

RECOVER

Information for professionals working with families affected by substance misuse



Introduction

The main aims for this pack are to provide services working with families with a comprehensive guide to encourage a holistic approach to support those who use drugs and their family. This approach can help to enhance the treatment given and to enable providers to **Think Family** more effectively.

Content

Cards within this pack cover the following categories:

- Substance users under 18 years
- Parents and carers of substance users under 18
- Substance users 18 years and over
- Parents and carers of adult substance users 18 years and over
- Parents and carers who use substances
- Children of substance misusing parents
- Foster carers and extended families including kinship care
- Family reintegration

There is also information on Family Services, which crosses over all categories.

Background

The 2008 national Drug Strategy, Drugs, Protecting Families and Communities emphasises the need for local partnerships to identify the needs of families and commission a range of family focused interventions based on the Reaching Out: **Think Family** report, published by the Social Exclusion Task Force in 2008.

The Hertfordshire Drugs Strategy 2008 – 2011 focuses specifically on the support needs of parents by addressing the needs of the whole family to prevent harm to children, young people and families. This will be achieved by sharing information and working in partnership across children, young people and adult services to address the intergenerational transmission of drug use and offending within families.

What does Think Family mean?

Think Family means reforming systems and services provided for vulnerable children, young people and adults to secure better outcomes for children, by co-ordinating the support they receive from children's, adults' and family services so that practitioners can:

- Identify families at risk of poor outcomes to provide support at the earliest opportunity
- Meet the full range of needs within each family they are supporting or working with
- Develop services which can respond effectively to the most challenging families
- Strengthen the ability of family members to provide care and support to each other.

Extract from DCSF Think Family Toolkit: Improving Support for Families at Risk – Strategic Overview

All types of services— statutory, voluntary and independent – may all come into contact with families at risk of poor outcomes. The implications of Think Family are far reaching and extend to both universal and targeted services working with adults, young people, children and families and working across all sectors.

Why is Think Family important?

A Think Family approach would ensure that contact with any service offers an open door into a broader system of joined-up support. Individual services cannot solve every problem that a family presents with, but practitioners would consider the causes and wider impacts of presenting problems and use engagement with their service as an opportunity to identify need and direct support to the individual and their wider family.

Providing tailored, flexible and holistic services that work with the whole family can turn lives around.

FAMILY SERVICES



Family Information Service (FIS)

www.hertsdirect.org/fis

T: 0300 123 4052

FIS aims to offer you the most up-to-date information available in your area for children and young people aged 0 - 19 yrs (0 - 25 with a disability). Information is available on early years provision (children aged 0 to 5) and childcare and children's services, including:

Courses
Individual support
Childminders
Out of school clubs
Child Care Costs

One off sessions or workshops
Telephone support
Support groups
Play Schemes
Pre-schools/Playgroups

Family Services Directory

www.hertsdirect.org/fsd

This Directory brings together information about services for children, young people, their parents and carers. It also links information sources in Hertfordshire with directories in neighbouring areas.

Targeted Advice Service Hertfordshire

Practitioner Consultations: 01438 737 511

Customer Service Centre: 0300 123 4043

The Targeted Advice Service (TAS) is an interim multi-agency team, working alongside the Customer Service Centre. TAS provides advice and guidance for cases where they do not meet the threshold for social care.

Where practitioners are unsure whether the social care threshold has been met (where safeguarding needs may be unclear), TAS has in place a Consultation Line. However, it is an expectation that practitioners would have first consulted their line manager and/or safeguarding lead before contacting TAS.

If you have clear concerns about the safety of a child, please contact the Customer Service Centre without delay.

Extended Services

www.hertsdirect.org/extendedservices

- Children's Centres provide service for children under 5 years and their families.
- Schools provide access to extended services for older children and their families.

Children Centres and Extended Schools provide access to a range of universal and preventative service which include:

- Access for two, three and four year olds to free early education (including free nursery places)
- Details of family activities, parents and activities for children and young people
- Access to formal childcare
- Funded activities for vulnerable children and young people who are eligible for free school meals through 'extended opportunities'.
- A range of advice and support sessions about going back to work, accessing training and adult learning

THINK FAMILY PROJECTS



Within Hertfordshire there are a number of projects under the *'Think Family'* umbrella. They all aim to secure better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and adults by co-ordinating the support they receive from children's, adult and family services.

