



# Orkney Alcohol Counselling & Advisory Service

## NEWSLETTER

Issue 29

November 2009

### Special points of interest:

- Annual Report
- Reception Hosted
- Counselling in Schools Seminar
- Specialist Qualification

**“ I have no hesitation in confirming that OACAS continues to meet the criteria outlined in the COSCA Recognition Scheme..... ”**

It is a whole year since OACAS' last newsletter: quite frankly we have just been too busy doing the work/reorganising to have time to put one together!

We have now however completed another operating year since our last newsletter, and we have had our AGM, in August, so time to let you have our latest news!

1. We are now well established in our new, roomier premises at 6 Bridge Street Wynd, Kirkwall. Funding from Awards for All enabled initial adjustments (such as installing a kitchen and our telephone system) and also upgrading of computers and purchase of additional office furniture. We have also had several rooms repainted.
2. Since the beginning of 2009 we have employed a second, part-time young persons' Counsellor (funded by BBC Children in Need) – this broadens the choice to young people and enables the service to consider other methods of service delivery (See below: "Counselling in Schools")
3. We continue to be a COSCA Recognised Counselling & Counselling Skills Organisation (We were Orkney's first), and recently completed our third annual monitoring Assessor's visit.

Extracts from the COSCA Assessor's Report:

**“An invaluable community resource,** OACAS works in collaboration with other agencies including Health and Education. Prevention, support and counselling aimed at change are themes which underpin the overall picture of the services offered to the community by OACAS.....

**I was particularly impressed by the work undertaken by the Youth Counsellors,** whose remit appears to be wide ranging with a focus very much on implementing preventive strategies. I spoke with both of the Youth counsellors who are highly motivated, and appropriately qualified for the specialised work that they do.....

**I also had the opportunity to speak with the Intake Worker whose role includes, contacting all adult referrals within ten days, conducting an assessment and allocating to the most appropriate counsellor. The intake system works well for the benefit of clients and is a good example of best practice.....**

**The new premises... are spacious, welcoming and very much fit for purpose. Accommodation includes comfortable counselling rooms and a moderately large room which may be**

(Continued overleaf)



If you require more copies of this leaflet, or if you have any views or comments on drug or alcohol problems, or you simply wish any information on our counselling and information services please contact us.  
Address and contact details overleaf.

Affiliated to:



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[www.oacas.org.uk](http://www.oacas.org.uk)

## We Can Help

*(Continued from front page)*

*used for groupwork.....*

*In conclusion, the meeting was fruitful with open and honest dialogue between the Manager, the chairman, various members of staff, volunteers and myself. I left the meeting with a sense of a well run community oriented organisation comprising an enthusiastic and committed group of staff and volunteers, led by a highly regarded and motivated Manager, supported by an interested and equally motivated Chairman.*

*I have no hesitation in confirming that OACAS continues to meet the criteria outlined in the COSCA Recognition Scheme....."*

## Annual Report

**Our Annual Report for year ended 31 March 2009** states that:

- We saw 213 clients, over 1173 sessions – as busy as ever
- Of those adult cases that were closed/came to an end 57 of our customers were reported as being better than when they commenced seeing us, 20 reported no change and none achieved a bad outcome.
- That 48% of referrals were self-referrals, and that 36% of referrals came from GPs and other health professionals, demonstrating a recognition of our professionalism and skills in delivering our talking therapy service.

## Who we are

We are an independent, voluntary organisation. We help people who are suffering from the effects of alcohol and/or drugs misuse, either through their own misuse or because someone they are close to (spouse, family member, friend) is misusing alcohol and/or drugs.

We also encourage those who do drink alcohol, to do so responsibly, within safe limits and without causing harm to themselves or others.

Our aim is to limit the effects of alcohol and/or drugs misuse on individuals, families and the community, by providing a range of services and activities.

We also provide 'Generic' counselling for other problems such as Stress, Anger, Relationships (Families/Partners/Friends), Gambling, Low Self Esteem and Coping Strategies.

We offer:

General Information and Advice.

One-to-one Counselling

Counselling for Couples and Families (alcohol related).

Support Groups for individuals affected by another's alcohol misuse.

Young Person's Alcohol Advisory Programme

## Reception

In conjunction with Orkney College's bi-annual day workshop entitled "Counselling at the Edge", OACAS hosted an evening reception for delegates and speakers on 26 June: much eating and networking with workers from Shetland and the Western Isles.

## Seminar: Counselling in Schools

In June Susan McGuiness of Strathclyde University and co-ordinator of Glasgow Counselling in Schools Project visited us along with Jim Doyle, Deputy Head of John Paul Academy, Glasgow. They demonstrated the benefits of having the availability of in-school Counsellors to work with individual young people experiencing difficulties, such as assistance being independent of more directive statutory services. It is hoped OACAS' present by appointment schools Counselling

service could be developed along the lines of the Glasgow model – so that young people themselves more easily contact assistance direct, rather than wait to be identified and referred, usually after problems have grown far larger than they need have.

## Specialist Qualification

We are pleased to report that Renate Andrews, our Youth Counselling Coordinator, recently obtained a Post Qualifying Diploma in Counselling Children & Young People, awarded by



ABC Awards, one of the UKs largest vocational awarding bodies.