

# Alcohol Focus Scotland



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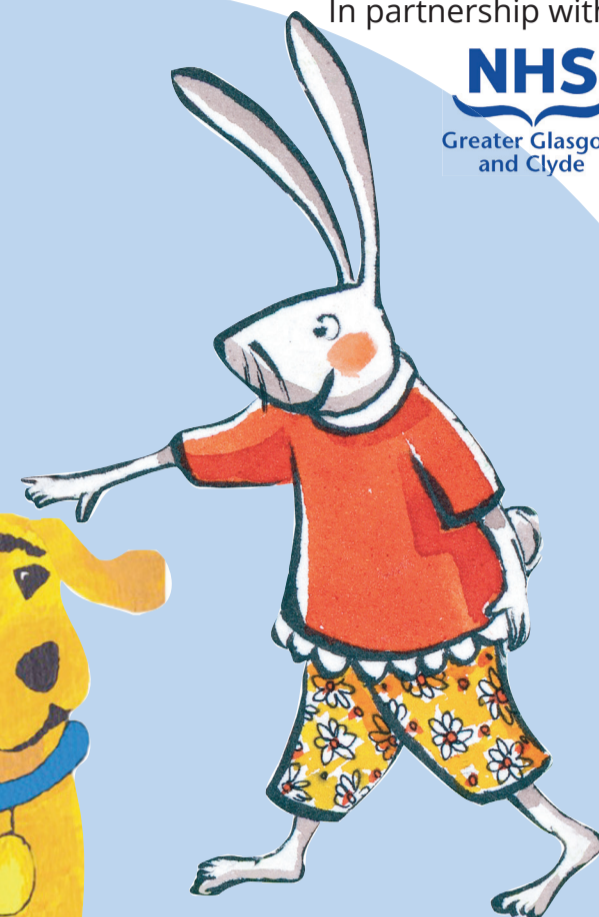
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In partnership with:



## WHAT HAVE A DOG AND A HARE GOT TO DO WITH SCOTLAND'S MOST PRESSING PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN?



This is the story of a dog named Rory, a hare named Lila and a whole range of tactile and digital resources born out of a partnership between national charity **Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS)** and **NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHS GGC)**, Scotland's largest Health Board. Both partners share a desire to see fewer people have their health damaged or lives cut short due to alcohol, fewer children and families suffering as a result of other people's drinking, and communities free from alcohol-related crime and violence.

Image: Alcohol Focus Scotland characters, Rory the dog and Lila the hare.

## THE ISSUE OF ALCOHOL HARM

An estimated 51,000 children and young people live with a parent who has an alcohol problem. But what can we do? Working together, AFS and NHS GGC have been able to develop a response that focuses on helping children and young people to understand that if they have an adult at home who drinks in ways that cause harm, they are not alone, that it is not their fault and help is at hand.

Scotland is on its way to becoming an ACEs aware nation. ACEs are Adverse Childhood Experiences. Having a focus on ACEs matters because research has shown that the negative experiences a child may encounter - including having a parent or main carer with an alcohol or substance misuse problem - can then have a profound long-term negative impact on their health outcomes in childhood and throughout life.

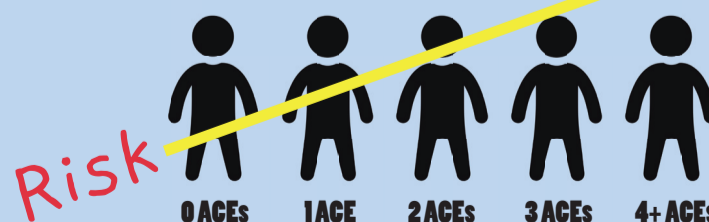
# ACEs

are **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

Three types of ACEs are:



As ACEs increase, so does the risk for negative health outcomes:



Possible negative health outcomes include:

- Drug use
- Missed school/work
- Severe obesity
- Suicide attempts
- Broken bones
- Depression
- Alcoholism
- Diabetes
- STDs
- Heart disease
- COPD
- Smoking
- Lack of physical activity
- Cancer
- Stroke

# A FAMILY OF RESOURCES

This is where the dog, and the hare and the innovative AFS and NHS GGC partnership comes in. In 2007 Alcohol Focus Scotland began producing materials that support work with children, young people and families to develop problem solving and decision-making skills while increasing empathy, resilience and coping techniques. In 2010, NHS GGC have seen the potential to use these resources across education, children's services, family support and treatment services – in both the statutory and third sectors. They have therefore worked with AFS to further develop Oh Lila and Rory into a suite of paper, DVD and online resources.

