

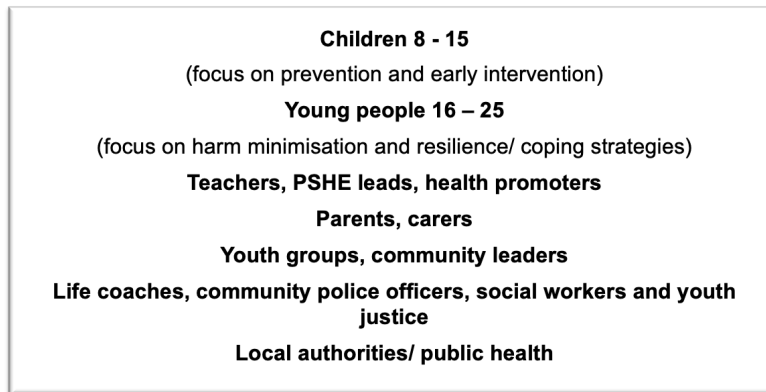


PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC GOALS AND IMPACT REPORT 2025



THE TALK ABOUT TRUST THEORY OF CHANGE

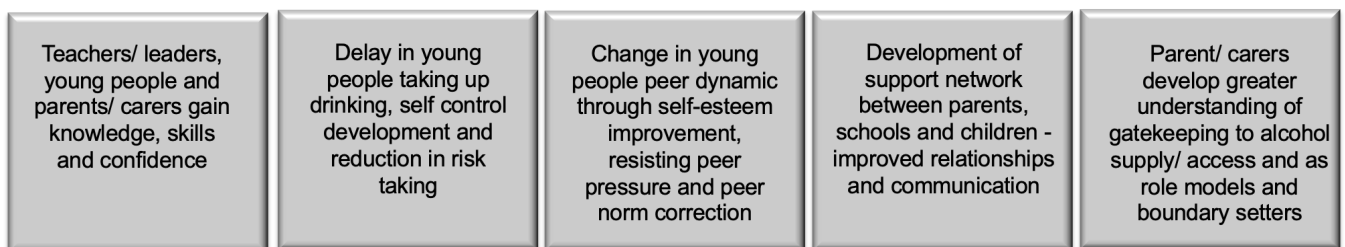
SERVICE USERS



ACTIVITIES



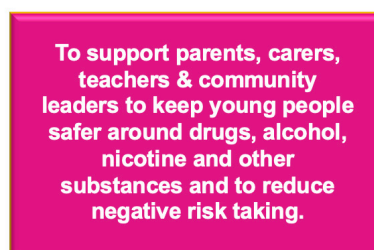
SHORT TERM OUTCOMES



LONG TERM OUTCOMES

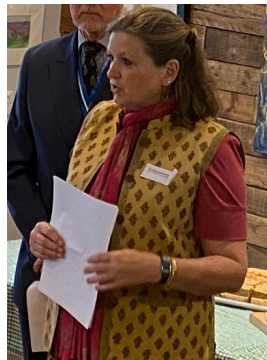


MISSION



Vicky McDonough, Chair of Trustees outgoing

It is humbling to reflect on what we have achieved as a small, focused charity over the last 15 years, with a simple mission to ensure that every child across the UK has free access to evidenced, effective and engaging drug education. By intervening early, we seek to improve both the health outcomes and life chances of young people across Britain. As such, our team of 10 dynamos have done a wonderful job covering the country in 2025, helping to keep young people safe. Sadly, with ketamine, solvent and inhalant as well as nicotine use on the increase, our work is all the more important.



Pleasingly, 2025 has seen an expansion and deepening of our work in Scotland, Dorset, Bristol, Cheshire and North Yorkshire, for example. We thrive on working in partnership with a shared vision, such as with the NHS in Glasgow and Clyde, Inverclyde Health and Social Care and Inverclyde Council in Inverclyde and Police and Crime Commissioners in Dorset and North Yorks as well as Crime Beat in Cheshire.

On average, we support 1,000 settings a year and some 500,000 children and young people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. This year we won

the Education Resource Awards for the best non ICT resources for drugs and nicotine education and two best resource awards from Teach Secondary. We were also awarded CPD accreditation for our training modules and we won The King's Foundation award for outstanding contribution to community. Our founder continues to be a sought after expert on panels, at conferences, for consultants and academic partnerships. All of the above not only makes us very proud, but is evidence of the quality of our staff, commitment and programmes.

Pavilion in The Park, our café, community hub and office, continues to thrive at the heart of our community, as well as contributing core funds to The TALK ABOUT Trust way beyond all expectations. Providing diversionary activities through the 20 or so clubs and groups that operate from our building is a wonderful addition to our mission and goals, which bring pleasure to so many of all ages and abilities.

I am so pleased to be handing the baton of Chair to a fellow teacher who understands the needs of early intervention health education so thoroughly. I will continue as a Trustee and will enjoy slightly less responsibility, knowing the Charity is in great hands, with our Founder as well as our new CEO and Chair.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vickie McDonough".

Victoria McDonough MA PGCE

Jackie Sonner, Chair of Trustees incoming

My aim as incoming Chair is to ensure that the board of trustees maintains focus on our charity's mission, always ensuring that the young people we work with are at the heart of our decision making. It will also be vital for us to support our new CEO and Founder through the transitional period and beyond. We will need to help develop and pursue a strategic direction whilst building upon the many successes of the first 15 years work of our fabulous charity. In particular, we will be focused on improving our digital platforms, including e-learning, website



evolution and generally making sure that we are where young people are in terms of extending our reach into all types of media. We also need to monitor our new ventures into the primary sector and the ever increasing range of programmes that our regional teams are involved in. In essence, the trustees will need to ensure we keep doing what we do well, but also have the capacity to stay up-to-date with new issues, able to adapt our programmes and support accordingly. I look forward to leading our inspiring team in delivering these aims as we look ahead to the next five years and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonner".

Jackie Sonner BA (Hons) PGCE

Read more about our Chair and Trustees [here](#).

Steve Morton, CEO

It was with a great deal of anticipation that I joined The TALK ABOUT Trust as CEO in September 2025. I was already hugely impressed with the reputation and national reach of this small, but highly impactful organisation, and its holistic approach to harm prevention and child protection



reminded me of my ten years at the NSPCC, way back in the early part of the century. This is an organisation which intervenes powerfully to make everyone aware of their responsibilities to keep children and young people safe from the risks of drugs and alcohol and provides the means to do so, supporting teachers, youth workers, parents, even the police, but most importantly the young people themselves.

I am, frankly, in awe of what Helena has achieved in her 15 years at the helm, and over my first few weeks I have also been delighted to learn what a talented, committed and passionate team of Talk About trainers she has assembled. Some have been working for The TALK ABOUT Trust for many years, all have extensive experience, whether it be teaching or youth work. Behind the scenes, we have another long-serving team of experienced, and equally passionate, finance, administration, community engagement and web publishing staff. We also have a wonderful team at our PiP Café, whose work provides such vital income to help us achieve our vision. Meanwhile, our trustees give us their time, their wise counsel and their constructive challenge. Collectively, everyone has had a massive impact on the life chances of thousands of young people.

New CEOs like to make their mark, and I'm no different, but the platform on which I'm able to build is a very stable one, there is nothing broken to fix. I've found astonishing depth and breadth of reach in places like Glasgow and Dorset and many examples of what an agile, innovative, horizon scanning organisation can

achieve. The future is more of the same, more young people empowered to make the right decisions, more trusted adults confident in their ability and their knowledge to share our essential information, more safety nets created across the UK.

We will continue to provide teachers, parents and youth professionals with the most up to date resources and training and will strive to find more visionary funders, so that we can continue to provide this free of charge wherever possible.

We will continue to go where the need is greatest, identifying the vulnerable young people who can so often fall through the cracks in a system which needs to be more joined up. Young people face barriers to inclusion through factors such as disability, language, culture, sexuality, poverty or trauma, characteristics and experiences which can be multipliers of risk. We will overcome these barriers through continuing to create bespoke resources and training, developed in partnership with specialist organisations, guided by the experiences of young people.

We will continue to listen to the voices of those young people, through our direct work and through our online presence, which we intend to rapidly evolve. We will be where young people need us most and amplify their voices as we campaign for system change. But, we won't make our calls to action alone. Our culture of collaboration with partner organisations will ensure the right ears hear what we have to say.

So, I look forward to many years working alongside Helena and the whole team. Years which I am confident will see us consolidate on what has gone before, safeguarding the futures of many more children and young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small loop.

Steve Morton

Read more about our TALK ABOUT Trust Team [here](#).

OUR VISION

WHO WE ARE

The TALK ABOUT Trust work is built around three pillars: supporting young people, their parents and carers and the professionals who work with them:

Early intervention and prevention approaches for children and young people

Ensuring we equip young people with the knowledge and life skills to make safer choices before any potential problems begin. This primary goal has been enhanced with targeted work for children most vulnerable to alcohol and drug misuse, plus harm reduction approaches for older teenagers and young adults including support on cannabis and vaping.

Supporting teachers and youth professionals with everything they need to deliver effective and engaging alcohol and drug education (training and resources)

Evidence shows that trusted adults who know the children well are best equipped to deliver health education. The TALK ABOUT Trust therefore provides workshops, training, online and face-to-face support and resources for teachers, youth workers, health professionals and those working day-to-day with 8 to 25 year-olds of all abilities and backgrounds. This is both an affordable and sustainable model as those trained are then confident and equipped to use positive life skill approaches and can cascade their learning to others.

Empower parents and carers

Parents and carers are the key suppliers of alcohol to young people (70%) and play an essential part in setting boundaries and being good role models. These 'tough love' skills delay the age that young people drink or use other substances and the amount that they drink or experiment. The TALK ABOUT Trust therefore facilitates workshops and seminars and has a dedicated web area for parents and carers, with advice varying from the law, the physical and mental effects of early alcohol use to hosting parties.