The projects support the needs of families by providing help with multiple problems such as:

- child and adolescent behaviour
- parenting skills
- poor attendance or underachievement at school
- domestic violence
- family poverty and debt
- worklessness, education, training and employment,
- addressing physical or mental disabilities
- substance misuse
- homelessness or risk of loss of tenancy
- youth or adult offending

Key workers in each of the teams will work with families to provide practical assistance, and access to services and positive activities.

For more information on *'Think Family'* visit:

www.hertsdirect.org/childrenstrust

The Scaffold Project

T: 01438 757321

Scaffold is a multi-agency project particularly aimed at those families who are either not being supported by or are not engaging with existing services.

There are four Scaffold Teams based in Borehamwood, Broxbourne, Stevenage and Three Rivers. Each comprises staff drawn from HCC Adult Care Services, Children Schools & Families, Hertfordshire Constabulary and the Health Service.

The South Oxhey Family Intervention Project (FIP)

T: 020 8428 5434

The South Oxhey Family Intervention Project works with families who have been identified as the most challenging and vulnerable in terms of multiple problems as listed above. It offers intensive, persistent and assertive support to create the change within dysfunctional families to improve the outcomes for the children living within the household.

Housing Challenge Family Intervention Practitioners (FIPs)

Housing Challenge Project Family Intervention Programme (FIP) Key workers are based within seven Hertfordshire District Councils either with the respective Council's Anti-Social Behaviour team or a local housing provider. They provide support to those who live in social housing or privately rented accommodation, are at risk of eviction due to persistent anti-social behaviour or rent arrears, and have multiple needs which indicate 'families at risk'.

Go to **www.hertsdirect.org** and type **Housing Challenge** for a list of Housing Challenge FIPs.

East Hertfordshire Family Intervention Project (EH FIP)

T: 01992 533634

The East Herts Family Intervention Project (previously know as the Sele Farm Housing Challenge) is a police-led project that focuses on breaking the cycle of long-term intergenerational offending amongst families. It is concentrated on the Sele Farm Estate (Hertford) and the King George Estate (Ware).

SUBSTANCE USERS UNDER 18



Drug and/or alcohol misuse does not occur in isolation. It is often a symptom of/or associated with other problems such as emotional and mental health issues, youth offending, persistent absence and exclusion from school, family problems or living in communities with high incidence of crime.

Research shows that where young people do develop problems with drugs, the involvement and support of parents and families can make a real difference in improving outcomes.

Where to go for additional advice and support

A-DASH

T: 01923 427288

The Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Service (A-DASH) provides confidential assessment, advice, support and treatment to young people who have drug and alcohol problems under the age of 18, who have a Hertfordshire GP or live in or attend school in Hertfordshire.

Although not specifically resourced to work with parents, carers and other family members, A-DASH will undertake family work to make treatment more effective. A-DASH links with the two Parenting Practitioners based within CAMHS who have a remit to provide a family focus to treatment interventions.

Specialist Carers

Specialist carers provide short term placements for children and young people with particularly challenging behaviour and complex needs. Some carers have additional experience, support and training to deal with adolescent substance misuse.

The Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Service in Hertfordshire (A-DASH) will identify the need for a young person to be looked after by a specialist carer and liaise with the appropriate social care team.

Specialist Adolescent Teams

The Specialist Adolescent Teams, part of Children Schools and Families, provide a short term focused support service, usually 3-4 months in length, for young people aged 10 – 17 years and their parents and carers.

They work with the whole family and equip them with the skills to reduce risk factors that may lead to young people being accommodated, becoming involved in the youth justice system or being excluded from an education provision.

Cases will be referred following an assessment completed by the Assessment Team, Locality Children in Need Team, Looked After Children Team, Youth Offending Team, Youth Inclusion and Support Panel or Special Needs/Disability Team or Education Welfare service.

For more information on referral visit www.hertsdirect.org/caf

Adolescent Resource Centre

T: 01707 343630

The Lakes Adolescent Resource Centre in Welwyn Garden City is a countywide service that provides intensive support to young people aged 12-18, whose needs are proving to be beyond the resources of existing services. A multi-agency approach brings health, social care and education together under one management, coordinating care across the agencies for the benefit of the young person and their carers.

