

“What is the problem...? It is my business if I drink and smoke a bit of stuff now and again...



...everyone has a drink these days don't they? I am not rolling about drunk and I can still look after my kids so what's the big deal?

Anyway, it helps me get through the day...after Kimberley was born, I felt very down again, like I did after the other babies and sometimes I need a bit of something to get through the day...I am not addicted to anything...I can't afford to be!

Money is very tight, but everyone needs a blow out now and then or they would go mad.

Our Michelle is pregnant but she'll be ok – Jim will see her alright. I know that he's a bit old for her, but they make their own choices don't they? Any case, she needs him now, she is his responsibility and I have enough on my plate with the younger ones...

Jim has known Michelle for years...he has seen her grow up. I wasn't keen when they first got together, but what can you do? She is 16 now. The midwives keep coming round trying to see her but I don't know what all the fuss is about...pregnancy is not an illness. I was 6 months pregnant with my first before I even knew, never mind the doctors! Women have been having babies since day dot without nosey parkers doing checks and tests.

The younger kids are ok, they do just fine - Troy is a bit of a handful but what boy his age isn't? Susan is no bother at all - she loves the telly and she never makes a peep. Ryan and Kimberley were not planned - I admit that, and before they came along, Darren had made it clear that he didn't want any more kids so it has been hard. They all do as they're told and they know when to keep quiet - their dad has a foul temper and we all get out of his way when he starts.

Me and Darren like to get out a couple of times a week but we can't afford a sitter - if Michelle is in she will look after them, but if not, there is always someone on the street that will sit for a couple of hours...

...it usually only costs us the price of a few cans so that's not bad..."

Claire Henderson's story

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