



Conference evaluation report

This report is based on the evaluations received from delegates from the RA Conference 2011. We got back approximately 65 forms– but few were entirely completed so the numbers will not add up to 100%.

Introduction

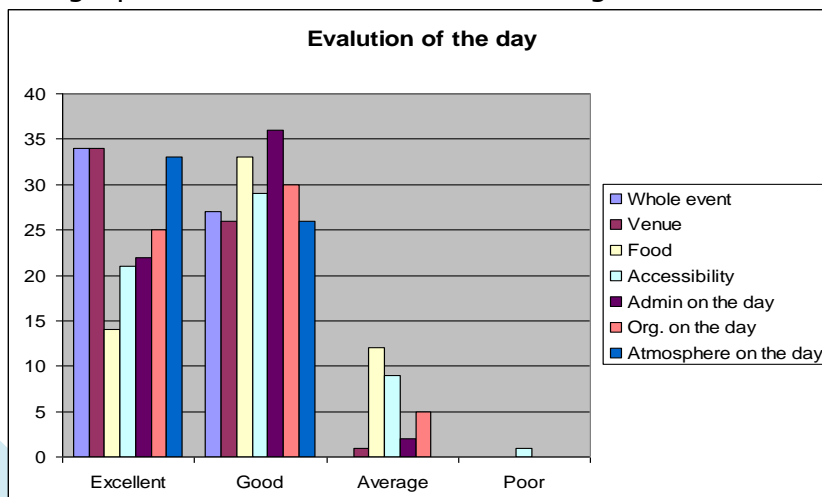
Initially the RA had targeted to attract up to 100 delegates to an event in Edinburgh with some caution as it was felt that economic pressures would have an impact on peoples ability to access funding for the conference. To that end we kept the price very competitive with an early bird fee of £95, going up to £115 after the end of August. Service user places, of which were limited, were £5 and were gone within hours of the conference being announced. The Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium gained 10 places for their membership in recovery. We had 35 subsidised service user places in addition to service users who had paid full price. Delegates were predominantly from Scotland, although there was good representation from other areas and covering a spectrum of organisations, roles and responsibilities within the recovery field.

*“Excellent and informative presentations provided by a cross-section of service professionals.”*

In total we had approximately 140 delegates and 21 speakers/workshop facilitators / event organisers. On the day we had a total of 155 people present – 40 more delegates than we projected and an increase on attendance from last year. This can be attributed to the rich programme of national and international experts, wide range of workshops and topics all reflecting contemporary issues and applied theory. We had marketed the conference more assertively this year, advertising through the growing RA database, Scottish Drugs Recovery Consortium membership, Wired In and took an advert out in the DDN magazine.

Evaluation of the day.

This graph demonstrates that most delegates rated the day as “excellent” or “good” which includes the pre-arrangements for the day,



organisation on the day and overall experience.

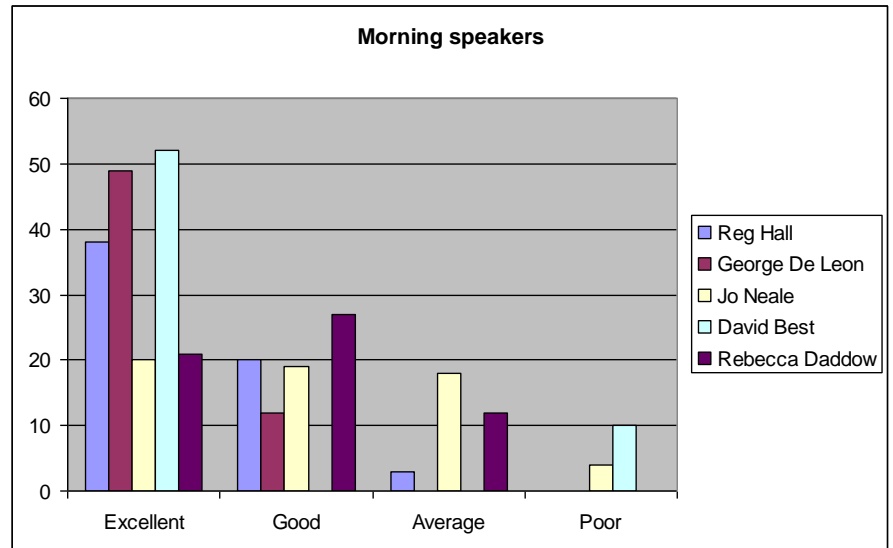
There were comments about difficulties in finding workshop rooms, which explains the accessibility scoring (“average” and “poor”). There

was also comment regarding lack of seating in the main hall for the morning talks. This can be explained by the contract we had with Edinburgh First indicating 130 people – as there was an expectation that we would have had a larger percentage of “no-shows” than we actually got. However, the seating issue was rectified during the morning break.

