

Parents Hand-out

Statistics

- A recent national survey found 12% of 11 year olds claim to have tried alcohol, rising to three quarters of 15 year olds (Health and Social Care Information Centre) – Often this will be taking place within the home under parental supervision;
- 1 in 5 fifteen year olds said that they drank alcohol at least once per week (usually at weekends), whilst levels of binge drinking for 16-24 year olds are higher than any other age group;
- The level of alcohol consumption among young people has doubled in quantity over a 10 year period from around 1990 (DoH 2009); and
- Young people in the UK remain among the highest consumers of alcohol in the whole of Europe (ESPAD 2012).
- The Smoking, Drinking and Drugs Survey (2012/13) found that 31% of 15 year olds said that they had at some stage used an illegal, or socially unacceptable substance (24% of which said that this was in the past year);
- 19% of 15 year olds admitted to using cannabis in the past year (SDDS); and
- 20-24,000 under young people aged under 18 years access specialist substance misuse services each year, 90% of which are for cannabis or alcohol (NTA). There is also an increasing concern around the long term effects of NPS USE. 41% of young people accessing this
- There were 6,549 admissions to hospital with a primary diagnosis of a drug-related mental health and behavioural disorder. This is a 5 per cent (322) increase from 2011-12 when there were 6,227 such admissions. Overall, between 2002-03 and 2012-13 admissions have decreased by 15 per cent (1,142) from 7,691 to 6,549.
- There were 61,142 admissions with a primary or secondary diagnosis of drug-related mental health and behaviour disorders. This is a 6 per cent (3,290) increase from 2011-12 when there were 57,852 such admissions. Figures have continued to increase year on year and are now almost twice as high as they were ten years ago when they were 31,490 in 2002-03.
- There were 12,238 admissions to hospital with a primary diagnosis of poisoning by illicit drugs. There has been a long-term increase of 75 per cent (5,227) since 2002-03 when there were 7,011 such admissions.
- The total number of deaths related to drug misuse in England and Wales was 1,496 in 2012, a decrease of 109 from 2011 when there were 1,605 such deaths. This continues the downward trend seen since 2008 when deaths peaked at 1,939.

- The most common underlying cause of death was from accidental poisoning, accounting for 73 per cent (1,087 out of 1,496) of deaths.

Halton Statistics

- In Halton in 2013/2014, 27% young people referred into treatment from education services compared to 24% across the whole of England;
- 26% of young people accessing treatment were aged 13-14. The national average for this age group is only 19%;
- 30% of young people accessing treatment in Halton were aged 16 compared to the national average of 27%;
- Gender related substance treatment shows that 76% were males and 24% females;
- Cannabis is the main substance being used in Halton where 92% of young people seeking treatment were using this compared to 85% across the whole of the UK;
- The most common type of intervention in Halton is psychological with 89% of young people accessing this type of intervention
- Out of 539 clients accessing recovery services; 275 are parents, 133 of which have children living with them and 142 do not have parental responsibility;
- 77 young people were admitted into hospital between 2012-2013 for self harm, 18 of which were 12-13 year olds,
- Out of 45 emergency hospital admitted patients, 17 were young people aged 10-19;

Why young people experiment with substances

- Exam Stress;
- Parental/Home Pressure;
- Low confidence/self-esteem;
- Developing Relationships (family and peers);
- Peer Pressure;
- Body Image;
- Bullying;
- Plans for the future i.e. concerns around unemployment
- Social Media.
- Eating disorders
- Self harm
- Mental health

Impact on future decision making

- Disengagement/Low educational attainment;
- Susceptibility to engaging in risky behaviour;
- Poor physical/psychological or sexual health;
- Fractured relationships i.e. family/friends;
- Involvement in anti-social behaviour/criminality; and
- Addiction to drugs/alcohol.

Support

Nearly 3 quarters of children aged 9-17 say they would turn to their parents first for information and advice on drinking alcohol;

3 fifths of children aged 11-15 saw parents as a useful source of information regarding drugs (increasing further at the older end of this age range);

Over half of 14 year olds and 2 fifths of 13 year olds agreed with the statement 'my parents don't mind me drinking if it's not too much'.

80% of parents say they will deal with the issue of drugs/alcohol once it happens, but the earlier we start the conversation, the greater the opportunity to promote resilience and informed decision making around drugs/alcohol.

What can you do?

Fear – What if I say the wrong thing or show myself up? What if there is a problem, I wouldn't know what to do!

Lack of Knowledge/Confidence – He/she probably knows more than me?

Personal Beliefs/Attitudes – It's normal to experiment a bit at their age, never did me any harm? At least they are drinking/smoking at home where I can see them? They have too much common sense for that?

Communication – You can talk to him/her about anything these days? If there was something wrong they would probably tell me?

Time – We're always working and he/she is always out with their mates, what are we supposed to do?

Responsibility – It's up to the school really isn't it?

1. Getting clued up
2. Don't presume the issue won't affect your children
3. Plan ahead for the conversation
4. Think about location/environment
5. Don't Give Up
6. Talk to Other Parents

How my child might feel?

- Fear – I just don't know what they will do, or what they will think of me when I tell them?
- Concern – It's my problem to deal with. I don't want to bother them they have enough to worry about. They won't be interested?
- Consequences? - They would kill me! Throw me out of school/home probably? I would be in some serious trouble!
- Denial – It's not a problem for me, I just do it when I'm feeling down. It's not like I do it every day. Everyone else I know is doing it, why bother telling them?
- Trust – I just don't think they would understand or know what to do. They will probably just overreact and judge me. I'd end up never living it down!

Key tips

- Listen to the YP and ask for their opinions, rather than simply lecturing them with the facts
- Stay calm, try to be clear in setting out your values/expectations, but try and avoid shouting or making ultimatums. This may encourage secrecy. For example 'if I catch you ever doing that you will be out of my house'
- Avoid being judgmental 'only an idiot would start using cannabis, it's disgraceful'
- Show empathy/understanding which can help ensure a YP knows they can talk to you if there is a problem. For example 'I know lots of children your age have a lot of pressures put on you and can develop problems at school, its completely normal. I'm here to help whenever you need me'.
- Warn about potential consequences of drug and alcohol use based on their effects/risks. Perhaps ask the YP to consider some potential scenarios they might be likely to face and ask how they might react i.e. peer pressure

Support

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