

Iain Dalglish – Action Research Executive Summary

Investigation into the career/employment support available for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in West Dunbartonshire

Introduction

This research project was undertaken to try and find out what sort of career support was available for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in one local authority. West Dunbartonshire was chosen, as it is an area that has been highlighted as having a significant drug and alcohol problem. The authority has been cited by the Director of Public Health, as the 2nd most deprived of ‘income deprived’ population and 3rd most deprived of ‘employment deprived’ population in the country.

Findings

A number of agencies were contacted and it was discovered that there is a fairly substantial provision available in this authority. There are a number of agencies that work together to tackle the problem. The main emphasis appears to be preventative work with young people, as there are several initiatives specifically targeting young people

The main adult provision is by an agency called Alternatives that runs the employability programme Progress2Work, funded by Job Centre Plus. This agency works with addicts at all stages of recovery and the goal of the organisation is to move clients from chaos to employment.

Conclusions

- There is a substantial amount of support available for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in West Dunbartonshire
- Young people are targeted in particular
- There is strong inter-agency working in the authority

- There should perhaps be more provision for adults
- The problem is being tackled fairly successfully

Iain Dalglish

Action Research Project

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recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in West
Dunbartonshire**

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Preface

The decision to investigate the career/employment support available to recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in West Dunbartonshire came from two main influences. The first being work that my church is involved in. For a number of years there has been active involvement with the homeless, particularly in the West End of Glasgow, and a number of these individuals, as well as being homeless, have other issues, such as a substance dependency, be it alcohol or drugs. Also there has been contact with individuals who are in their own homes but have an addiction problem. I have seen a number of people whose lives have been completely ruined due to a dependency on either alcohol or drugs and I have also seen people who appear to have become 'clean' only to then regress back into depending on substances when they have been unable to cope with the pressures of life.

I have been curious as to what support, particularly in relation to employment, there is available for those individuals who have managed to some extent to control their addiction and are in a situation of recovery and how this support helps them not to regress back into a state of dependency.

The reason to focus on West Dunbartonshire was due to the fact that I had a 3-week in placement in the Careers Scotland office in Dumbarton. While there I learned that there are a number of areas in West Dunbartonshire that have a significant drug problem and I was keen to find out what support there was for this client group once they had managed to get their addiction, to some extent, under control and were actively seeking to gain some form of employment or training.

This client group does need a lot of support and it is encouraging to note that there are a number of agencies that are helping individuals to make the often very difficult transition from a state of substance dependency into employment or training.

Iain Dalglish, May 2005.

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Abbreviations Used

ACHB – Argyll and Clyde Health Board

DACA – Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol

DPH – Annual Report of the Director of Public Health, 2004

EIU – Effective Interventions Unit

GGHB – Greater Glasgow Health Board

Introduction

The council district of West Dunbartonshire covers the area from Clydebank on the outskirts of Glasgow all the way to Gartocharn at Loch Lomond, taking in towns such as Dumbarton, Alexandria, and Balloch. It is home to approximately 93,000 people, a number that is falling with time and becoming increasingly elderly. West Dunbartonshire is governed by two health boards: Argyll and Clyde Health Board, covering the area south of Loch Lomond that includes Dumbarton, Alexandria, Bonhill and Renton, and Greater Glasgow Health Board, covering the Clydebank side of the council district.

According to statistics, the area of West Dunbartonshire is the second most deprived of 32 councils in Scotland for 'income deprived' population and third for 'employment deprived' population. Employment figures show that 72% of the working age population is employed compared with a national figure of 74% and 24% of children were in workless households in 2001, compared with a national figure of 18% (DPH: 2004).

In terms of alcohol and drug problems, the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2004 states that, in the Argyll and Clyde part of West Dunbartonshire in particular the consumption levels of alcohol are 'worryingly high' and this includes binge drinking, especially at weekends. West Dunbartonshire has higher rates for hospital admissions due to alcohol problems than Scotland as a whole and the Argyll and Clyde part has higher rates than the council as a whole. Also, numbers of new patients attending drug services are 'much higher than in the rest of Scotland' (DPH: 2004).

It is estimated that there are around 2000 drug users within the council area and this figure is growing, especially amongst the under-16 age group, which increasingly is using drugs such as valium, ecstasy, diazepam, and strong varieties of cannabis.

