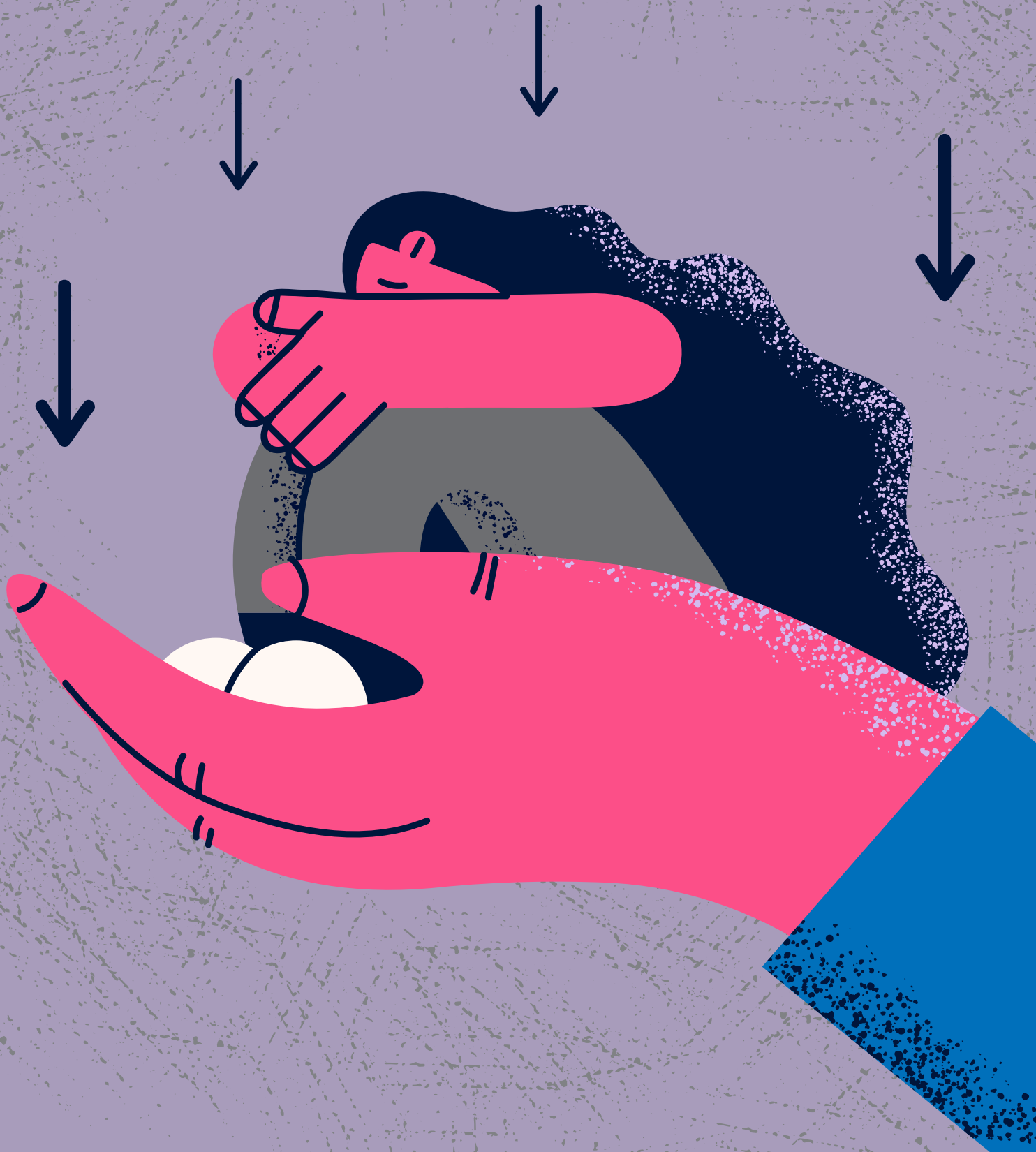




Supporting you one step at a time

# Annual Report

2021/2022



# Thank you

To the Volunteers, Staff and Trustees who worked so hard during challenging times.

Kind words from some of our clients.



*Thank you, I want to reiterate how much I needed your help to go on. I think your service is unsung. What you're doing is life changing. You've saved a life that could have been wasted.*



*I'm not saying I'm cured, but my life is easier in every respect.*



*Thank you for all your help and kindness towards me over these past few months. It's helped me so much.*



*Very easy to get on with, put you at ease. Gave very sound advice and offered support.*

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# Chairman's Foreword

Reflecting on the year there have been many moments that inspire when this great charity rose to the challenge of its times. As the country continued its fight against Covid the deep impact that the pandemic had on people's lives became apparent. Many people who were worried, isolated or stuck at home and seeking comfort, turned to drink or drugs or both. The impact on FASS services has been significant, for we have always had a policy of trying to help everyone who approaches us.