**Oh Lila!** tells the story of an adventurous young hare called Lila, who gets herself into trouble. Lila goes through a range of emotions before confiding in her friend, Eric the squirrel, who encourages her to seek help from the wise old hare.

The key message behind Lila's story is to ensure children who get into trouble or make a mistake always know that they should not be afraid and instead speak to someone they trust to help them. The resource is widely used in nurseries, family learning centres and early years services.

A second story in the series focuses on Lila's friend Eric who is experiencing the impact of alcohol being used in his home. Again, children learn that it is important to not be afraid or embarrassed but to go to a trusted adult and ask for help if they are being affected by another's alcohol use.

The resources can also be used by practitioners to engage the wider family in the topic by supporting children to create drama, art or music related to the *Oh Lila!* story, which they share with their parents. Lila and her friends are now available digitally with more information for parents and carers too.

[www.ohlila.org.uk](http://www.ohlila.org.uk)

**Rory** is a learning resource focused on the issue of parental alcohol problems. The original story charts the downturn in the life of a dog called Rory as his owner, Fred, develops problems with alcohol. The *Rory* resources can be used in flexible ways to help children understand the feelings they might experience when living with someone who has an issue with alcohol. It fosters understanding and empathy for children in this situation and encourages children to speak to a trusted adult if they have any concerns or need support. Adults reading the book gain a better understanding of the impact of parental alcohol misuse from a child's point of view, creating opportunities for practitioners to discuss potential life style changes if required and available support.

Over the years Rory's story has also developed further, building on the original story text to explore Rory's experience of his owner being in recovery (*Book 2*), and then not being able to care for him due to relapse (*Book 3*). *Book 3* has multiple endings, therefore a supporting practitioner or carer can decide which is most appropriate for the child. The original *Rory* story and resource is used in primary schools and community-based agencies. *Rory Book 2* and *Book 3* are mostly designed for individual use with children. The books focus on the impact these experiences have on Rory, how he feels, the support available to him and asking for help.

[www.roryresource.org.uk](http://www.roryresource.org.uk)

**ADAM** stands for Another's Drinking Affects Me and is an online resource for young people who are concerned about, or possibly affected by, another person's drinking. This can be a parent, sibling, friend or other. The resource acts as a support to the young people affected and offers signposting to support agencies that they can share with others if appropriate. *ADAM* is used by specialist services working with young people across Scotland. *ADAM* is part of [www.chatresource.org.uk](http://www.chatresource.org.uk)

**C.H.A.T** stands for the Children Harmed by Alcohol Toolkit. It brings together *Rory*, *Oh Lila!* and *ADAM* resources. The toolkit was developed in consultation with practitioners from social work, young carers services, community justice and treatment services. *C.H.A.T* is being used by practitioners working outwith education, where a family is affected by someone's alcohol use, such as criminal justice, prisons and community. Practitioners report that the tools available facilitate dialogue and build insight in the participating family.

[www.chatresource.org.uk](http://www.chatresource.org.uk)

## IT IS ALL ABOUT PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND RESILIENCE

If there ever was a truism in the work to reduce alcohol harm it is that '*one size never fits all*'. Tackling the challenges means embedding alcohol policy and practice in both evidence and theory – and what both tell us is that we need to start as early as possible when it comes to alcohol harm work with children and young people across the domains of home, school and community.

**The core protective factors that this little hare and dog (and then *ADAM* and *C.H.A.T*) are concerned with are social and emotional learning, interpersonal relations, communication and resilience.**

There is much talk about what resilience might mean for a child living in adverse circumstances, and so when children read the story of Lila or Rory, or when they hear the stories of the older young people told in the *ADAM* resource, they recognise their circumstances, find support and develop coping techniques, so that they can navigate around and through crises – this is building resilience.



“One of the key values of this relationship is that we very much work together to achieve our individual goals”

- Jane Wilson, Learning & Business Development Lead, Alcohol Focus Scotland

“AFS had been working with the first iteration of the Rory resource and we had begun thinking about using and building on *Oh Lila!* I remember first meeting Linda at our offices in Glasgow and explaining the project and that we were looking to add to the *Oh Lila!* storybooks. I was delighted that NHS GGC agreed to fund the delivery of training and provision of the resource packs in their area. Of course, the resource is really about building resilience and protective factors and at that time Linda was working on the NHS GGC Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Education Model of which resilience was a key strand, so it was a perfect fit. I think Linda really understood what we were trying to do as it very much aligned to NHS GGC’s plan, but it also took some foresight and buy in from both parties to drive this idea forward.

