



Terms of Reference and Practice

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1. Introduction

This booklet has been designed to meet the needs of all members of the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol, Drugs and BBV Forum. It may be of particular use to new members who may be unfamiliar with the Forum and its activities, but also provide a reference and guide to established members of the forum.

The aim is to provide some of the essential background information that may be needed in order to operate effectively with the forum and a brief summary of the roles and responsibility of members.

It is hoped that this booklet will be kept up to date and further versions be made available to forum members through web pages or by contacting the forum secretary.

Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV Forum, Web Pages

<http://www.aberdeenshireadp.co.uk/>

Forum Administrator

Angela May

Email: <mailto:abdncentral.forum@hotmail.com>

Tel: 07773781085

Forum Treasurer

Angela May

Email: <mailto:abdncentral.forum@hotmail.com>

Tel: 07773781085

2. Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV Forum

There are three Alcohol, Drug and BBV forms in Aberdeenshire. It would be wrong to think that the three forums are the same. The Forums are very different in their membership, organisation and the issues they get involved in and how they approach action. However there are many similarities and best practice is shared between the Forum Chairs, who meet regularly to ensure continuity in messages fed back to the Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs Action Partnership. The forums also share the commitment of a support officer from the ADP Support Team who aims to make the three forums aware of one another's activity as well the activity of the wider ADP partnership.

Central Aberdeenshire in respect of the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV forum is geographically made up of the Aberdeenshire school boundaries and as such takes in the areas represented by Ellon Academy, Meldrum Academy, Turriff Academy, The Gordon's School, Kemnay Academy, Westhill Academy and Inverurie Academy school areas. Anyone living, working, studying or having an interest in alcohol and other drugs issues in these areas may join the forum membership, attend the meetings or keep abreast of the developments of the forum via the web pages or by contacting the forum Secretary.

The Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) support the Forums, and the Chair of the forum is invited to sit on the full ADP as well as having access to other ADP subcommittees and task groups. The forum is provided with funding each year from the ADP (see funding). Other members of the forum may be invited to join subcommittees or short term working groups organised by the ADP partnership. This allows for good communication and delivery of the work of the forums at all levels.

There is no formal constitution for forums but the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV Forum has devised its own set of aims and objectives and adheres to the terms of reference and practice as set out in this guide to ensure continuity, accountability and good practice.

3. Aims and Objectives

Aims

The principle aims of the Forum are to co-ordinate and express the views of service providers, service users and those in need of services in relation to substance misuse.

To work in partnership, with the aim of progressing and developing responses to local issues relating to drugs and alcohol and BBV.

Objectives

- Engage with communities
- Identify local issues and develop responses
- Act as an advisory group to the ADP and engage in information exchange
- Target young people with the focus on reversing current trends regarding substance misuse and BBVs and develop a strategy
- Develop and progress in partnership a forum action plan, taking into account local and national strategies/plans
- Provide education and awareness around drugs, alcohol and BBVs
- Link with relative services, raising awareness of inter-related issues across the health and wider agenda

4. The Chair

The Chair has perhaps the most important single role to play in ensuring that forum meetings run smoothly and actions agreed are followed up and progressed beyond the meeting. But even a good Chair will find these tasks exhausting unless all the members of the forum give appropriate support to the role.

During a forum meeting the Chair's job is to make sure that decisions are taken on all the items that are on the Agenda. In practice, this usually means that the Chair will have to make judgements about how much time to allocate each agenda item. It also means that he or she may occasionally have to bring speakers back to the agenda and generally encourage people to make their contributions brief and to the point.

In regular meetings the role of the Chair is a formal one; speakers will be expected to address their comments to the Chair. The Chair may decide to allow open debate on a particular issue but members are expected to return to the agenda when requested by the Chair. This helps the Chair to keep control of the discussion. In the case of a dispute the forum Chair has the final decision on how to progress to a reasonable outcome and in the event of any votes with tied outcomes the Chair would have a deciding vote.