The articles in this report recount the experiences of our staff and volunteers, and the people who use our services. They are stories of positive support and therapy provided in times of serious need. They also illustrate the imagination and initiative available in FASS for development of services and exciting new projects. I am always impressed by the resilience and commitment that is a hallmark of FASS. This year especially, I must express my admiration and gratitude to the staff and volunteers who have so selflessly dealt with all the challenges thrown at them.

**John C Hamilton**  
**Chairman**

# Management Report

A common news theme over the past couple of years has been resilience in the face of severe restrictions to liberty and relationships. There were wonderful examples of stoicism and camaraderie, of charity and creativity. The community rose to the challenge of Covid and came out on top, or so it seems.

For all the strength, there was also fragility. The stress, the uncertainty, the enforced changes - perhaps all took a toll. And now, as the height of the pandemic appears to have past, there are other pressing worries.

We have seen that fragility at close hand, in the sheer number of people seeking help from FASS services this past year. It's also evident in the complex alcohol and drug issues, health and welfare needs they brought with them.

The Alcohol Support Service experienced the most intense level of demand ever faced in its 45-year history. Many people were drinking much more during the Covid restrictions. That together with development of mental health issues like anxiety and depression, often forged intransigent problems. The counselling service responded with great professionalism and skill, increasing its capacity wherever possible. It's a great credit to the Staff and Volunteers that it maintained its usual high quality of service in such difficult circumstances.

It was a similar experience for our ADAPT Substance Recovery Service. It provided its community-based Triage Support and Counselling, REACH hospital liaison service and Near Fatal Overdose intervention throughout Fife. Clients and their families required intensive help. Whether it was people attending for the first time, or those returning following a relapse, they received enthusiastic and dedicated service. ADAPT staff and volunteers also introduced a brand new Retention Service and the KY8 support hub in Methil.

Curnie Clubs received a further 3-years funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to tackle isolation and loneliness. It was a year of innovation for Curnie Clubs. Staff and Club Members used learning gained from pandemic practices to reformulate how Curnie Clubs work. They developed a new flexible mix of face-to-face and online delivery to deal with pandemic restrictions.

Our people, the staff and volunteers of FASS are resilient, but we are mindful of their need for care and welfare too. Like many in the Third Sector, they have delivered diligently faced with the same pandemic pressures as everyone else. This year, as in the past, they were nothing short of magnificent.

**Jim Bett, Mhairi Owens, Dave Dempster, Donald Grieve – Management Team**

# Alcohol Counselling Service



**The Alcohol Support Service provides psycho-social counselling for individuals aged 16 and over concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.**

Our counselling is tailored to meet individual need, with a choice of abstinence or controlled drinking regimes. A collaborative, goal focused and recovery-based approach assists our clients to address their concerns about alcohol use and does so within a context of inter-related psychological, social and relationship issues. Counselling is also available for family members and friends.

It was during the year from April 2021 until March 2022 that the full impact of Covid restrictions manifested for the service. As people again faced a return to something approaching normal life and work, drinking patterns and mental health issues that developed during lockdown, proved to be less than manageable without specialist help. Many chose to approach FASS and this resulted in demand for alcohol counselling increasing significantly.

***During the year the Alcohol Support Service received 750 referrals for alcohol counselling.  
A 42% increase compared to the year before.***

During the time of Covid, from lockdowns and beyond, we have also been helping people with higher levels of mental health issues, particularly extreme anxiety combined with alcohol use. Also, higher levels of suicidal ideation have been noted. Counsellors are dealing with cases that are more complex, and the support required by clients is more intensive and long lasting. Another challenge we've faced has been clients staying in the pathway for longer.

The service response during the year has been both dedicated and professional. Notably, counselling staff and volunteers dug very deep to increase the number of sessions available for clients.

As restrictions eased, we offered face-to-face Counselling again. We also continued to provide many sessions of counselling by telephone and video, using skills developed during the pandemic. It is as a very flexible and responsive service that we end the year and look forward to the next.

***There were 402 closures of counselling programmes, with 309 (77%) clients indicating either complete success or significant progress with their chosen goals of abstinence or controlled drinking with recognised 'safe' limits.***

313 clients (78%) indicated similar success with their improvement towards psychological health and emotional well-being.