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire

www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.org.uk

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire is a service for young people which provides information, advice, guidance, support, and positive activities for 13 – 19 years (up to 25 years for young people with learning and/or disabilities and those leaving care).

There are a number of Youth Connexion Centres and One Stop Shops across Herts. Practitioners are also based in schools and colleges.

PARENTS AND CARERS OF SUBSTANCE USERS UNDER 18



When parents/carers find out their child is using drugs it can be a terrible shock and cause tension and distress for them, their family and friends. As drug problems do not exist in isolation it is important to focus on the needs of the whole family rather than only addressing the drug.

The involvement and support of parents and families can make a real difference in improving outcomes.

Talking with local support services or attending parenting programmes are two approaches to support the whole family as many parents need support to increase confidence and develop behaviour management and communication skills when experiencing difficulties with their child.

Where to go for additional advice and support

CAMHS Parenting Practitioners

T: 01923 427304

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides advice, assessment and treatment on emotional, behavioural and/or mental health problems that require specialist support. CAMHS works with children and young people up to the age of 18 years and their families.

The Parenting Practitioners provide a therapeutic lead intervention and will work with parents and try to join up services for parents and children to ensure that interventions are more effective and enduring.

Parental Drug Awareness Service

T: 01707 393934

The Parental Drug Awareness Service (PDAS) is a free, confidential service offering information, support and advice to parents and carers who may be concerned about their children and drug, alcohol and solvent use or misuse. Most PDAS clients self refer but services can advise parents and carers to contact PDAS or call on their behalf.

Parentline Plus

T: 01707 270696 www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Parentline Plus offers a range of free support services for parents with children 18 and under, including a 24 hour helpline, email support and web based resources for both parents and professionals, and telephone support groups. Telephone support groups might be useful for parents who were not ready to engage with parenting programme or with other group therapy.

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities

T: 01992 555909

Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities is a 13 week programme designed to strengthen parenting skills and prevent or manage behavioural problems. The programme is aimed at parents and carers of children aged between eight and 16 years old where there are concerns about anti-social behaviour.

Parents are normally referred or refer themselves to the parenting programme. Referrals often come from Social Workers, Extended Schools Co-ordinators, CAMHS, Youth Offending workers, Specialist Adolescent Team workers, Behaviour Support workers, Health Practitioners and GPs.

SUBSTANCE USERS OVER 18



Adult substance misuse treatment agencies can offer a range of services and support for the user, their friends and family depending on their needs. These may include:

- Needle Exchange Schemes
- Advice and information
- Liaison, throughcare and aftercare with criminal justice services
- Structured psychosocial intervention such as key working, counselling, couples therapy, family therapy and other interventions
- Group therapy (either support or more structured) and day programme
- Complimentary therapies such as acupuncture
- Advice on housing, benefits, training and education
- Pharmacological interventions for heroin users such as prescription of Methadone or Buprenorphine
- Community or inpatient detoxification for heroin and poly drug users
- Assessment and management of co-morbid mental health problems in collaboration with local mental health services
- Assessment for residential rehabilitation services based on individual needs

All adult substance misuse treatment agencies encourage clients to involve their families and friends as part of their treatment plan and can offer targeted support to families and friends. Some services do provide a range of family interventions. However, more holistic interventions to improve treatment outcomes will require working in partnership with other child and adult services.

Also see: **Parents and Carers of Adult Substance Users**

Where to go for additional advice and support

To find local adult substance misuse treatment agencies in your area visit:
www.hertsdirect.org.uk/caresupport

Recovery and Integration, Training and Education (R.I.T.E)

T:01923 260 733 www.hertsrite.co.uk

email: rite@druglink.ltd.uk

This service has been commissioned by Hertfordshire Joint Commissioning Team to provide training and education on Mental Health and Substance Misuse. The training targets professionals, service users and carers and will be delivered in various venues across Hertfordshire.

R.I.T.E offer bespoke training packages and in-house delivery, which include:

- Introduction to the principles of recovery
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Opiate prescribing
- Think Family
- Carers rights and legislation
- Stress management
- Overdose

Master classes from recognised experts will draw on national examples of best practice to enhance treatment and practice in Hertfordshire. The R.I.T.E website features courses available and options to book, research information, other training in Herts, and access to e-learning modules.

