



Healthier behaviour outcome:

Reducing Drug Misuse

This information sheet provides your school with suggestions to support your work on South West Healthy Schools Plus. It includes background information about reducing drug misuse, helps you select actions which will bring about healthier behaviour outcomes, identifies early success indicators and signposts to key resources.

Background Information

The UK has one of the highest levels of dependent drug use and the highest level of recreational drug use in Europe¹. Latest Government statistics show that the use of drugs by young people is decreasing, including the rate of frequent use by 11 to 15 year olds², however the scale of the problem shows that continued work is necessary. Young people are most likely to develop problems with drugs if they come from vulnerable groups, such as those excluded from school, children in care or from families experiencing multiple disadvantage.

In 2008 a new Drug Strategy (2008 – 2018)³ was launched. It highlights the need to:

- focus on families where parents misuse drugs
- intervene early to prevent harm to children
- prioritise parents' access to treatment where children are at risk
- provide intensive parenting guidance and support for family members, such as grandparents, who take on caring responsibilities.

Possible Actions (Evidence Based or Good Practice Principle Led)

South West Healthy Schools Plus is focused on bringing about actual changes in behaviour. This is dependent on increased knowledge, skill development and in some cases, attitudinal change. Actions that address these three elements could feature in your school's plans and should result in healthier behaviour outcomes.

Evidence Based Practice

Your school should follow, where possible, activities which have been proven to work. When identifying healthier behaviour outcomes you should take account of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) drugs guidance⁴, which sets out the following key messages:

- Drug Education should be delivered as part of PSHE education and Citizenship and is most effective when supported by a Whole School Approach
- Drug Education should cover all drugs and, when appropriate, should focus on drugs of particular significance to children and young people such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, volatile substances and Class A drugs
- The programme should be based on the views of children and young people and build on their existing knowledge and understanding
- Drug Education should be taught by skilled and confident teachers.

¹P Reuter, and A Stevens (2007), An Analysis of UK Drug Policy: UKDCP, London.

²Drug use, smoking and drinking among young people in England in 2007, NHS Information Centre www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/health-and-lifestyles-related

³Home Office (2008) Drugs: protecting families and communities www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/drug-strategy/drug-strategy-2008

⁴DCSF (2004) Drugs: Guidance for Schools www.governor.net.co.uk/cropArticle.cfm?topicAreaid=9&contentId=892&mode=further

Follow Good Practice Led Principles

As explained in the information sheet **Selecting Actions and Carrying Out Baseline Surveys**, schools will sometimes develop their own actions where evidence based actions do not exist. In such cases, it is essential that your school develops a rationale which clearly shows the steps from action to behaviour change which will lead to a healthier behaviour outcome.

Example

Healthier Behaviour Outcome:

Improved knowledge of risks involved, and improved confidence about making informed choices related to healthier behaviour with respect to drug consumption.

Action:

Fully involve young people in the development of a comprehensive Drug Education programme, where young people gain the knowledge and understanding of risks associated with drug consumption.

Rationale:

Young people need innovative, responsive and realistic Drug Education to support them in their ability to make informed choices relating to healthy lifestyles. Involving our young people in planning their own resources and tailoring recommended programmes to their needs will increase engagement and may increase their self-esteem through meaningful involvement in planning curriculum content. Involvement will improve acceptance of healthy behaviour messages and encourage better information uptake leading to improved intentions around healthier behaviour with regard to drug consumption.

Note:

When following an action that follows good practice led principles it is important that it is evaluated carefully. If successful the action will be added to the evidence base of what works.

Baseline Survey

Before taking any action, your school will carry out a baseline survey to establish current levels of behaviour. This will be the starting point from which you will plot progress. After an action has been completed, a follow up survey will take place to show how well actions have worked.

This will enable your school to build up its own evidence base. Over a period of time, this approach will provide your school with a clearer picture of what actions are most successful.

When you plan a baseline survey, remember that you are not starting from scratch. Try to use any information already available in your school, such as data from the Ofsted reporting system or from your previous Healthy Schools work. You can supplement this by asking questions in a written format (questionnaires) and/or by talking to groups to hear their views (interviews or focus groups).