The Chair may agree with the membership to have short-term task groups to progress particular actions or agenda items. These task groups would be expected to inform the Chair of all agreements and outcomes at agreed intervals. This allows the Chair to keep to time scales and ensure progress as appropriate.

Perhaps most importantly the Chair is expected to have good knowledge of the terms of reference and practice as set out in this guide, which allows the forum membership to have confidence in the decisions of the Chair. The Chair is obliged to declare an interest where appropriate during the course of an agenda should he or she have cause to. The Chair would be expected to pass on his vote and the deciding vote would then fall to the Vice Chair.

It is important to acknowledge that the Chair's role extends beyond the forum. The Chair is seen as the official spokesperson of the Forum and as such holds a seat on the ADP. This allows the views of the forum membership to be heard at the strategic decision making level and reflect the ADP strategy in the actions of the forum. Due to holding a seat on the ADP it is hoped that the Forum Chair will be selected from within the voluntary sector partners or an individual with community based working or living experience of issues around alcohol or other drugs. This is with a view to bringing another dimension to the strategic partnership of the ADP.

The Chair is also the public face of the forum and may attend community events, courses, and conferences as a representative of the forum. The Chair will also encourage other members to attend such events as made available to the forum and feedback to the next meeting.

A Chair wishing to end their role before the end of any year should do so in writing to the forum membership and the ADP Support Officer. This should be done with notice wherever possible to allow for the membership to progress with appointing a new or temporary Chair.

In the event of extended absence, inappropriate activity or low performance Chairs may be asked to step down by the ADP Support Team Leader on behalf of the forum membership. The forum membership would then be asked to appoint a new or temporary Chair to continue with the agreed duties of the Chair.

5. The Vice Chair

The Vice Chair has no specific duties other than standing in for the Chair when he or she is unable to be present and includes deputising at the ADP or any subcommittee meetings. A Chair may however, negotiate with the Vice Chair to perform any regular duty to support the Chair in their role.

6. Electing the Forum Chair/Vice Chair

From January 2010 the Chair and Vice Chair will be elected during the first meeting of each year.

Anyone interested in taking up the post of Chair or Vice Chair should submit this interest in writing to the forum Secretary four weeks before the first meeting of the year. A reminder will be given at the final forum meeting of the year. These nominees will be circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

During the first meeting of the year, a nominee from within the forum membership with no interest in undertaking the role of Chair /Vice Chair will oversee the process of the vote. Those declaring an interest in these roles will be introduced in turn and will present to the forum membership a short overview of their reasons for wishing to take up the role. They may also take the opportunity to make a statement of their vision for the forum over the next year. The membership may wish to consider written applications provided in a candidate's absence. The existing Chair and Vice Chair may wish to put themselves forward to continue in their current role.

The candidates will be asked to leave the main meeting, accompanied by the ADP support officer, and allow the forum to decide the selection for Chair and Vice Chair respectively. Only members present on the day will have a vote, but those present may wish to consider a postponement in light of the number of members present and how representative these are of the wider membership. In the event of no agreement being reached the forum membership present will be asked to vote and the candidate receiving the majority vote would be appointed. The membership may wish to offer any unsuccessful candidate the position of Vice Chair.

The new Chair will resume duties from the end of the first meeting of the year.

In the event of no candidate showing any interest in the position of Chair, the existing Chair may continue unchallenged if invited to do so by the membership. A Chair wishing to step down should declare their intentions during the final meeting of the year.

In the event of no Chair being appointed to the forum, the membership would be asked to take turns in Chairing and attending to other duties until such time as a candidate indicates their interest in the post and is successfully nominated.

7. The Secretary

The secretary is responsible for:

The Agenda

The Secretary in consultation with the Chair will create agendas. Members may wish to put items on the agenda, including any service updates or developments and contact the Secretary directly to agree this. The Secretary will compile an agenda considering any requests and timescales and equipment required and will contact the Chair for confirmation prior to the final circulation and for inclusion on the web pages.

Fixed agenda items could include New Proposals, Action and Monitoring Update, Financial Account, Support Officers Update and Service Development.