WHAT WE DO

Intervene early

We aim to reach children before they begin drinking or experimenting with vaping or drugs and help them work out why it makes sense to wait until they are older (if they choose to drink) and how early and heavy drinking or substance use increases their risk of injury, accidents, health harms, grooming, exploitation and assault and makes them more vulnerable to others. We use evidenced approaches to build young people's knowledge, resilience and life skills, helping them make more responsible, informed choices as they encounter alcohol and other substances. A new key focus is working with younger children to raise awareness of vaping, online grooming and county lines.

Harm reduction

As young adults begin to navigate the world of parties, pubs, clubs, festivals and independence, we equip them with the knowledge, awareness and strategies needed to stay safer around alcohol and drugs. We have specific programmes addressing spiking and safer nights out as well as how alcohol and substance use affects consent and increases other vulnerabilities.

Train the workforce

We train teachers and professionals to deliver evidence-based, interactive and enjoyable alcohol and drug awareness to children and young people of different abilities and backgrounds in a variety of settings. This includes schools, special schools, pupil referral units, alternative education, sports and youth clubs, school nurses, the police and youth justice teams.

Improve learning and life chances

Our interactive activity-based and award-winning Talk About Alcohol programme for schools with additional elements for SEN settings is proven to enhance knowledge and significantly delay the age that teenagers choose to drink whole drinks, so reducing harms and improving health outcomes. We have also applied our knowledge and resilience approaches to vaping, cannabis, ketamine and other substance education for all abilities and youth settings. We focus our support in regions where alcohol and drug related harms are highest and have targeted

approaches for those most vulnerable to alcohol and drug misuse, such as care experienced children and victims of childhood trauma.

Sustainable, affordable legacy

The teachers and youth professionals that we equip with the knowledge, skills and resources to support young people ongoing around alcohol, cannabis and vaping become our ambassadors and cascade their learning to others. This means our programmes cost under £1 per young person. We continue to mentor those we train with new and updated resources, provide professional development and ongoing phone/email support via our highly experienced and regionally based staff.

Strengthen role models and boundary setting

We build parental confidence, knowledge and skills to talk and support their children around alcohol, vaping, cannabis and other illicit substances. We encourage parents and carers to be good role models, to set and stick to boundaries, to monitor their children and to understand the risks associated with underage drinking and experimentation, particularly in unsupervised settings.

Provide diversionary activities

We encourage and facilitate diversionary activities for young people that build community cohesion and so help reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and the onset of drinking and substance use.

Provide engaging evidenced based information, workshops and online resources for young people

Lecturing, scare mongering and 'just say no' messages are proven to be ineffective in changing young people's attitudes and behaviours to alcohol and drug use.

The TALK ABOUT Trust uses highly evaluated discussion-based activities, rehearsal strategies and interactive approaches with young people in a variety of settings both face to face and online that build young people's decision-making skills, resilience and ability to resist peer pressure and so make informed, safer choices.

MISSION

To keep young people safe around alcohol and drugs, improve life chances and reduce negative risk taking. We support teachers, parents, carers, community leaders and those under 25.

OUR GOALS

- Raise the age of onset of drinking whole drinks from the current age of 13 to at least the UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidance of age 15 with a long-term goal of the legal purchase age of 18.
- Reduce the prevalence of vaping, cannabis and other substance use through early intervention and prevention.
- Reduce the prevalence and social acceptability of binge drinking and drunkenness, vaping, cannabis and other substance use among young people to the age of 25.
- Raise awareness of the lifetime risk of early alcohol and other substance use.
- Ensure the life chances of young people most vulnerable to alcohol and drug harm and abuse are improved.
- Reduce the accidents, violence, assault and harm caused to young people and the community by alcohol and drug use.
- Encourage diversionary activities for young people that reduce anti-social behaviour crime and onset of drinking and drug use.
- Support young adults to the age of 25 in University and other settings and reduce the prevalence of spiking under 25.

CORE OBJECTIVES



SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Ensure that young people of all abilities (aged 8 to 18) are provided with the information, skills and resilience to make safer choices around alcohol and other substances by providing free access to evidenced alcohol and drug education via websites, games, lessons, films and activities in all youth settings across the UK.
- Support vulnerable young people at higher risk of alcohol and drug related harms with targeted approaches.
- Support young adults up to the age of 25, specifically those more vulnerable to alcohol and drug related harms and student populations.
- Ensure harm minimisation resources on alcohol and other substances for young people to age 25 are freely available. Provide online support, workshops, peer to peer training and opportunities for young adults.



SUPPORT SCHOOLS AND ORGANISATIONS

- Train teachers, health educators (RSHE), youth professionals and community leaders new to the TALK ABOUT Trust programmes face to face and online on all issues regarding alcohol, cannabis, vaping and other substances.
- Support the provision of the Talk About Alcohol programme and other substance resources, websites, films, games, lesson plans and worksheets and SEN specific activities free of charge to schools and youth supporting organisations.
- Provide ongoing guidance, training, updates, signposting and new resources to settings currently provided with TALK ABOUT Trust programmes through our regionally based specialist staff throughout England and Scotland.



EMPOWER PARENTS AND CARERS

- Equip parents and carers, face-to-face and online, with the necessary skills to keep their children safe around alcohol and other substances.



ENHANCE COMMUNITY COHESION

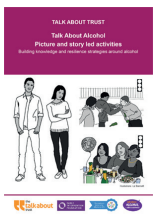
- Enhance local community cohesion in Dorset through our community hub Pavilion in The Park, to include partnership delivery of diversionary activities and opportunities for training and skills for young people, that in turn reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and onset of drinking and drug use.

Keeping young people safe around **alcohol & other substances**

15 YEARS

2013

Introduce a tailored programme for children who are neuro diverse, using pictures, colours and stories. Neuro diverse young people are 4 x more likely to live with substance misuse or dependency.



2020

Extend target top age to 25 and develop bespoke programme for vulnerable young adults at risk of homelessness or not in education, employment or training, covering alcohol and cannabis.



2025

Roll out of DANE resources, nationally.



2025

Win Education Resource Awards for best non ICT Resources for KS3 Drug Alcohol and Nicotine RSHE Resources.



2020

Begin working with older teenagers as they prepare to leave school, empowering them to make safer choices.

2020

Develop six ready to deliver lesson plans for alcohol.

2018/19

Employ regional coordinators for the North and the South West and Midlands.

2025

Host our 15th Anniversary Alcohol and Drugs Conference.



2025

Awarded CPD accreditation for training modules.



2024

Launch County Lines, NOS and Ketamine training modules



2022

Launch of young adult facing website life-stuff.org



2024

Helena receives an Honorary Doctorate from Bournemouth University.



2021

HRH visits and officially opens Pavilion in the Park.



2021

Drink Spiking campaign launched and evidence given at House of Commons Inquiry.



2018

Move into Scotland, with a new Scotland Manager and Scotland specific resources.



2016

Joint host 1st Alcohol and Drugs Conference with Mentor.



2013

Awarded 3/3 for effectiveness and 5/6 for quality of evaluation by CAYT and IFS 2013.



2015

2018

Selected by EIF as top 80 most effective programmes for early intervention globally.



2020



2010

The Alcohol Education Trust is registered as a charity and its first part time administrator established. Talk About Alcohol, based on best practice from EUDAP Unplugged and SHARP from Australia is trialled and rolled out to 300 schools.

2011-15

The Talk About Alcohol programme is evaluated by The National Foundation For Educational Research and found to significantly reduce the uptake of consuming whole drinks (by 14%) an effect that got stronger as teenagers got older and was equally true for ethnically diverse young people. The findings in a study from UCL Institute of Behaviour Change were reflected in areas of high deprivation where alcohol related harms were highest.

2016

Launch The Talk About Alcohol website.



2016

Receive GSK Kings Fund Health Impact award.



2017

Launch the Talk About Alcohol, Cannabis and Vaping Games and Activities Pack for alternative settings.



2017

Selected as promising practice by European Platform for Investing in Children.



2023

We change our name to The Talk About Trust to reflect teaching alcohol, drugs and nicotine.



2023

Developed, pilot, triall and launched Drugs, alcohol and nicotine education (DANE).



2024

Develop vaping awareness and vulnerability programme for Primary schools.



WHY ARE WE NEEDED?

