

Senior Counsellors Report: Swansea

The twelve-month period covered by this report has shown a marked increase of work in the Agency. This is reflected initially by a 21% (146) increase of referrals to WGCADA from 688 in the year 2002 – 2003 compared to 834 in this year 2003 – 2004. Also the number of referrals attending during the same period for Initial Assessment has risen by 27% from 434 to 550. We actually have an Initial Assessment attendance rate of approximately 66% of persons who have been referred to us.

As a result of this increase there has been an obvious knock on effect in that those people assessed are referred into the various stages of treatment as well as onto projects like the DOMINO. Because of this the waiting lists for both the Pre-Treatment and the Primary Groups have seen a large increase. The waiting list problem for the Primary Phase of treatment is also compounded by the success of the Pre-Treatment Groups.

At this point I would like to thank all the staff in the Agency for their commitment and hard work over the last twelve months that has allowed us to somehow cope with this increased workload, which is reflected by the increase in the number of appointments offered to our clients. I include all the staff in these thanks, not just the counsellors, The Administration for all the work they do both seen and unseen, the Management Staff for their patience and efforts in attempting to secure funding for more staff to both offer better services and to alleviate the pressure on the current staff, and last but definitely not least to the volunteers who give their time freely to assist the Agency with the services offered.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new staff, namely our new Tenancy Support Worker, Family Worker and Home De-Tox Worker. I don't think they realised what they were letting themselves in for when they joined us, but they seem to be enjoying it and are definitely giving full commitment to both the Agency and the clients.

What's New

- Our Staffing structure has been changed in that we now have a Training and Development Manager, a P.A. to the Chief Executive that hopefully gives him more time to devote his energies into both running the Agency as well as to meet more possible Funders. Also the Senior Counsellors and Administration Manager have been given more responsibilities for the running of their various areas.
- The rooms in Swansea have been re-organised to free up more rooms for counselling clients. The Management team are using the old Group room opposite the Admin. Office and the rest of the staff are now on the top floor. The kitchen in the conservatory has been converted to a counselling room, which allows us to see disabled people.
- The old garage has been converted and is self-contained. This is now the Group Therapy room and is also used by the DOMINO Art & Craft Class as well as by the staff for meetings and training sessions.
- As part of the re-structuring all staff members now receive supervision by a senior on a regular basis, allowing for any suggestions to improve services offered as well as giving the staff member an opportunity to sort out any minor difficulties that they may have.

- Training, both In-house and from outside bodies, has been introduced and this is already proving beneficial to the way our service is given. Volunteer training has also been introduced and all volunteers are now trained before working in the Agency.
- Quarterly reports have been introduced, showing not just the Funders, but also any interested party, the exact nature of the work and workload of the Agency throughout the year, and allows the staff to see the figures as well.
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Treatment Opportunities

1. Pre-Treatment Groups

We only have one Pre-Treatment worker, but thanks to the volunteer training programme, he has volunteer helpers to assist with the groups. Pre-Treatment is often over-subscribed due to the demands of the specialist schemes and the counsellors trying to prioritise who accesses the groups, but the worker somehow manages to maintain an even balance as to who comes into the groups. These groups are not only good grounding for the clients but also for the volunteers who may be moving on into others areas of WGCADA.

- **Phase One:** This is an eleven-week rolling programme of education. There is currently a three-month waiting list to gain access to this group. Some clients are referred to us specifically for this group alone. Many choose to stay on of their own volition to continue the treatment process and of 38 people who completed this group and left, some later chose to come back.
- **Phase Two:** This is an 8-week rolling programme and clients entering this group have to be clean and sober or detoxing from the prescribed drugs used in the detoxing of alcohol/drugs. They are started on their Step 1 work and receive 1-1 counselling on a weekly basis, in preparation for Primary Treatment.

2. Primary Treatment (Group Work) – Minnesota Model

We run two Primary Treatment Groups, and have only two Primary Counsellors. They are only supposed to have a maximum of 8 people in the group, but due to the success of the Pre-Treatment Groups, we have nine or ten in each group, in order to try and keep the waiting list down. This phase of treatment is based on the Minnesota Model of Treatment and takes clients to Step 5 of the Fellowship 12-Step Programme. Clients in this group are expected to attend the self-help Fellowships of Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous.