NHS GGC has been supportive of our work and I think one of the most important things about the relationship is that we have maintained it across a long period of time; we have continued to talk with each other and practitioners and build on what was initially introduced to really make an impact. Working together we have developed a whole suite of both paper based and online resources and websites, delivered training and recognised that there has to be ongoing support for practitioners delivering in the field. Because it’s driven, dynamic and changing, the programme is much more effective, and this has allowed us to build relationships with those on the ground who are actually using the resources.

One of the key values of this relationship is that we very much work together to achieve our individual goals. None of this is tick-box. If you are going to collaborate it has to be worthwhile for both partners. AFS wanted to raise the profile and awareness of the harm that can be caused by parental alcohol use. We wanted to ensure that those who have relationships with children such as nursery staff and teachers are equipped to be able to identify and intervene when there is a problem, and we wanted children to have the confidence to ask for help and realise that what is happening is not their fault. NHS GGC have very much shared this vision and building resilience and protective factors is a key element of their alcohol and drug prevention and education model, so our partnership has helped us to achieve our organisational and joint goals”.

“When I first came across the resources it resonated with what I already knew, that alcohol prevention and education work should begin as early as possible. I could see that there was potential that these resources could fill a gap we had at that time, a gap that was informed by our commitment to evidence-based activity in relation to the resilience and protective work streams that are part of our GGC Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Education Model. The value of these resources is that they can be used effectively by existing practitioners who are already skilled and have a genuine rapport with children in early years and primary stage education, to very gently support the children to consider and understand their own and other’s circumstances and introduce the idea of asking for help from a trusted adult. Practitioners do this by taking a holistic approach to developing resilience and protective skills such as decision making, problem solving and empathy and this is vital for children and young people as these skills can be developed further into positive coping mechanisms, rather than relying on alcohol as a solution if things go wrong later in their lives.

NHS GGC are both a funder and a partner in this process. This means we have remained involved throughout, helping to adapt original resources, develop new ideas and shape existing resources so they are fit for purpose and quality assured. This has made us more effective in marketing the training, websites and resources to staff as we truly believe in their value.

I like that Alcohol Focus Scotland are committed to making a real difference in the lives of vulnerable children and their families. AFS have a staff team who develop innovative programmes. It’s clear that they are keen to work with partners such as ourselves in Health Improvement and also those in Education Services, Social Work, Community Safety, Police and the Voluntary sector to make this difference. It’s evident to me that both partners in this relationship are - and have to be - flexible, conscious of our local needs and able to ensure resources and training programmes are evidence based, relevant and cost effective.

For myself and colleagues within NHS GGC, we remain committed to this joint approach because developing resilience in our society is essential if we are to reduce alcohol related harm and the impact it can have on vulnerable children and families. To make a difference we need to invest in evidence based, co-ordinated and consistent approaches and early intervention programmes such as *Oh Lila!* and *Rory*. These programmes have a positive impact on the lives of those engaged as the resilience and protective factors they build are the first very important building blocks required to reduce alcohol related harm in our children”.

“Rarely do you get to do something that is so positive, developmental and evidence-based. I feel that we have invested in a relationship, not just a resource.”

- Linda Malcolm, HI Lead Alcohol & Drugs, NHS Greater Glasgow And Clyde



# The resources timeline...

## 2007

- At a conference organised by the Swiss Institute for Alcohol and Drugs Alcohol Focus Scotland staff are introduced to a story book called 'Boby', a little dog affected by his owner's drinking.
- AFS gets permission to adapt the story for Scotland and the character becomes *Rory*.
- 21st November 2007 AFS launches *Rory Book* at Storytelling centre in Edinburgh.
- AFS develop a short training programme for voluntary sector agencies. Practitioners like the book and ask for supporting materials.

## 2008

- AFS develop the *Rory Resource Pack* which includes a puppet, games and activities.
- The resource is piloted in schools and voluntary sector agencies in West Lothian.



[www.roryresource.org.uk](http://www.roryresource.org.uk)

## 2018

- *Oh Lila!* goes digital – new online interactive resources for early years with online resources available for parents.
- *C.H.A.T Plus* is developed with *Rory Book 3*, a book for looked after children.