The Minutes

The Secretary is responsible for taking a note of the minutes and producing an accurate summary of activity and actions agreed at the meeting. In the absence of the Secretary a volunteer from the forum membership would be requested to undertake this task. It would be recognised that those agreeing to take minutes should not have large items on the agenda and must be able to commit to producing accurate minutes within two weeks of the meeting. For similar reasons the Chair and ADP Support Officer would not be expected to take minutes. A meeting template will be made available to the Secretary or anyone agreeing to take minutes in the absence of a Secretary.

Minutes should include the following information:

Date

Attendance

Apologies

Agreement of last minute

Matters Arising

Agenda Items

AOCB

Time, Date and Venue of the next meeting(s)

Minutes should be completed within two weeks of the meeting and posted on the Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV Forum section of the Aberdeenshire ADP web pages by the Secretary; they must also be circulated to any member requesting a postal copy by the third week after the meeting. Members are encouraged to be proactive in collecting their minutes from the web pages and ensuring that agreements reached in the meeting are attended to within specified times. Queries on items raised in the minutes should be raised with the minute taker. Amendments will be noted at the subsequent meeting and included on the next minutes.

Circulations

The Secretary will update the web pages with any appropriate information forwarded by the forum membership. The Secretary will also ensure that those members requesting electronic or postal notification of information are included in the circulations. The Secretary may wish to contact the ADP Support Officers to discuss including a particular circulation on the News section of the web pages.

Database of Members

The Secretary will manage a list of the membership and take note of those wishing postal or electronic notifications of the agenda, the minutes and any circulations. The secretary will contact members annually to ensure continued inclusion in the membership. A members' list with agreed contact details will be posted on the web pages and those not wishing to be included on the web pages should advise the Secretary.

Updating the web page

The Secretary will be provided with training and support from the ADP Support Officer in managing the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol, Drugs and BBV Forum section of the Aberdeenshire ADP web pages. The Secretary will then have the appropriate access to upload agendas, minutes and circulation to the web pages and may discuss further information uploads such as service developments or news items with the ADP Support Officer.

Venue Arrangements

The Secretary will be responsible for booking the rooms and any refreshments for meetings that are agreed yearly in advance by the forum membership. The Treasurer will be advised of payment for venues or any costs incurred for refreshments in advance of receiving invoices.

Payment

As this position requires time spent attending to administrative duties and may incur expenses, money will be made available to pay these administration costs. As this is in effect a paid position there will be a Job Description available to anyone considering taking up the position. The hourly rate will be negotiated with the current forum membership, taking account of current pay rates relative to administrative duties. The Secretary should provide the forum Chair with an account of their duties, including time spent on tasks and, once agreed and signed by the Chair, submit an invoice for these to the forum Treasurer.

A Secretary who is unable to perform these duties will be asked to step down by the Chair and a new Secretary will be sought.

8. The Treasurer

The Treasurer to the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV Forum is appointed or reinstated by the forum Chair during the first meeting of the year. This post may continue from the previous year(s) although may remain only with the support of the forum membership.

The Treasurer is responsible for the finances of the forum. Payments made to the forum must be deposited into a bank account and recorded.

The Treasurer may be asked by the Chair to provide a statement of account at any time to assist with making decisions regarding applications for funding. The Treasurer will have up to two weeks to present this account. A full statement will be provided in advance of each forum meeting. A statement of the accounts will be circulated with the agenda and presented on the web pages.

The Chair or Vice Chair will advise the Treasurer in writing of any payment due to be made and ensure provision of written support in the form of an agreed funding application or invoice in advance of any payments being made. The Treasurer will be contacted by the Secretary who will advise of any costs incurred through arranging venues for forum meetings or sub groups and the cost of any refreshments.

The Treasurer will arrange for payments to be made by cheque and keep any receipts of payments for at least 3 years.

The Central Forum has agreed to use a system where 2 signatures are required for signing the Cheques for making payment. Those signatories will include the Treasurer, the Chair, the Vice Chair and the ADP Support Officer. The Forum membership may wish to agree at anytime to increase the number of signatories from within the financial sub group to a maximum of six.