PARENTS AND CARERS OF ADULT SUBSTANCE USERS



Research shows that supporting families can improve outcomes for users seeking treatment, help prevent relapse and aid long term recovery (ADFAM – We Count Too 2009).

Many people worried about the substance misuse of people they care about do not consider themselves to be a carer. They feel that they are simply getting on with what needs to be done and doing what anyone else would do in the same situation.

Those who care for others with substance misuse problem have legal rights as carers which are:

- To be informed that they are entitled to a Carers Assessment if they provide substantial care on a regular basis
- To receive a Carers Assessment if they wish
- To have equal access (as anyone else) to work, leisure and education.

Carers in Hertfordshire have developed a Family Carer Directory which can be accessed at www.carersinherts.org.uk. The Family Carer Directory was developed as a resource for carers but is also useful for other services.

Where to go for additional advice and support Carers in Hertfordshire

T: 01462 456660 www.carersinherts.org.uk

Carers in Hertfordshire provides support to anyone caring for a relative or friend who has a physical or learning disability, dementia, mental health problem, misuses drugs or alcohol is ill or frail. It doesn't matter if that person lives with the carer or if the person being cared for is an adult or child.

Families Anonymous

T: 0845 1200 660 (lo-call) or: 020-7498 4680

**Calls are answered Mon-Fri 1-4pm and 6-10pm, weekends 2-10pm
(Answer phone available outside these hours)**

Families Anonymous is a self-help worldwide fellowship of families of drug users and those with behavioural problems. The programme's focus is on the family and supporting them in coping with the addict. Family members should be advised to call Families Anonymous who will advise them on their nearest source of help.

Al Anon T: 020 7403 0888 www.al-anon.org.uk

Al Anon family groups provide support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking. Anyone can access the groups by telephoning the number shown above or one listed on the website. No formal referrals are required.

CoreFamilies T: 01992 581 040 (WDP Drugsline Hertford)

CoreFamilies offers systemic therapeutic sessions, facilitated by trained family therapists, to adults with a drug using and offending history plus other adults affected by their substance misuse. Individual, couples and family sessions will be available to people referred by adult substance misuse treatment providers.

Parental Drug Advisory Service T: 01707 393934

The Parental Drug Advisory Service (PDAS) is a free, confidential service offering information, support and advice to parents and carers who may be concerned about their children and drug, alcohol and solvent use or misuse. Most PDAS clients self refer but services can advise parents and carers to contact PDAS or call on their behalf.

Also see:

**Substance Users over 18
Family Reintegration**

FAMILY REINTEGRATION



Re-establishing stable lives and reducing re-offending which often arises from successfully completing treatment in community and prison – this might be lost if ongoing support is not provided.

A range of additional flexible support is needed to help rehabilitate and re-integrate former drug-misusing offenders, such as:

- access to and help with housing provision,
- skills development and access to employment,
- help with mental health issues,
- family issues,
- managing finances and debt
- building positive social and peer networks

When addressing the needs of drug users it can sometimes be overlooked that they are also sons, daughters, parents, partners, grandchildren, siblings and members of extended family networks.

The impact of problem drug use on families is profound with some families feeling their only option is to withdraw support and to break their ties with a family member.

At the same time, families play a critical role in supporting family members with drug problems – for example:

- providing emotional support,
- housing,
- access to leisure and other forms of meaningful activity
- initiating and supporting engagement with formal treatment services.

In short, families play a big part in making a reality of recovery, but this has not always been recognised or supported.

Where appropriate the role of the family should be considered as part of the care planning process.

The Prison Service

HMP Bedford, Visitors Centre T: 01234 373219

HMP The Mount T: 01442 836300

HMP Bedford is the main prison working with offenders from Hertfordshire.

The Ormiston Trust at HMP Bedford works with children and families affected by imprisonment. They provide good quality visiting and contact opportunities for children to spend time with their imprisoned parent/carer or family member.

Fathers Inside is delivered at HMP **The Mount Prison in Hertfordshire in Bowingdon, Hemel Hempstead**. The course provides male offenders with parenting skills, specifically them to engage in their children's education while in prison.