## 2017

A *Rory* and *Oh Lila!* Learning Event helps build reach across Glasgow.

## 2016

*C.H.A.T* is formally launched in Glasgow.

## 2015

- *C.H.A.T* training is developed.
- *C.H.A.T* is taken to community justice settings and piloted.

# 2009

AFS launches the *Rory Resource Pack* to support practitioners to use *Rory*.

# 2010

- Again, visiting Switzerland AFS meet a new character, in this book for younger children the Swiss character is called *Oh Lila!*
- AFS get the rights to translate the *Oh Lila!* story for Scotland.
- AFS wants to develop *Oh Lila!* into a resource pack for young children in early years settings.
- NHS GGC and AFS staff discuss the value of the resources and the partnership is born!

# 2011

- *Oh Lila!* is piloted in nursery and school settings in Glasgow and West Lothian, the book is supplemented by additional games and activities.
- The *Oh Lila!* Learning Resource is rolled out and evaluated.

# 2012

The *Rory Learning Resource* is evaluated for use in schools.

# 2013

*Rory Learning Resource* is rolled out across Glasgow City – 72 schools/9 training sessions

# 2014

- The *Oh Lila!* film and web resources are launched.
- *ADAM* a resource for young people affected by another person's drinking is developed and launched.
- The *C.H.A.T* resource is developed and piloted in 9 agencies and organisations that work with families and adults in recovery from alcohol addiction.
- This includes development of new *Rory Book 2* and Eric the squirrel (*Oh Lila! Book 2*) book. Further *ADAM* online resources.



# Pen pictures: USING THE RESOURCE

**Lois Lurinsky, Principal Teacher at Hillhead Primary School talks about Rory:**

"Our school is a large primary school, in an urban environment, serving a very diverse community. We first heard about Rory at the local health co-ordinators meeting, at a time when we were updating our Health and Wellbeing curriculum. We knew that we wanted to be delivering work across the school that would help children understand the impact of alcohol on families and communities.

Hearing about Rory, such a strong character, living in circumstances that the children could understand, helped us build a programme that children connect with at different times, progressively so that they build awareness of alcohol. The Rory puppet is a great part of the resource. We use Rory to help every child understand that they can find someone to talk to about anything that concerns them, and that they can be a good friend by helping others get help when they have a worry.

Our commitment to training across the school has been an important part of the success we have had using Rory. It's available in-house and for everyone. This means that in the 3 years we have been working with Rory the story and the learning have become embedded in our Health and Wellbeing curriculum. Teachers are confident in delivery, and parents like the story too and are happy that we use the resource.

Rory is an important resource that helps us to raise awareness of alcohol and the harm that it can do. He's such a loveable character, very relatable for the children, his circumstances are described sensitively, and the children get a great deal from it".



**Ashlee Meechan from Kidsplay Childcare talks about Oh Lila!**

"Oh Lila! is a fabulous resource for the nursery, it allows the children to understand and express their feelings and emotions, helps them to realise who to approach when they have a problem and what is a good or bad secret.

At first impression it seemed like a good story which was easy to read to the children, using the flip book and the puppets. We made Oh Lila! the main topic for our 3 to 5-year olds for the first month, to allow us to concentrate on the story. We created a floor book and developed a nurturing room where the children can visit and discuss their feelings in different ways using puppets, interactive wall displays, a feeling tree and games. We now have our own nursery hare which the children help to care for daily".



Pen pictures:

# THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DESIGNERS

The creative design of the *Oh Lila!*, *Rory*, *ADAM* and *C.H.A.T* resources is central to their development – how they look and feel is part of their success. The resource designers, Bryan Scott and Helena Ohman, tell us about that experience:



## **Bryan Scott from UTooCreative:**

“With some experience of supporting communication and design around Community Safety and alcohol awareness, UTooCreative got to know about Alcohol Focus Scotland and *Rory* after being commissioned through their NHS partner, Linda Malcolm. Our first job was to help with the animated version of *Rory*. From the outset, as designers, we found Jane at AFS to be very positive, and that has meant that a working relationship has grown over the years. Working in partnership we have produced some impressive and robust paper based and online materials to support delivery of the programmes. As a design company, the work itself is very satisfying as it makes such a difference to so many children’s lives.

Of course, I feel the design element of the resources is very important, children need to engage with what you are trying to say to them and if the subject isn’t portrayed in an engaging manner then they will just switch off. But getting the balance between content and the design is vital as the most important part of the resource isn’t the way it looks, it is the messages that they are portraying. In saying that, I am pretty pleased with how all the resources look! I hope that there is much more to come”.