▶ CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The problems

- Children who drink regularly and heavily before the age of 15 are significantly more likely to try drugs, smoke, engage in unprotected or risky sex, be injured or assaulted. GCSE predictions fall by 20 points, the difference between a grade 9 and a grade 5. Early drinking is also a significant predictor of problematic use in later life.
- Young people who use drugs when 14 or younger have the greatest risk for drug dependence (34% prevalence rate of lifetime drug use disorders). It is also a significant predictor of lifetime alcohol dependence. The most common substances used by teenagers are alcohol, cannabis, nicotine and solvents/ inhalers, such as NOS.
- Low well-being was much more likely amongst pupils who recently smoked, drank and/or have taken drugs as low levels of life satisfaction were at 57% compared to 18% for those who have not smoked, drunk or tried drugs.
- 13% of pupils aged 11-15 have ever and 15.5% young adults aged 16 to 24 years reported last year drug use (end March 2024) – 4.5% of those class A.
- 15% of 11-year-olds have had a whole alcoholic drink rising to 62% of 15-year-olds.
- According to ASH, vaping prevalence has increased by 50% in one year from one in 13 to one in 9 teenagers with 4 in 5 saying they have seen vapes promoted and advertised.
- Of the 16,212 under 18's in treatment, 87% are there predominantly for cannabis and its derivatives, followed by alcohol (36%) – 62% were young males.
- An estimated 1 in 10 under the age of 25 have experienced having their drink spiked or needle spiking and in 2022/23 there were 6,732 cases of spiking recorded by the police according to the NPCC. These figures include: 5,775 cases of drink and other forms of spiking and 957 reports of needle spiking. Vape spiking is also now prevalent.
- Peers may influence other young people to engage in or refrain from substance use directly or indirectly, there is a dramatic rise in levels of use among young people who believe most, or all of their friends, drink or take drugs.
- Young people who experience childhood adversity and trauma such as emotional or physical abuse, family breakdown or neglect are particularly at risk. A young person experiencing four traumas is 11 times more likely to smoke cannabis and 4 times more likely to binge drink.
- It is estimated that 14% of care leavers drink alcohol every day, a third use cannabis and a third use alcohol as ways to cope, deal with anxiety or to help forget trauma.
- Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are three times more likely to face addiction when older. A diagnosis of ADHD or associated behavioural disorder is the greatest predictor of problematic alcohol or drug use.
- Children with learning difficulties are three times more likely to be abused, with alcohol a factor in grooming and violence.
- Young people who drop out of school, are 4 times more likely to be regular cannabis users and 1.2 times more likely to binge drink.
- Excluded children are five times more likely to have used alcohol or drugs on the last month. In 2023/24, nearly 25,000 children were excluded for a fixed period and 742 were excluded permanently from state schools in England due to alcohol or drugs. In 2019, the National Crime Agency found that 100% of children involved in County Lines had been excluded from school, and they also found that being excluded from school is a contributing factor leading to a young person's risk of criminal exploitation
- Alcohol and Drugs can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness and the homeless population is 10 times more likely to be in treatment for alcohol or drugs. 35% of deaths of homeless people were related to drug poisoning in 2021 and 10% were alcohol-specific deaths.
- Prison surveys suggest that 40% of inmates were under the influence of alcohol and 45% were under the influence of drugs at the time of committing an offence.
- Lack of stable employment and lack of stable housing are significant contributors to poor mental health and turning to drink or drugs to cope with deprivation. The most deprived are 7 times more likely to have an alcohol-related hospital admission and 16 times more likely to have a drugs-related hospital admission.
- The total number of children living with people starting treatment was 50,053 in 2023. Young people living with alcohol or drug dependent parents/carers report living highly disrupted, insecure and chaotic lives. They also experience shame, stigma, and discrimination due to their association with a parent/carer who uses substances.
- Between 2021/22-2023/24 there were 9,623 alcohol specific hospital admissions for under 18s in England - that's 25 per day.

Our solutions

- A whole school approach for every child is crucial, so that we can equip all young people with the skills, knowledge and tools to make safer choices about alcohol and drugs before experimentation begins. The likelihood of lifetime substance misuse drops 4-5% for each year use is delayed, hence independent evaluation showing that our Talk About Alcohol programme significantly raises the age teenagers choose to drink is paramount to improving young people's life chances. We are thrilled, post successful pilot, have rolled out similar early intervention and prevention programmes for drugs and vaping in secondary schools and vaping resources in primary schools.
- We engage young people with an interactive online platform talkaboutalcohol.com that encourages them to build knowledge and find out in a fun way, through games and quizzes, about the effects of alcohol and other substances on their physical and mental wellbeing. [Life-stuff.org](https://life-stuff.org) also provides tips, information and support to help ages 16+ with health, wellbeing and social issues.
- Our activities, rehearsal strategies and role play allow young people to work out for themselves the effect of impulsive behaviour, enabling them to make more responsible, informed choices.
- We have developed a complex suite of resources and training using proven communication methods for young people with learning difficulties using colours, stories, scenarios, pictures, emojis, cartoons and techniques such as distancing and using characters.
- We include all major drugs and nicotine in our early intervention and harm reduction approaches and support young people, schools, youth and sports clubs as well as parents around alcohol, drugs, vaping and nicotine products.
- We focus our training and support workers in areas of high deprivation where alcohol and substance related harms are highest.
- We have targeted streams of work supporting care experienced children and those who face a greater risk of substance dependency and misuse.
- We reduce the potential harms from alcohol, cannabis and vaping to 16 – 25 year-olds by equipping them with the knowledge, awareness and life skills to make safer choices and where to go for help and support.
- We correct social norms – namely the fact that most young people do not use drugs or get drunk.
- We work closely with partners who ensure disadvantaged young people are given the best chances through building their self esteem, life skills, training and employability. We support staff with training, resources and the skills to support young adults around alcohol and cannabis misuse and vaping.
- We support young people in alternative education and provide training and resources to those working with them.
- We work closely with virtual school and foster agencies who support care experienced children and care leavers. We have a bespoke alcohol, cannabis and vaping programme for 16 – 25 year olds leaving care or at risk of homelessness living in assisted accommodation. Training and resources enable life coaches to have one to one conversations around higher harms, levels of use, consequences, grooming, consent and other relevant issues.
- We work very closely with the Youth Offending Teams as well as training staff in pupil referral units being careful not to trigger trauma or stigma at all times.
- Our staff training and materials at all times avoid stigma and triggering trauma and highlight the importance of being supportive, empathetic, non-judgemental and how to offer targeted support and referral to specialist family charities working in this area specifically.



► SCHOOLS AND YOUTH PROFESSIONALS

The problems

- Health Education became a statutory requirement for schools to deliver in September 2020, including alcohol and drug education. Teachers and youth workers cite not having enough time and not being subject experts as barriers to delivering effective health education.
- According to the most recent Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Survey, only half of pupils said they received lessons on alcohol (56%), smoking (56%) or drugs (60%).
- Lessons peaked in year 9, and only half of those pupils thought their school gave them enough information about smoking (52%), drinking alcohol (51%) or drug use (48%) meaning half of children are not sufficiently prepared for the challenges and choices they will face around alcohol and drugs.
- In 2022/23, there were 590 permanent exclusions from schools in England due to alcohol or drugs.
- Schools generally have little budget, training or guidance for RSHE.
- Charities and commissioned services supporting vulnerable children and young adults may lack the expertise, resources and training to support them

Our solutions

around alcohol and drugs.

- We provide an easy one stop shop for busy, time poor teachers where they can download lesson plans, implementation and evaluation guidance by topic or by ability for each year group.
- We make our evidenced Talk About Alcohol programme and resources for drug, alcohol and nicotine education available free of charge to all secondary schools across Britain.
- We train teachers and youth professionals and provide ongoing guidance so they feel confident and knowledgeable in teaching about alcohol and other substances.
- We provide games, one to one and small group activities suitable for use with young people in alternative settings, sports and youth clubs together with free training.
- We provide workshops, training and resources to life coaches and mentors of young adults in settings such as Foyers, Housing Associations and for organisations such as The King's Trust.

► COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

The problems

- Children living in households where parents drink to excess are more likely to drink early and problematically.
- Young people who use alcohol or drugs have significantly lower parental supervision than those who don't use substances.
- Parenting that increases alcohol and drug use includes: a lack of parental monitoring, high levels of parent/child conflict and a child's lack of willingness to disclose information to their parents.
- The greater the number of unsupervised evenings with friends, the greater the likelihood that young people will report having consumed alcohol in the last week and having used drugs in the last month.
- Our research shows that 93% of parents and carers overestimate the number of teenagers who drink and get drunk and so supply their children with alcohol, thinking they'll get it elsewhere, otherwise.
- Parents and carers are the prime suppliers of alcohol to under 18s.

Our solutions

- We help parents and carers to understand why drinking at too young an age and drinking too much can harm their child's short and long term health and also how drinking outside of the home raises the likelihood of other risk taking such as smoking or taking drugs.
- We correct perceived social norms with positive messages on how teenagers are drinking and using substances than they were 10 years ago.
- We give positive parenting tips that reduce all risk taking such as how to set boundaries, be a good role model and know where their children are.
- We empower parents to resist teen pressure and manipulation.
- We explain teen brain development and how early use of alcohol and other substances significantly increases the likelihood of problematic use and dependency and can permanently change developmental pathways.

SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

Helena Conibear, Founder

After 15 years at the helm of our wonderful charity, I very much look forward to stepping back to a more part time role as Founder in 2026 and am thrilled to welcome our new CEO, Steve Morton to our dedicated team of staff, trustees and volunteers.



I would also like to say a very personal and heartfelt thank you to all the amazing individuals who helped organise, sponsor or took part in our 15th anniversary celebrations during 2025. Our two fundraising events raised some £32,000 for The TALK ABOUT Trust – and incredible amount for us to be able to dedicate to our work and ensuring that we can continue to keep our drug education free for young people, their parents and the professionals who support them, ongoing.