Information about family interventions provided within the prison service might be useful for clients with partners or other family members who are in custody, or for members of families affected by substance misuse who contact adult substance misuse treatments providers for help and advice.

Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS)

T: 07769 918659

Family Learning describes a range of activities that involve parents and children from 0-16 years of age, learning together to develop new skills and knowledge. HAFLS believe that family learning services can be targeted at families affected by substance misuse in order to encourage communication, child development and re-establish family bonds.

Carers in Hertfordshire


www.carersinherts.org.uk T: 01462 456660

Carers in Hertfordshire provides support to anyone caring for a relative or friend who has a physical or learning disability, dementia, mental health problem, misuses drugs or alcohol is ill or frail. It doesn't matter if that person lives with the carer or if the person being cared for is an adult or child.

Also see:

Parents and Carers of Adult Substance Users

PARENTS AND CARERS WHO MISUSE SUBSTANCES

A photograph showing a person's hand resting on a wooden table. Next to the hand is an empty, clear glass. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a person's arm and shoulder.

When parents misuse drugs and alcohol, their ability to appropriately care for their children is often compromised and parental substance misuse is commonly associated with high levels of family dysfunction. Parental substance use does not automatically have an adverse impact on children but it can increase their vulnerability.

When a parent or carer misuses drugs or alcohol, their children may have caring responsibilities, which are inappropriate for their age. These responsibilities must be recognised and may have an adverse effect on children's development.

Further information on how to support those children of substance misusing parents who have a caring responsibility see:

Children of Substance Misusing Parents and Carers

What to do if you are concerned about children living with substance misusing parent/carer?

Once clients with parental responsibilities are identified, practitioners should follow the Process for Adult Services card in this pack, to determine if any action should be taken to safeguard children in each case.

If there are particular concerns regarding the welfare of children affected by parental substance misuse then you should refer to your internal safeguarding procedures and/or contact your line manager or safeguarding lead. This may involve starting the common assessment framework process and convening a team around the child. Guidance on completing a CAF can be found in www.hertsdirect.org/caf.

Sharing Information

All services should also be sharing information where necessary to safeguard children from significant harm.

Also see: The seven golden rules for sharing information, taken from HM Government Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers.

If you have clear concerns about the safety of a child, please contact the Customer Service Centre without delay on 0300 123 4043.

Where to go for additional advice and support CoreKids

T: 01438 312 055

CoreKids offers practical and emotional support using 1:1 parenting support and parenting groups. CoreKids interventions are tailored to each individual family's need and support is offered to extended family members who have taken parental responsibility for children where the parents are problem substance users.

Although based in the north of the county, adult substance misuse treatment providers should call CoreKids for advice if they feel a client who is a parent may benefit from this service.

HertSpeak

T: 01438 312 055

HertSpeak is a project specifically for children, parents and families where problematic parental alcohol misuse may be an issue by working in a family focused way to help adults to be effective parents, families to communicate and children to be safe and healthy. They aim to offer the whole family emotional and practical support to build upon existing parenting skills and relationships.

Adult substance misuse treatment providers should call HertSpeak for advice if they feel a client who is a parent may benefit from this service.

Also see:

Parentline Plus

Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Agencies

PROCESS MAP FOR ADULT SERVICES

Step One: Does the client have children?

YES

NO

Establish detailed information regarding each child including:

Name:

Age – DOB:

Residency:

Who is main carer?

Does client (or anyone else) have concerns about the child/children?

Has there ever been social care?

Is a social worker involved with the child?

Does the client have someone else's children living with them?

YES

NO

No further action

As a matter of course use the **Single Service Request** form to identify if there are any potential needs in relation to the child. If no additional needs are apparent then no further actions needs to be taken. If the **Single Service Request** identifies "additional needs" for the child does the client consent to the sharing of information?

YES

NO

Establish whether a CAF has been done for each child/children by contacting the CAF Administrator on **01438 737575**.

If **YES**: make links with the Lead Professional involved with the child/children

If **NO** – are you the right person to complete CAF with child/young person/parents?

Consent is refused.

You continue to work with parents

Revisit consent issue as appropriate

If **NO/NOT**: request a full CAF be completed by most appropriate agency in children's service in order that a package of support can be achieved for child and parent. Contact your district IP manager for support.

