

**The Polish Family Project:
A Pilot Support Program for Individuals and Families
Affected by Domestic Violence and Alcohol Misuse**

**Dr Dina P. Sidhva
Multi Cultural Family Base**

PREFACE

On behalf of MCFB, I am pleased to present the “Polish Family Project Pilot” report; funded by the City of Edinburgh Council. The Polish Family Project Pilot (PFP) supported Polish individuals and families affected by domestic violence and alcohol misuse, by helping them to rebuild their lives, through a holistic, planned intervention. The PFP spearheaded the process of enabling service users, in particularly arduous situations to rebuild their lives. It encouraged them to find the means to accomplish and sustain their lives, and to plan a future for themselves, by offering support and information that helped them to develop greater control over their lives.

To do this, the pilot delivered a service that met high professional standards and operated in an environment that recognized human dignity and worth and respected the service users. The PFP excelled in creating a caring environment that enabled service-users to work toward life changes in their present, such that they are able to achieve and maintain a future.

One of the key successes of the PFP was the 1:1 work—to be able to support service users to rebuild their lives, at a point when every aspect of their life and/or the lives of their children was in a crisis. Another major achievement was the ability to reach out to over 40 service users (in the short span of three months) who were isolated and unable to access services that they truly needed. What was somewhat less successful was its inability to meet the needs of the large numbers of individuals who requested support.

At the heart of this pilot was a desire to understand what the needs of migrant Polish individuals and their families affected by domestic violence and alcohol misuse were. Along with this was a desire to illuminate the impact and significance that the PFP has had in enabling individuals and families from the Polish community to rebuild their lives. And crucially to consider how this innovative Pilot can be disseminated and progressed such that some of the outcomes achieved may be sustained and built on.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of all those persons who were involved in this Pilot Project. I thank the City of Edinburgh Council and in particular the CYPSP, for their proactive support that made this creative pilot possible. I also thank Kasia Raszewska, the PFP worker, without whom this Pilot would have not been possible. Her experience, insight and contribution to both the Pilot and this Report are pivotal. Her commitment and intuitive grasp of the Polish psyche coupled with her natural zeal to support fellow-Polish people, made collaborating with her a purposeful experience. I thank her for her time and inputs through every stage of this pilot. I would like most especially to thank all the service users, who with their candour and sincerity transformed a research activity into a meaningful exercise. Listening to their diverse voices has enabled an inclusive, open dialogue about the merit and worth of the project, and about the future needs of the community. Equally to thank the volunteers whose steadfastness and dedication goes such a long way in bettering the lives of vulnerable individuals; and Callum McLeod, Community Learning and Development Worker and the Fort Community Association for providing a 'home-way-from home' for Polish people in Edinburgh.

Finally I would like to thank my colleague and Chief Executive Cathy Macnaughton for all her continued efforts and support from the very inception of the Pilot, and my colleagues John Boughey and Yun Zhang for their approach to effective performance management and in their capacity to plan effectively.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the overwhelming response of the service-users who were interviewed for this pilot. According to these service-users, being involved with PFP has changed their lives, and as its name suggests, has truly given them an opportunity to live more meaningfully with their families and loved ones.

1. Number of women, men, and children served

The Polish Family Project (PFP) was the first support project specifically intended for women and children who are affected by domestic violence and alcohol misuse targeted at new Polish immigrants living in Edinburgh. It generated a lot of interest and revealed considerable need in the community. A large number of women and some men (10 individuals affected by domestic abuse and 30 individuals affected by alcohol misuse) made inquiries. These were individuals who have been looking for support and were not able to receive it earlier due to language/ cultural barriers and lack of knowledge of agencies and legislation. Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown for individuals making inquiries.

