

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF WEST GLAMORGAN COUNCIL ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE LTD CENTRE

The alcohol and drug advice centre was initially founded and established in 1979 as the "Alcohol Advice Centre", staffed by the director Alan Douglas and part time secretary Margaret Morris. It was financed by the Welsh Office and Health Authority funds. However a great deal of work took place four years prior to this date in order to stimulate the interest and involvement of various groups. Initial discussions and meetings took place in 1975.

In February this year a meeting was convened with the National Council on Alcoholism, involving Mr Derrick Rutherford, Director of NCA and at this meeting he gave some basic information and emphasised the necessity of involving both Social Services and Health Authority in the establishment of a service. This was followed by a meeting in June 1975 with the South Wales Council on Alcoholism in conjunction with, as it was then called, the West Glamorgan Council on Alcoholism. This was the first public meeting, it was called to establish the Council formally, and a constitution of about seventy people attended. This was a very encouraging turnout and the enthusiasm and interest generated here reflected later in the years that followed by the interest shown by various professionals who joined the Committee of WGCADA.

The Health Authority showed interest and assigned Dr Littlepage to serve in an advisory capacity on the committee. By the end of 1975 the newly established committee consisted of representatives from most statutory services, and Dr Riordan was elected as president of the Committee

For the next few years there was much difficulty and a good deal of pressure to raise funds for the Director Mr Alan Douglas. In September 1978 a seminar was held to discuss development in which Mr Derrick Rutherford (National Council on Alcoholism) and Dr Littlepage, (Local Health Authority) took important roles. This was followed by a meeting in February 1979 in which an application was made to the area medical officer Dr Phillips-Miles, for funding and premises for a possible project were discussed. Mr Derrick Rutherford formally expressed his disappointment that no funds were forthcoming from Social Services.

In April 1979 another meeting was convened, it was a reflection of the increasing involvement of both the National Council on Alcoholism and the Health Authority that both had representatives at this meeting and conversely that no representatives from either Social Services or the County Council were present. Discussion at this meeting concerned a possible grant from the Health Authority for the year 1978/79. The Welsh Office had made it clear that it would make no long-term commitment, but would offer up to £7,500 in matching grants, and would require the Health Authority to continue the grant the following year.

It was not necessary to explain the intricacies of funding applications further. However, it should be said that in 1979 / 80 applications were again made to the West Glamorgan County Council and Social Services for funding and none was forthcoming. So pressure was on to achieve enough money to claim the Welsh office matching grants. Further discussion of this meeting concerned the type of service which would be most useful. It was confirmed that as hostels were available in other areas in South Wales that it would be more constructive to have a counselling service in West Glamorgan. In May 1980 an Annual General Meeting was held in which the president Dr Riordan stressed the necessity to forge two way links with both the Health Service and the Social Services so that those with drinking problems should be encouraged to seek early treatment. It was stated at this meeting that the Director of the National Council on Alcoholism Mr D Rutherford, had approached the Welsh Office and arranged matching grants. Dr Littlepage and the area medical officer having negotiated a grant from the Health

Authority. It was also stated that suitable premises had been found. A significant statement concerning the role of the AAC as a catalyst in inspiring a multi – disciplinary approach to the problem was made by Dr Alan Hawkins

The Welsh Office offered a diminishing grant over a set period 1979: 50%; 1980: 40%; 1981: 40%; 1982: 30% 1983 Nil. The Health Authority increased its funding annually, but unfortunately the AAC (Alcohol Advice Centre) never received a full grant (i.e. from the Local Authority, so never received full Welsh Office matching grant) The Centre was therefore always under-funded in the early years. It was felt that Social Service should have taken some responsibility.

All negotiating took place in JCC meetings where the Health Authority stated that this area should not be their sole responsibility; but despite fairly continuous petitioning of Social Services they refused to contribute to joint funding with the Health Authority. The practical implications of these political manoeuvring meant that the Service was placed in an insecure position in the early years. The funding allowed only for one full-time worker (the Director) and one part-time secretary. I had been doing voluntary work for about one year with the Centre, with such a small staff team, it became apparent by 1983 the AAC could not afford to continue purely on Health Authority funding, as the number of clients had increased and the administrative load was too great for a part-time worker. In May 1984 Alan applied for finance under the MSC community programme.

This was approved for one year: funding for one full time supervisor / counsellor; two part time counsellors and one part time secretary for the period October 1984 – 85. I was employed as supervisor / counsellor and all the personnel were trained and working effectively by January 1985. As might have been expected the numbers of clients increased dramatically during this time. The Director (Alan Douglas) was therefore concerned that when funding ended in October 1985 there would be far too great a caseload for the original small “team”. With the support of the Health Authority he therefore applied to the Welsh Office for further funding.