If **YES**, complete CAF with parents and /child/young person.

- Send copy to CAF Admin, Client Services, PO Box 153, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2GH.
- Convene TAC.
- Identify Lead Professional at TAC

For more information visit:
www.hertsdirect.org/caf

SEVEN GOLDEN RULES FOR INFORMATION SHARING

- 1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
- 2. Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- 3. Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
- 4. Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
- 5. Consider safety and well-being:** base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
- 6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
- 7. Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Extract from HM Government Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers. Copies can be obtained from www.ecm.gov.uk/informationsharing.

CHILDREN OF SUBSTANCE MISUSING PARENTS AND CARERS



Parental substance use does not automatically have an adverse impact on children but it can increase their vulnerability. When parents misuse drugs and alcohol, their ability to appropriately care for their children is often compromised and parental substance misuse is commonly associated with high levels of family dysfunction.

A child at risk of significant harm or whose well-being is affected could be a child:

- Who is involved in his/her parent's substance misuse
- Who becomes a target for parental aggression or rejection
- Who has caring responsibilities inappropriate to his/her age
- Who may witness disturbing behaviour arising from parental substance misuse
- Who is neglected physically and/or emotionally
- Who does not live with the substance misusing parent but has unsupervised contact with them
- Who is socially isolated because they feel unable to either bring other children home, or understand or have the words to explain what is happening at home to adults
- Who is at risk of severe injury, profound neglect or death.

Meeting the needs of Children and Families in Hertfordshire

The Meeting the needs of Children and Families in Hertfordshire document (www.hertsdirect.org/integratedpractice), published by the Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership, contains further detail on thresholds, the types of need requiring a specialist service and those requiring a targeted services approach, including the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

If a parent or carers level of substance misuse and their personal circumstances indicate that their parenting capability is likely to be seriously impaired or that undue caring responsibilities are likely to be falling upon a child in the family, please contact the Customer Service Centre without delay on 0300 123 4043

The Process for Adult Services card could also help to determine if any action should be taken to safeguard children in each case.

Where a family presents with additional or complex needs then the identifying practitioner should consider starting the common assessment framework process and convening a team around the child. Guidance on completing a CAF can be found in www.hertsdirect.org/caf.

Sharing Information

All services should also be sharing information where necessary to safeguard children from significant harm. Also see: The seven golden rules for sharing information, taken from HM Government Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers.

Where to go for additional advice and support

Dreamkeepers

T: 01442 269804

Dreamkeepers is a service supporting vulnerable primary school children by offering them mentoring support to promote stability, reduce isolation and give the children new motivation and life skills. Currently, Dreamkeepers is being delivered in Dacorum and South Oxhey.

Herts Young Carers

T: 01992 586969 www.koolcarers.org.uk

Young Carers are children and young people who care for someone in their own home who is ill, has a physical or learning disability or mental health, drug or alcohol problems. This service can provide Information, breaks for young carers, support group and a voice on young carers' issues.

HertSpeak

T: 01438 312055

See: Parents and Carers who misuse substances

CAHMS Parenting Practitioners

T: 01923 427304

See: Parents and Carers of Substance users under 18

FOSTER CARERS, EXTENDED FAMILIES, CARE – UNDER 18'S



All of the services that provide support for parents and carers in this pack also support foster carers, carers and other family members (uncle, aunts and older siblings).

Care by foster carers, carers and other family members can provide emotional permanence for children and provide them with stability. Providing them with support helps children to develop and thrive and will result in better outcomes for children.

Taking on the care of children of substance misusing parents can be very difficult. Children may have neurological damage due to their mother's substance use, such as foetal alcohol syndrome, foetal and neonatal toxicity. Children may suffer from slow development, hyperactivity, behavioural problems and poor school attendance.

Carers and other extended family members may face problems when they take over the care of the child that foster carers may not face. These are:

- Stress and psychological problems
- Health and age related matters
- Loss of social life and isolation
- Overcrowding
- The effect on family relationships
- Financial costs

All these problems are exacerbated by substance misuse.

They often lack knowledge about their rights and responsibilities, have access to very little information, are unaware of sources of help or support and often want guidance about the day-to-day practicalities of living with children and young people.

There is a range of support available for those taking on a caring role depending on each family situation.

For more details contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043.