There are a number of reasons for individuals becoming involved with either drugs or alcohol and then becoming addicted. Some of these are: poverty; the environment that they are in; problematic relationships; in the case of a young person, perhaps problems at

school; lack of education; experimentation that becomes a coping mechanism; enjoyment; lack of other opportunities; trauma; abuse, either physical or sexual. It can also be seen, therefore, that those who have addiction problems may well have other barriers that may prevent them from going into employment or training, which also have to be overcome.

From these reports it can be seen that West Dunbartonshire has been identified as having a significant drug and alcohol problem. It is necessary, therefore, that those who have these dependency issues be given appropriate support in order to be able to deal with their addiction. This support will be in many forms, as recovering addicts will all be at different stages and no two addicts' recovery process will be exactly the same. Studies show that there are three basic categories of individuals:

- those who are (or are almost) job ready
- those who are not job ready at the moment, but have the potential to be with some support
- those with multiple problems (employment is not a short or medium term possibility) (EIU: 2001).

Research has shown that an important part of the recovery process is employability provision and according to a report published by the Effective Interventions Unit, which is part of the Scottish Executive,

the importance of employability provision as a key part of the overall treatment, care and support for drug users is now more widely recognised and is supported by evidence (EIU: 2003)

Studies by the Effective Interventions Unit that take in the whole of Scotland show that 'most treatment seeking drug users are unemployed' and that 'employment can aid the process of recovery from substance abuse'. It is also reported that 'a significant proportion of drug treatment services are extending their provision to include promoting access to education, training and employment opportunities' and that 'the main thrust of

employability support tends to be personal development and building self-esteem often incorporating both individual and group work' (EIU: 2001). From the literature, therefore, it can be concluded that, rather than being seen as something that should be simply tacked on at the end of a recovery programme, employability support is a key component of addiction recovery.

These studies have also concluded that the individuals who participate in employability programmes of this kind have four main motivations for doing so:

- The desire to make a break and escape from drug dependency, health problems and reliance on welfare benefits.
- The wish to develop social support structures beyond the drug 'culture'.
- The desire for a sense of normality.
- The possibility of earning money.

It has also been observed that once the support of an employability programme has finished not all clients will be at the same stage and some may require further support from agencies. According to the EIU, a 'survey of recovering drug users stabilised on methadone showed that only 20% currently felt ready to look for employment' (EIU: 2001). The aim of the employment support is obviously to increase the job-readiness of clients.

There are a number of factors that contribute to a person who is recovering from an addiction problem being not ready for work and the EIU highlights several of these.

They include:

- lack of skills
- low self-esteem
- few work-related qualifications
- poor previous experience of employment and training
- a range of social problems
- mental and physical health problems

- criminal records (EIU: 2001).

The purpose of employability programmes, therefore, is to help individuals to overcome these barriers. The programme should have as its core activities such things as

confidence building, personal development and social skills, anger management, basic skills (literacy and numeracy), education, training and work-related activities (work tasters, placements, voluntary work). They may also increase the individual's belief in their own capacity to gain and maintain employment (EIU: 2003).

Many individuals recovering from the misuse of substances find that the stigma attached to their condition over difficult to overcome and another aim of employability programmes is to help people to overcome this barrier.

The aim of this report is to focus on one area in particular, West Dunbartonshire, and try to ascertain just what is available in terms of support, in particular employability support, for those who are recovering from drug addiction or alcoholism. It will look at the services offered to clients by various agencies and how a network of agencies work together in order to support their clients to get become ready to enter some form of employment or training.

Methods of Investigation

The first point of contact for this research was one of the key workers, that is those who work with social inclusion clients, at the Dumbarton Careers Scotland office. The first contact was in November 2004 when general information about the key worker role and the client group that these individuals work with. The next contact, in early April 2005 was to ascertain, first of all, what services Careers Scotland offered to the client group that was being investigated and also to find out what partner agencies the organisation worked with in West Dunbartonshire that offered employability services to recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, so that they too could be contacted. The interview was conducted by email, as this was most convenient for both parties.

Contact details of other agencies that Careers Scotland works with were given and a number of agencies were either telephoned or emailed in order to try and arrange meetings for interview or simply to interview by email. Several agencies were contacted and a meeting was set up with Alternatives, a drugs agency.

