

BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL

FDAC



The problem-solving court

Highlight Report

1 March 2021 - 31 March 2023



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Introduction

The Rt Hon Sir Andrew McFarlane said, 'Family drug and Alcohol Courts (FDACs) aim to keep families together, where it is safe to do so, by supporting parents to address their substance abuse.'

They do so through a problem-solving court process where trained judges and a specialist multi-disciplinary FDAC team collaborate to give parents a 'trial for change'.

They offer a better way of conducting care proceedings and have demonstrated time again in the research that they provide in a more effective way of supporting families to stay together and become safer and stronger, while decreasing the likelihood of future child neglect and abuse.'

In Birmingham & Solihull FDAC, parents are given 'parent folders' and they are tasked with homework and updating a weekly appointment sheet that will reflect their engagement on a weekly basis.

Parents take pride in their folder and take this to their non-lawyer reviews (NLR's) to show their FDAC Judge.

The interventions and pathways offered at our site are numerous. Domestic abuse one to ones and Own My Life groups run weekly.

A senior practitioner and family support specialist have been trained on Safer Relationships and are now able to offer healthier relationship work to fathers who go through FDAC.

FDAC support in observing and supervising Family Time.

It helps to inform the rehabilitation plan for the children to return to their parents care (if applicable) and is also an opportunity to support the local authority and evidence a robust assessment with recommendations for families.

Birmingham & Solihull FDAC also facilitate family meetings and mediations where needed for our families. We take a trauma informed approach and have emotional wellbeing groups run by the Mental Health Specialist.

There are also groups run by the Family Support Specialists, supporting in parenting work.

The parenting work is run over **10 weeks**.

- In **Week 1**, it is the introduction of how parents got to where they are and speaking around the local authority's concerns.
- **Week 2** is around Maslow's Hierarchy of Need.
- **Week 3** is around ACE's.
- **Week 4** is around the impact of parents lifestyles on their children.
- **Week 5** is around the different parenting styles.



- **Week 6** is around ages and stages in a child's development.
- **Week 7** is around boundaries and routines.
- **Week 8** is around role modelling.
- **Week 9** is around power and control and **Week 10** is a recap of the learning.

There is also a substance misuse group which is a rolling group for our parents.

It is 6-8 weeks and is about understanding substances and its effects, about cravings, triggers, it covers function of a person's use, high risk situations, cost benefit analysis, refusal skills, coping strategies and relapse prevention.

Birmingham & Solihull FDAC have created partner agency working.

We work closely with various partners to support parents through the trial for change.

We have established links with CA (Cocaine Anonymous) and AA (Alcoholics Anonymous).

We have also work closely with CGL and SIAS which are recovery agencies for substances.

We have a partnership working with Birmingham City Council and Solihull Council in relation to social housing and support parents with their housing needs.

We have liaised with the Pure Project and Fircroft College to support our parents get into education, employment or training.

Birmingham & Solihull FDAC were the first FDAC to create a Community Intervention Plan.

This plan is given to parents who are not successful in entering the trial for change.

A plan is created and given to them so that they are not left without any support.

The plan is based in the community so although they will not be working with FDAC, they are signposted to other agencies who can support them through their journey.

For families who complete the trial for change, Birmingham & Solihull FDAC offer a post FDAC support package for 3-6 months.

This consists of them receiving a community intervention plan to support the transition back into the community agencies for support, for testing, fortnightly to monthly key work sessions which are held face to face which reduce over the post support period.

Attendance to the CA meetings held on site is also still available to them.

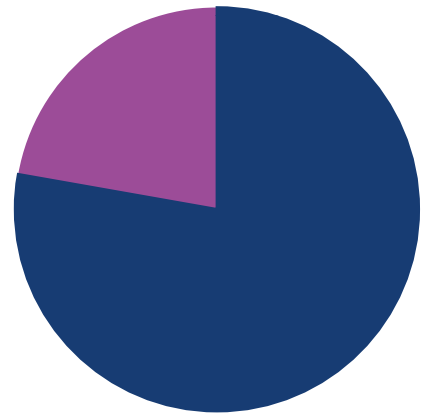
Read our Highlight Report for more details.