This application was approved, resulting in a grant in perpetuity for £20,000 to finance the present staff team. At that time the director had attempted to select and train volunteers, but out of fifty applicants he had found only two suitable following the training course. Both of these people had left the area soon after completing the course. Alan stated that although there was a fair amount of enthusiasm, the trainee volunteers were inconsistent and unreliable on the whole.

Alan felt that the job required certain personal qualities and expertise and it was difficult to find people with both. There was additional external constraints on volunteers which tended to make their commitment erratic, e.g. family; employment etc. So for these reasons the (AAC) Alcohol Advice Centre did not use volunteers for individual counselling, though relatives and clients themselves helped out occasionally by manning the phone during the day for short periods; making coffees etc. Volunteers also worked occasionally with the Women’s Group. Despite problems encountered selecting and training volunteers, the centre had two regular volunteer workers who acted as group facilitators. Mary Edwards (2 days per week) and Sheila Roberts (1 day per week)

By 1986 a timetable of staff activities had been developed (see below) and this indicates that much of staff time was taken up with group work, group work activities and individual counselling sessions. Along with Alan Douglas and Joan Anderson, this was the team

Norman Preddy:	Full-time senior counsellor / supervisor
Cliff Guard:	Part time counsellor
Rosemary Owen:	Part time counsellor

(Mary and Sheila are graduates of the programme and work on a voluntary basis, helping as co-therapists with group-work)

Staff Timetable

19.09.86	AM	PM
Monday	No Group	
	Counselling: Norman (2) Rose (2)	Norman (2) Rose (2)
Tuesday	Women's Group (Rose / Mary)	
	Counselling: Norman (2)	Norman (2) Rose (2)
Wednesday	Group x 2 (Norman / Mary/ Rose/ Cliff)	Group Activities (Norman)
	Counselling: Norman (2)	Cliff (2) Rose (2)
Thursday	Group (Cliff / Sheila)	Group activities (Norman)
	Counselling: Norman (2)	Cliff (2)
Friday	No Group	
	Counselling (new clients only): Norman (2) Cliff (2)	Norman (2) Cliff (2)

NOTE – Counselling sessions: limited to four clients a day (i.e. 2 per half day) for each counsellor.

Therefore 30 counselling sessions per week (22 regular clients and a space for 8 new clients)

The above is in comparison to the current day (2004), which consists of 70 staff throughout the agency.

However this gives an indication of the formally structured programme as it was the. Support and help was offered to clients on an informal basis to supplement formal appointments. The main office often functioned as an informal "drop-in" centre for aftercare support and extra help and support for those still in treatment. The secretary then, Joan Anderson, took a large part of the responsibility for that aspect of the work. Many clients felt that the friendly informal support consistently available in the main office was an integral part of their recovery programme. Staff not working with clients would spend any free time in the office and an atmosphere of friendly interest and genuine concern encouraged clients who did drop in to stay and discuss problems and support each other.

It should be emphasised here that the role of the secretary in maintaining an atmosphere conducive to this kind of constructive interaction was crucial. She needed to listen, understand and give reassurance as appropriate. It was essential both for telephone work and the office management that she be a mature, level-headed person who could deal with a variety of situations, sometime stressful, as they arose. Twenty-five years on I'm glad to say, the past and certainly the present office management throughout WGCADA fulfils these criteria admirably.

Treatment Philosophy and Method

The treatment is based on the Minnesota Model of therapy with additional emphasis on Glassers concept of "reality therapy". Both philosophy and method are inextricably linked with the based premise of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Centre dealt with both alcohol and drugs problems and in the early days worked only with abstinence orientated approach based on AA and the Minnesota Model. However as you will see throughout the WGCADA web site – the service has been expanding in the past few years to include a whole range of differing models. The traditional abstinence based model of addiction remains the underlying philosophy of WGCADA and abstinence is still clearly the long-term goal. But the Centre now also deals with people who are not actually addicted but need help to control their alcohol / drug use and education to make them aware of the dangers of addiction itself. The aim of abstinence can also be deferred to allow for harm reduction work and structured long-term withdrawal programmes if necessary.

Staff training and background and their attitudes and opinions regarding their work – Early 1980's

Alan Douglas – Director and founder

Mr Douglas left school to join the Army in 1944. on leaving the Army in 1948 he worked for Customs and Excise from 1948 – 1979. During this time he worked for seven years as "Dangerous Drugs Trainer" for South Wales and the borders and took an interest in counselling techniques at the time.

Mr Douglas took an interest in Alcoholism in 1967, when he became a founder member of Alcoholics Anonymous in Swansea having stopped drinking himself. Being, as he says in the early stages of his own recovery. At this time Alan arranged a series of training sessions concerning alcohol use and counselling skills. By 1973 Alan was a Trustee of Alcoholics Anonymous and a member of the AA General Service Board He retained the post until 1979. As an indication of Alan's interest, a list of various activities is included.

