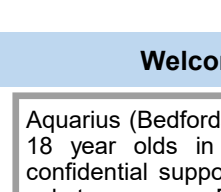
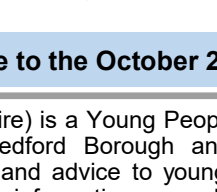




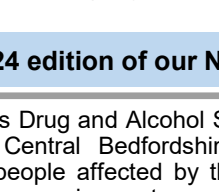
Top stories in this newsletter



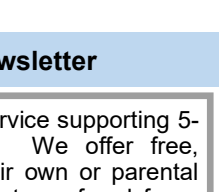
Current Trend: Nitazene



Family Offer



Multi-Agency offer



Service User Story

Welcome to the October 2024 edition of our Newsletter

Aquarius (Bedfordshire) is a Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service supporting 5-18 year olds in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. We offer free, confidential support and advice to young people affected by their own or parental substance use. For information around the service or to request a referral form, please email ypbedfordshire@aquarius.org.uk or call/text/WhatsApp 0746 733 6203. You can also visit www.aquarius.org.uk.

Aquarius Young People's Team Bedfordshire

What We Do

- We provide face to face, telephone and virtual support.
- We prefer to see young people in school but will see them at any appropriate venue.
- Home visits (for one to one sessions) are not always appropriate due to confidentiality but is offered to our high risk clients not in education.
- Family sessions (home visits) are offered for conflict resolution.
- For both our drug using and affected Other young people, we measure outcomes based on school attendance, hobbies and interests, relationships at home, physical health, emotional health, (also gang involvement and CSE). These outcomes inform our child-led careplans which are reviewed every 3-4 sessions.
- We are commissioned to work up to 20 weeks and aim to offer between 8-12 sessions.

Our Support

Young People using Drugs and Alcohol

- ⇒ We create a young person-led careplan based on their goals which can be to reduce or to stop.
- ⇒ If the young person does not want to reduce, we focus on harm reduction advice and create a risk management plan.
- ⇒ We provide drug education, identify patterns, look at triggers, alternative coping strategies, (delay/distract/decide) and monitor drug use through drug diaries.
- ⇒ We look at other areas that may be impacted by their drug use, (such as education, family relationships, hobbies and interests, mental and physical health), and work together to improve this.
- ⇒ Resources can be sent directly to the young person and then discussed in sessions.

Young People Affected by Parental Substance Misuse

- ⇒ We cannot change their parent's/sibling's/friend's drug use but we can support the child to feel less worried, angry or upset about it and focus on developing their own resilience.
- ⇒ We use the 7 cs of addiction to provide a framework to deliver this support
- ⇒ A majority of these young people will be part of a plan, (CIN or CP) so information is continually shared to keep the child safe.
- ⇒ For some young people, parental substance misuse decreasing can be a worry as they will describe their parent as being more, stressed, angry, and difficult to live with. Again, we will support the young person to manage these feelings and focus other areas of their life.

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Current Trends—Nitazenes

Drugs are changing and often mis-sold – they frequently do not contain the substance people intend to buy and may contain synthetic substances such as spice or Nitazenes

Nitazenes are strong synthetic opioids. In the UK, evidence suggests that nitazenes may be an adulterant in heroin or cocaine preparations but they have also been found in other drugs.

The potency of nitazenes can lead to a higher risk of overdose. To stay safe and reduce the risk of an overdose, it is important that extra precautions are taken when using any type of drug. **It is safe to assume that any drug could be something else.**

Naloxone is a medicine which can temporarily reverse the effects of an overdose caused by opioids such as Nitazenes. An overdose involving Nitazenes may require a larger amount of Naloxone to counteract it. Call 999 to ensure emergency services are on their way and then give naloxone doses one after the other, allowing 2-3 minutes between each dose.

If you are under 18 and concerned about Nitazene, please contact Aquarius for support.

If you live in Bedford Borough or Central Bedfordshire and require testing strips and/or Naloxone, these can be obtained from Path 2 Recovery. Please call P2R on 0333 332 4019 for more information.

Family Offer

Aquarius is a young people-led drug and alcohol service, which means we do not work with parents/carers in isolation. For parents who live in Bedfordshire and require support, please contact Path 2 Recovery's Friends and Family Support Service on 0333 332 4019.

To build trust with a young person, it is important that they feel confident that the service is for them and their needs. This means that communication between worker and parent/carer is limited unless it has been agreed with the young person beforehand. Instead, we encourage Family Sessions where open communication can take place.

Family Sessions are designed to reduce conflict and improve relationships within the home. We appreciate that young people do not live in isolation so their drug use can impact wider family members. We will support family members to openly communicate their concerns and identify realistic solutions.

If a young person is not ready for a referral but has consented to contact and information being shared, we can organise a joint session with the parent and explain the service and the support we provide. We will make it clear that, moving forward, the support is for the young person even though the initial appointment may have been facilitated by their parent.

Although it is a worrying time for parents/carers, continued contact with the worker can lead to mistrust of the service and disengagement by the young person. It can also lead to limited information being shared with their worker as they may believe this will be shared with their parent/carer, putting them at further risk.

It also breaks our confidentiality agreement with the young person.

It is important that all young people trust that Aquarius support is for them, and that the needs of their parent/carer will be met by an appropriate service or intervention.