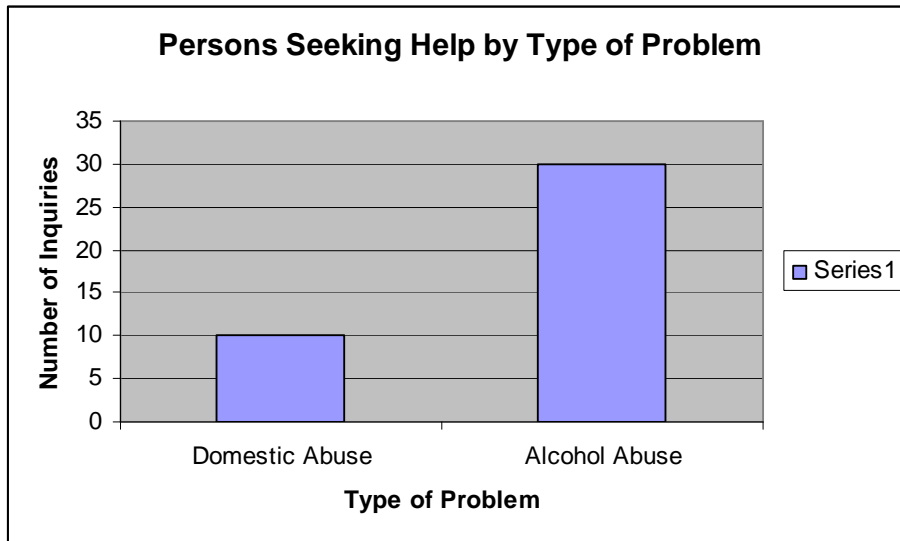


Figure 1. Graphic depiction of inquiries into services.

The PFP worked intensively with five women, two men, and three children. The breakdown of the reasons for seeking service is depicted in Figure 2.

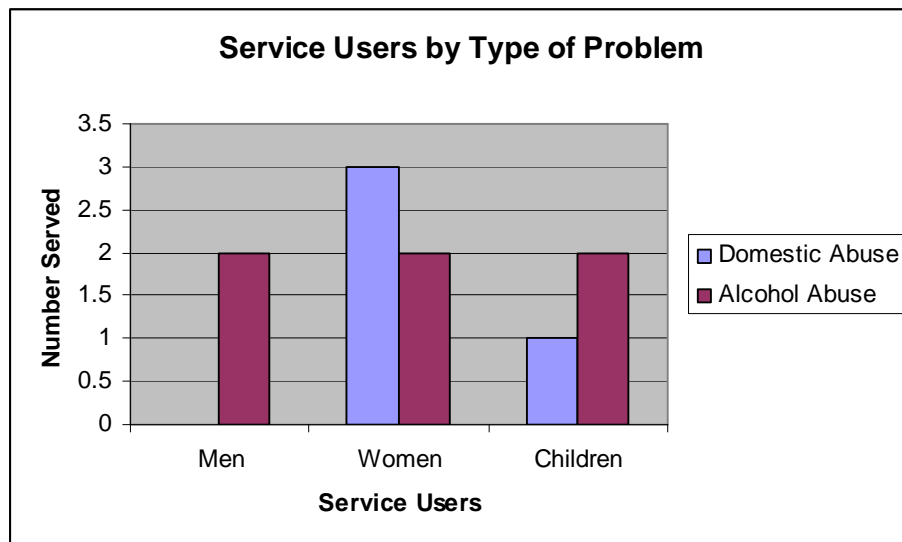


Figure 2. Reasons for seeking help.

Among the three women affected by domestic violence who were served, one was on medication for depression, and another also lived with a partner who was misusing alcohol.

2. How service users were drawn to the PFP

Service users came to the program from a number of sources. The particulars for each source are given below.

- **Service Users who were already using Swietlica (the name given to the Polish Drop-in):** Volunteers at Swietlica were regularly approached by women and children affected by domestic violence, housing problems and alcohol misuse. These individuals were looking for complex support, including welfare advice and practical information. Many were in desperate situations such as homelessness or a state of crisis due to domestic violence and alcohol misuse. Each week there were up to a 100 people attending the drop-in, and most required information and advice. About 80% of visitors to the drop-in do not speak English, and thus Swietlica is the first point of contact for them (GP, housing, employment, language courses, primary and secondary education of children, translation of letters).
- **Service users from the Polish Support Group:** Some service users were already being supported by volunteers from the Polish Support Group at Swietlica.
- **Individuals who responded to advertisements:** A number of service users came in response to advertisement flyers, which were placed in Swietlica, Polish shops, businesses, churches, and community centres.
- **Individuals who responded to an Internet ad on szkocja.net:** The Project was advertised on szkocja.net, which is viewed by approximately 470, 000 unique visitors per month, generating about 8,500,000 page views.
- **Individuals who learned by word of mouth**