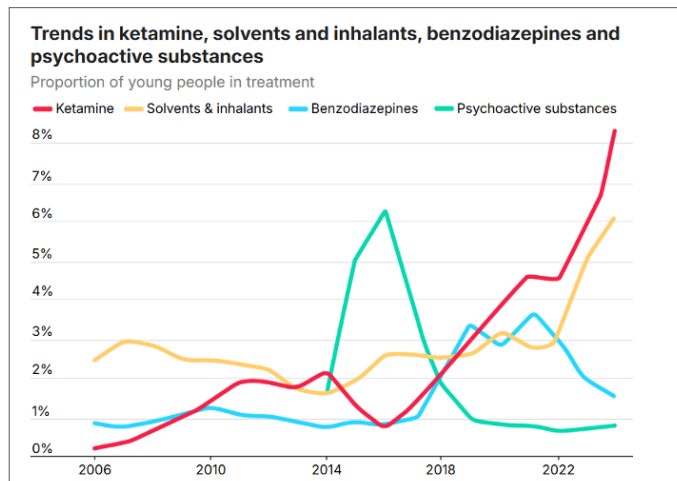
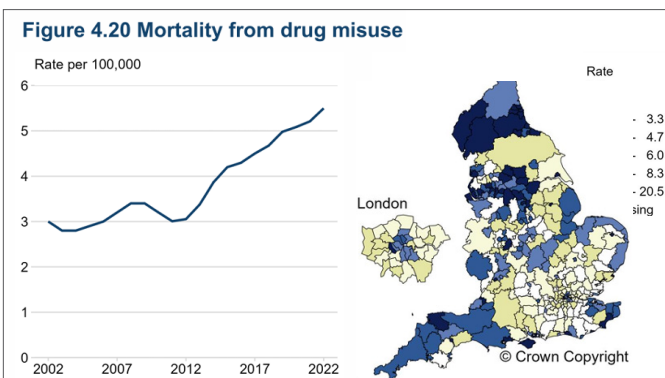
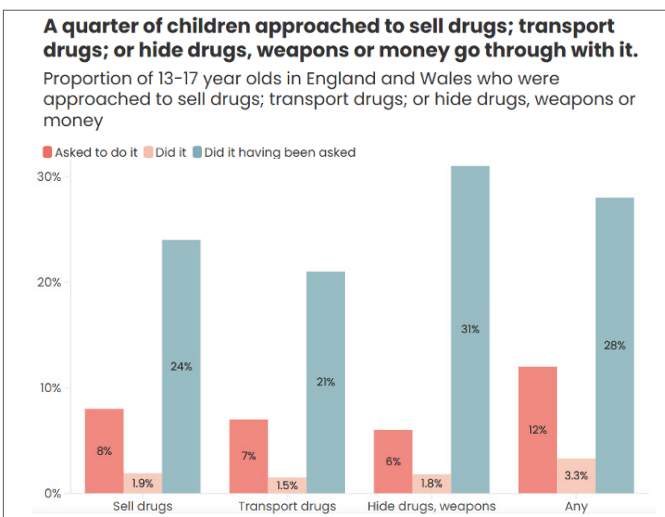
A huge thank you too, to Vicky who has now retired as our Chair. As a co founder, she has been a constant support offering wise counsel and always there at our key milestones and a true ambassador for our work. When Vicky and I sat around a kitchen table in 2009 with other teachers and professionals and decided to take the best drug education programmes from the EU and Australia and adapt them for UK schools to help address the growing binge drinking and virtual drinking culture that was at its height in the UK at that time, we could not have imagined where we would be as a charity today. Our goal, with us all as volunteers and with one part time paid administrator, was and remains to ensure that every young person has the knowledge, skills and resilience to make safer life choices. We set out to raise the age of teen drinking from age 13, to reduce alcohol related harms and improve life chances. We are very proud that on our watch underage drinking has more than halved, binge drinking and alcohol related harms and under 18 hospital admissions have all declined significantly.

Over the last decade youth behaviours and the risks facing them have changed markedly. The first substance

of experimentation is now nicotine, through the advent of vaping. Cannabis, through its strength and availability, has grown to be the substance leading to most harm among our children. 87% of the 16,000 teens seeking support for substance treatment are dependent on cannabis (second is alcohol at 36%).

More recently ketamine use has risen alarmingly, as has the use of solvents and inhalants, with our children being bombarded with marketing and advertising for illicit substances via their phones and tablets.

Most shockingly a recent report from the Youth Endowment Fund found that in a survey of nearly 11,000 children aged 13 to 17 one in nine said they had been approached to either sell drugs, transport drugs, or to store weapons, drugs or money in the last 12 months. Over a quarter of those approached went through with it - the equivalent of 120,000 teenagers in England and Wales.




So, in order to support teenagers and to provide them with the knowledge, skills and resilience they need to recognise risk and potential exploitation, our charity, The TALK ABOUT Trust has evolved to now support children from age 8 through to age 25, of every ability and background and in every setting, for often the most vulnerable are not in school or mainstream education. We have extended our resources, training, websites, advice to include all of the above and this year have enhanced our impact and reach in the following ways:

DRUG ALCOHOL AND NICOTINE EDUCATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND FREE OF CHARGE

A suite of interactive drug education lessons, fully mapped to RSHE requirements, covering choices, the Law, drugs and their effects, classification and county lines were made freely available to all secondary school settings this year.

The lesson plans are supported with downloadable resources, films, bitesize activities, implementation guidance, teacher training and student workshops. The trial and pilot of the resources were evaluated by UCL and Bournemouth University Masters students and showed an increase in knowledge and a lower intention to experiment with or to try drugs.

The universal programme was possible thanks to the support from The Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner. Every Head Teacher and secondary school across Dorset (via the Coastal Alliance of School Heads – CASH and Dorset Head Teachers) was given access to the online resources with training and student workshops, embedding the programme over two years. Please see the teacher guidance online [here](#).



Workbook

Talk about Drug, Alcohol and Nicotine Education tool kit

A programme of lesson plans, powerpoints, bite size activities and fact sheets for KS3/ KS4 covering choices, influences, norms, with detailed content on alcohol, vaping and nicotine, cannabis and cannabis products, county lines and supply.

TOPIC


ALCOHOL CANNABIS DRUG EDUCATION

OTHER DRUGS VAPING AND OTHER NICOTINE PRODUCTS

YEAR GROUP

YEAR 10 / 54 YEAR 11 / 55 YEAR 7 / 51 YEAR 8 / 52

YEAR 9 / 53



Leaflet

Supporting young people to give up vaping or nicotine products

This booklet gives advice and support on reducing and giving up vaping or nicotine products

TOPIC

VAPING AND OTHER NICOTINE PRODUCTS

YEAR GROUP

YEAR 10 / 54 YEAR 11 / 55 YEAR 12+ / 56

ENHANCED BITE SIZE RESOURCES AND WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT ON KETAMINE, MDMA AND SOLVENTS

Due to a steep rise in ketamine use and teen hospitalisations, we have developed and rolled out an assembly and workshop for teenagers to raise awareness of ketamine and its potency the lifelong health effects, including bladder and kidney damage.

Ketamine
(Special K/ Vitamin K/ Kat/ Super K)

What is it?
A dissociative and sedative

Short term effects: numbness, chilled, loss of feeling, unable to move, confusion, agitation – disconnected from reality, memory loss
Ketamine can
- increase heart rate
- make someone feel sick

Long term it is linked to serious bladder damage making it painful to wee, can lead to incontinence and leaks. Regular use is linked to stomach cramps and other organ damage including to the brain and kidneys. Abuse can lead to a decline in mental health and memory loss.

Ketamine is a class B drug, which means it is illegal to have personally, to give away or sell.

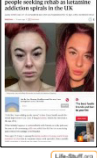
Possession can result in up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Supplying someone else, even friends, can result in up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Like drink-driving, driving when high is dangerous and illegal.

talktofrank.com/drug/ketamine

Warning: rise in ketamine use and availability in Dorset



Like, share and post a picture for awareness

Use of solvents and inhalants, which are cheap and freely available has also risen steeply this year, this can include some 2,000 mainly household products (including NOS), hence we have released fact sheets and on line resources to raise awareness and to upskill teachers and professionals.

COUNTY LINES AND ONLINE GROOMING

Working closely with two specialist organisations, Get Safe Online and Escape Line (county lines specialist organisation), we have developed a comprehensive training module on online safety and on recognising the signs of grooming and county line involvement. We have an hour of powerful testimony from a brave escapee of ‘lived experience’ recorded with a victim of child exploitation recruited at age 8. We have a lesson to complement the training called ‘Where’s The Harm?’ and a range of pictures and stories to use with primary age children.

VAPING, NICOTINE POUCHES AND SPICE IN VAPES

The biggest issue for schools continues to be vaping, SNUS or nicotine pouches and how to support pupils and reduce supply and use. Of particular concern has been Professor Chris Pudney’s testing of vapes and e liquids, finding that one in eight tested from schools contained the zombie drug, Spice. The ‘giving of vapes’ to very young children by older teenagers and the risks of county line recruitment and child exploitation is very high, as is the easy availability of vapes and other substances online and via social media and gaming platforms.

We are working both locally and nationally to try and address these huge issues. Other concerns are that synthetic cannabis, THC, and other toxins are being added to e liquids and vapes without the knowledge of the young person. 84% of schools believe vaping is an issue (Source NASWUT).

Do you believe vaping by pupils in school or on school premises is an issue on your school

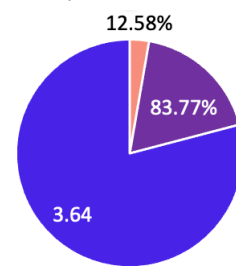
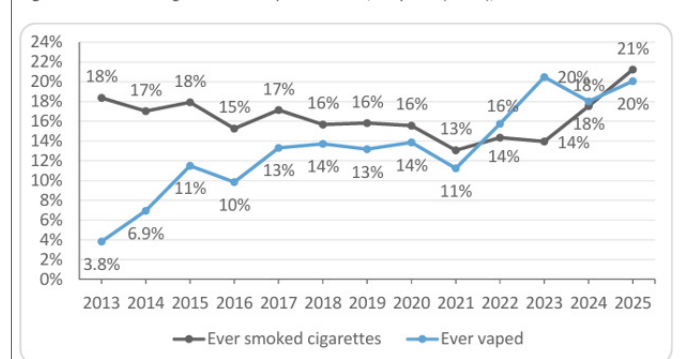


Figure 9. Ever use of cigarettes and vapes over time, GB youth (11-17), 2013-2025



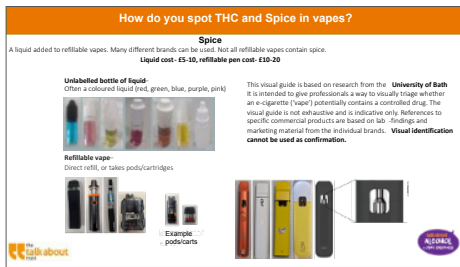
ASH Smokefree GB Youth Surveys, 2013-2025.