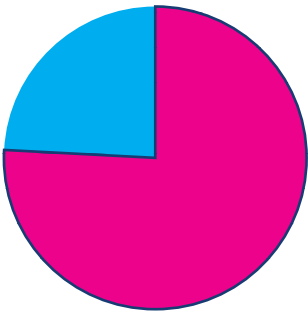
OUR FAMILIES

- **63 families** entered Birmingham & Solihull FDAC between **1 March 2021** and **31 March 2023**.

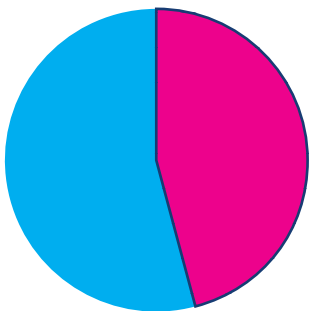
78% from Birmingham
22% from Solihull



- **82 parents** and **105 children**.



Parents
76% female
24% male



Children
46% female
54% male



OUR OUTCOMES

- **26 families** cases concluded.
- Consisting of **34 parents** and **41 children**.
- The **average length** of **FDAC proceedings** was **34.2 weeks**

Outcomes for children

53.7% of children were reunited with one or both parents at the end of proceedings.

31.7% of children were placed with a family member or friend.

Outcomes for parents

70.5% of parents completed the FDAC programme.

57% of parents who were misusing substances at the start of FDAC had stopped by the end of proceedings.



CHILDREN DATA

- **Average Age:** 4.6 years.
- **7%** had previous experience of being in care proceedings.
- **28%** of children were under a year's old when care proceedings commenced.
- **84%** were not in the care of their parents at the start of FDAC.

Ethnicity of children

- **44%** were White British.
- **3%** were White Other.
- **34%** were Mixed Multiple Ethnic Group.
- **4%** were Black British.
- **4%** were Asian British.
- **11%** were unknown (due to lack of engagement or father unknown)



CHILDREN DATA

Care orders

- **95%** had Interim Care Orders (ICO's).
- **3%** had Interim Supervision Orders (ISO's).
- **2%** had Child Arrangement Orders (CAO's).

School Information

- **45%** were old enough to attend school.
- **40%** had issues attending school.
- **5%** had infant mental health or CAMH's referrals or support in place.
- **10%** had an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

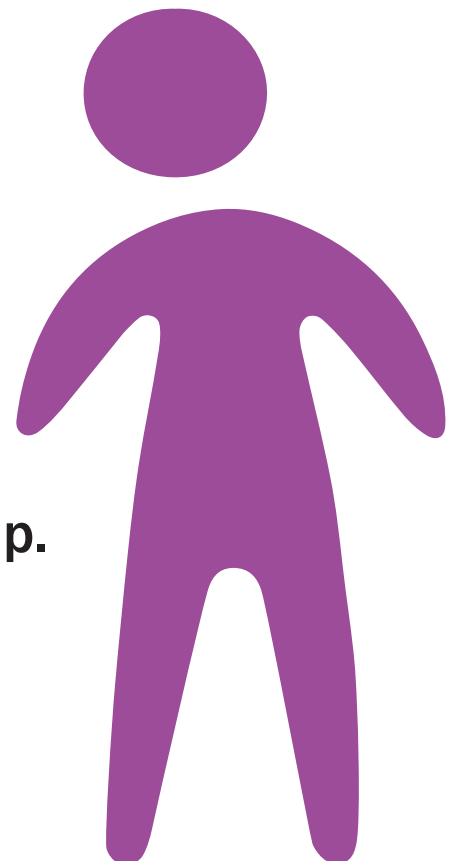


PARENTS DATA

- **Average Age:** 36.35 years.
- **78%** families were from Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT)
- **22%** families were from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
- **17%** of parents had been in care while they were children.
- **79%** previously had contact with Children's Services.
- **34%** of parents had previous children removed from their care.
- **22%** of families who entered FDAC were a couple.
- **78%** of families who entered FDAC were a single parent.
- **60%** of parents had criminal convictions or cautions.

Ethnicity of parents

- **69.5%** were White British.
- **1.2%** were White Irish.
- **1.2%** were White Other.
- **13.4%** were Mixed Multiple Ethnic Group.
- **6.1%** were Black British.
- **7.4%** were Asian British.
- **1.2%** ethnicity was unknown.