3. Key Issues for the women, men and children affected by domestic violence and alcohol misuse

A number of key issues were common among the service users. They include the following:

- Access to mainstream services due to lack of language needs.
- Inability to make use of help offered in English, e.g. attend AA groups, receive counselling, or call police when there is a domestic violence incident at home.
- Lack of support networks: Mothers and children were unable to escape when there was a domestic violence incident, as the majority have no extended family here.
- Lack of ability to report abuse experiences: Children who are new arrivals are unable to speak about being victims of domestic violence or alcohol misuse to their teachers, priests, or other officials due language barriers. It is already

very difficult to reveal that sort of information in your own language, but it is almost impossible to do it if you do not speak English.

- Fear of disclosure: Children of new arrivals were often discouraged to speak about family problems due to fear of social work involvement and children being taken into care.
- Fear of not being able to explain things properly to social worker when it is revealed that there is domestic violence or alcohol misuse in the house. Women fear that they will not be able to explain why they stayed while the misuse was happening and thus will be thought of as responsible for the abuse towards their own children.
- Lack of knowledge of rights and entitlements: Women did not have the knowledge about their rights, and particularly knowledge of who is responsible when a man is abusive. They were also unaware that victims may be entitled to extra support due to abuse. (e.g. being entitled to housing support when fleeing domestic violence).
- Lack of access to public funds: Many women and children do not have access to public funds because they are not registered with the Workers Registration Scheme. Part of the project was about raising awareness of this.

4. Lessons Learned from the Pilot Project

This was a pilot project, and one of the outcomes was the discovery of a number of important facts about the needs of this population and the particular barriers to service that they experience. These issues are described below.

- Women and children did not want to use interpreters when meeting GPs, Consultants, Police, and other officials to discuss their problems with being victims of domestic violence. The reason for this was that the service users were afraid that they might know the interpreter, who might later reveal the information further into the community. This was a huge issue for most service users who did not speak very good English. Around 90 % of the PFP service users required the support of a Polish speaking worker, as they did not speak English well enough to communicate their issues and receive support.
- Women and children need to be informed about their rights and entitlements. The service users were often surprised that they are entitled to help and support when in crisis, e.g., from a domestic violence incident.
- Many in the Polish community are reluctant to talk about family problems such as domestic violence, alcohol misuse, or poor housing, for fear of children being taken into care: there seems to be an understanding of that aspect of Child Protection intervention.
- Flexibility of the worker is very important. Often the women would not want to meet at the drop-in or other known facility, but would telephone and ask to meet at a coffee place where they do not know anyone and it is less likely that people from their own community would recognise them.
- Alcohol misuse is common in the Polish community, and there are no support services offered in the Polish language for people affected by this problem. People dependent on alcohol approached the project themselves to ask for referrals to local services (therapy, groups, counselling) but they would not

approach these services directly, giving such reasons as, 'My English is not good enough' and 'I feel ashamed to talk about it in front of an interpreter.'

- Providing support to individuals affected by domestic violence and alcohol misuse was crucial. It was very important for them to feel supported, and the relief of many service users was palpable.

5. Future Needs

This pilot project has uncovered a number of needs for future services, including the following:

- A free support service for members of the Polish community where they can access information and help when in need.
- A dedicated worker for this population. There were a number of children and vulnerable women who were not supported due to the lack of time and the large number of people requiring help.
- Continuing support for service users, particularly vulnerable women and children.
- Coordination and liaison with other agencies.
- Immigration Advice particularly in relation to the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS); Polish citizens as EU8 citizens need to register to work in the UK: this is linked to entitlement to benefits. If you are self-employed, you do not need to register with the scheme (www.workingintheuk.gov.uk).
- Providing legal advice and cultural interpretation in situations involving domestic violence and child protection.
- Providing legal advice and information re: family law, divorce, custody of children, separation advice)
- Promoting Positive Parenting and Relationship Counselling for individuals and families
- Provide skills, information and advice on vocational guidance and other skill based opportunities.
- Support personal and professional development through further education and adult education, access courses and volunteering
- Provide skills such as: interview skills, application form skills, developing a winning CV and assisting in job searches
- Liaise with potential employers on issues related to employing Polish migrants, such as language barriers
- Provide information about health issues such as: mental health, substance abuse and addictions, women's health education, sex education for young people and children
- Provide support to families affected by domestic violence: need for an Emergency safe accommodation, help with finding private accommodation and accessing public housing
- Provide support to families affected by alcohol misuse: developing culturally appropriate services and appropriate interpreting service for Polish community, working together with NHS to provide services for people dependent on alcohol, those recovering from alcohol misuse and their families.