The proportion of never smokers who report that they think they will try smoking soon from 0.9% to 2.0% (Figure 10). It is unclear what might be driving this. The increase was seen among both those who have and have not tried vaping.

We now have a large range of resources, lessons, fact sheets, myth busters and online resources on vaping, nicotine pouches for ages 8 – 25. The lessons also cover other nicotine products such as shisha, cigarettes and illicit vapes. There is a specially commissioned animation by a Leeds graduate and animator, ‘Vape Radpuff’, as well as discussion-based elements on how vapes are marketed and deliberately targeted to young people. We’ve also filmed some great discussions and opinion pieces with young people on their views and attitudes to use as conversation starters with other young people, as well as with professionals such as dentists and toxicologists.

This is complemented by teacher implementation guidance and training, plus a booklet for older students on how to support someone who is trying to cut down or stop vaping.

Finally, after collaborating with The King's Trust and Hampshire Fire Brigade, we also highlight fire hazards of using vapes in our resources, as well as the ecological and environmental impact.



NICOTINE POUCHES

To help tackle the shocking increase in SNUS (nicotine pouch) use, especially among sporty young men over the last year, we have recorded a suite of short awareness films with a specialist dentist on the oral impact of nicotine use. At present, nicotine levels are not regulated and pouches can be given, sold or marketed to young people. They are openly promoted by influencers and sports people. Young people are not aware that nicotine levels can be the equivalent of 10 cigarettes per pouch, nor their effect on oral health or the heart.



THC and SPICE in Vapes and E-Liquids (vape juice) - What we need to know

Information for young people.

Talk About Trust founder Helena Coribear in conversation with Professor Christopher Pudney, Professor of Applied Biochemistry at Bath University

TOPIC
VAPING AND OTHER NICOTINE PRODUCTS

AGES
11-13 YEAR OLDS 14-16 YEAR OLDS 16+



Big Puff - High Nicotine Illicit Vapes - what we need to know

Discussion with Helena Coribear, Founder of the Talk About Trust and Post Graduate, Rachel Andrews, at Bath University

TOPIC
VAPING AND OTHER NICOTINE PRODUCTS

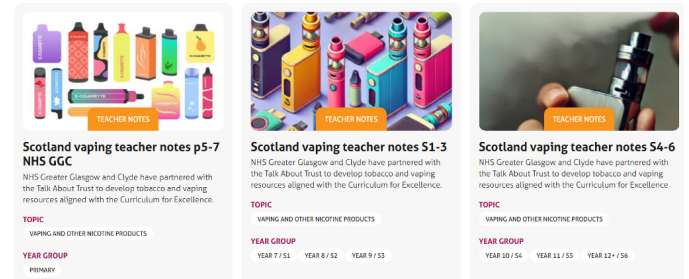
AGES
11-13 YEAR OLDS 14-16 YEAR OLDS 16+

COMMISSIONED VAPING AND SMOKING RESOURCES FOR ALL SCHOOLS ACROSS GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE

It has been a huge pleasure and a mammoth task to pilot, trial and develop a suite of bespoke lesson plans, films and resources for both primary and secondary schools across the region for



Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS. The resources cover smoking and vaping as well as training for teachers covering P2 to S4. We have loved working closely with pupils across the age range both to inform and refine the content. The resources can be viewed here.



We now look forward to providing a suitably adapted programme for the use in the third sector during 2026.

PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCES ON VAPING COMMISSIONED FOR ALL DORSET PRIMARY SETTINGS

Post pilot in Dorset with 6 schools, with an invaluable advisory council of 8 head teachers guiding the work, we have now completed age-appropriate resources including games and activities, which look at what vapes contain, explains nicotine levels and the effects of nicotine on the brain, lungs and heart and on the environment. Currently only available to Dorset schools, we look forward to making the resources, games and activities freely available to all primary schools from autumn 2026.



SPIKING

Our outreach to raise awareness of Spiking among 16 to 25-year-olds has almost doubled this year as we provided posters, awareness cards and talks/stands to some 140 Universities, Colleges and 6th forms. Together with methanol poisoning, spiking is now detailed in RHSE guidance which is a welcome step. It's been a huge pleasure to support freshers' weeks and to provide talks and specialist lectures at FE Colleges and Universities across the country.

It has been useful to be a member of the Home Office panels that address spiking and has worked towards a standalone offence for spiking. We provide an SMS messaging service - a text messaging service highlighting how victims of spiking can obtain support. This is to support staff in emergency



departments and at sexual health clinics following our training of staff. This easy share leads to Crime Stoppers, the police UK app, Victim support and to Sexual Assault Referral centres, as well as highlighting the Samaritans and Rape Crisis. (See [life-stuff.org](https://www.life-stuff.org)).

DRUG AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION CONFERENCE FOR PROFESSIONALS AT BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY JUNE 18TH 2025



Every two years we host a national drug and alcohol education conference in a different geographical region. This, our fifth, was kindly hosted by Bournemouth University. The conference aimed to help ensure that all professionals working with young people are equipped with the most recent facts and figures, an understanding of best practice and the evidence base, and resources to enable the delivery of age and ability appropriate drug and alcohol education.

A range of expert speakers, including Dr David Regis from the School Health Education Unit, Professor McAlaney from Bournemouth University, Escape Line, Face2Face and David Sidwick, Joint National Lead for drugs and alcohol at the APPC, provided valuable insights into the current issues, developments and programmes in the field.

The day equipped delegates with the confidence, knowledge and resources to teach evidenced drug and alcohol education and provide an understanding of the context and scale of the ever-changing issues facing young people.



The hands-on CPD training workshops demonstrated how best to support young people in building their knowledge, resilience and life skills that will help them to make safer choices.

Delegates walked away with resources which will enable them to plan, deliver and evaluate their PSHE scheme of work on drugs, alcohol and nicotine education. The resources are equally relevant for professionals working with young people in non-school settings and, although the focus is on alcohol, nicotine and drugs, the interactive workshops showcased skills, games and activities that are applicable to all PSHE and health education.

120 health educators, teachers, youth leaders and drug and alcohol practitioners attended our day of speakers covering county lines, vaping, drugs on social media, neuro diverse approaches for young people, followed by CPD workshops chaired by The Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, Professor Michael Dooley. It was a much valued, highly evaluated and successful day. You can view presentations [here](#).

CPD ACCREDITATION FOR TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL TRAINING

2025 has also seen us invest in becoming an accredited CPD provider. This is further endorsement of the quality of our training provided both face to face and online to professionals. Our Drug Alcohol and Nicotine training for teachers (3½ hours), our training for professionals supporting vulnerable 16 to 25-year-olds (3 hours) and our Talk About Alcohol training (2 hours) are currently approved, with more to come.

In addition, we have won two Teach Secondary Awards, including best free resource across all subjects and amazing recognition from the Education Resource Awards for the best secondary school resource for RSE!



ERA - Best secondary resource for RSE

Teach Secondary - Best free resource



PAVILION IN THE PARK AND OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Pavilion in The Park (PiP) our office community hub and café continues to thrive at the heart of the Poundbury community. PiP not only allows us to deliver diversionary activities for young people and cohesion in the local community, but provides our charity with a valued income stream, covering a high proportion of our core funding needs and reducing the pressure on us as a charity in a tough fund raising environment.

We achieved a long term ambition in 2025 with the launch of the Poundbury Youth Club in partnership with Dorset Youth Community Centre. Following a pilot, this has proved a huge success with local young people who love the Great Field and our café environment. We now host some 20 clubs and groups – from chess and table top games to a senior social café to holiday clubs, after school art and teen hang out days.

KING'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

In recognition of our community outreach, we were absolutely thrilled to have been awarded The King's Foundation's 'Building a Legacy' outstanding contribution to community award for 2025. The award recognises one organisation a year that has been created in a new development and has brought cohesion, bonding and created a place where people feel welcomed and want to be.

'PiP is the embodiment of what can happen when you bring people together to brainstorm what a new community needs. At Poundbury it was a space that was inclusive offering free events and clubs for everyone of all ages, incomes and abilities



Helena Conibear Founder of The TALK ABOUT Trust and Pavilion in The Park (PiP) with PiP trustees, volunteers and staff with The Kings Foundation Building a Legacy outstanding contribution to community award

who live here or in the local villages around. Consultation with residents and local school children also showed they wanted PiP to be eco friendly, to offer good value refreshments, shelter and supervision of the planned park to ensure it would be a safe and welcoming community space. We're proud to say that with more than 20 clubs and groups running from PiP, from the weekly park run, to the digital drop in, the senior social, teen hang out, youth club and holiday clubs we are delivering on that vision thanks to the wonderful volunteers, partners and organisations as well as the staff at PiP that make it not only possible, but a joy to provide.'

Helena Conibear, Founder of The TALK ABOUT Trust

'We were delighted to award the President's Award this year to PiP for their outstanding work in the heart of the community. This is the only award with a financial contribution and we very much hope that both the award and contribution will allow the charity to have even greater impact and transform more lives in the future.'

Ben Bolgar MVO, Director of The King's Foundation

With the support of our dedicated Club Leaders, committed volunteers, and the passionate team at PiPs, our

outreach programme and community events continue to grow and thrive. This is only possible through the amazing grant funding support that we receive from local charities and organisations which enables us to employ Kerry Smith, our Community Engagement Manager on a part-time basis and to continue to put on events for free. We've created a unique community asset supporting local families, and people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, sparking joy, belonging and cohesion within Poundbury, Dorchester and our surrounding villages.