### Morning speakers

Having 5 lectures in the morning was too long for some people and next year we will do a mix of keynote presentations with more participative activities. However, in the main comments received were positive about the individual presentations as indicated.

Each presenter received positive and negative comments – expect for Reg Hall and George De Leon who both received positive comments only. In particular George De Leon struck a cord with many of the delegates and highlighted as one of the best things about the day. Some of the presentations were reported to be challenging – particularly when statistics were involved or too many slides - but at the same time thought provoking and complementary to each other without much overlap and offering fresh and novel ideas for people.



There is also some learning for the RA in how presentations can be practically applied for people – so answering the question “*but what does this mean for me and my efforts to move recovery forward in my local area*”. One response to this may be taking questions from the floor to facilitate that shift in thinking from theory to practice in a personal way for people so they can make the links between the academic and practical.

*“Reg Hall spoke for a lot of us. He also came across terrifically.”*

### Mutual Aid lunchtime meeting

There was no representative from NA to facilitate a lunchtime meeting which was due to a communication problem leading up to the conference. However, 33 people reporting having attended the lunchtime SMART group – of which 14 had never attended one before and got a lot out of it. Reasons for not attending can be summarised as:

- 🌀 Not enough time
- 🌀 Didn't know where it was
- 🌀 Needed some space and time out
- 🌀 Enjoying the networking and conversations
- 🌀 Would have preferred to go to the NA meeting
- 🌀 Go to lots of mutual aid meetings anyway.

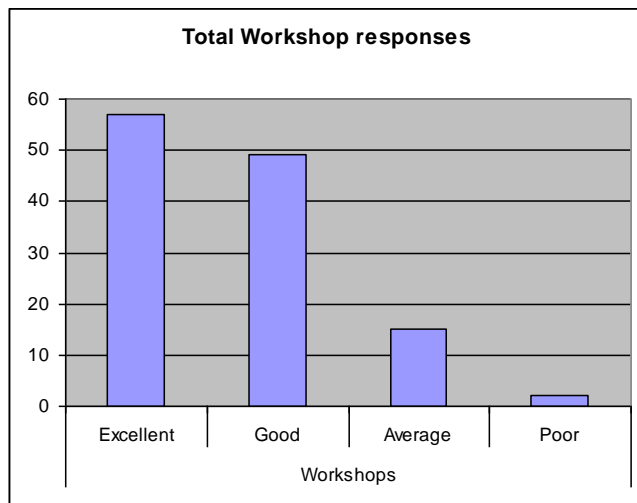
The meeting was well facilitated and inspiring for people. Attendees gained a good degree of information from the 30 minute session, with some intending to go on and join local SMART groups.

### Workshops

Because the numbers are small (each workshop getting approximately half a dozen evaluation responses) the workshops are being reported as a totality with individual feedback going to the workshop facilitator. Some people evaluated both workshops, but there was a lot who reported on their first workshop and had left half-way through the afternoon.

*Maslow was great and I will be incorporating what I learned into my work with clients.*

Comments on workshops are wide-ranging, but generally delegates reported positive experiences. Participative workshops were favoured over more structures presentation styles and delegates prefer smaller numbers.



Moving from building to building to find workshop rooms was a problem. We had anticipated that and supplied floor plans and maps, but for future conferences will endeavour to secure conference space which is self-contained.

The research masterclass got mixed reviews. For some people the title was misleading and they expected more than a beginners guide to research, but for others they found the information very useful indicating a desire to go and

initiate local research which the RA will follow-up on.

One delegate recommended that the walking workshop should specify that walking is actually going to take place and out of the 30 delegates who had signed up for that "early bird" only 3 people actually walked – although 18 delegates reported it as "excellent"!

The "Tag Clouds" were completed and will be collated and shared via WiredIn and the Recovery Academy webpages as shown below.

### Most helpful thing on the day

All keynote speakers were individually cited as most "helpful thing" on the day – particularly George De Leon. However, overwhelmingly the atmosphere enabled networking, communicating and making links between delegates. People like talking "recovery" to each other and learning from other local experiences. The programme had enough variety to meet peoples expectation – although delegates found it difficult trying to decide which workshops to attend.

*Everyone that I spoke to was warm and friendly - all were buzzing about recovery - networking brilliant!*