6. What difference has the pilot made?

This small-scale pilot project has served as a starting point for developing services for the Polish migrant population. Accomplishments include the following:

- Starting a process of informing vulnerable new arrivals (mainly women and children) of their rights, entitlements, and responsibilities
- Allowing the establishment of new links with existing agencies such as NHS, Police, Domestic Violence projects, Community Centres, Equalities Unit, etc.
- Aiding in the prevention of serious problems for service users (children being taken into care, housing eviction, child abuse at home).
- Garnering attention from NHS, Police, and other officials.
- Establishing Swietlica as a Remote Reporting Centre.
- Supporting independent self-help groups, which have emerged during the course of the project for domestic violence and alcohol misuse.
- Increasing awareness of available support systems among new arrivals.
- Service Users reported that their lives had changed for the better

7. Case Study examples of the work of the PFP: Kamila and Ola

The work of the PFP can be illustrated by these vignettes, which provide the accounts of individuals who made use of PFP services. The identifying details have been removed and the names have been changed in order to preserve the confidentiality of each service user.

Kamila

Kamila was born in a town in Plock in 1980. Her parents divorced, and Kamila and her sister lived with her mother. The family was poor, and the mother received assistance from the state. Kamila's mother became ill with cancer, which later went into remission. The mother and sister still live in Poland. The sister works on a farm, and the mother continues to receive some government support.

Kamila completed primary school and vocational training at a technical school. She was trained as a professional cook. She worked as a food preparation worker in local restaurants.

Kamila met her boyfriend Kuba at age 23. They lived together and she worked two jobs. He also worked at various jobs. He had a particular interest in the outdoors, and worked as a guard at a seaside resort. They could not make enough money, however, and eventually they decided to move to Edinburgh to look for better paying work.

Kuba moved to Edinburgh in the summer of 2006. He had trouble finding work at first and had to borrow money to survive. He attended the Drop-in service, where he met someone who helped him find a job that paid well enough for him to have Kamila join him in Edinburgh. He arranged to rent a flat from a friend, but two days after Kamila arrived in Edinburgh, the friend changed her mind, and Kamila

and Kuba became homeless. Despite the fact that he was making good money, they ended up living in a tent from August to November of 2006. They had no sanitary facilities and often had to go many days without bathing.

During that time, Kamila lost her job, and she found out that she was pregnant. She got a job as a cleaner in an industrial building, but she was forced to give it up because the heavy lifting had an adverse affect on her pregnancy.

Kamila and Kuba sought help at homeless units in Edinburgh, but she was not allowed to sleep there. She and Kuba were able to use the services of the Homeless Centre during the day, and there they met an alcoholic man who allowed them to stay in his home. Later she and Kuba and some other people moved in with another individual who was also an alcoholic. This was a very unpleasant environment, which Kamila described as damp, disgusting, and smelling of alcohol. Six people shared one room, and Kamila was the only woman. The men would often get drunk and fight with one another. Kamila and Kuba only slept there at night. They spent their days at the Homeless Centre or at the Christian Sisters' convent.

After one month in the shared flat, one of the men who was Scottish got another flat, and invited Kamila, Kuba, and two other Polish people to live there with him. Although she and Kuba have their own room, Kamila states that this setting is also very unpleasant and dangerous. The Scottish man they are living with is often drunk, and he becomes combative and careless when drinking. Recently he started a fire in the flat, and if Kamila had not gotten up, they could all have been killed. The other problem is that Kuba also has a problem with alcohol, which is getting worse while he is living with other people who drink often. He developed problems with excessive drinking around 1998, and this has continued to be an issue between them. He is a binge drinker, and his periods of drinking may last anywhere from three days to two weeks to a month. He often becomes quite ill after he has been drinking, and he has been in and out of detox a number of times as a result. There is some history of physical abuse by Kuba, usually related to his drinking, but Kamila states that he has not been abusive since she got pregnant.