And another 78 people finished counselling after requiring a single appointment for crisis counselling or relapse prevention.

Our EMDR or Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing psychotherapy continued to operate face-to-face when restrictions allowed. EMDR is used to aid recovery from complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and panic attacks, addictions and other intransigent problems. The service dovetails with the counselling service. During the year until March 2022 EMDR helped 16 clients.

The Alcohol Support Service invests a great deal of effort and resource to enable a high quality and standard of service. Our counselling is delivered in line with COSCA Standards & Ethics and the quality of our organisation continues to be recognised by COSCA's Recognition Scheme for Organisations.

## Training

The service also continued to fulfil its role as a placement provider for University and College counselling students. Throughout the year we continued to recruit counsellors into the service, providing training, peer support and practice supervision often delivered face-to-face or by Zoom and Teams. During the year we added 5 volunteer trainee counsellors who each received pre-placement training and an inhouse Induction.

Both our Counselling Service Co-ordinators are registered Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) Trainers. This year we increased the number of our Trainers to 4 with the addition of 2 counsellors who are now qualified to deliver SMHFA.

## Support & Supervision

Practice Supervision is mandatory for all volunteer and staff counsellors and is defined by Governing Bodies, Codes of Practice and Ethics Frameworks. All supervision is organised and monitored to ensure safe practice and delivery of a quality service.

**Helen Hutton, Sarah White | Counselling Service Co-ordinators**



## Counselling after the Pandemic

*"We are returning to normal counselling. Is Covid over? During restrictions, we delivered our service mainly by telephone so the most important skill we used was listening. Telephone counselling was intense and required lots of focus. You could say that counselling during Covid was more difficult and certainly more tiring" - Counsellor*

*"Your service was the only one that "got me" when no one else wanted to know. You were happy to work with me knowing my children had been removed from my care. So grateful for your service .....Amazing!"*

*"I couldn't have done this without this service, you didn't judge me, you listened"*

*"Can't believe I saw my counsellor as soon as I did, would recommend to anyone going through a tough time"*

*"I start college in September, something I didn't think I would ever do, I now have hope, something I didn't have for such a long time"*



# Working with a client

## **I was working with a 37-year-old client for a year before the pandemic.**

At the initial consultation, he stated that since age 18, he had tried to stop drinking more than ten times with some success but never managed to achieve a long-term abstinence. Our main therapeutic work focused on helping him learn to navigate life or 'the living', as he called it, without alcohol.

Most of my clients mention that they are really scared to imagine life without drinking. Especially at the beginning of their recovery journey, they struggle to see a happy and fulfilled life beyond the bond they have formed with alcohol. This client expressed similar fears and concerns. During his first year of sobriety (abstinence) he learned to identify his strengths and abilities, and he managed to put strategies in practice, which helped him navigate 'risky situations', such as the festive season, birthdays, work stress and relationship issues.

By the end of that first year, it was apparent to my client, that having the stability of an open ending therapeutic process had provided the continuity that had been missing for the most part from his life. He considered the security of a 'safe space' helped him believe in himself and his ability to maintain abstinence long term.

Not long before the lockdown began, he lost his job and experienced great anxiety. At this point, our therapeutic work focused on lapse/relapse prevention and management, and on building resilience to cope with uncertainty. I must admit that I felt neither of us had been, in anyway ready or equipped to deal with the level of uncertainty that the Covid pandemic unleashed on every aspect of our lives.

My client, apart from having to deal with psychological and emotional challenges, also had to address some practical issues so he could attend telephone sessions. Finding a safe and secure place became a real challenge with all his family members being constantly at home.

The bulk of our therapeutic work during pandemic focused on helping him deal with high levels of anxiety and other mental health issues, such as low moods and panic attacks that developed during lockdown.

Despite all his challenges, he has managed to reach 3 years of sobriety and is doing really well, and he has managed to secure as he puts it, 'the job he always wanted'.

**Counsellor**

# ADAPT Substance Recovery



**ADAPT offers advice, access to services and counselling for individuals and family members worried about alcohol, drugs and prescribed medicines.**

During the post-covid period, there has been an intensity to the outreach support needed by our clients and their families. Many were first time service users, but there were also many who had relapsed during the pandemic and its isolation. They came seeking help for their reliance on substances, but many also had their mental health impacted. There was often a complexity of problematic issues around family relationships and their socio-economic situation.