We are so grateful to local organisations, businesses and charities who make our community outreach possible.



OUR 15TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND THANK YOU

A huge number of volunteers, trustees, staff, sponsors, donors, our speakers, hosts and guests made our 15th anniversary events such a huge success this year. We are immensely grateful and we had such a wonderful opportunity to share our story, impact, reach and the difference that we make day to day to the lives of young people. We look forward to our thank you event at The House of Lords this Spring.

Without our patrons, those who hold events or raise money



for us, grant givers, individual donors, partners and sponsors we would be unable to ensure that every child in England and Scotland has access to quality assured drug education, giving them the knowledge, skills and resilience to make safer choices.

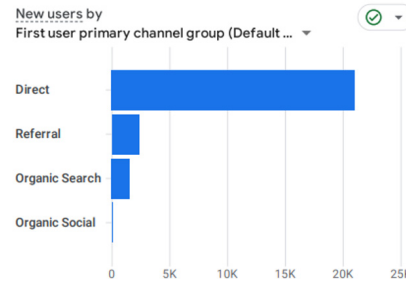
Thank you!

Helena Conibear, Founder

To receive regular update, please [sign up for our regular newsletter](#).

OUR IMPACT AND REACH

talkaboutalcohol.org



Life-stuff.org

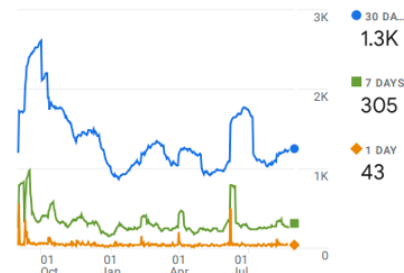
Event count by Event name

EVENT NAME	EVENT COUNT
page_view	65K
session_start	19K
first_visit	17K
user_engagement	15K
scroll	1.1K
click	682
file_download	233

Event count by Country

COUNTRY	EVENT COUNT
United Kingdom	34K
United States	15K
India	5.3K
Canada	4.5K
South Africa	3.1K
Philippines	3K
Australia	2.5K

User activity over time



RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION & REACH

Kate Hooper, schools and youth organisation coordinator

It's been such an exciting year for TALK ABOUT Trust with our 15th anniversary celebrations, welcoming a new CEO and the development of lots of new resources!



We have supported just over 1,000 settings across the UK with hard copies or downloads of our resources.

As always, the range of settings supported was hugely varied and includes school nursing teams, youth justice teams, councils, police, the NHS and football clubs as well as a wide variety of mainstream schools, independent schools, special schools, alternative provision and pupil referral units.

We have seen a decline in use of our hard copy resources (Games and Activities Boxes, 16+ Boxes and Teacher Workbooks) and a move to our huge range of wonderful online resources, games, fact sheets and guidance, curated to age, ability, sector and topic on our extensive website www.talkabouttrust.org – a reflection of the demand for e learning and digital resources.

We have several new resources introduced this year including the Drugs, Alcohol and Nicotine Education suite of resources, modules on County Lines and interactive vaping resources for primary schools.

We are seeing huge rise in use of our online games, quizzes and myth busters, in both educational and non-educational settings.

PAGE TITLE AND SCREEN ...	VIEWS
AlcoholClockGame	44K
Switchin Kitchen	3.4K
Talk About Alcohol + Other S...	904
Alcohol Clock Game - Talk A...	2
Body Watch - Talk About Alc...	1

PAGE TITLE AND SCREEN ...	VIEWS
Gambling and how to keep it ...	4.6K
Preventing drink spiking & w...	4.1K
Life Stuff	3.8K
Tips for a safe night out	2.6K

Our fantastic regional team have been involved in an amazing 628 engagements this year reaching 1,054 settings across England and Scotland. This included 250 training workshops, parent talks, 113 sessions for young people and 259 other engagements. In addition to all types of schools, settings supported include universities, youth charities, police, parent groups, NHS, councils and Public Health.

Based on responses from 681 of those who have received TAA training from us, our average rating for both our training and our resources was 9/10 overall again this year, which was great to hear.

Other findings showed:

- Knowledge around the topic covered rose from 6/10 before the session to 9/10 afterwards.
- Attendees rated how equipped they felt to teach the topic as 6/10 before the session and 8/10 after it.
- Confidence in knowing where to signpost young people for help and support rose from 6/10 before the session to 9/10 afterwards.
- 97% said that they will change their approach to social norms as a result of training.

Based on the response of 273 respondents who received 16+ session from us

- 76% said their views on the topic covered had changed as a result of the session.
- The sessions were rated at 9/10 overall.
- 95% said they felt able to make informed choices following the session.

It's always wonderful to see so many positive comments from those who have attended training and examples of these from this year have included:

"Fantastic training! Feel equipped to discuss with young people now I know the legalities around the topic."

"Great trainer, very informative session."

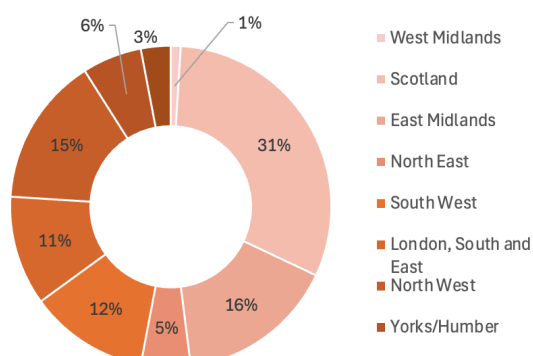
"Thank you. This website, training and resources will have a positive impact on my key work sessions and ultimately the young people I work with."

"Well presented with valuable life experiences."

"Informative and good interactions with all attendees."

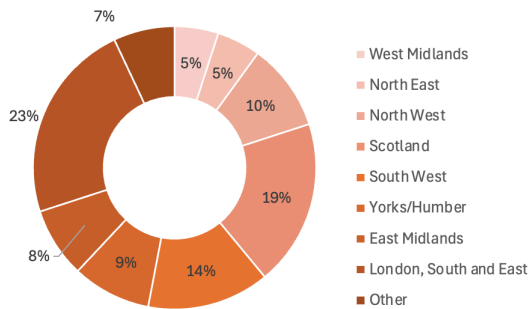
When downloading our resources, we ask people to tell us how they heard about us. Over a quarter of respondents heard about us via a recommendation, which is wonderful. 32% of those downloading our resources asked for further help such as personalised advice, further resources and training sessions.

HARD COPY RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION BY REGION



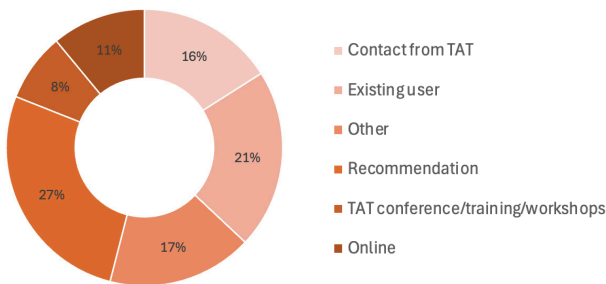
We have continued our important work around spiking this year and this has included providing 140 colleges and universities with our anti-spiking posters and awareness cards, training, student sessions and support. We know that these are hugely appreciated by the settings receiving them, especially around Freshers' week.

TAT DOWNLOADS BY REGION

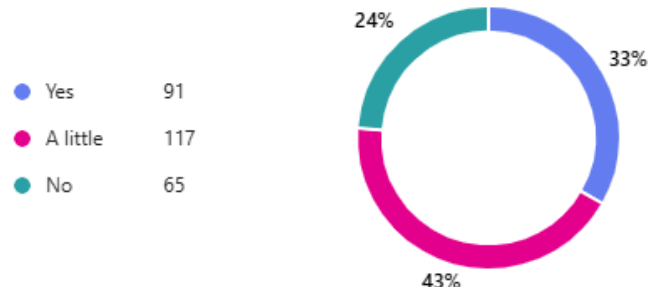


(Data based on information gathered from 758 downloads of lesson plans and resources).

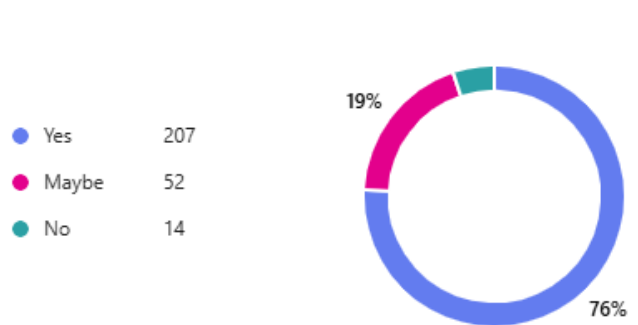
HOW DID PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT US?



9. Have your views on the topic/s the session covered changed as a result of the session?



14. Do you feel you can make more informed choices around the



REPORTS FROM OUR SPECIALIST TRAINERS

Our regionally based staff work to support our three key pillars of:



Supporting and engaging children and young adults



Supporting and training teachers and health professionals



Empowering parents and carers and to protect young people

This helps fulfil our goals to

- Raise the age of onset of drinking whole drinks from the current age of 13 to at least the UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidance of age 15 with a long term goal of the legal purchase age of 18.
- Reduce the prevalence and social acceptability of binge drinking and drunkenness, vaping, cannabis and other substance use among young people.
- Raise awareness of the lifetime risk of early alcohol and other substance use.
- Reduce the accidents, violence, assault and harm caused to young people and the community by alcohol and drug use.
- Encourage diversionary activities for young people that reduce anti-social behaviour crime and onset of drinking and drug use.
- Ensure the life chances of young people most vulnerable to alcohol and drug harm and abuse are improved.

