

To Whom It May Concern:

The illness of addiction is the only illness that tells you you haven't got one ([redacted] ex-user's life story 2003). A very good and interesting quote, for people who don't understand addiction, the people's who's life it destroys, and the families who have to live with loved one's who suffer from this illness.

It gives me great delight to hear that a panel of States members are coming together to hear the view's of the community and families, regarding the issues surrounding drug and alcohol addiction/abuse and the services the island has to offer or doesn't.....

Let me introduce myself, my name is [redacted] and I am the sister of the late [redacted] was a heroin addict himself for a number of years, before he went into Silk-worth Lodge in January 2003, which I have to say is a blessing to the Island, and was needed along time before it had been set up.

I, myself, left the island 4 years ago, to work in the U.K. with this client group. I have for the last 3 years been working in the care/ housing sector as a support worker/counsellor with individuals and groups of people with drug, alcohol and mental health issues.

I have gained a good, sound knowledge and understanding of this client group and the wide range of services available to them in the surrounding area of Brighton and Hove.

(Please find some leaflets enclosed, for your reference).

The services I am aware that are available on the island are as follows: Silk-worth Lodge

Drug and Alcohol Service.

N.A and A.A. meetings.

Hospital Detox

Drug and Alcohol Counsellor who visits the prison.

There is also emergency accommodation on the island, which I am sure will also have dealings with this client group.

The Shelter

Roseneath Hostel.

On all of these projects set up, I have different opinions, whether they be from myself personally or from views from other people, and of course my brother, whom had direct contact with most of the services.

All of the above named organizations are working towards the same aim and with the same service users. But why is it time and time again, I hear when on my return to the Island that some are working together and some are just not willing: for example, the amount of problems my mother, (whom will also be in contact with you) has had with the Drug and Alcohol service, and this is supposed to be a professionally States funded environment.

Whereas, at Silk-worth, they are very professional and sensitive in their approach to this client group and also encourage family involvement in the recovery of addicts. Another major concern of mine is the hospital Detox. Hospital detox's, I believe only really work, if the service user, after being detoxed has some form of after care available to them, involving group work or rehabilitation, as it is the psychological effects of the drug which have the biggest impact. I have seen many people within the last 3 years go into detox only to come out of hospital too either use or drink again, because of lack of support. It is easy to detox someone in a controlled environment but they need re-educating in their mind, to explore the issues based on their drink or drug usage. Also when they are back in the community, they are no longer in the same environment so they have the freedom to do what they wish and that is normally to go back to the lifestyle they know.

Again, people who have offended and are in prison are in the same position. These individuals have detoxed in prison and I am aware that they do have the support at La Moye. But on their release some have nowhere to go and are directed to the Shelter, where they can easily relapse, back into the same miserable existence, because they are being put back into an environment where they are in contact with either drink or drugs.

This is also a very vulnerable time for them because the body cannot tolerate them using the same amount of drugs as they used to, so overdosing is often a high risk factor. Both the above scenarios are pretty much a vicious circle, because they keep on going round and round.

It would be a good idea to set up specific accommodation for these people, like independent living with support in house and then they can access the support when needed, and also make use of the other services available in the island on top.

I cannot comment much on the N.A and A.A meetings as they are very private, but I do think they are a good idea as everybody is supporting everybody else and the service users feel a little comfort in the fact that they are not on there own in the journey of recovery.

A Drug and Alcohol Councillor is a good idea and I also think that outreach workers visiting homes would be an advantage, to see how individuals are coping, because it can be a very lonely time for people. Also they could offer advice on relapse prevention, money issues, life skills and basically see how they are coping back in the real world. Life on Life terms, as my brother did say, when he left rehab.

Another idea could be a Day course for individuals who would stay in there own homes, or hostel at night, but during the day work on the issues surrounding their drink or drug addiction in a very structured way.

Other States departments could get in involved like employment services, Adult education services and health services.

Boredom is one of the biggest reasons why people relapse. There is no structure to their day.

The Island could also explore alternative medicines that are prescribed to individuals. At the moment I am aware that

Methadone is prescribed, but again this substance is highly addictive and normally users “ Top-Up” with heroin. How about the use of Subutex ? This alternative does not carry as many side-effects.

I do hope some of the above is of use to you. I have only commented slightly on some of the services, and the general idea, is that at times they do not always work in sync with each other. Could this have something to do with funding issues?

I have also shared with you some ideas of what can work from my experience and knowledge, these may or may not work on the island, but there is no harm in expressing them and giving the panel some ideas to think about.

Addiction is a very complex illness and is not as straight forward as people think. It can ruin people’s life, families and communities, which then in turn causes a bigger and wider problem.

There is one last piece of knowledge that I would like to share with you, and that is one of the biggest lessons I did learn whilst working with this client group, and it may seem pretty basic, but recovery has to come from the individual who has the illness.

The individual has to want to change, because it is them, and them only who will be doing the hard work and facing the most scariest journey of there lives, at that is to start facing up to the reality and recognising the illness that tells you haven’t got one.

If you should require any further information from me or
need to get in contact, please use the above address or
telephone me on (home).
(mobile).

Yours faithfully,