

NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2020

Our DrugFAM winter newsletter reaches you after three very busy months for DrugFAM.



A Grant Awarded By The Lottery

The earliest piece of news since our September newsletter is very positive news:



In partnership with

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND

On 6th October 2020, The National Lottery awarded DrugFAM a grant of £100,000 from the Government's Coronavirus Community Support Fund to enable DrugFAM to meet the rapidly increasing demand for its support services, nationwide, as caused by the pandemic and lockdowns. This has given DrugFAM a tremendous boost, in terms of cashflow, stability and continuity of service. We would like to express our thanks to HM Government for making this possible.

As a direct result of this grant, we have been able to engage the services of a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). More about this later...

Drug And Alcohol Deaths During The Pandemic

Sadly, we have supported 46 bereaved families since lockdown began in March. Our kindest thoughts and sympathies are with these families whom we have reached out to individually to offer one to one and group support. Our quarterly bereavement groups will continue online in 2021 – the next group will take place on Sunday 28th March from 2pm-5pm led by our professional bereavement through substance use counsellor, Peter Cartwright.

Winter 2020



Annual Bereavement Conference

Due to COVID restrictions our Annual Bereavement Conference took place on Saturday 10th October as an online conference.

This was a new challenge for DrugFAM but it allowed our reach to extend nationwide. Over 100 people attended from all over the UK and Europe. The event opened with an address from Emilia Fox, the British actor, and continued with a wide range of contributions from people with their own lived experiences, including our Junior Ambassador James Sabin and his brother Phil who will be Sky Diving for DrugFAM in April 2021. To support them click here :

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/phil-james-skydive?utm_source=Sharethis&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=phil-james-skydive&utm_campaign=pfp-email&utm_term=8661688d58a841cobb13ed7e118fca4

The chat rooms were supportive for everyone too. We listened to songs from Celtic singer Ado Matheson and poetry from Christina Thatcher which drew everyone together. We received some very helpful feedback from over one third of attendees which we shall refer to for future conferences. We would like to thank Jasmine Plowright for her event management and Mountain Healthcare for their financial support.

Our 2021 conference will take place on Saturday 9th October.

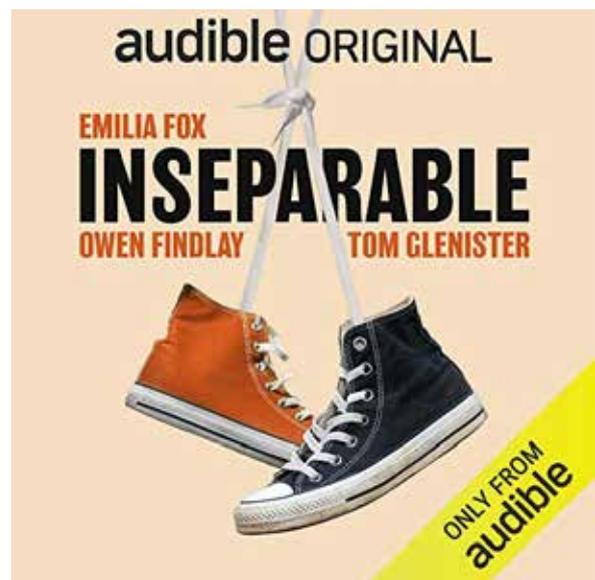
New Patron

We are delighted to welcome Emilia Fox as a new Patron of the Charity.

Emilia first met Elizabeth at the beginning of 2020 because Emilia had been engaged to both to narrate and play the part of Elizabeth in 'Inseparable', a radio play in ten parts adapted from



Elizabeth's 'Mum Can you Lend me Twenty Quid?' (available on Amazon.co.uk and Audible.co.uk).



It is wonderful to have Emilia's support. Her opening address at the Annual Bereavement Conference was extremely moving and very sincere showing her understanding and support for DrugFAM's work.



Drug, Alcohol And Gambling Abuse In England

Recently published statistics from the Office of National Statistics state that in 2019, 4,393 deaths due to drug poisoning were registered in England and Wales.

Public Health England's latest data, released in September 2020, shows that the number of heavy drinkers in June was 8.4 million compared to about 4.8 million just four months earlier. Social isolation caused by lockdown restrictions has created potential to encourage problem gambling from home using mobile devices (APPG, Online Gambling Harm Enquiry, June 2020).

DrugFAM's own records show that there are many families in the UK whose domestic lives have worsened this year due to substance misuse: during the nine months between January and September 2020 we handled 11,403 contacts with people in need (via telephone, email, letter, one-to-one's and support groups) and supported 2,091 families, compared with 6,905 contacts and 1,895 people in the same time period in 2019. The charity received 413 new referrals in September, October, and November this year.