We are seeing more people accessing these groups and completing treatment quicker because they have already progressed through a major part of their Step One work in the Pre-Treatment Two. As a result, instead of taking twelve months to complete Primary it now only takes six – eight months of group work and one-to-one counselling. Twelve people have actually completed treatment and passed onto the Aftercare stage.

With the success of Pre-Treatment adding to the waiting list for this stage of treatment we could easily start a third group if we only had the staff to do so.

3. Aftercare

During the course of this year we lost our Aftercare counsellor, who had been seconded to us by the Local Authority, and her work has now been taken on by the other staff.

This Group offers ongoing 1-1 counselling to those who have reached Step 5 of the Treatment Programme. They receive this counselling once every 4-6 weeks, and attend the Aftercare Group one evening every month.

4. Family Counsellor

We have a full time Family Counsellor employed at the Swansea Agency. We believe that addiction is a Family Illness and that it is not only the alcoholic or addict who suffers the illness but also Family, Friends and colleagues. As a result we run a Family Programme that also follows the 12-Step principle, on a 1-1 counselling basis. In the six months that the Family Counsellor has been with us she has not only done talks to the various treatment groups but has steadily built up an active client base of approximately 40 persons, that include not only Family Members but also young children under the age of 16 years who have the illness of addiction.

Other Services

Arrest Referral

Any person who has been arrested where substance/alcohol use is suspected is given the opportunity to immediately access our service if they wish. Court reports can be prepared if needed, together with appropriate prescribing interventions, arranging De-tox and counselling where these needs are identified.

The Arrest Referral worker has approximately 40 clients who are chaotic and attend on an irregular basis, expecting *their* counsellor to be readily available to see them. On top of her normal work at The Centre and in the Police Station, she also assists of an evening once a week with assessments and Aftercare clients.

Community Support Worker

Assists clients who are unable to attend the Centre to establish a structure in their life, together with arranging De-tox, both Hospital and In-patient Rehab, assisting with DSS forms and any other day-to-problems. This worker often works more hours than he should in order to meet the needs of the clients and he regularly assists with the DOMINO Project, not only attending there, but also providing transport to and from client's homes so that they may access the Project.

Tenancy Support Worker

Works hand in hand with the Community Support Worker in assisting with housing issues. She also assists with the DOMINO Project in the same way as the Community Support Worker does. She is also an active member of our League Of Friends in her own time.

If it were not for the work of the Tenancy Support and Community Support Workers a lot of our clients would be unable to access the help on offer.

Home DeTox Worker

This is a welcomed new post to us and the idea is that this worker, in partnership with the Community Drug and Alcohol Team and Swansea Drugs Project, will offer help to people in their own homes in accessing a DeTox from alcohol and/or drugs that they would previously have been denied. She will offer not only assistance in obtaining a DeTox but also support whilst undergoing it. This will then, hopefully, allow those people to access the help available to them in our Agency or in that of one of the two partners.

DOMINO Project Worker

WGCADA runs a DOMINO (Development Of Motivation In New Outlooks) Project that aims to assist clients both gain new Life-skills and see that they are worthwhile members of the community as well as showing how much can be achieved without alcohol or drugs. The Project runs an allotment in the Mumbles, IT (Computer) classes, Cookery classes, Anger Management, Music Groups and a variety of other activities.

We have recently obtained further funding to continue this project and to hopefully expand it, and the added bonus is that the Project Worker will now be full-time in Swansea, because funding has also been obtained for a full-time worker in our Neath Branch, therefore our worker will not have to go there to assist anymore.

Clients are actively encouraged to attend DOMINO irrespective of their stage of treatment because we feel that a lot can be gained and learnt by them in their recovery process.

Hopes for 2004/2005

- **To continue and improve upon the services already offered.**
- **To obtain funding for more abstinence counsellors**
- **If above successful then to start another Primary Treatment Group.**