The Internet was also used as a means of trying to find contact details for agencies that worked with recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in the area of West Dunbartonshire. A number of agencies were contacted by email in order to try and ascertain information about what they did in the West Dunbartonshire area and how they sought to give career or employment advice to individuals who were recovering from either drug or alcohol addiction. The main problem with this method of research is the length of time it can take people to reply to an email, if they do reply at all. Some agencies were emailed 3 times and also contacted by telephone but it was very difficult to find people who were available to speak when the agency was telephoned. The other problem was time constraints, as the individuals employed by these agencies had extremely busy schedules and it was not always possible to organise a face-to-face meeting without waiting several weeks.

The organisations that were contacted were:

- Careers Scotland
- Alternatives
- Alcohol and Drug Action Team for GGHB
- Alcohol and Drug Action Team for ACHB
- Fairbridge
- DACA
- Job Centre Plus
- The Wise Group
- Scotland Against Drugs
- Scottish Drugs Forum
- Clydebank College
- Skillseekers
- Y Sort-It
- West Dunbartonshire Partnership

The background reading on the topic was done almost exclusively on the Internet, as it was possible to access various reports, such as the annual report by the Director of Public Health, and also various publications by the Scottish Executive on the nature and provision of employability programmes.

Findings

As a result of contacting various agencies in West Dunbartonshire that deal with clients with drug and alcohol issues, it was found that there is a fairly substantial provision for the client group in question and that there seems to be a multi-agency approach to working with clients who have addiction problems. One of the questions that individuals who were interviewed was asked was what other agencies did they work with and it became apparent that in West Dunbartonshire at least there are a number of organisations that work together very closely in order to try and tackle the drug and alcohol problem in their area and to move those who have been affected by addiction on to being able to engage in employment or training.

Careers Scotland

Careers Scotland is an all-age guidance service and, as such, attempts to meet the career guidance needs of anyone who is eligible for work. The key worker service that the organisation operates is a provision for those clients who may have certain barriers that prevents them from moving on to either employment or training and seeks to move them on past these barriers, in order to allow them to progress to work or training.

Key workers would work with individuals that have addiction issues, although, if that is the main issue, the key worker would tend to refer them to another agency that specifically deals with either drug or alcohol addiction, e.g. Alternatives. After the addiction issues have been addressed and they are no longer the primary issue, even though the problem may still be there, but to a lesser extent, the key worker would then seek to reengage with clients and try to help them to improve their employability skills. It is found that clients that have drug or alcohol issues also have other barriers, perhaps an unstable home environment, for example, and the key worker would also try to encourage them to look at these other barriers and then refer them to other agencies that they deem appropriate to deal with these issues.

The majority of key worker clients are young people and clients can be referred to them by a number of individuals and agencies, such as other careers advisers who deal with 'mainstream' clients, social workers, and schools. Other clients referred by Job Centre Plus or who simply drop in to the Careers Scotland office would tend to be seen by other Careers Scotland staff, such as careers advisers who perhaps mainly deal with adults.

In terms of employability support, a key worker would offer intensive support to a client who had addictions issues. Most of the clients that a key worker would see have little or no qualifications and their skill levels tend to be fairly low. The key worker, in conjunction with other agencies, will support clients in trying to boost the clients' confidence, self-esteem, IT levels, for example, and sometimes even a young person beginning to turn up for an appointment is a step forward. All the time that the key worker is with a client, he or she is trying to move the client forward. Clients that work with key workers do so on an entirely voluntary basis and one of the keys to this type of support is the ability to be flexible, as the support is very much arranged on the clients' terms and the key worker has to fit in with what they want.

Once a client has successfully made the transition into either employment or training, the key worker would track them for as long as is deemed necessary in order to ensure that they have settled in to their new environment and are able to cope with the different demands that are now placed upon them. There is no time limit for a client to be tracked but one of the key statistics that Careers Scotland measures its success with a client by is if he or she manages to sustain a placement for three months. If a client manages to do this the key worker would then begin to back off to see how the client is able to cope on his or her own. The door is never closed, however, and a client can always access the key worker service again if necessary.

