



Look Beyond the smile

Suicide Prevention

#4Tom..... the story so far

So it's been just over two years since the day our lives fell apart and our hearts were forever broken and the same time since we vowed to try and prevent further suicides and stop other families going through this pain.

We also vowed to ensure losing Tom was not in vain and that his memory and life would live on helping others .

So ,in March 2019 #4Tom was born .

Being honest ,the first year is a complete blur.

We were numb with shock and pain and when I think back I wonder how we did some things around charity events and campaigning .

I think it was just pure adrenaline from the shock of losing Tom .

However , in that first year , the charity raised almost £12000 , we were humbled by the support of Tom's friends and family .

Also that year my daughter Laurie and I wrote a paper to the coroner who carried out the inquest into Toms death and

we influenced her that more awareness was needed . Since then I've been working closely with the coroners office looking at data to inform future awareness campaigns .

(See update below under research)

I spoke to as many people as I could in order to find out what was happening to prevent suicide in Wales .

In October 2019 I joined the **Cwmtaf suicide and self harm group(SSH)** and also began working closely with Nichola of **The Jacob Abraham Foundation.**

Jacobsfoundation.org.uk

As part of a project being undertaken by the SSH group and working with the company **Sixty Six Ninety Nine** ,I made two films talking about Toms story with the aim of raising awareness on the issue of cocaine use and it's links to mental health issues and suicide.

Here's the links ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZT-PgUDEjd4>

Another project I fed into was the '**See Say Signpost**' project led by Maggie Cee . In the next few weeks posters and wallet size awareness cards will be distributed around Merthyr and Rhondda valleys .

Here's the link for more info into this amazing project .

 4tom.org  nicola@4tom.org  [4TOM](https://www.facebook.com/4TOM)  [#4TOM](https://twitter.com/4TOM)

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<https://www.seesaysignpost.info/>

Then ,lockdown happened !
and the 1st anniversary of losing Tom !
.....the combination of both hit me hard , I was forced to stand still and breathe and sadly face reality , it hurt!

I could no longer keep my self busy , with all the usual things that I planned tirelessly to ensure I didn't have time to think , I couldn't get the workshops going that I'd planned and all the fundraising events were being postponed
To be honest ,I felt I was letting Tom down .

Then , one night as I 'spoke to Tom ' apologising for letting him down and saying I didn't think I could go on , I received a message from Maggie who I'd met on the SSH group ,closely followed by another from Nichola Abraham and I felt the energy and motivation rush back I think someone was listening

Since then , although it's still been a bumpy road with lots of zero energy days , trying to get through a second lockdown and the second anniversary of losing Tom , I'm pleased to say lots of positive things are happening and #4Tom continues.

Working with Maggie and Nichola we have set up **The Co Alc Alliance** .

This alliance aims to raise awareness of cocaine / alcohol links to suicide and mental health issues, to provide information for users, their family and friends, with the ultimate objective of preventing suicides and mental health issues due to the effects of a cocaine comedown . The forming of this alliance is a huge step going forward . The alliance has the support of the police, local authorities , health boards and many mental health groups .

I've also set up a private face book group for those parents bereaved by suicide called '**The Missing Cwtch** ' if you know anyone who may benefit from talking to other parents who been through this same tragedy please give them my name .

We've also been nominated by Malcolm Colbran Councillor as one of the **MAYORS CHARITIES** for 21/22 , thank you Malcolm and good luck for your Mayoral year

We also have a website and email address

4tom.org(under construction)

nicola@4tom.org

We are in process of opening a special charity bank account now we are official so will soon have a donate button on our sites.

Financial Update

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As we couldn't use the money raised in the ways we planned due to the pandemic we gave money to Mind and to 2 wish upon a star , totalling £5000 and paid for the charity registration .

In a difficult year we still saw a few small virtual fundraising events were held , thank you Gavin Burnett, we received donations from individuals and companies , Ben Grezica, Toms logs and The Sunflower Cakery and sold face-masks and bands . A big thank you to Cerys Hopkins and Wendy Watts for making face-masks .

So , going into 21/22 the charity has £8500 in the pot .

As a registered charity we have to submit our accounts annually , however If anyone would like any information about the money raised and how it's spent please get in touch .

So , what's the plans for 21/22....

We are now an official charity 🤝🤝
Our Registered Charity number is 1194191.

Fundraising

Tygan and Corals skydive is now on 30th July (4th time lucky!) the girls are convinced Tom doesn't want them to do this jump!

Walking Wales 4Tom - the plan is for this event to be held next Easter . Colum and Peter McNally and others have put so much work into this event which was originally planned for Easter 2020 and I know everyone was looking forward to it. I'm assured it will happen !

Ella and Richard Jones abseiling of Newport Transporter Bridge , no new date as yet

Other ideas we have to raise money this year (depending on the pandemic of course)are a charity evening / ball , a music festival - T fest (V fest but T for Tom!) , a motor biking event as Tom loved his motor bike and producing more merchandise .

If anyone would like to raise money for the charity , please get in touch , I promise you every penny raised will go towards preventing suicide .

Awareness

The Co Alc alliance
www.coalc.info (under construction)



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We are at the action planning stage and one of our main objectives is to raise awareness of the issue through various campaigns such as the See Say Signpost campaign , potentially producing a short film and working closely with the Jacob Abraham Foundation to roll out workshops for users , their families and their friends.

2 wish upon a star

I've recently done a podcast with 2 wish upon a star , talking about Toms story ,again to try and help raise awareness . This podcast will go live in the next few weeks . The podcast is called **The Elephant in the room** on Spotify

National mental health wellbeing conference

Toms story features in a presentation by Maggie at the above conference , again talking about the issue of cocaine and alcohol use and the links to suicide and mental health issues . The Conference is on May 20th , tickets for this virtual conference can be purchased at **Eventbrite.co.uk**

Government groups

I currently sit on the Cwmtaf Suicide and Self Harm group and have been invited to sit on the Gwent group so that the Co-Alc group has representation across South Wales .These groups help raise issues to the National Suicide and Self harm group and Cross Party group who deal with suicide prevention .

Research

I'm continuing to work closely with the central coroners office in Wales .

Work is ongoing looking at every suicide in their Area(Cardiff and valleys)over the last 5 years to obtain the evidence to back a Public Health Wales Campaign.

I'm also looking to visit other coroners offices looking at consistency at inquest with regards to toxicology requests and conclusions .This will help ensure we have good data to work with going forward and raise issues/ trends much earlier .

Hopefully , the above data collation work will feed into a Swansea University Research project around suicide prevention .

Networking

I'm aiming to continue to meet up with as many organisations in the South Wales area who are campaigning on mental health and suicide to look at ways we can work together

Some of the groups I follow and are worth a visit on social media are

Jacob Abraham Foundation

Lost boys club

Andy's Mans club

and Start the conversation

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I'm also talking to people who have had issues with cocaine and suicidal thoughts and are going through recovery, as well as those struggling now to make sure that any work I do is the right work, that will make a difference.

I hope this newsletter provides you with an update of 4Tom so far

For more information on any of the above or on any of the organisations I've mentioned please get in touch

Nicola, Tom's Mam

nicola@4tom.org

Or message on Facebook page 4tom



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