

Patrons: Tony Adams MBE • Olly Barkley • Calum Best • Lauren Booth • Geraldine James OBE • Elle Macpherson • Suzanne Stafford CQSW • David Yelland

Press Release – for immediate release

COA Week Giving a voice to the 1 in 5 children affected by their parent's drinking

Nacoa (The National Association for Children of Alcoholics) is celebrating Children of Alcoholics Week (14 – 20 February 2016) a friendly voice reaching out to the 2.6 million children in the UK living with parental alcohol problems.

COA Week is an international campaign to raise awareness of the millions of children around the world being affected by parents who drink too much.

“Without help these children become lost in the system; they grow up feeling un-noticed at best and abused at worst. Nacoa’s work is all about planning for a positive future – helping them to transform their negative beliefs about themselves into an ‘I can do’ attitude.” COA Week supporter and Nacoa Patron, Elle Macpherson

Craig Revel Horwood, Calum Best, Marco Pierre White and Kim Woodburn are also among the many celebrity supporters of COA Week.

Despite the prevalence of drink problems, there is still a long way to go to dismantle this taboo subject. Demonising people with drink problems prevents them and their children from asking for help. This year, Nacoa wants to see COA Week reach even more people. Media agencies, businesses, charities and the general public are all invited to get involved.

Nacoa Trustee, John Fenston, explains: “For many children a Nacoa volunteer will be the first person they talk to about their parent’s drinking. Our work is crucial because as a first point of contact we can help children regardless of whether their parents continue to drink. We want other charities and organisations to work with us to promote COA Week. Together we can give these children the chance of a brighter future.”

“For Nacoa to survive in the digital age and respond to today’s need with many young people living their lives online and through their smart phones, an online presence is vital. The world is a different place to when the charity started in 1990, a time when children called the helpline from phone boxes.

Our website is very much part of our helpline service: a way to reach out to let children know they are not alone; a safe place to learn about alcohol problems, explore their feelings and find ways to make positive choices for themselves.” Hilary Henriques MBE, CEO and Co-founder

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“We are a small charity and without the help of so many wonderful volunteers and supporters, we would simply not exist for the children that need us.” Cassandra Ohlson, Nacoa volunteer, formerly Volunteering Manager

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Editors Notes:

- Children of Alcoholics Week is celebrated internationally. 2016 is the 8th year the event has been held in the UK.
- www.coaweek.org.uk suggests ways to get involved and contains downloadable resources.
- There are an estimated 2.6 million children in the UK living with a parent who drink too much.
- Sadly, problems don't disappear when children move away from home or reach adulthood. Millions of adults are still affected by their parent's drinking and the effects of growing up with alcohol problems.
- Children living with parental alcoholism are:
 - Six times as likely to witness domestic violence
 - Five times as likely to develop an eating problem
 - Three times as likely to consider suicide
 - Twice as likely to experience difficulties at school
 - Twice as likely to develop alcoholism or addiction
 - Twice as likely to be in trouble with the police
- Nacoa (registered charity no. 1009143) was founded in 1990 to provide information, advice and support to everyone affected by a parent's drinking. This is provided through a free and confidential telephone and email helpline and website. Helpline: 0800 358 3456, Email: helpline@nacoa.org.uk, website: www.nacoa.org.uk
- Nacoa has responded to over 267,000 calls since 1990.
- Nacoa's website can be found at www.nacoa.org.uk.