The main agencies that Careers Scotland works with in West Dunbartonshire, especially in relation to alcohol and drugs are Fairbridge, which is an organisation that works with young people not in education or employment and they target young people at risk from alcohol or drugs. They also work with Job Centre Plus who would refer clients to them,

Alternatives, a West Dunbartonshire-based drugs agency, and the Dumbarton Council Area on Alcohol (DACA).

Alternatives

Alternatives is West Dunbartonshire's main drugs agency, the only one in the voluntary sector, and is part of the West Dunbartonshire Social Inclusion Partnership. It is an all-age service, dedicated to providing a continuum of care for its clients from chaos to employment. Alternatives categorises the clients that are referred to them into 3 levels, with level 1 being the most chaotic users and level 3 being those who are perhaps beginning to engage in employment or training.

Level 1 clients:

- Chaotic
- Homeless
- Not accessing services
- Intravenous users

Level 2 clients:

- Receiving medical intervention – detox or maintenance
- Needing assistance with housing, legal, DSS, childcare
- Needing individual or family counselling
- Needing structure to their day
- Initiating new lifestyle
- In need of family support/respite
- Children/young people needing support

Level 3 clients:

- Those maintaining changes
- Those exploring new lifestyle

- Participating in education/training
- Those moving into employment

Alternatives provides a range of services for these different client groups. As with the key worker role in Careers Scotland, all the service provision is trying to move the client on a further stage towards being able to engage in education, employment or training. As the EIU report pointed out, and as can be seen by the way that Alternatives categorises its clients, people will be at different stages at different times and there is no set pattern for how long a client will need support. Alternatives have different members of staff that deal with particular clients and the service provision for the three client groups is as follows:

Level 1 clients:

- Information
- Advocacy
- Needle Exchange Service
- Local satellite bases – drop-in
- Inter-agency working

There are 2 outreach workers that work with this client group.

Level 2 clients:

- Assessment, Care Plans, Reviews
- Individual counselling
- Family work / Family support groups
- Young people services
- Group work programme
- Complimentary Therapies
- Local satellite bases – appointments
- Inter-agency working

Alternatives workers assigned to these clients are: 3 project workers, 1 young person's worker, 1 respite care coordinator, 2 children and family workers, and 2 group workers.

Level 3 clients:

- Group work programme – skills
- Training for employment
- Education opportunities
- Complimentary therapies
- Inter-agency working

There are 2 Progress2Work workers that deal with these clients.

According to their 2003-2004 annual report Alternatives received a total of 629 referrals during that year, 62% from the Dumbarton side of the authority and 38% from the Clydebank side. A substantial number of the referrals were self-referrals (41%) and other agencies that have referred clients include Job Centre Plus, West Dunbartonshire Social Work, prisons, and Alternatives' own outreach workers. Other agencies that can refer clients to them would include GPs and schools.

During 2003-2004, 91 of those 629 were referred for Progress2Work, which is an employability programme funded by Job Centre Plus, run by Alternatives. The programme has five specific outcomes that have to be met: training and education; the client moving on to New Deal provision; the client sustaining 13 weeks in New Deal provision; the client moving in to full-time employment; and sustaining 13 weeks in full-time employment. Drug treatment providers and other Alternatives staff were responsible for referring 62 of these clients and 29 were referred from Job Centre Plus and other employment-related agencies. Each of these clients was assessed as to their suitability for the programme and in the end only 36 of the 91 actually signed on to the programme. Of the others that had been referred, 8 were deemed to be unsuitable, 19 were not signed on because they required additional support and 28 did not attend.

The programme is for clients of 18 years and over and clients can be at a range of stages, e.g. someone who may just be thinking about doing an evening class and it is part of the programme to move them towards being able to do this. Sometimes individuals will have to be referred to CLAN, which is a literacy and numeracy agency if a client has

difficulties in this area. The main prerequisite for joining the programme is that a client is either 'clean', i.e. not using any form of drug, or on a stable methadone programme. Initially, the programme is a 10-week development course, which is mainly delivered through group work sessions. For those clients who have been referred internally, i.e. from other Alternatives workers, this will build on what they have done during phase 2 of the process. Research has shown that those who have been referred internally have a greater chance of a successful outcome as a result of participating in the Progress2Work programme than those referred by outside agencies, e.g. Job Centre Plus, as those who have been referred internally will have had prior support. There may be some individuals on the programme that want to look at career options and work placements can be arranged if appropriate. The aim of this course is to build up the clients' confidence and self-esteem and to get them to focus on the skills that they have and those they may need to develop in order to prepare them for going out into a workplace or a training establishment.