At this time Kamila is not clear at all what she will do after the baby is born. She and her partner have no prospects for work back in Poland, and they cannot expect financial help from their families.

PFP has provided information about legal, housing and welfare rights and options, intensive practical and emotional support on a one-on-one basis and material support via the community based Drop-in and discussed crisis and safety planning. Moreover she has a volunteer from the Drop-in who supports her, because she does not speak the language. They referred Kamila to the Housing Department for homeless assistance, but she was told that she can only receive five days of housing and a return ticket to Poland. At this point the baby is due in less than two months, so she could not fly back to Poland even if she wanted to go, and she feels that a 30-hour bus trip would be too difficult in her current condition.

PFP has now made another application for housing in her name; as Kuba is now working part-time, but this is not sufficient to entitle them to benefits. Either she or Kuba must work full time and pay National Insurance contributions in order to receive benefits. Kuba is working temporary jobs, however, and it is never certain whether they will have enough money for food and basic needs. Kamila continues to receive assistance from the PFP. She indicates that she feels very much supported by the PFP—she does not know how she would survive without this support.

She said: “I hope I can continue to be supported to rebuild my life in Edinburgh... Right now I need help at each stage along the way, but I will soon be able to be independent and work and give back to this country what I have received from it. The Project worker has made a difference that is beyond description in my life: she has given me hope to go on and to look forward to the future. I believe that such Projects are crucial for the well being of migrant women such as me, who are living in the shadow of domestic violence and alcoholism, away from their homes in a new land and different surroundings”.

Ola

Ola is a 38-year-old divorced woman with two sons. The older daughter, Halina, is 18 years old and still living in Poland. She has visited his mother in Edinburgh and would like to join her here, but he is involved with a young woman who does not want to leave Poland. The younger daughter, Marysia, is 9 years old and now lives with her mother in Edinburgh.

Ola had her own house cleaning business for about four years while she was still living in Southeast Poland—she employed about seven people. Then the economic conditions changed and the business was forced to close. She was without work for about six months, during which time her partner, Stefan, moved to Edinburgh seeking economic opportunities. Ola came to Edinburgh to visit Stefan, intending to stay for three to six months.

When Ola arrived in Edinburgh, she was surprised to find a good-sized community of Polish people, who made her feel welcome. She found that she really liked the culture in Edinburgh, and she realized that she really didn't feel at home in Poland any more. Visa difficulties made it impossible for her to return to Poland for over a year, and she decided to remain in Scotland. As Ola put it, *“I feel here that this is my right place; so after just a week here I called my mum and said I might stay here for good. I feel here at home, I feel here better than Poland.”* Ola has now lived in Edinburgh for about three years.

Although Ola preferred to live in Edinburgh, she did become homesick for her family. She had to leave her daughters behind when she first moved to Scotland, and she missed them terribly, particularly at Easter and Christmas. She broke up with her partner, though they remained friends. She also missed her parents, who visited her two years ago after years of separation, and this was a joyous time for her. Her younger daughter, Marysia, came to Edinburgh last autumn and remained with her, but Halina returned to Poland to be with her boyfriend.

Ola has a history of difficulties with alcohol misuse that goes back several years. She realized that alcohol was a problem for her when she was still living in Poland and sought therapy there. She was able to quit drinking for about two years, but then her marriage broke up and she began drinking again. She again sought therapy and stopped drinking for a while. After she came to Scotland, she began drinking again after about a year. During this time she had no job and nothing to do, and she was very lonely for her children. She began drinking, at first only on weekends, but gradually the use of alcohol began to dominate her life, until she was spending entire days alone drinking. After Marysia came to live with her she restricted her drinking until after he was in bed, but she realized that she needed to do something about the problem.