Family Sessions for young people impacted by a family members substance misuse can often be very emotive and leave both parties feeling vulnerable. These sessions are delivered sensitively to encourage communication and not to apportion blame or shame.

If you feel a family session will be beneficial, please discuss this with the allocated worker or contact the service.

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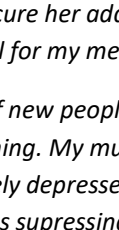
Current Team

There have been positive changes in the structure of the service due to additional roles being created.

Operational team includes:

Service Manager

Shieuly Begum



Young People's Team Bedfordshire

Administrator

Millie Collier

Senior Practitioner

Trish Mayberry (new role)

Complex Needs Workers

Anna Morgan (YOS) (new role)

James Roach

Nichola Walton

Practitioners

Samantha Goldsmith

2x New Practitioner (TBC)

Multi-Agency Offer

Online Presentations

For partnership agencies working with young people in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire, we offer a free 1-1.5hrs service update and current trends Presentation on Teams.

This includes;

- Information about our service offer
- How to support young people who are using
- Barriers to support
- Current Drug Trends

We are also happy to deliver a 10-15 minute service presentation at multi-agency forums or external agency team meetings .

Peer Supervision

We encourage professionals to attend our Fortnightly face to face Peer Supervision where they will get an insight into the work we deliver and the challenges when working with young people using drugs or alcohol. External professionals can also share their service information with Aquarius practitioners.

For information on any of the above multi-agency offers, please email the service.

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Aquarius Service User Story

"I was first introduced to Aquarius through being referred by CAMHS, as I started experiencing psychosis symptoms after using a THC vape, given to me by a friend. The vape was on THC, and caused me to have psychotic episode that featured extremely traumatic flashbacks and left me with derealisation for months, and depersonalisation with extreme paranoia and anxiety.

I first started using drugs when I was 14. My mum, who was my best friend, started drinking. I did not notice what was happening at first, but it quickly became apparent. In a matter of a couple of months, my mum turned into an abusive, neglectful alcoholic. Before my mum started drinking, she smoked weed, and actively encouraged me to do it with her so I didn't think it was bad. I liked the way it made me feel, especially when my mum was heavily drinking on a particular night. I liked the escape.

After 7 months of this, I left home at 15 and moved into a family fostering arrangement with my uncle. My mum was so upset with me for leaving, she would call me every single night, extremely drunk and emotional. If I said anything about her behaviour, she would hurl abuse at me non-stop, blame me for her addiction, blame me for leaving and threaten suicide because of this.

Shortly after, my younger brother was also taken from my mum's care. She had started using inhalants, she became homeless and lost her license due to drink driving. Despite this, she still denied having an addiction. She was constantly being arrested for public disturbance, drunk and disorderly, abusing my grandparents and police officers. I loved my mum and believed that I could cure her addiction, even though being in contact with her was extremely detrimental for my mental health.

I started sixth form and met a lot of new people. Smoking was an easy way to socialise, so it quickly became an everyday thing. My mum's addiction began to take over my everyday life and I became extremely depressed and anxious, smoking was my coping mechanism, but all it was doing was suppressing my emotions.

I started to be introduced to other drugs too. I tried MDMA for the first time and it made me feel like nothing mattered anymore. I craved this and started doing it every weekend, as well as Ketamine and Mushrooms. Drugs were a form of escape for me, but I was cautious to not let them take over my life, although I was not as worried about the weed as I should have been.

My CAMHS worker referred me to Aquarius... and I couldn't be more grateful; they were so welcoming and genuine. They listened to everything, and never judged me. They gave me so much education on drugs and the dangers of what's in them and mixing them. They helped me reduce the amount I was smoking, and I completely cut out harder drug use. They always reminded me how important it is to celebrate the progress I made, and how important it was to take one day at a time with patience. I was never afraid to tell them if I had smoked more on a particular week or had thoughts of relapsing.

As well as helping my addictions, Aquarius also helped my mental health. They listened to me talk about my mum and her addiction for hours. Aquarius taught me that I cannot cure someone else's addiction, and that's ok. I am only responsible for myself and my own actions.

Aquarius taught me that even though I am unable to control the things that happen around me, I am able to control how I let these things affect me. Bad things are going to happen but a bad day is not a bad life, and you are not alone" Service User, 17.

YPBedfordshire@aquarius.org.uk

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If you have been affected by anything in this newsletter, would like more information, or would like to share your story, please email the service. You can also call/text WhatsApp our office mobile.

We are open Monday-Thursday 9-5 and Friday 9-4.30.

Our website page is in the process of being updated however in future, you can access this information on www.aquarius.org.uk.



aquarius

Aquarius Young People's Team Bedfordshire

Woburn Court, 2 Railton Road, Kempston MK42 7PN

Email: YPBedfordshire@aquarius.org.uk

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www.aquarius.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1014305

Humankind and Richmond Fellowship have merged to form a new charity, Waythrough, with Aquarius as their subsidiary.

Humankind remains the legal entity operating as Waythrough pending legal and regulatory finalisation of our name change. Humankind Charity (Humankind) is a company registered in England and Wales (Registered Charity No. 515755 Registered Company No 382 0492)

Registered office: Inspiration House, Unit 22, Bowburn North Industrial Estate, DH6 5PF.

VAT 413 2088 32, Social Housing Registered Provider 4713, CQC Registered Provider 1-126775024