The process can take a long time before someone is ready to move on to the next stage and there is no time limit for a client to move on to the next stage. The view of one of the Progress2Work workers is that a large part of the job is very much staying with people and encouraging them to keep going. One of the major concerns is that the clients relapse into their former dependency and one of the responsibilities of the Alternatives staff is to provide clients with enough support to minimise the risk of that happening.

The Progress2Work programme appears to be very successful in its outcomes, as, according to the 2003-2004 report, of the 36 that were eventually signed up for the programme, 34 managed to achieve a successful outcome: 19 were entering education and training, 4 were moving onto New Deal provision, 1 was completing a 13-week New Deal programme, 6 were entering into employment, and 4 had been maintaining employment for a minimum of 13 weeks.

Alternatives does, of course, work with clients at the other end of the spectrum also. The clients that are participating in the Progress2Work programme are, to a fair extent,

stabilised, whereas those who are at levels 1 and 2 are less stabilised and need a different kind of support. All the time the Alternatives staff are trying to move clients on so that sometime in the future they may be 'job-ready'. There are group work sessions organised for level 1 and 2 clients also. The sessions for level 1 clients concentrate on getting the client 'group-ready', that is getting the client to a stage where he or she is able to attend group sessions consistently and engage within a group in an appropriate manner. For level 2 clients, the group work programme runs for two days over 12 weeks and is more intense than level 1. It explores lifestyle change for the recovering drug users and how to go about initiating this. This then prepares them for progressing on to level 3 when they are deemed to be ready to begin seeking some form of training or employment.

Another scheme that Alternatives runs for younger clients is the Young Person's Project, which is for young people between 12 and 18 who have drugs issues. There are a number of services that are offered, one of which has been a 10-week group work programme in a secondary school. This was done in conjunction with the police community liaison officer and resulted in positive outcomes. 10 pupils with drugs issues took part and, as a result of this group work intervention, there was a marked decrease in drug use, less chaotic behaviour was observed, and all the young people were able to sit their Standard Grades. After this, 6 of the young people stayed on at school to further their education, while another 2 became employed full-time. These young people were at risk of being excluded due to their drugs problems but through the group work programme were able to obtain grades at school and move on to a next stage.

DACA

The other main agency in relation to alcohol and drug addiction is the Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol (DACA), which is an agency that offers counselling and advice to alcoholics at various stages in their recovery. It is an all-age service and, as with Alternatives, most of their clients are self-referral cases. Other agencies that they work with include statutory bodies, i.e. social work and the two health boards, voluntary organisations such as Alternatives and Stepping Stones, and also the authority reporter to the children's panel.

The counselling is on a one-to-one basis, as many of the clients that the DACA workers deal with have a number of issues that they need to discuss and especially at the beginning of recovery treatment, they will need intensive personal support in order to get them to a stage where they are able to move forward and look at possibilities of employment or training. As with those affected by drugs, those who have alcohol issues tend to have other issues that they need support with, e.g. homelessness, family problems etc. DACA also offers its clients advice on a number of such issues that they may be affected by and that may pose a barrier to their recovery.

The organisation also offers a diversionary programme for young people in order to try to curb the prevalence of binge drinking, as pointed out in the Director of Public Health's report, which appears to be growing in the area. An increasing number of young people are consuming more alcohol than before and the aim of this project is to try and encourage the young people to control their alcohol consumption before it gets to the stage where they become dependent on it.

They do not, however, offer any employability programmes, as there is not enough funding available in the authority for two programmes. As Alternatives runs Progress2Work, it is felt that all resources should be channelled into that and DACA will refer clients to this project once they feel that the clients are at a stage in their recovery where they will be able to cope with going on such a programme.

Fairbridge

While Alternatives and DACA are all-age services, there are other agencies in West Dunbartonshire that deal only with young people. Fairbridge is one of these organisations and they work with 13-25 year olds who are not in education, employment, or training and are at risk, for a variety of reasons, of dropping out and becoming socially excluded. Such reasons include youth unemployment, juvenile crime, drug addiction, and homelessness. It is a national organisation that concentrates its activity in 14 of the most deprived urban areas in the country and has premises in Glasgow, so it is not a West Dunbartonshire-specific project but it is one of the organisations that Careers Scotland refers young clients to from West Dunbartonshire who have drug or alcohol issues. Fairbridge does not deal exclusively with young people who have drug or alcohol problems but many of their clients at risk of dependency on substances.