## **Helena Ohman - Freelance visual artist and filmmaker:**

“I am a visual artist and filmmaker, with a particular interest in working with public sector partners. Having worked on aspects of *Rory*, *Oh Lila!* and *C.H.A.T*, I have had very positive experiences – from clarity about the commission, through to doing and delivering on projects. It is important to build a supportive and close working relationship with my clients, to take time to listen to what they want to achieve with their projects. Sharing the same values with the organisations I work with is very important for me, to be able to communicate the often difficult and challenging messages that they wish to share.

Working with the first *Rory* and *Oh Lila!* film commission, I learned how important and invaluable these resources are – for example, how children can easily identify with *Rory*, build confidence and learn to empathise with other children. The books, puppets, DVD and games, and also the training and support of teachers and practitioners, are all important design elements that have proven to help many children open up and talk about their own experiences with alcohol. The design of the resources, a playful yet thoughtful way of learning about a difficult subject, makes these resources so accessible and successful.

The collaboration over the years has been very successful and as a creative practitioner I am delighted to have had the opportunity to use my skills and expertise to be part of producing these very important pieces of work - resources that help change children’s lives”.



# HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN THE SUCCESS OF OH LILA!, RORY, ADAM AND C.H.A.T?



**The resources have come out of an organic and evidence-informed journey.**

Discovering the Swiss Institute for Alcohol and Drugs publication and the use of a little dog to communicate with children was fortuitous. This character enabled Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS) to construct a new approach to engaging with children and families on the issue of alcohol harm and how it impacts them. With a visionary partner and funder like NHS GGC willing to develop evidence-based, innovative and collaborative practice, *Rory* and *Oh Lila!* were born.

**The importance of training**

Access to all of the resources is linked to participation in training. On-going support is provided through the *Oh Lila!* and *Rory* websites and practitioner events. Over 1400 professionals have attended one of 103 sessions provided and have been trained in the use of *Oh Lila!*, *Rory* or *C.H.A.T*.

Training and support has become such an important aspect of the AFS and NHS GGC partnership. This followed the realisation that the effectiveness of any intervention is highly dependent on the relationship

between the adult facilitator and the child or young person. So, it is important to consider the confidence, skills and values of the person using the resource. Scotland's relationship with alcohol is at the very heart of all practitioner training. Time is also given in training to thinking about alcohol harm in the context of families and how we can support children and young people to understand what is happening and to seek support and help.

Central to the training, and something that emerges strongly from evaluation, is that training helps