A Treasurer who is unable to perform these duties will be asked to step down by the Chair and a new Treasurer will be sought.

9. The Membership

Members

Anyone with an interest in issues around alcohol and other drugs in Central Aberdeenshire may become a member of the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol, Drugs and BBV Forum. There are no other set criteria and the forum would hope to attract those with both professional and life experience and knowledge of alcohol and other drugs issues.

Anyone wishing to become a member should advise the forum Secretary or the forum Chair of his or her decision. Members name, current position (if appropriate) and email contact will be included on the Central Forum section of the Aberdeenshire ADP web pages. On becoming a member, those members not wishing their details to be displayed should advise the forum Secretary who will not include their details on the web pages.

The Secretary will contact the membership yearly in October to ensure that continued membership is desired. Anyone not responding to the Secretary by January of the following year will be removed from the membership.

Members are invited to comment on the agenda items in person at the forum meetings, but may also wish to submit comments in writing in advance to the Secretary. However only members present will be able to vote on issues requiring a decision to be made, unless otherwise agreed in advance by the forum Chair with the forum membership.

It is hoped that members will undertake their role in the forum with a proactive approach and become involved in the activity of the forum wherever possible.

The Forum recognises that it may not be practical for everyone to become a member of the forum. Other individuals and projects that address alcohol and other drug issues in the community should not be excluded from, accessing forum support. Therefore members may be asked to support a non-member in completing an application for funding form and support or endorse an application from a non-member.

10. Guests

Anyone with an interest in issues around alcohol and other drugs in Central Aberdeenshire may attend the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV Forum meetings. Guests are also invited to view the Agenda and minutes of meetings online.

www.aberdeenshireadp.co.uk

Guest speakers or those with specialist knowledge, skills or experience may also be invited to attend meetings to give presentations or share their views. They may also wish to attend to raise awareness of their own service's, events or concerns. Any guest may inform the Secretary of their details to become a member (see above)

Guests do not have a vote on any agenda items that require decisions or on voting for the appointment of office bearers.

11. Aberdeenshire ADP Support Officer

The Aberdeenshire Drugs partnership ADP is supported by a small competent and resourced team, designed to support all ADP partners and ADP committees in their work. The ADP Support Team Officer who is responsible for Community Engagement performs the role of Support Officer to all three of the Aberdeenshire Alcohol, Drugs and BBV Forums.

The Support Officer will attend forum meetings and whenever possible arrange for the attendance of another support team member in his or her absence. The Support Officer's role in the forum is advisory and as such they have no vote and cannot support or object to any planned projects. The forum may wish to make requests on the Support Officer's time to undertake small pieces of research or perform fact-finding tasks and report back to the forum. The Support Officer will consider this and negotiate this based on other commitments and time constraints. Any strategic planning or supporting documentation required by the forum membership to improve the performance of the forum will also be undertaken by the Support Officer at the instruction of the membership. This would also be negotiated, based on the other duties of the Support Officer and may involve work with the Chair, the Secretary or a sub-committee to achieve some of these tasks.

The Support Officer will inform the forum of the current activity of the ADP and any subcommittees or development that the ADP partnership are leading on or supporting. This will whenever possible be a written report. The Support Officer's Report will be submitted to the forum Secretary two weeks in advance of the forum meeting and included in the agenda uploaded onto the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV section of the Aberdeenshire ADP web pages. Other members of the support team may be invited to attend the forum to present information on particular issues or to advise of any new objectives the ADP would like the forum to be aware of. To find out more about the areas of responsibility of the ADP Support Team, the current ADP Support Team objectives may be viewed on the ADP web pages.

The Support Officer meets regularly with the Chairs of the three forums and supports this role and the Chairs' commitment to the wider ADP community. This may require supporting the Chair with any conflict they experience due to their other positions held, for example as a member of a substance misuse service. The Support Officer also supports the Chairs of the forums to manage the time commitment faced by the Chair of the forum in performing his or her duties.