There are a number of programmes that the organisation runs in order to try and build up the motivation and skills of the young people that it works with. The client group that Fairbridge works with are generally disengaged and it is the job of the support workers to try and help them to reengage, so that they are able to move on and have the ability to begin to cope with education, employment, or training. Skill development is key to the rehabilitation process and Fairbridge has a list of skills for life that it aims to help its young people develop. The skills are broken down into four categories: recreation and community skills; independent living skills; personal and social skills; work-based skills.

Recreation and community skills include:

- Developing skills in sports
- Developing skills in creative arts
- Developing skills in performing arts
- Developing skills in other recreational areas
- Supporting individuals/groups within the community
- Understanding/supporting the local environment

- Understanding the law and people's rights

Independent living skills include:

- Finding and maintaining a home
- General health and hygiene
- Hygiene at home
- Money management
- Nutrition and food preparation
- Personal safety
- Safety at home
- Sexual health

Personal and social skills include:

- Communicating
- Establishing interpersonal relationships
- Managing feelings
- Negotiating
- Planning
- Problem solving
- Reviewing
- Understanding and identifying with others
- Understanding social values

Work-based skills include:

- Finding work
- Health and safety at work
- Working with an employer
- Working with colleagues
- Working with customers
- Working with money

The access course is the first course that clients participate in when they are beginning the process of personal development. This course is designed so that the instructors are able to assess what the young people's development needs are before they move on to the more specific courses. It also gives the young people the opportunity to find out how the organisation works.

The young people take part in a number of activities, such as caving and abseiling, that are designed to encourage them to learn more about themselves individually and also in a group setting how their behaviour impacts on others around them. Once the young people have taken part in this it is hoped that they will have the confidence and the motivation to move on to one of the more specific programmes that Fairbridge runs.

There is a football programme that is designed to build literacy skills, as the young people not only play football but they also produce newsletters, prepare fitness programmes, and arrange away games. This helps to improve literacy and also teamworking skills and networking skills, which are essential in the employment market. The development of these skills can also help the young people to gain qualifications accredited by the Open College Network.

The Learn to Earn course gives the young people an opportunity to run their own business. It is a 12-week course and the young people get the opportunity to sell a product. The scheme is supported by local business and volunteers run training sessions on aspects of running a business, such as finance, IT skills, and promotion of a product. This scheme is used to encourage young people to use their enterprising skills.

Panoramix is a scheme that encourages work skills in a more artistic setting. The young people get the opportunity to produce backdrops and scenery for clubs and parties in, for example, a local community centre. It is a way to get them to express themselves creatively but also to introduce them to working as part of a team and getting a project completed within a deadline. Not all those who take part are artists particularly, as some are more interested in computer design and others in the administration side in the office.

There is also a web awareness course that is run in conjunction with AOL UK. This is designed to introduce young people to the Internet and to help improve their IT skills.

All these courses are used to develop the personal, interpersonal, and work skills of the young people. At each stage the young people develop an action plan with targets that they have to try and meet. They draw this up with the aid of instructors and development coordinators but, as the young people develop, they are increasingly encouraged to be responsible for their own action plans and be in charge of their own development.

Skillseekers

The Skillseekers programme in West Dunbartonshire is run by the Dunbartonshire Local Enterprise Company in association with West Dunbartonshire Council. It is a training programme for young people aged 16-24, where they get the opportunity to work towards a recognised workplace qualification, such as a Modern Apprenticeship. The programme is divided into 3 parts: Life Skills, Get Ready For Work and Mainstream Modern Apprenticeships.

The Life Skills part of the programme is for young people who have a chaotic lifestyle and this may include misuse of drugs or alcohol. This part of the programme is designed as a preparation for life in general and also to identify barriers to moving on to further training or employment and try to prepare the young people to move on. The programme looks at a wide variety of issues, including housing, health, money, crime, youth justice etc, and is seeking to bring about attitudinal change in the young people.