Our small band of regionally based staff, Kathryn (The North), Karen and Sarah (Midlands and The South), Amy (London and the South-East) and Ailsa (Scotland), provide Drug, Alcohol and Nicotine Education (DANE) for young people, training for teachers and youth professionals and workshops for parents and carers nationally.

This year we trained over 2,000 teachers and professionals working with young people of all abilities and backgrounds. Teachers and health professionals are given an insight into activities and approaches that inspire young people to learn through enjoyment – by providing evidenced but fun activities, 'bottom up' materials that build resilience, self-esteem, encourage working in groups, role play and 'rehearsal strategies'. The TALK ABOUT Trust takes a positive engaging approach that does not attempt to induce shock or stigma, but focuses on what young people can do to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, make a positive contribution and achieve physical and mental wellbeing.

By engaging younger people BEFORE they begin drinking, vaping, smoking or experimenting with substances in an unsupervised environment, we ensure that children and young people think about the consequences of short-term decisions. Our programmes develop the skills and knowledge needed to make informed choices about when, if and how much to drink as they reach the legal drinking age and the short and long term consequences of substance use. Following training, those trained are fully supported online via talkabouttrust.org with a fun learning zone for teenagers talkaboutalcohol.com, with regular updates and newsletters.

6th formers and students are supported with a comprehensive wellbeing hub life-stuff.org

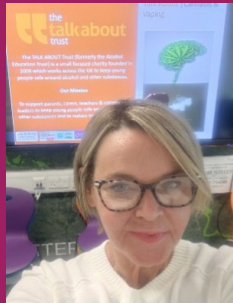
Having regionally based staff also ensures that the TALK ABOUT Trust reaches more young people directly in different settings and can effectively target the geographical areas where substance-related harms for under 25s are highest. We delivered workshops, lessons and assemblies to children in 113 schools, plus many other youth settings this year. Our regional staff also help train young health champions, students studying health and social care as part of their outreaches to ensure peer mentors are engaging and knowledgeable. Using data from the indices of deprivation as well as substance treatment statistics for Under 18's and hospital admissions for U18s in England and Scotland, we focus our resource on young people in areas that need our support most as well as all areas of Scotland where alcohol and drug related deaths are nearly twice those in England.

Parents and carers are also supported locally by our specialist coordinators around 'tough love' parenting skills, setting boundaries, the law and how to keep their children safe around alcohol. Research shows that unless parents/carers are good role models, set boundaries and know where their children are and who they are with, any efforts by schools/ other organisations to reduce risk taking, including underage drinking and substance use are limited. Parents/ carers are also the key suppliers of alcohol to those under the age of 18. The TALK ABOUT Trust specialists engage parents and carers via school and the community. We also have a dedicated web area for parents on www.talkabouttrust.org

To learn more about our ambassadors and staff click [here](#).

Kathryn Arnott-Gent, Northern Manager

It's been an incredible year, with around 150 workshops, and training sessions provided, including a diverse mix of teacher and staff training, direct workshops for pupils and older students, and health events. Much of our work has focused on key issues such as staying safe, county lines, spiking, and vaping, with growing demand for sessions on illicit vapes and other nicotine products such as pouches.



Alongside delivering training and supporting young people, I've been busy developing new bitesize learning resources covering topics such as ketamine, county lines, energy drinks, solvents and nitrous oxide. I've also been busy working towards our professional accreditation through the CPD Standards Office, and I'm delighted to share that we now have three fully accredited courses, our 16+ Alcohol, Cannabis and Vaping resource, the Drug, Alcohol & Nicotine Education (DANE) resource for secondary schools, and our Talk About Alcohol resource for secondary school!



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT - SECONDARY

Examples include the beautiful Ysgol Dyffryn School in Wales, delivering three sessions to their Sixth Form on the topic of spiking — covering alcohol, needle, and vape spiking. The day was a great success, with staff noting a strong student response after the session, especially around vape spiking, which many had not heard of before, and the issue of illegal vapes.

At Lytham High School, 300 Year 10 students participated in an interactive workshop on alcohol awareness and personal safety. Similarly, 200 Year 10 students at Filey High School attended two sessions exploring alcohol use and vaping. 400 students across Years 12 and 13 at Allerton High School in Leeds took part in sessions focusing on staying safe, spiking awareness, and methanol poisoning.

A fantastic session was also delivered at Cardinal Langley High School for students in Years 7–10. There was a constant stream of students throughout the day, with many engaging in valuable one-to-one conversations. What stood out most was that most of the young people reported that they had never tried vaping or alcohol.



It was also a pleasure to return to Ripon Grammar School to deliver our annual staying safe around alcohol session to over 200 Year 12 students. The students are always so engaged, enthusiastic, and keen to take part in discussions and activities it's a real pleasure to deliver to them.

"The TALK ABOUT Trust were brilliant on Friday for our P16. - please pass on my thanks to Kathryn as well, as she was absolutely brilliant." (Allerton High School Leeds)

FOOTBALL CLUBS

Outreach this year included supporting Wigan Athletic as hosts of the Premier Kicks Regional Tournament. The event, held over the Easter break, brought together Year 11 students from clubs including Manchester United, Manchester City, Salford FC, Rochdale FC, Stockport FC, and, of course, hosts Wigan Athletic.

Each team had a 20 minute session on vaping, nicotine pouches and alcohol. Activities included using beer goggles for a penalty shootout activity — a fun and engaging way to demonstrate the effects of alcohol impairment. There was some shock at how significantly alcohol can affect coordination, which lead to some great conversations about alcohol tolerance and unit awareness. A brilliant day with excellent engagement from all young people



"Wigan Athletic Community Trust has worked closely with Kathryn and the Talk Education Trust over the past year. During this partnership, Kathryn has delivered high-quality training and provided valuable resources for our coaches to utilise across community programmes."

In addition, young people from Community Club Organisations (CCOs) across Greater Manchester participated in an engaging, informative, and enjoyable workshop at the Premier League Charitable Fund Regional Qualifier that we hosted in Wigan. The workshop with 14 to 16-year-olds focused on raising awareness around vaping, tobacco, and alcohol.



The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, and we are now exploring opportunities to integrate similar workshops into future Trust events and other departmental initiatives." Rachel Wood, Youth Engagement manager, Wigan Athletic.

OLDER STUDENTS

Engagement with older students across colleges, universities, and youth organisations has continued to grow this year, reaching thousands of young people in further and higher education. Sessions delivered across the University of York, York College, Liverpool Hope University, the University of Chester, Leeds Aviation College, Askham Bryan College, Reaseheath and Craven College provided valuable opportunities to discuss key topics such as spiking, alcohol awareness, vaping, and other substances.

What has stood out most from these conversations is the clear and lasting impact they can have. Two particular highlights were a student proudly showing they had thrown away their illicit vape after attending a workshop a few months earlier, and another student handing Kathryn a letter explaining how our previous chat from earlier event had made a huge difference to their alcohol use — they had almost halved their intake since we last spoke.



"On behalf of everyone at Craven College, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for taking the time to come in and support our students through your training sessions, talks, and participation in our fairs.

Your willingness to share your expertise, insight, and real-world experience makes a genuine difference to our learners. Many of our students have expressed how valuable and inspiring they found your sessions, and it's clear that your involvement has helped broaden their understanding of future pathways and opportunities.

We truly appreciate the energy, kindness, and professionalism you brought to each interaction. Partnerships like this enrich our college community, and we are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support." Rosemary Simpson, Student Service Manager, Craven College

"On behalf of everyone at York College, we want to extend our thanks for your support at our Well-Being Festival this week. It was truly a pleasure to host you and learn more about the valuable services you provide. There were many positive interactions with our students, which was great to see."

I was also delighted to be invited to attend to speak on my very first podcast which will be available for students to listen to attending Liverpool Hope University. The discussion was with the President of the Students Union covering alcohol units, staying safe around substances, knowing your boundaries and how to support someone giving up nicotine.



STAFF TRAINING

Training teachers and staff who support younger and more vulnerable young people remains a vital part of our work. Research shows that trusted adults are best placed to deliver sessions on sensitive topics, and I am pleased to report that this year I have delivered training across the North of England to youth services, secondary schools, sports clubs, children's homes, and third-sector organisations.

In addition to sessions focused on our highly evaluated resources, we have provided staff awareness sessions to enhance understanding of issues such as County Lines, ketamine, and NOS, as well as more recent bite-sized sessions on identifying illicit vapes containing THC and Spice. Evaluation feedback has been extremely positive, demonstrating significant increases in knowledge — in some cases, knowledge rose from a score of 2 prior to the session to 10 afterwards.

We continue to extend our thanks to A Wilderness Way for commissioning us to deliver monthly sessions to their staff, focusing on our Alcohol and Cannabis resources, with around 50 staff attending each month.

"The Universal Youth Services in Sheffield City Council undertook training around alcohol with TALK ABOUT Trust. We found this very useful and that the training and resources provided us with up-to-date information. The interactive night club was a particularly useful tool that we can then use with young people. Kathryn was very engaging. Big thank you!" (Sheffield Youth Services)

"I thought this session was absolutely amazing, excellent resources and delivery and genuinely super informative". Thank you (Family Action Stockton)

"Brilliant piece of training." (A Wilderness Way)

I would like to highlight the fantastic work we have delivered in Rochdale this year. With the support of Rochdale Healthy Schools, we have been able to coordinate a comprehensive programme of staff training across secondary schools, PRUs, the 0–18 school nurse service, and the youth service.



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

I was delighted to attend and support the Rochdale Young Health Activists Event on two separate occasions. Students in Years 8–12, completing their Level 2 Young Health Activist qualification, they had to research important health messages and asked insightful questions throughout the session.

I also had the pleasure of attending Rochdale Youth Club's International Women's Day event, where I delivered three workshops for girls focusing on staying safe around alcohol. The day was brilliant, and the students were fully engaged in the alcohol clock and unit-pouring activities.