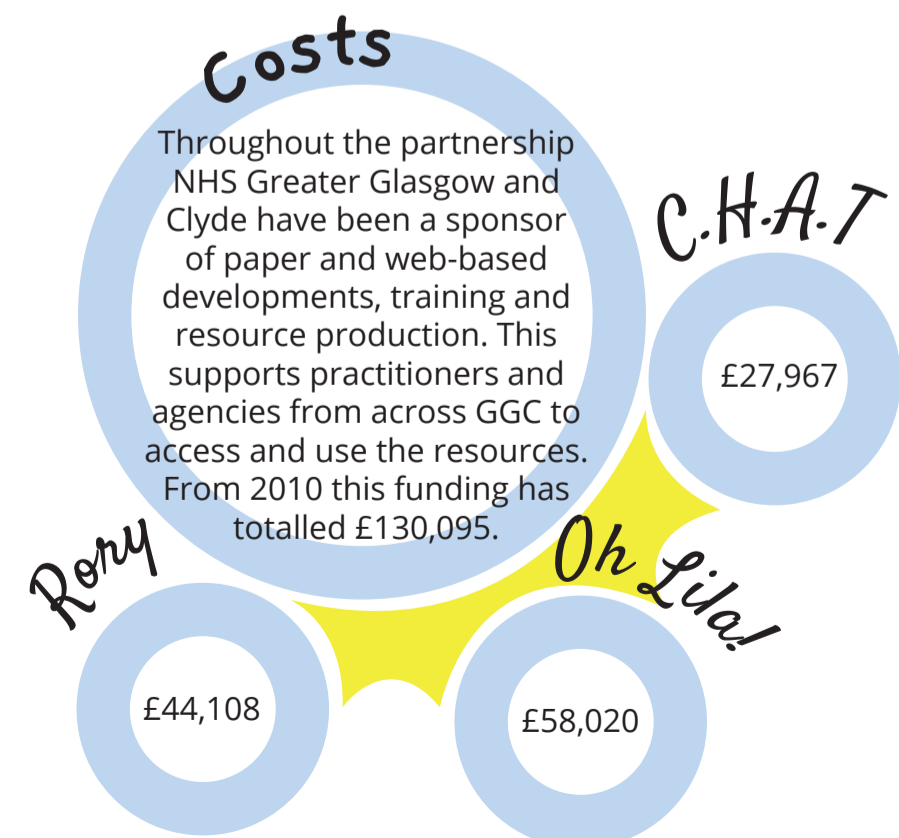
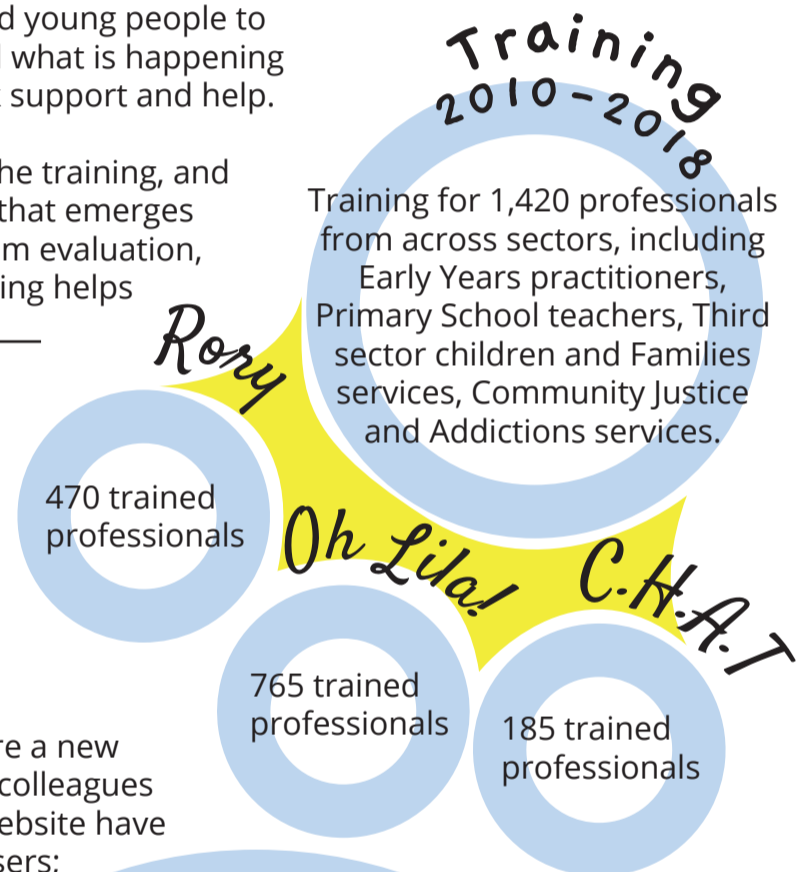
practitioners to build confidence and skills in key areas: discussing alcohol consumption with children and young people, identifying children or young people affected by parental drinking, raising the issue with a child or other family member, and managing a disclosure from a child or family member about a family member's harmful drinking.

## Resource Pack dissemination

With funding support from NHS GGC and in association with the training delivered since 2010 *Rory*, *Oh Lila!* and *C.H.A.T* packs are in use across the region – 516 in total! *Oh Lila!*: 260 packs in Early Years and Nursery settings, *Rory*: 204 packs in Primary schools, *C.H.A.T*: 52 packs across a mix of children and family service providers.

## Digital resources

As our digital lives mature *Rory*, *Oh Lila!*, *C.H.A.T* and *ADAM* - online resources are a new platform to increase reach, access and influence when it comes to supporting colleagues in their work with children, young people and families. Number of times the website have been visited: *ADAM/CHAT* – 6,423 individual users; *Oh Lila* – 2,635 individual users; *My Family & Alcohol* – 7,290 individual users; *Rory* – 11,639 individual users.



**“My initial concern was about how I might raise the issue, but I realise now that Rory will give me a secure and safe framework.”**

- *Rory* training participant

**“We enjoyed the training. It got us to think about things differently.”**

- *Oh Lila!* training participant

**“It gives me the tools to look for harm without judgement.”**

- *C.H.A.T* training participant

Report design: [artistrossrobertson.com](http://artistrossrobertson.com)  
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