## ADAPT Triage Team

*1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022*

*1016 clients*

*322 females, 693 males, 1 non-gender specific*

As the main Substance Use Triage service in Fife, ADAPT is often the first point of contact of support. We receive people wishing to be assessed, referred, and supported into the services that they, their families or significant others may require. The service provides care planning and includes a community active links and mentoring programme. It supports people accessing clinical and psycho-social treatments, maintaining contact with them and their families until they are safely within appropriate services.

Motivating Service Users, building and strengthening recovery capital, supporting engagement and compliance with treatment, and assisting with any identified health and social needs are amongst the benefits of this approach.

### **Clients benefited from ADAPT's engagement and support into many Third Sector and Statutory Sector services including:**

- Housing & Homelessness Services
- Universal Credit & Benefits
- Help for Debt
- Social Services
- GPs and Primary Care
- Harm Reduction, Blood Born Virus testing, and Naloxone distribution
- Advocacy
- Help with travel to appointments

## **ADAPT Substance Misuse Counselling**

### **182 Referrals for Counselling**

**78 females, 104 males**

Brief psycho-social counselling provides help for clients in crisis and for those not requiring opiate treatment services. A solid foundation for recovery is established through a solutions-focused approach that includes identification of the client's personal strengths and resources. Relapse prevention strategies help maintain recovery. Counselling provides a full range of ADAPT first contact interventions including immediate care and triage assessment where necessary. 182 people were referred into counselling during the year.

There were 86 closures of counselling programmes, with 85% of clients indicating either complete success or significant improvement. Another 35 people finished counselling after requiring a single appointment for crisis counselling or relapse prevention.

## **ADAPT Near Fatal Overdose (NFO) Team**

### **294 unique clients (87 females, 207 males) who experienced 363 near fatal overdoses.**

The NFO team supports those who experience near fatal overdose and engages with them following intervention from Fife Scottish Ambulance Service. It provides a follow-up contact and offers advice and support for people at risk, and their loved ones. It also offers the opportunity to explore substance misuse issues, and mental and physical health issues, family relationships, social environment, and housing. Screenings and tests for Blood Born Viruses and sexual health are available, also safer injecting equipment, needle exchange and Naloxone.

The team engages with vulnerable people who have overdosed on Heroin and other opiates. These have often been taken in combination with alcohol, street Valium and prescribed

medications. In total, ADAPT NFO engaged with 695 people, clients and families, who were impacted by a Near Fatal Overdose or Drug-related Death. This project works as a partnership between ADAPT, the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Fife ADP Drug Death Coordinator. ADAPT NFO is funded by Fife ADP and the Corra Foundation.

## ADAPT REACH Team

**125 Patients (34 females, 90 males, 1 non-gender specific)**

REACH is ADAPT's contribution to the Hospital Liaison service. Our partners are the NHS Addiction Service, and We Are With You. The REACH team provides dedicated support in the community for people discharged from Victoria Hospital following treatment for alcohol and drugs.

REACH aims to reduce deaths by increasing and maintaining service user engagement with harm reduction, alcohol and drug treatment and rehabilitation services. This improves outcomes for people who are at risk, and for their families. REACH support usually lasts up to 9 months from first point of contact. Each patient can receive multiple contacts including home visits, often several per week.

This year, the REACH team engaged with 125 new patients, 80 of whom were referred directly from Victoria Hospital. The others came from various sources including Social Work and ADAPT Triage and Near Fatal Overdose Teams.

92% of referrals were for alcohol-related conditions, 5% Illicit substances and 3% for multi-substance misuse. During contact, 27 patients completed a further detox programme and were supported until safely discharged.

## ADAPT Retention Service Team

In November 2021, our new Retention Service began. The team's aim is to work with partner agencies to identify clients at risk. They may have fallen out of treatment, and we seek to engage, and aid their return. Some feedback about this partnership working between Addiction Services and Retention Service:



*"I have found the input from your service extremely helpful in re-engaging patients and assisting patients to attend appointments and the Rapid Access Clinic. I have found your recent attendance at clinical meetings extremely useful, as information is shared, and risk factors are identified and dealt with very promptly as a whole team approach."*

and

*"I have had quite a few patients from my caseload that have required support from yourselves and often the support has been very intensive. Making contact with high-risk patients, visiting their homes (often multiple times a day), providing transport to and from our appointments and GP/hospital appointments, looking for patients in the community to try to encourage engagement, supporting high risk patients that are at high risk of overdose, and providing mobile phones to keep patients engaged, which is so valuable to have that point of contact."*

## KY8

In March 2022, ADAPT launched the KY8 community hub in Methil. This offers drop-in support for individuals or family members affected by Substance Misuse. No appointment is needed and local people can simply drop in for a chat and a cup of tea or coffee.