Members of the community wishing to make a funding application to the Forum can also contact the Support Officer. The Support Officer can assist applicants to complete their application form and offer advice on the current ADP Strategy or other relevant policy or publications. The Support Officer cannot endorse or recommend any application for approval.

It will also be a responsibility of the Support officer to network on behalf of the forums and develop links with other community groups, events and activities.

12. Funding

Income

The Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drug Action Team (ADP) has historically supported the forums by providing annual administration funding. This has now been enhanced to allow forums to gain access to further financial support.

The ADP will decide on what finances are available on an annual basis for the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol, Drugs and BBV Forum. The underlying principle of the ADP Strategy aims to enhance and strengthen the role of the forum and seeks to delegate resources appropriate to support this. The amount of resources may vary annually based on proposed activity and effective use of resources.

Although not prescriptive the ADP partnership requests that funding is used primarily to enhance capacity for communities to be able to provide smaller and less formal support mechanisms for those experiencing difficulty with alcohol and or other drugs. The forum may also wish to invest in awareness raising and other education and prevention methods including training for its local community.

Requests for this funding will be agreed with the ADP Support Team Leader and applied for in writing by the 1st March each year. The application will include a summary of activity from the previous year, a statement of the accounts and any plans or proposals for the year ahead. Any money for the previous year's application not committed by the end of March must be returned to the ADP. Money committed but not yet spent requires agreement in advance with the ADP Support Team Leader.

The forum will be expected to keep a record of its activity across the year and will make use of an Action and Monitoring Update Form throughout the year and submit a completed copy to the ADP at the end of the financial year.

The forum may also consider alternative fundraising methods.

Applications to the Central Aberdeenshire Alcohol Drugs and BBV Forum for Funding

People living and working in Central Aberdeenshire are invited to make funding applications to the forum for small projects or events that will impact on alcohol and drug related issues locally.

Applications are open to all members of the forum (see membership), however projects can approach members to support an application on their behalf. Successful applicants may be requested to become a member and/ or attend forum meetings regularly to update on their project.

Guidance for funding applications and an attached application for funding (Form 1) can be downloaded from the Aberdeenshire ADP web pages, www.aberdeenshireadp.co.uk or by contacting the forum Chair or ADP Support Officer. The ADP Support Officer is available to assist with completing the application form. Applicants looking for larger amounts may wish to contact other forum members for more specialist support with their application.

Completed applications are returned to the forum Chair who will contact at least four members of the forum's financial subcommittee. For smaller or less complex applications a swift decision may be reached through virtual communication by the subcommittee. The full forum at the next scheduled meeting will discuss larger and more complex applications. The subcommittee may choose to meet and discuss applications out with the forum meeting. In the event of any dispute the Chair's decision will be final. All decisions reached will be recorded on application Funding Decision Form (Form 2). This form will be returned to both successful and unsuccessful applicants and included in the next scheduled forum agenda.

Funding Decision Forms will have details of the expectations on the applicant. This will include criteria for reporting on the progress of the project and the accounts. Progress Report Forms (Form 3) will be provided and can be downloaded or obtained from the web site: www.aberdeenshireadp.co.uk.

13. Protection of children/vulnerable adults (all forum members)

In the event that a forum member identifies an area of concern regarding the protection and welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults, that member should in the first instance use the policies and procedures of their own organisation to identify and alert an appropriate agency.

If the member concerned is not a representative of an organization, contact should be made with Aberdeenshire Council Housing/Social Work Department by calling either the out of hours emergency line on: **0845 840070 (Monday-Friday 5.00pm-8.45am or Weekends 24hrs)** or the relevant local social work office. A full list of local offices may be obtained from http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/care/help/living/local_sw_offices.asp.

If the matter is of immediate concern, contact should be made with Grampian police on: **0845 600 5700**. In an emergency (i.e., if a crime is in progress, violence is being used or threatened and/or there is a danger to life) call **999**.