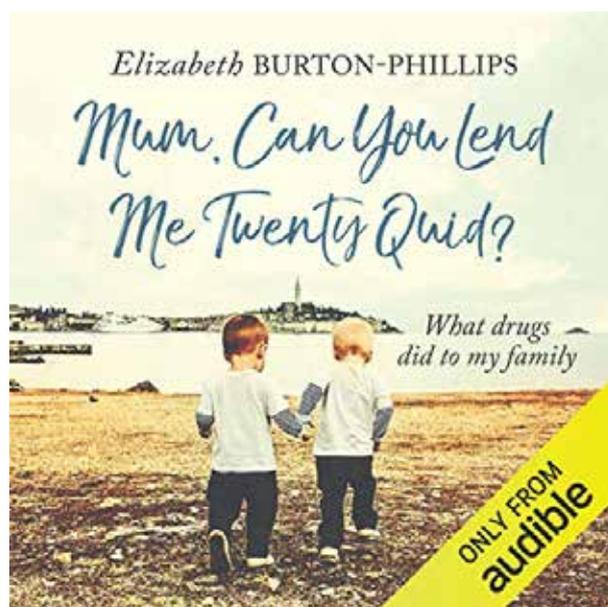
The second report from Professor Dame Carol Black's independent review into the misuse of illegal drugs in England is expected now to be published in the New Year. We understand that it will show a detailed picture of treatment, recovery and prevention and focus on making recommendations to the Government. Let us hope that the needs and concerns of families and loved ones in their own right will be addressed.

Audible Book Reading by Elizabeth

In October Elizabeth spent a few days at a recording studio in Chippenham, recording her memoir 'Mum Can You Lend Me Twenty Quid?' to make a recording for Audible.



Elizabeth articulates the impact of this in an article she wrote, which you can find in the Blog section of our website.



Radio Interviews

Elizabeth's voice held out for two radio programmes: the first being an appearance on Noel McDermott's programme in October, and the second being an appearance on Radio Marlow in Emma-Jane Taylor's morning show on 8th November when the topic was addiction. Sharon, our Operations Manager, was on both programmes with Elizabeth



Support from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

We are delighted to announce that Wokingham Borough Council has agreed to extend its contract with DrugFAM to deliver our telephone helpline, support group, one-to-one sessions, and bereavement support to families in the district who are affected by drug use, substance abuse and addiction.

“This is wonderful news because it means that DrugFAM can continue to provide information, advice and support to families in the Wokingham Borough, some of whom we have been supporting for more than three years” said DrugFAM’s Founder, Elizabeth Burton-Phillips MBE. WBC has shown that they recognise the value of DrugFAM’s work, and we hope that this commitment from Wokingham will be adopted by other local authorities when we apply for financial support.

We Have A New Logo And An Updated Website

Our new logo is a subtle modification of the previous logo, designed to show that we support families who report problem gambling, often alongside drug or alcohol misuse.

Thank you to Design Directions in Twyford who continue to develop all DrugFAM’s branding without charge. DrugFAM’s website was given a makeover during the Autumn and the content refreshed. We are very pleased with the outcome and are extremely grateful for the technical services of Ben O’Neill provided freely and cheerfully. Elizabeth also worked hard to check the accuracy of content with input provided by Gill Owen-Conway and by other members of staff.

Volunteering

Gill, Sharon and Steve’s hard work writing an online training course has paid dividends.



Since the summer we have received over 20 enquiries about volunteering and 11 candidates have already received online training. That is a lot when you consider the time and effort required from both parties. We are very pleased with our new volunteers, some of whom have already graduated from training and started on the Helpline. These people are wonderful – thank you!

New CEO

We are delighted to welcome Paul Rompani as our new Chief Executive Officer who joined the team on 1 December.

Paul comes to DrugFAM with a CV full of charity experience and more. He is a really nice person who has settled in quickly and has ‘zoom met’ all of DrugFAM’s staff and a good number of the Volunteers.

We would like to express our gratitude to Charles Owen-Conway, our Chair of Trustees, who has, for the past year, given so much of his time leading the Charity and securing vital funding. In his humorous and straight-talking style, he has helped DrugFAM weather the Coronavirus storm and has nurtured a good working relationship with The National Lottery, which should stand the Charity in good stead. Charles will continue with his duties as Chair of Trustees, so he will never be far away.



Telephone Helpline

Following a three-month consultation with a top telecoms provider, a new telephone system is planned for January 2021 for the Helpline and office.

Robust and user-friendly, it will be suitable for remote training, with no more technical problems during calls. We know that life has become more challenging for many families during the pandemic. If you cannot get through to a family support worker when you call, please leave a voice message and bear with us – someone will call you back as soon as possible, usually within a day. We have a full rota of Helpline staff at the ready to cover the Christmas break. You know how to reach us.

The Power of 7

Our Founder's 70th birthday appeal has been doing well.

You can add a message to your donation or donate anonymously. If you donate via JustGiving, adding gift aid is quick and easy too. No paperwork is required. The money reaches DrugFAM's bank account within a few days. Have a quick look!

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/drugfamspowerof7>



And finally we would like to wish you all a restful Christmas and a positive New Year. Please look after yourselves.

If you need us, you know where we are.

**Helpline number :
0300 888 3853
9am-9pm
365 days a year**