



Keeping Safe

Information for parents
who use drugs or alcohol

Keeping children safe and well.

About Oasis

Oasis Partnership is a local charity offering a range of support services to anyone whose life is affected by their own or someone else's substance use.

This information booklet is for parents who are concerned that their alcohol/drug misuse may be affecting their child and details how best to keep them safe from harm.

It has been designed to help increase your awareness of alcohol/drug related problems and inform you of the support available.

The booklet also tells you of the services on offer at Oasis and on the back you will find some useful telephone numbers if you want further support.

Oasis aims to maximise the funding available for our services however owing to demand there will be times where you may have to wait for certain services.

Our Mission Statement

**Together making a difference; to be the best, not the biggest;
to lead change and not just follow**



What's on offer at Oasis?

Oasis offers a wide range of support services that can be accessed in High Wycombe and Aylesbury. Anyone can refer to Oasis by calling our contact numbers or by popping in to see us. Following a referral you will be invited to our drop in where you can chat about the support available.

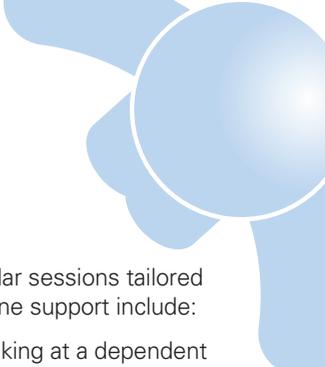
Services include:

Assessment

This involves meeting with a member of the team on a one to one basis to discuss your support needs in more detail and plan your treatment pathway. We will look at your patterns of drinking, your current circumstances and ask you about your own goals. This will help us decide together the best support package for you.

Alcohol Support Group

If you are feeling isolated because of your alcohol use our support groups offer the opportunity to hear from other people in a similar situation.



One-to-one support

There are a range of one to one services available which are regular sessions tailored specifically to your own experiences and goals. Types of one to one support include:

Extended Brief Interventions – Aimed at those who are not drinking at a dependent level. These are short sessions and will help you focus on reducing your drinking to a moderate level or abstinence.

Keyword sessions – These are longer sessions which are aimed at people with more complex alcohol needs. The sessions will be based around your own care plan and, working with partners in the area, will focus on all aspects of your circumstances. People who enter into this treatment service can also discuss potential detox options.

Counselling – Following some keyword sessions counselling may also be beneficial to some. This service will offer a safe environment for you to explore some issues that may be holding you back.

Structured Day Programme

A 16-week day programme for anyone (over 18) seeking support regarding their substance misuse. An initial meeting would be arranged prior to commencement on the project to establish commitment to change.

Aftercare Support

Oasis works with many partners in the area to offer invaluable aftercare and social inclusion support including relapse prevention.

Art Therapy

A chance to try a new way of expressing yourself with our resident artist. This group meets on a weekly basis and develops confidence and self-esteem.

Acupuncture

An ancient method of holistic healing which promotes self-healing. This practice is proven to help the management of symptoms of alcohol and drug misuse.

Benefits of the support from Oasis include:

- Improved health and social functioning
- Shared experiences
- Increased motivation
- Knowledge and ideas
- Awareness of triggers
- Strength and self confidence
- Wider support network.

Although we will endeavour to see you as soon as possible in the drop in it is worth remembering that there may be a waiting period. However there are tea and coffee facilities and a welcoming team to make you feel at ease.

The OASIS Partnership can offer support and advice relating to you and your child. We aim to provide you with the best support to meet the needs of you and your family.



First steps

Don't be afraid to ask for help:

Where possible, involve your wider family in helping you care for your child. In order for them to be able to do this, they need to understand the true picture wherever possible.

Seeking help to address your drug/alcohol use is seen as a positive by all agencies. Develop an open and honest relationship with your drug/alcohol worker. This will help them advise you on the best ways forward.

If people feel you are trying to hide things, they are more likely to doubt you, even when you are being honest with them. Seek help when it's needed and try to listen to and act on the advice given by agencies.

Questions to ask yourself as a parent:

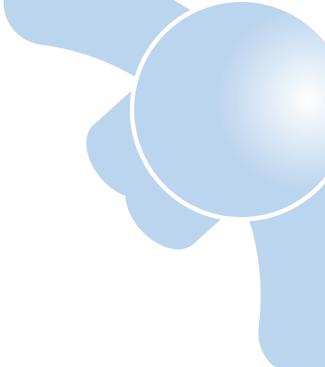
How do you think your drug/alcohol use affects your child? How do you explain your use to your child? Are there any things you would like to change to reduce the affect on your child? Is there any support you feel you and your child need? Is there anyone you can turn to for help? Have you any concerns about your child using drugs/alcohol now or in the future?

Keep your baby safe in bed:

It is dangerous to sleep in the same bed as your baby and young children if you are very tired, have been drinking, using drugs or using prescribed medication as you might forget they're there. In some cases this has led to parents rolling on babies and suffocating them. Don't take your baby or young child to bed with you.

Social Care:

If you misuse drugs and/or alcohol, this does not mean that social workers automatically get involved with your family. Families where there is drug and/or alcohol misuse can still provide a safe, secure and supportive family environment for their children. Overleaf there are some things you can do as a parent that may reduce the affect your drug/alcohol use could be having on your child. Our information sharing policy will be explained to you at your first appointment.