PARENTS DATA

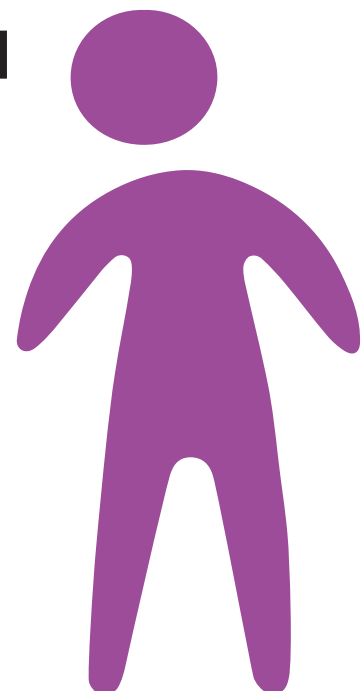
Complexities

- **51.2%** of parents lived in social housing.
- **13.5%** of parents lived with family or friends.
- **19.5%** of parents lived in supported housing/hostel/refuge.
- **12.2%** of parents lived in a private tenancy.
- **1.2%** of parents were homeless.
- **2.4%** was unknown due to lack of engagement.

Challenges families faced

Substances most commonly used by parents were:

- **72%** Cocaine (including crack).
- **49%** Alcohol.
- **41%** Opiates (including heroin).
- **39%** Cannabis.



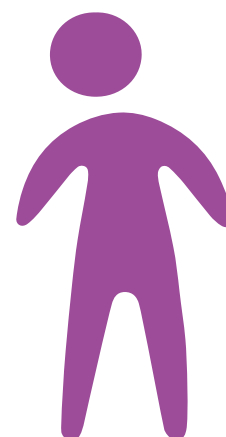
PARENTS DATA

For the parents who went through to the trial for change who were misusing substances at the beginning, at the end:

- **47%** had a cessation in alcohol.
- **47%** had a cessation in drugs.
- **7%** reduced their alcohol misuse.
- **11%** reduced their drugs misuse.
- **11%** had no change in their alcohol misuse.
- **7%** had no change in their drug misuse.
- **3.6%** had an increase in their alcohol misuse.
- **0%** had an increase in their drugs misuse.

Mental Health

- **91%** of parents showed signs of mental illness.
- **91%** had mild to severe depression (using PHQ-9).
- **87%** had mild to severe anxiety (using GAD-7).
- **40%** had scored suggesting the presence of PTSD (using IES-R).



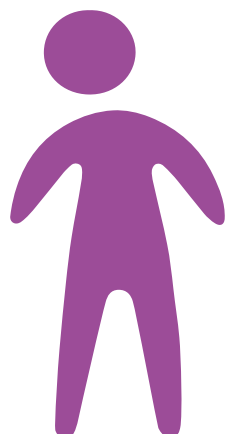
PARENTS DATA

Domestic Abuse

- **82%** of parents reported having experienced domestic abuse at some point in their lives.
- **61%** were victims - **100%** were female.
- **11%** were perpetrators - **100%** were male.
- **10%** were both victims and perpetrators – **37.5%** were female and **62.5%** were male.

Pre-Proceedings

- **19%** of families had an FGC in pre-proceedings.
4 in Solihull
8 in Birmingham
- **15** FGC's or Family Meetings happened during the FDAC process.
- **56%** of families had parenting assessments in pre-proceedings.
7 in Solihull
28 in Birmingham



ENGAGEMENT

- Over **4981** appointments were offered to parents in total, this includes Court, CGL, SIAS, Fellowships, Family Time (Local Authority), Dry Houses etc.
- **61%** were offered by FDAC alone including unannounced visits with **81%** of them attended.
- **97%** were face to face and **3%** were virtual or via the telephone.
- **11%** of the unattended appointments, parents notified the team whilst **8%** of unattended appointments parents did not communicate with FDAC.
- There have been over **425** NLR's and CMH's (non-lawyer reviews and case management hearings).
- **94%** were attended, out of those **92%** were face-to-face and **8%** were attended virtually.
- **6% (22)** were not attended and out of this, **64% (14)** made prior contact with professionals whilst **36% (8)** did not attend without notifying anyone.



POST FDAC

- There have been no re-referrals or escalations back to court after **3, 6, 12, 18** and **24 months** post FDAC in Birmingham Children's Trust where parents have made the changes and had reunification with their child(ren).
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Further information

For further information please contact:

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