1967 Member of the first AA group in Swansea
1969 Member of the first intergroup AA in South Wales
1968 Founder member of the Cyrenians (Swansea)
1969 Founder member of Swansea CVS
1969 – 70 Involvement in development of St Leonards House (Hostel for ex-prisoners) and a pre-release committee.

Founder member of the National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counsellors NAADAC

1980 Associate member of institute of Health Education (full member in 1985)
1983 Founder member of the Federation of Welsh Councils of Alcoholism

Role

The Director's role in the development of the Alcohol and Drug Advice Centre reflects the experience and skills gained during his varied career. However Alan found the

management function taking up more time as the centre expanded and its development leaving little face to face work with clients (something we all miss). Alan had a clear conception of the aims and practice of the Centre.

General Aim

To enable people to live happy, free and rewarding lives without the use of mood-altering drugs.

Norman Preddy – Senior Counsellor 1982

Mr Preddy worked as a miner for the first 10 years of his working life followed by a period of work for British Rail. He himself had problems with alcohol and drugs in 1979 he entered treatment at Broadway Lodge, a residential rehabilitation centre based on the Minnesota Method.

Mr Preddy, after two years of recovery, attending AA regularly and voluntary work with the probation service was asked by Alan to join the centre to do voluntary work.

Role – 1984

Norman's role was full time senior counsellor at the centre, and as a co-therapist in two groups per week, helping with group activities and assignments that follow group session. Also saw clients for individual counselling, initial assessment interviews, home visits, supported family members.

1986 – Rosemary Owen, Part Time Counsellor

Rosemary worked at various jobs before becoming employed at the centre, where she initially worked as a part time secretary / administrator and after training and experience became employed as a counsellor / group therapist. Rosemary worked three days per week at the centre; she was a co-therapist with the Women's Group also the mixed groups and saw clients on a one to one.

Joan Anderson, Secretary

As secretary of the centre, Joan's work was involved in all aspects of the centre often dealing with difficult phone calls and supporting clients in an informal capacity in the centre.

Mrs Anderson had no links with AA when she first arrived at the centre. She said that she was comfortable with the philosophy, but it took time to understand it and adapt. Mrs Anderson spoke of the support and understanding for the team members for each other. She felt that staff members offered one another much help and that this led to a good working team.

Cliff Guard – Psychologist and Part Time Counsellor

Mr Guard spent much of his early life in the army, moving to America after the war, where he studied denial psychology. He took an early retirement and moved back to Swansea where he took up employment with the Centre.

Mr Guard focused mainly on one to one counselling. He also wrote court reports and individual assessment interviews. Mr Guard worked as a psychologist in an American prison, specifically with Addicts and Alcoholics. During that time he became familiar with the Minnesota Model of treatment and the philosophy Cliff stated at the time that the "AA" had evolved the philosophy of the 12 recovery steps and 12 traditions, but the Centre (AAC) provided more than an extension of Alcoholics Anonymous.

He cited as examples that the Centre provided:

1. Counselling (following that set forth in the Minnesota Model and requiring clear cut commitments from clients).
2. Reality therapy (based on Glaser's therapeutic technique)
3. Follow up support and after-care. (These are aspects forming the base of the Minnesota Model)

All the staff had experience of Alcoholics Anonymous philosophy and method, and all of us received intensive training in the Minnesota method. The level of commitment to this particular method was evident then and still to this present day people are seeking and completing treatment with this method.

The AA 12 step recovery is without a doubt the most extensive self-help programme applied worldwide. It has managed to survive over four decades in America and spread to over 50 other countries. The alcoholic is regarded as powerless over the illness or disease of alcoholism, but if the user abstains from drinking then he / she can arrest the illness. There is no cure, if he / she drinks again then the compulsion will return even greater than before.

There has been many changes since the AAC (Alcohol Advice Centre 1979) not forgetting the people and the work Alan was involved with prior to 1979. Some have been mentioned, and some have not but we do remember them. There were probation officers, doctors, police, priests, counsellors teachers, health workers, social services, psychiatrists, users of the centre – all these people became members of the AAC Committee.

Alan Douglas retired in 1987.

Rosemary Owen became Director and worked for 5 years, taking the agency on and worked hard building links and contacts with statutory departments, non-statutory groups, commerce and industry and at the same time maintain and develop a therapeutic service. Sadly Rosemary retired with ill health. By this time Sheila Roberts, Ann Price, and Alun Barfoot had joined the team.

There you have it, a brief history of AAC from 1979 - 2004. The rest will be another story. Keep your eyes peeled for an update.

Norman Preddy
Chief Executive