

2011 Bamford Implementation Commissioned Call

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Title of research project: Parental Alcohol Use and Resilience in Young People in Northern Ireland: A study of Family, Peer & School Processes

Abstract: Alcohol misuse is a significant social and public health issue in Northern Ireland and continues to be a key priority (DHSSPSNI, 2011). Parental alcohol misuse, in particular, can have considerable negative effects on the lives of young people and the family environment (Harwin et al., 2010; NSPCC, 2010). However, not all families affected by alcohol misuse will experience difficulties. Evidence suggests that many children who live with parents who are drinking harmfully, are not adversely affected by exposure to such environments, either as children or as adults (Velleman & Orford, 1999; Tunnard, 2002a). The proposed study aims to investigate family, peer and schools processes in the development of resilience among young people in Northern Ireland within the context of parental alcohol use. The planned programme of work, involving secondary analyses of datasets, will make maximum use of the 'Belfast Youth Development Study,' a longitudinal study of young people's development in Northern Ireland which collected data from the cohort over 10 years (11-21 years of age) complemented by data collected from their parents and siblings as part of the 'Family Study.' These datasets of community samples will provide the unique opportunity to investigate the development of resilience and indeed the internal (e.g. mental health) and external factors (e.g. positive peer relationships) that may mediate or moderate resilience among young people, within the context of their parent or caregivers use of alcohol. These datasets also provide the opportunity to investigate the health, social and educational outcomes for young people during adolescence and emerging adulthood. The study will make a valuable contribution in advancing current knowledge on family, peer and school processes that promote resilience among young people with a view to informing interventions specifically designed to promote resilience among youth exposed to parental alcohol use in Northern Ireland and further afield.