Your Child's Basic Care

Routines

Try to set good daily routines for your child e.g. mealtimes, washing and bedtimes. It is important to get them to school on time and collect them on time, being late is upsetting for your child and may raise concerns with their school and other workers involved with your family.

Health

It is important that your children keep up to date with all medical and dental check ups. If you're pregnant, ensure you keep all of your antenatal appointments as this shows you are looking after your own, and your baby's health needs.

Social needs

Older children may tell you they enjoy looking after the younger ones but it is important that they spend time with children their own age doing things that children do e.g. after school clubs or visiting friends as this helps to build their confidence.

Emotional warmth

Children need to know that you love them, listen to them and that they are important to you. This helps them to feel safe and secure.

Practical needs

It is important you provide enough food and a decent home for your child as this helps to show that you are able to put them first over your drug/alcohol use.

Violence & conflict

It is important to remember that children are always affected by hearing arguments and fighting. Try to keep your disagreements and shouting away from them.

Play

Spending time with your child is more important than buying expensive toys. They learn more from you playing with them, whether that is a walk in the park or playing on the sitting room floor with pots, pans and wooden spoons as this helps to build positive relationships.

Family occasions

Children look forward to birthdays and family occasions e.g. Christmas. By remembering and celebrating them, you're helping your child to learn to plan for the future. If you've promised your child a family outing, try to ensure it happens - this helps your child to trust what you say.

Boundaries

Regularly tell your children what the ground rules are i.e. the difference between what is right and what is wrong? Be realistic in what you expect of them and try not to change the goal posts.

Build confidence

What other children think of your child will be important to them so make sure they're clean and wearing suitable clothing. It is also important that as their parent you behave in a way that makes them proud of you and provide a home they can invite their friends to when they want to. Don't turn up at their school or other appointments drunk or intoxicated.

Role models

It is important to remember that the way children learn most is by copying their parent's behaviour so think about what they see and what they hear!

By courtesy of Sheffield Safeguarding Board.



Drug/Alcohol Use

Safe storage

It is very important to think carefully about where you keep and dispose of medication, drugs, alcohol and equipment connected to your use. Children are curious and enjoy copying their parents, so it needs to be kept out of sight and out of reach of your child. Ask your drug worker for advice and a 'Safer Storage medication box'.

Children should never see drug use

Children should never witness drug use – either your own or friends. Insist that when friends come to visit they do not use in front of your children. Where possible use when the children are not in the house e.g. when they are at school. If you live with your partner and they also use drugs or alcohol, try to use at different times so one of you can look after the children.

“But my kids don’t know that I use” – research shows that from about the age of 4 (often younger) children are aware of their parent’s drinking and drug use, even if you hide it from them as they may hear conversations or see changes in your behaviour.



Visitors

If you have people who use drugs/alcohol coming to your house when your child is there, there will be concern about your child’s welfare. This is because generally, the more contact your child has with drugs/alcohol use, the greater the chance of them being affected by it.

Parental drug/alcohol use

Children may not understand the frustration, anger and change in your mood surrounding withdrawal and change in your behaviour after using drugs/alcohol. Are you still able to meet your child’s needs e.g. take them to hospital if they have an accident? If you’re planning a detox, make sure you have support with childcare, including someone you trust to take and collect your child from school/nursery.

Supervision

Children must never be left home alone or taken with you to get drugs, however young they are. Neither of these is a choice, you need to plan ahead and arrange for a suitable person to look after your child. If you’re involved in criminal behaviour, this will affect your child as this may lead to enforced separation due to arrest, spending time in cells or being sent to prison.

Useful Numbers and websites

Drinkline

0800 917 8282

Drug Fam

08453 883853

Alcohol Concern

020 79287377

Alcoholics Anonymous

0845 7697555

Samaritans

0845 7909090

www.drinkaware.co.uk

www.talktofrank.com

www.units.nhs.uk

www.knowyourlimits.info

How to find us

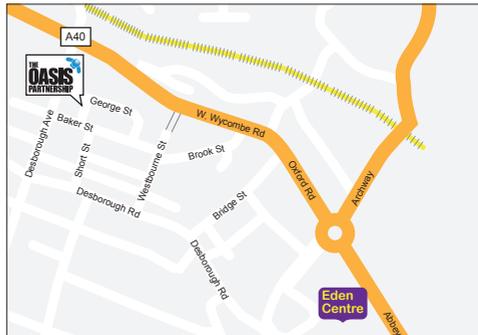
High Wycombe

Oasis House

George Street
High Wycombe HP11 2RZ

Tel: 01494 898480

Fax: 01494 898489



Directions:

Turn onto Baker Street at Victoria Pharmacy and turn left.

Aylesbury

Unity House

98 Walton Street
Aylesbury HP21 7QP

Tel: 01296 338008

Fax: 01296 421585



Directions:

Take the slip road towards the Magistrates Court and turn right.

You can **Email us** on:

info@oasispartnership.org

For more information please visit us at:

www.oasispartnership.org

THE
OASIS
PARTNERSHIP

 **INVESTORS**
IN PEOPLE