

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **“I can’t face another Christmas like that again...”**

...this is typical of the calls to **Al-Anon Family Groups** in January. Volunteers on the helpline hear stories of a ruined Christmas: too many drunken parties where partners refuse to leave until they are carried out; husbands or wives not turning up for Christmas lunch, having just popped out for a minute or two; fears of violence or verbal abuse; worry about the effect on the children; endless excuses to family and friends about the drinker’s behaviour – all are typical in the lives of families of problem drinkers.

It is the unseen effects which occur in the home of a problem drinker that can cause long term emotional and financial problems. Fifty per cent of domestic violence is fuelled by alcohol. Every alcoholic adversely affects at least four or five other people. It is usually the family, but also friends and work colleagues, who bear the brunt of the problems.

**Al-Anon Family Groups** is a worldwide organisation which offers help and support for anyone who feels their life is or has been adversely affected by another person’s drinking. There are approximately 800 groups in the UK and the Republic of Ireland offering understanding and hope to those who are finding that living with a problem drinker is too much to bear.

Groups meet weekly and observe a policy of strict confidentiality and anonymity. Al-Anon is a non-professional, not-for profit organisation run by its members. The sole aim is to help those people in distress from drink related problems find solutions to improve their individual situations. Members are given the opportunity to speak about their personal circumstances and share the changes in attitude and lifestyle which have enabled them to live more secure and rewarding lives, regardless of whether or not the drinker seeks help.

Al-Anon Groups are respected across the medical and professional community and have been helping many distressed people for over 50 years.

“Al-Anon Family Groups seems to me to be one of the world’s best kept secrets, which is a real tragedy because it can be the most fantastic support system for vast numbers of people affected by other people’s alcohol problems.” Tony Goodall  
Alcohol & Substance Misuse Lead, Leeds Primary Care Trust

These are some quotes from Al-Anon members:

*“Before Al-Anon I spent Christmas hiding. Now I spend Christmas with healthy people”*

*“Christmas was a terrible time, everyone else was having a good time and my family lived in fear. But we had to pretend that we were having a good time.”*

*“It was scary walking into a room that was full of strangers, so I put on my ‘everything’s okay’ mask. Then the members began to share their stories. Everyone’s words carried such depth and honesty that I began to feel hopeful. I thought maybe I could let my guard down too. Maybe somebody would finally understand.”*

*“Though I once viewed my life as a tragedy, I now have a different perspective on those experiences.”*

*“Together we can accomplish what we cannot do alone.”*

For further information contact Al-Anon Family Groups:

Website: [www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

Email: [enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk)

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Note to Editors:

**AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS** is a worldwide organisation with more than 800 groups in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Today there are meetings in over 100 countries where the members share their experience, strength and hope to solve their common problems whether or not the drinker is still drinking.

Further information about Al-Anon can be obtained from:

**AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS UK & EIRE**  
**61 Great Dover St**  
**London**  
**SE1 4YF**

**Tel: Confidential Helpline 020 7403 0888**

**Fax: 020 7378 9910**

**Administration: 020 7407 0215**

**Website: [www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)**

**Email: [enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk)**