They also look at employment and work-taster placements, of perhaps 1 or 2 days per week, can be organised in order to get the young people familiar with a working environment, so that it would be possible for them to move on to employment successfully. There is a 4-week 'roll-on, roll-off' scheme whereby after 4 weeks of being on the programme those who may be ready can move on, however, young people can be with Life Skills for up to a year and it is hoped that the work-taster placements will lead to full-time employment at the end of the course.

In the third week there is a residential 2 days where the young people go away as a group and they are not allowed to take any alcohol or drugs. It is trying to introduce them to the idea of having fun without substances and can be the first step to these young people who are using substances reducing their dependence on them.

Life Skills works with a number of partner organizations to deliver its services. Some of these partners include Alternatives, DACA, Strathclyde Police, Y Sort-it, CLAN, Careers Scotland, Employer Services, and Action Team for Jobs.

Y Sort-It

Y Sort-It is a youth information and support network that is run by young people for young people. It provides information and advice on a whole range of issues facing young people aged 12-25 in West Dunbartonshire who are at risk of being socially excluded. The young people are offered support and advice on issues, such as housing, homelessness, youth rights, employment, training, education, relationships and personal issues, and health etc.

The young people that access the service may include those who have addiction issues. There is an employability outreach service that works with a limited number of people at one time and provides them with intensive support to help them overcome their barriers through both one-to-one counselling and group work.

Clydebank College

Clydebank College runs a Learning Works course, which is a 'roll-on, roll-off' initiative that offers part-time study to a number of people with different issues, not specifically recovering alcohol and drug users, although there are some of these clients on the programme.

The Learning Works programme offers study in:

- Numeracy
- Communications
- Computing/IT
- Confidence Building course (Steps to Excellence for Personal Success)

The range of clients that access this initiative include

- Unemployed
- Women returners
- Individuals on Incapacity/Severe Disablement/Disability Living Allowance
- Drug/alcohol recoverers
- Asylum seekers
- Employed participants with low-level core skills
- Retired individuals

This course is designed to build up the confidence and employability of its users so that they are able to move on perhaps to further education or employment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Through this investigative study of career/employment support for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics in West Dunbartonshire, it can be seen that there is a significant provision available for this group, particularly young people. There is a fairly severe problem, as has been highlighted both through health board reports and also through speaking to individuals involved in rehabilitation programmes, such as Alternatives, and it is important that there is an attempt made to reverse the trend of people turning to substances and becoming addicted to them.

Among young people in particular there is a lot of preventative work that is done through agencies such as DACA and Fairbridge before the young people get to the stage where they are addicted to substances, as then there is a lot more work that is required before someone would be ready to access education, employment, or training. The Careers Scotland key workers and youth information agencies, such as Y Sort-It are also valuable sources of support for young people with addiction problems. There is a large emphasis on work with young people to try and prevent those involved with drugs and alcohol becoming so dependent that it takes over their lives and becomes an even larger barrier to overcome.

It can also be seen from the research that those with drug or alcohol issues have other barriers that also need to be addressed and this is the reason for the multi-agency approach that exists within the authority. It is important that agencies keep in touch with one another, so that the social problems that affect that area of West Dunbartonshire can be dealt with effectively.

The importance of employability provision is recognised as an effective means of helping those who are recovering from an addiction stay off whatever substance they were using. This can be seen in both the young people's provision, e.g. Life Skills and also the adult provision, e.g. Progress2Work.

There could, however, perhaps be more work done with adults in this area. The main adult provision appears to be Progress2Work run by Alternatives. Out of 629 people

referred in 2003-2004, only 91 were referred to the Progress2Work programme and only 34 completed it. There would be a number of individuals who the programme would not be suitable for, or who did not need to go on it but it seems that there could be more of an input with adults in the authority in order to try and build up their employability skills. The success of the project, however, is entirely dependent on the funding that it receives and, as has been seen from the research, there is only enough funding available in the authority for the one employability programme. Also, participating in the project is voluntary and individuals have to be willing to undertake the programme before they can begin the moving on process.

West Dunbartonshire is managing, to an extent, to tackle the problem of drug and alcohol addiction that exists in the area and provides a large support network for those who are addicted to these substances. By providing employability support as part of the recovery treatment, this will hopefully begin to make an improvement to the lives of these people and they will be able to move on into education, training, or employment, free from their dependency.

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