Sources of Baseline Information

- Logged drug incidents in school and exclusions
- Results from questionnaires of children and young people regarding drug misuse
- Local Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) Needs Assessment 08-09
- South West Public Health Observatory⁵
- Ofsted Tell Us
- NHS accident and emergency data for under 18 years.

⁵South West Public Health Observatory Mapping Tool www.swpho.nhs.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=35469

Healthier Behaviour Outcomes and Early Success Indicators

Schools will need time to bring about healthier behaviour and you will need to monitor how your actions are working. You will do this by focusing on early success indicators, which will help you capture data along this path. The first early success indicators are likely to be process indicators.

New policies, curriculum innovations and staff training are examples of actions that are necessary in order to bring about healthier behaviour but do not themselves show healthier behaviour – hence they are ‘process’ indicators. Later there will be impact indicators, such as changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, all of which lead, in time, to the final healthier behaviour outcomes.

Examples of Healthier Behaviour Outcomes

Your work around drug misuse could focus on increasing the number of children and young people who:

- have a good knowledge of the risks involved with a range of drugs
- feel confident about making their own informed choices relating to healthy lifestyles
- report that they have the skills to resist peer pressure
- can identify a person to approach and talk to about drugs issues
- say they feel confident about accessing help relating to drug misuse if needed in the future
- access drug advice
- access support services.

Examples of Early Success Indicators

Process indicators

Increased number of teachers who:

- are confident about teaching about drug misuse
- report they have a good knowledge base about drug misuse
- report they know how to manage a drug related incident
- are able to signpost children and young people to appropriate services

Increased number of children and young people who:

- are involved in the development of Drug Education programmes

Increased number of parents/carers who:

- attend awareness raising meetings/sessions
- report increased confidence in how to access support

Review the PSHE education programme to make sure drug issues are adequately covered

Impact indicators – signs of healthier behaviours

- increased knowledge about drug misuse
- reduced number of drug related incidents leading to exclusion
- increased number of young people confident about accessing help relating to drug misuse



Resources

The following are a selection of information sources which your school can draw on when developing your actions. Developments are taking place rapidly in this area, so this list should be used as a starting point rather than considered as a definitive list of recommended resources.

National Healthy Schools Programme Resources

The NHSP website

www.healthyschools.gov.uk includes a number of resources relating to drug misuse including:

NHSP (2008) PSHE education Guidance for Schools

www.healthyschools.gov.uk/Resources

Government Resources

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/PHI004quickrefguide.pdf

NICE public health intervention guidance 4 focuses on the 'Interventions to reduce substance misuse among vulnerable young people'. It presents the recommendations on 'Community-based interventions to reduce substance misuse among vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people'.

Department for Children, Schools and Families

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DfES+0092+2004>

Provides guidance for schools on drugs.

Blueprint

www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/young-people/blueprint/
Blueprint is a multi-component drug use prevention programme targeted primarily at young people aged 11 to 13.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

This website gives an outline of its new Drug Strategy with resources, guidance, toolkits and references to the range of agencies that are active across all areas.

National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse

www.nta.nhs.uk

The National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (NTA) is a special health authority within the NHS, established by Government in 2001 to improve the availability, capacity and effectiveness of treatment for drug misuse in England.

Positive Futures

<http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/young-people/positive-futures/contacts/>

Positive Futures uses sport and leisure activities to engage disadvantaged and socially marginalised young people. This aligns with the aims of South West Healthy Schools Plus and also links into the obesity and social inclusion agenda.

South West Public Health Observatory

www.swpho.nhs.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=35469

An information network and evidence base for anyone involved in South West Healthy Schools Plus.

Other Resources

FRANK

www.talktofrank.com

This website gives an A to Z list of substances and explains the appearance and use, effects, chances of getting hooked, health risks and UK law. It includes information on peer pressure, and links to services. It is aimed at young people who are concerned about their drug use and drug use of friends. It is also a source of information for school staff and parents/carers.

Drugscope

www.drugscope.org.uk

DrugScope is an independent centre of expertise on drugs and the national membership organisation for the drug field.