Ola was acquainted with a person who was recovering from alcohol misuse who made use of the Drop-In services at the PFP. Through his assistance, she was connected with the PFP worker, who referred her to an AA group. Ola found the AA group helpful, but it was conducted in English, and she realized there was a need for a similar service for people who spoke only Polish. She and a friend began a self-help group for alcoholics that was conducted in Polish. She has found this group to be very important and helpful. As Ola remarked, ***“[It] is really important-- because it is difficult for me to talk about feelings in my own language and in English it is more difficult--sometimes impossible to talk about what I have got inside me.”***

Ola has worked at a number of jobs since coming to Edinburgh. She started out at cleaning buses, but then got the opportunity to work as a cook for a French man who ran a restaurant in Edinburgh. She learned to cook really well, staying for about a year. Since then she has had various cooking jobs. She currently works as a receptionist about 20-25 hours per week. This job allows her to be at home with Marysia when she is out of school, so it is a good fit for her. Ola would like to someday open her own restaurant—a Polish take-away--and feature foods from Poland that might appeal to other expatriates in the area.

Ola has received assistance from the PFP in a number of vital areas. She was assisted in getting a Council flat for herself and her son, and she has also been given help in the process of applying for financial assistance and other services. The emotional and practical support she has received have gone a long way to draw her out of isolation and get her on the road to independence. Ola stated, ***“The PFP has helped me in every imaginable way, with all the basics and practical things. At the same time the worker and the volunteers have provided me with emotional support at a very difficult time, when I needed it the most: moving in to a new home and stopping to drink.”***

To sum up her experience with the PFP, Ola said, ***“The PFP has helped me to get back a part of my life that I felt I had lost because of my drinking, to be able to enjoy my life with my children, to be a part of society, and to be able to look forward to the next day. I think we need more people who can support the community at this time of change and flux. Our children need support to speak English; that is the most important, because they have to be in a world where they can be seen as equals.”***

Issues addressed while working with Kamila (K) and Ola (O)

Issues Addressed	Referrals and Services Accessed
Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Unit (Housing Department--K, O) • Domestic Violence Unit (K)
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacting prospective employers (K) • CV Writing (K, O)
Lack of English language skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English lesson classes (K)
Lack of information regarding benefits and entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support (K) • Access Entitlement (K, O) • Sure Start Maternity Grant (K) • Crisis Loan (K) • Child Benefit/Tax Credits (O) • Housing Benefit (K, O) • Equalities Unit (K, O)
Need for core services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools (O) • Community Police (K, O) • Doctors (K, O) • Midwife (K) • Bank (K, O) • Interpreting Service (K) • Social Work¹ (K, O) • Procurator Fiscal (K, O)
Need for help settling into new home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity and Gas (O) • Bethany Furniture / Edinburgh Furniture Initiative (O) • Freecycle (Yahoo) (O) • Catholic Church (K, O)

8. Case Study example of services to a child: Marysia

¹ The City of Edinburgh Council provides a range of help and support to vulnerable people in crisis, through the Health and Social Care and Children and Families Departments.

Marysia, Ola's 9-year-old daughter, has also received services from the PFP. She was interviewed about her experiences as well.

Marysia has been living in Edinburgh for the past few months after joining her mother. Prior to that she lived with his father and saw his grandparents and her older sister often. Nonetheless, she described his life in Poland as difficult. She was subject to bullying at school, and she missed her mother.

Marysia indicated that her life was also very difficult when she first moved to Edinburgh. She knew very little English, and he had trouble expressing herself and making her needs known at school. But Marysia was most troubled by her mother's drinking. Ola would often be upset or sad, and at times she would go out and leave her alone. She felt terrified and helpless at those times, because she did not speak enough English to ask anyone for help. She would call her sister in Poland and ask to go back home.

Marysia's situation has improved considerably since the family began receiving services from the PFP. The most important thing for her has been her mother's recovery from alcohol misuse. She is happier and spends more time with her, and she feels more secure and comfortable now that she is sober. Marysia also attends weekly sessions at Swietlica, and she reports that this service is very important to her—she wishes he could go more than once a week.

Marysia also receives services from a volunteer who comes once a week. The volunteer plays games and teaches her things, and she really enjoys it.

