

Holding Families guide for professionals

Working together towards positive change

Our support may begin with drug and alcohol misuse but offers a progressive holistic approach addressing many areas of families' needs.

The Holding Families programme provides whole family support for children and family members affected by parental substance misuse. Interventions are centred around the voice of the child. We work with parents and carers at any stage of their recovery from drugs and alcohol use.

What we do

Our child focussed programme supports children, parents and families with problems associated with parental substance misuse. Children and adult needs are dealt with and responded to at the same time.

We offer a range of individual support sessions, group work and family meetings. We are commissioned across Bury, Rochdale, Bolton, Salford and Trafford. The service has continuously evolved since 2006 via feedback from clients and independent evaluation.

The model

Holding Families work with families at the earliest opportunity with the aim of breaking the cycle of inter-generational substance misuse.

We offer families:

- Weekly one-to-one sessions for your children with their own worker.
- Fortnightly group work sessions for parents.
- Fortnightly one-to-one sessions for parents.
- Family meetings that enable children and young people, with the support of their worker, to tell parents/carers how they feel.
- Service user group.

How we are unique

- Our work is focussed on the voice of the child/children.
- We support children of any age, including pre-birth.
- We work with parents at any stage of recovery from substance use.
- We work individually with each family member as well as the whole family.
- We provide on-going support and follow ups for families.
- We offer support for concerned others.
- We work in partnership with existing services such as treatment services and children's services.
- We have a bespoke families database so we can evidence quantitative and qualitative evidence and outcomes.
- We develop, review and evaluate the service with our service users as well as academic researchers.

Training & delivery

- Contract us to deliver Holding Families in your area.
- Bespoke training packages available, for example children's and/or parent's group work or one-to-one work.
- We have created a bespoke families database (FAD) which is included in the support package and evidences outcomes for children and families in line with the Troubled Families Agenda.

Our aims

Holding Families aims to:

- Improve family health and wellbeing by reducing risk and vulnerabilities for children and their families.
- Reduce significant harm to children affected by parental substance use.
- Keep the child's voice at the centre of our service planning and delivery.
- Improve family communication and relationships.
- Achieve abstinence or reduction in parental substance misuse.
- Achieve negotiated family goals.
- Improve parenting capacity.

82%
reduction in
domestic abuse

60%
improvement in
school attendance

82%
reduction in
homelessness

65%
reduction in
offending

72%
improvement in
family relationships

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“I was a heroin addict for nearly 17 years. My daughter was in foster care, removed at 10 months old due to domestic violence. I have been clean for 3 years from street drugs and 1 year from methadone. My son is in college and I got my daughter back from care 2 years ago. If it wasn't for Holding Families my life and my children's lives would've gone badly.”

“I think it's really good and you learn more things about children and how the family should be. How the children feel scared, upset and not right when parents are using. It was a good thing that the children had their own worker to tell their problems to.”

“They helped me by being there when I needed someone to talk to.”