The new hub is a place where people can talk informally with ADAPT support workers. They can get advice for their own or another's substance misuse. The Hub offers ADAPT's full range of help including triage and referral, interactive community engagement, and Naloxone training and supply.

*"We are very aware of the number of high-risk Near Fatal overdose and Drug related deaths occurring in the community. Our friendly community hub helps us attract and engage with those in the Methil area who are in urgent need of support."*

*"In the Methil area alone there have been 22 drug related deaths in each of the past 3 years. Each one is a deeply sad personal tragedy, but we should also remember that each one also impacts on average 52 other people, all those family and friends of the deceased loved one."*

**Dave Dempster | Substance Misuse Manager**

# FASS Community Drug Service



**FASS Community Drug Service (FCDS) is for people experiencing every severity of drug misuse. From first time experimenters, to regular users, to people experiencing great problems because of their long-term chaotic drug misuse.**

*1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022*

*595 clients*

*175 females, 420 males*

*325 clients/patients benefited from Brief Recovery Support (including GP Clinics)*

*270 clients benefited from Intensive Support*

We help adults who are affected by substance misuse and their families who consequently experience a range of personal, social and lifestyle problems. Our outreach services are normally available in Dunfermline, West Fife, and Kirkcaldy. Whilst we maintained this whenever Covid-19 restrictions were eased, much of our contact with service users occurred by telephone.

Brief Recovery Support is outreach advice and immediate care for people when they are most likely to be using drugs. It offers crisis support, relapse prevention and lifestyle advice. We helped 325 service users over the year.



FCDS has had a long-standing professional working relationship with enhanced prescribing GP services in Inverkeithing & Benarty. We continue to assist with Opioid Replacement Treatment (ORT) offered within the surgeries. We advise and support clients on harm reduction and stabilisation leading to reduction and ultimate withdrawal from heroin and other opiate type substances.

Intensive Outreach Support offers an on-demand response for people who need more help to gain control over their drug misuse. It is provided for clients who find themselves in chaotic and potentially dangerous circumstances. Our work often involves dealing with family or social relationships, finances, homelessness and generally unhealthy life-styles that are fuelled by drug use. We helped 270 service users during the year.

**Dave Dempster | Substance Misuse Manager**



# Curnie Clubs



**Funded since 2016 to support lonely and isolated individuals, this year Curnie Clubs extended its activities.**

*1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022*

*55 Referrals*

*127 new and existing Members supported*

The year from April 2021 to March 2022 was challenging for Curnie Clubs. Society as we knew it had changed to an existence of pandemic restrictions, compounding the issue of isolation for our Membership.

Curnie received a further three years funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, albeit at a reduced rate. Over the year, as other funding streams ended, Curnie lost three valuable members of staff. This was a poignant moment in the Curnie journey, and the loss was felt by all. Funding is a fickle mistress and unfortunately these situations will occur from time to time.

## Curnie Groups

As the year moved towards March 2022, Curnie began to work face-to-face again. We now have in-person Clubs back in Dunfermline, Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes. Our Kirkcaldy Club meets in the Bennoch Hub, where our gardening Club is popular with members from across Fife.



Curnie was in a state of constant change during the year, developing new practices, skills and methodologies. We used learning from our pandemic practices to reformulate how we work, with a mix of face-to-face and our new online skills. It was a year of innovation with Staff and Members involved in the process of development. And it was a year we accepted Covid as a constant to work with as opposed to something to fear.

Our Volunteers, all of whom are Members, assisted with Club development, design and delivery. Members took ownership of the new-look Clubs. They were instrumental in putting in place measures to support newcomers who were not tech savvy. Members also developed cross-Club groups like Stroke Survivors, art and slimming, as well as co-producing the Gardening Club with staff.

*I was referred to Curnie nature group as my anxiety was through the roof. I now have more confidence in myself after taking part in the crafting sessions. I was out of my comfort zone, but the staff supported me through this.*

*The Curnie gardening project gave me a purpose. I now go down and water the garden frequently. I have been planting flowers and vegetables. It's a lovely group of people and for once I feel I fit in.*

As ever, our Members were people who had found themselves lonely and isolated because of worsening disabilities, homelessness, and mental health. They had lost their confidence to engage with others. Often supported by referrers or relatives to begin attending Curnie, they found a place of understanding and therapeutic support. Twelve Members moved on to take training courses; 2 entered education; 6 started jobs; 9 became Volunteers and 18 engaged with community activity out with Curnie Clubs.