Marysia describes her current life as happy and content. She still misses her father and sister, and she hopes that they will one day move to Edinburgh so that they can all be together. She looks forward to summer visits with her father in the meantime. As Marysia put it, *"I can see colours and everything looks beautiful to me: I see my mum she is smiling, she plays with me sometimes she is cooking and sometimes she is on the computer, so it is all very good, and I can talk a lot to her, so that is great. Every day I feel happier and happier and happier; I tell her that every day"*.

9. Impressions from the case study vignettes

Each of the three service users has a unique story—but in a way they are typical too: not an exception. Together these stories help to paint a picture of the population served by PFP and of the benefits that PFP brings to these individuals. These service users were dealing with a host of issues that are directly and indirectly related to their migrant status. Issues such as lack of awareness, isolation, hardships, and struggle are common in this group, and these issues present barriers to participation in more traditional social services. The special quality of safety offered by PFP, together with the down-to-earth, approachable attitude of the worker and the volunteers, have helped to begin the process of breaking down these barriers and connecting these individuals to the services they need. More in-depth research is required to develop a deeper understanding of the social, economic and cultural processes, which impinge on the lives of Polish individuals and families in Edinburgh, in light of "Changing Lives (Scottish Executive, 2006)", the report of the 21st Century Social Work Review Report.

10 Conclusion

Polish children and their families in Edinburgh are a section of our society with varied vulnerabilities and rapidly growing needs. The Polish Community Support Group started in December 2005 as an independent community group by Polish volunteers in response to a growing number of requests for information and crisis support from new economic migrants highlighted that a number of Polish children and their families were affected by issues of domestic violence and alcohol misuse and the urgent need to provide a service.

This pilot project “The Polish Family Project Pilot” (PFP) funded by the City of Edinburgh Council has enabled MCFB to employ a full-time Polish-speaking worker to provide follow-up support to Polish children and families affected by these issues. The supports included needs assessments, help with assessing available services, risk assessments and the provision of information; and included a strong link with statutory social work teams with the aim of reducing the risk of homelessness and harm to children.

The PFP has spearheaded the process of enabling service users, in particularly arduous situations to rebuild their lives. One of the key successes is the 1:1 work at a point when every aspect of their life and/or the lives of their children was in a crisis. Another major achievement was the ability to reach out to over 40 service users (in the short span of three months) who were isolated and unable to access services that they truly needed. It encouraged them to find the means to accomplish and sustain their lives, and to plan a future for themselves, by offering support and information that helped them to develop greater control over their lives. The special quality of safety offered by PFP, together with the down-to-earth, approachable attitude of the worker and the volunteers, helped to begin the process of breaking down these barriers and connecting these individuals to the services they need. What was somewhat less successful was its ability to meet the needs of the large numbers of individuals who requested support.

The key issues evidenced by the PFP were: access to mainstream services due to lack of language needs; inability to make use of help offered in English, lack of support networks, lack of ability to report abuse experiences, fear of disclosure and social work involvement, lack of knowledge of rights and entitlements and access to public funds.

Additionally the PFP has uncovered a number of needs for future services, such as a free support service for members of the Polish community where they can access information and help when in need; a dedicated worker, the need for continuing support for service users, particularly vulnerable women and children; coordination and liaison with other agencies; immigration and legal advice, promoting ‘positive parenting and relationship counselling’, the provision of a service that undertakes to support individuals and families around four crucial areas: employment, health, domestic violence and alcohol misuse.

Finally, this small-scale pilot has served as a starting point for developing services for the Polish migrant population. Accomplishments include the following: starting a process of informing vulnerable new arrivals (mainly women and children) of their rights, entitlements, and responsibilities; facilitating the establishment of new links with existing agencies such as NHS, Police, Domestic Violence projects, Community Centres, Equalities Unit, etc.; aiding in the prevention of serious problems for service users (children being taken into care, housing eviction, child abuse at home); garnering attention from NHS, police, and other officials; establishing Swietlica (the name given to the Polish Drop-in) as a Remote Reporting Centre; supporting independent self-help groups which have emerged during the course of the project for domestic violence and alcohol misuse.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the overwhelming response of the service-users who were interviewed for this pilot. According to these service-users, being involved with PFP has changed their lives, and as its name suggests, has truly given them an opportunity to live more meaningfully with their families and loved ones.