## Curnie Counselling

### *56 Clients in Counselling during the year*

Curnie counselling was initially funded by the National Lottery Community Fund for one year at the height of the Pandemic. It was subsequently extended for six months and again for a further six months. This service has proven to be much needed and opened a new set of referrers to us. We have two counsellors who work 20 hours per week. Our counsellors are fully employed working caseloads limited only by ethical practice.

*Counselling has offered me the space where I can talk about my emotions openly without feeling judged about mistakes I have made in the past. It enabled me to understand myself better and find the courage to forgive myself. Most of all, I can appreciate the present more and feel hope for the future instead of wanting to end my life and just give up.*



## Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Service

*60 families living with FASD supported  
7 Understanding FASD workshops delivered to health,  
social care and education professionals in Fife*

Our FASD Fife project provides support for parents and carers of those with FASD. It provides strategies and resources to support positive parenting and management of the condition. The project also provides a Facebook network and face-to-face peer support group, advocacy and education. The project has delivered FASD training both internally and externally to professionals in health, social care and education.

Eleven of the families we supported received intensive help over the year. Two adults with FASD were given support to help them manage daily living. We also delivered five drop-in sessions and three Understanding FASD workshops directly for Carers. Feedback was consistently excellent, with service users appreciating the lived experience of the Coordinator.

*"I do not know what I would have done without your support. You are the only person that really understands me, and you are able to help others better understand me. Since you have become involved, I have not got into trouble and not even had a drink or used drugs. Just having my family, friends and my workers know how to talk to me and understand better how I might react has made all the difference and now I am getting on better with people".*

FASD Fife now boasts two volunteers drawn from our alcohol service. This has been very successful and increases the depth of understanding and our skill base as an organisation.

## In conclusion

Curnie weathered the storms of 2021 – 2022. We adapted through the learning Covid forced upon us, and we have grown. We do not appear to have lost ground through being closed to face-to-face work and referrals are again at pre-Covid levels. Our position is stronger than ever, as we now have new experience, knowledge and skills at our disposal.

**Donald Grieve | Curnie Clubs Manager**

# Supporting Families

**STV Appeal, Scottish Government Winter Support Package, Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, Richardson & Starling, Scottish Digital Inclusion, NHS Charities Together, The Abby Church of Dunfermline**

**255 families supported between December 2021 and March 2022.**

The Scottish Government Winter Support Package was one of several involving ADAPT, the Alcohol Support Service and Curnie Clubs working together to aid disadvantaged families.

Others such as the trusts and funders listed above, also provided significant grants that were converted into vouchers for aid and electronic devices.

With their help we provided Supermarket Vouchers, Electricity Card Top-ups, and Food Parcels for at risk families with children. We experienced significant demand for food, clothing and help with utilities. In all, our help involved:

- A bus travel pass scheme for clients
- Gas/Electric vouchers
- Clothing Vouchers
- A food voucher scheme
- School clothing grants for children of families impacted by substance misuse
- Distribution of telephones for clients
- Distribution of electronic devices for clients & families
- Distribution of Christmas gifts for individuals & families



Families with a member experiencing chaotic substance misuse issues often have complex social care needs. Lack of money for essentials is common. Isolation is also often an issue. Families who had little or no access to communication devices had trouble maintaining appointments and medical prescription requirements with our services and with NHS Fife.

*"Many thanks for your support and help, would be lost without you"*

*"Many thanks for your kindness"*

*"Thank you so much for the vouchers, they have helped us a lot"*

**Dave Dempster | Substance Misuse Manager**

# A huge thank you!

## Thanks to our funders



## Trust Funders & Donations received with thanks

STV Appeal /Scottish Government Winter Support

Carnegie Dunfermline Trust

Richardson & Starling

Fife Voluntary Action

NHS Charities Together

The Abbey Church of Dunfermline

Scottish Digital Inclusion

Anonymous donators who used BT My Donate

Anonymous clients who made donations

Anonymous donators who made bequests

**Design by Jim Bett & Forbes Creative**





Fife Alcohol Support Service  
17 Tolbooth Street  
Kirkcaldy, Fife  
KY1 1RW

T: 01592 206200  
[enquiries@fassaction.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@fassaction.org.uk)  
[www.fassaction.org.uk](http://www.fassaction.org.uk)



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