Finally, it was a pleasure to attend the Year 10 parent session at Matthew Moss High School, and I look forward to continuing to support these events over the coming months.

"A really great session Kathryn. Looking forward to the next sessions and to future work with our Pru and youth service". (Rochdale Healthy Schools)

"It was a really useful training session and I will be using the activities in my sessions". (Rochdale Youth Service).

CHESHIRE

With support from Cheshire Crimebeat, we've delivered both staff and student sessions across the county, including Reaseheath College and Chester University.



Staff training covered County Lines and illicit vapes, while student wellbeing sessions focused mainly on alcohol, and spiking. At Chester University's Wellfest, it was refreshing to see that alcohol use was low, with students enjoying walks with friends, social clubs, and meals out, and only a handful reported vaping. Cheshire West & Chester Special Guardians have also received resources and training and we look forward to further work with Cheshire Lives, Cheshire East Youth Support, and Friends for Leisure.

SAFER ROSSENDALE

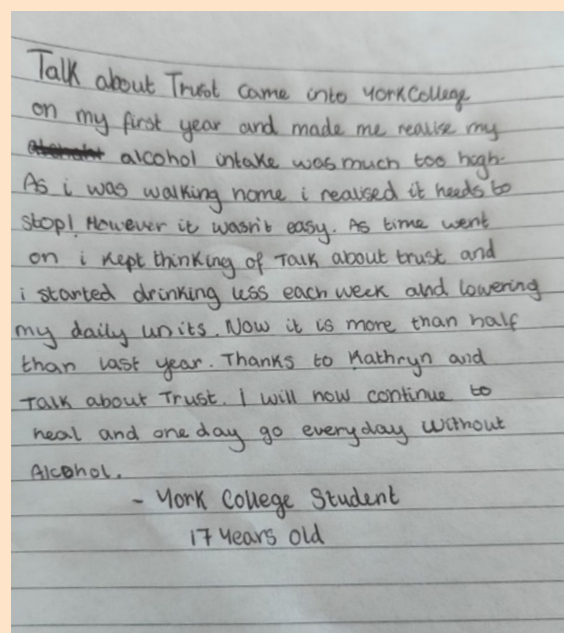
Organisations across Rossendale, including cafes, bars and family centres have received spiking training including the roles and responsibilities of venues, signs of spiking, what to do, how to help the victim, how to help the police – and how to report and support.

It has been an amazing year in the North, addressing and



responding to key emerging issues including, spiking, vaping, alcohol, and drug awareness. Some of the impact of these sessions has been inspiring, and is at the heart of why we do what we do - young people making positive changes in their behaviour, while we have also seen a huge increase in staff confidence and knowledge. It's clear that our resources, training, and workshops are making a real difference in communities across the North of England.

Kathryn is excited to continue building on this work, expanding our reach, further developing new resources, and exploring innovative ways to engage young people and staff.



Midlands and West Outreach, Karen Perryman and Sarah Boyle

It has been wonderful to welcome Sarah to strengthen our delivery team across Dorset, Midlands and The South West this year, enabling us to deliver our new programme for Primary schools and our continued in depth focus on drug education across Dorset as well as a new in depth support for youth settings across Bristol, for example. Thanks to funding received and partnerships built, we are making a real difference, helping to keep young people safe around alcohol and other substances.



Highlights of our varied, rewarding and impactful work include

TEACHER TRAINING

(Using our Talk About Alcohol Teacher workbook which incorporates six readymade lesson plans for time poor teachers).



Blandford School

We have trained not only teachers but safeguarding, pastoral and support staff to use resources which work equally well with one to one, in small or large groups.

"Very enjoyable and full of useful information. Eye opening and full of useful resources and tips to use. Trainer – Karen – was excellent. Thank you."

"I found this training session incredibly engaging and informative. The facilitator was knowledgeable and encouraged open discussions, making the session both interactive and insightful. The content around alcohol, cannabis and vaping was highly relevant and delivered in a way that was easy to understand and apply in practice. I would highly recommend this CPD to others looking to enhance their knowledge in this area."

Esteem Multi Academy Trust, Derbyshire



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SESSIONS

Through interactive workshops and assemblies, we have had the privilege of engaging with thousands of students across the region communicating social norms messages and harm reduction/resilience strategies both face to face and virtually. The participation and enthusiasm of students demonstrate the positive impact we have on young people helping to reduce negative risk taking.

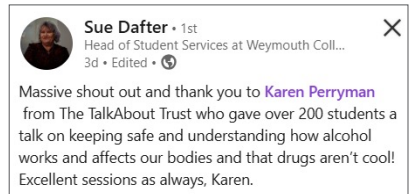


All Saints School, Weymouth

What a great time we've had at All Saints Academy, Budmouth and Atlantic Academy, Blandford School, Lychett, Sherborne School, and John Henry Newman, Birmingham to name but a few.



The ability to be able to react to arising problems is a key strength of the TALK ABOUT Trust. Ketamine was becoming a growing problem in Weymouth. All Secondary schools in the area were visited and assemblies highlighting the risks took place.



Weymouth College



"Really informative session, the interactive elements of breaking up the session with videos and getting us to think about statistics etc was a good way to maintain interest." Shirebrook Academy



John Henry Newman School, Birmingham

ATTENDANCE AT STUDENT DAYS



Cannington College



Strode College

Interacting with students at events such as Freshers' Fairs and Wellbeing Weeks is a favourite part of our work, especially in raising awareness of



Bournemouth University

spiking of all kinds. They are always so receptive to the messages we communicate and surprised at unit measures and nicotine levels in vapes and pouches.

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Our resources have been developed to ensure that young people of all abilities are kept safe around alcohol and other substances. What a buzz, working with YMCA, Chatterboxes youth club in Bournemouth. The young people were absolutely amazing - so engaged and their participation was phenomenal.

"It was so wonderful to see all the young people so engaged with your presentation. Thank you so much."



Chatterboxes, Bournemouth

All 40 plus staff at Mountjoy Special School received training in the use of our resources for vaping, cannabis and ketamine.

"THANK YOU SO MUCH!!! It was very informative and will be so helpful in giving our young people the correct information," Mountjoy Special School



Mountjoy Special School

WORKING WITH PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS

Ensuring that we reach extra vulnerable young people is key to what we do. We were lucky enough to work with Compass Pupil Referral Unit in Weymouth and Future Roots, Sherborne.



Future Roots, Sherborne



"Karen from Talk About Trust came to Compass Learning Centre today to talk to our Year 10s and Year 9s about the risks of Ketamine. Our young people responded very well to her style of delivery which was very relaxed, informal and responsive to the students' questions and needs. Year 9 especially were engaged in what she had to say and asked lots of questions about Ketamine and other drugs, which Karen was able to answer fully. They appreciated her non-judgemental attitude and relaxed and friendly nature and felt able to talk to her about their experiences."

TRAINING YOUTH PROFESSIONALS AND THOSE THAT WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Lots of these type of training sessions have taken place throughout the region. Here's some of the feedback in their own words.

"I am able to talk to my teens about their knowledge and experience."

"Brilliant session, taking so much away from this."

"The facts and figures information on the issues will really help inform young people of the real facts."

"Great session and so much usable information that can be adjusted for young people."

"Taking away more awareness of support in crisis, conversation starters, information to support young people in schools."



Dorset youth training days

WORKING WITH COUNCILS, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND THE POLICE

We have run several training courses open to all Dorset Council Children's Services Employees.

"Karen was a wonderful teacher and kept us engaged throughout the training, asking us questions to gauge our knowledge and answering any we presented her with. Overall an enjoyable and educational experience!" Dorset Council Children's Services Vaping Training Session



"Great training thank you. I love the interactive resources for CYP – brilliant. 🌟"

"Brilliant training, really informative, thank you. 🌟"

Lots of work has been carried out across Derbyshire with training around alcohol, cannabis and vaping open to anyone working or volunteering with 11 to 25-year-olds.



Derbyshire Community Health Services
NHS Foundation Trust

"Thank you for a really useful and interesting insight. Useful for me with the teenagers on my caseload."

"Fantastic session. The interactive resources, demonstrations through questioning and the interactive discussion were all very helpful and informative."
Derbyshire County Council



Vape training team

Training school nurses and community health services in the use of our resources enables these professionals to have meaningful, informed discussions with young people.

"Really useful. Thank you. I didn't know vapes could be spiked." Derbyshire Community Health Services (Health visitor)

ChatHealth Young People 11-19 **TEXT 07312 263 096**

ChatHealth
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
www.cornwall.gov.uk/chathealth

Get confidential health and wellbeing advice and support



Together for Families

"The training was informative, I enjoyed the videos and questions, and being able to share thoughts in the chat rather than pressure to discuss. Thankyou."

"Great training and great power point and videos."

"Very helpful. Very knowledgeable trainer."

Cornwall School Nurses

With anecdotal evidence that alcohol is a factor in 70%+ of contact with the police, we work with schools liaison and community safety teams across the region. Created in Dorset, thanks to funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner, our award winning secondary school Drug, Alcohol and Nicotine Education resources are helping immensely to help reduce young people's negative risk taking.



PARENTS AND CARERS

Work with parents and carers is a vital part of our work.

"I feel confident in my new knowledge and the resources supplied during the session to talk to young people about alcohol and get them thinking about the choices they make." Dorset Council Foster Carer

"I will be able to talk to young people in my care with more confidence and knowledge." Foster Carer



PRIMARY SCHOOL VAPING PROJECT

Following an approach from Primary School Headteachers in Dorset, we have developed a suite of resources around vaping for Years 3 – 6 thanks to Local Alliance Group funding. It is a huge pleasure to work so closely in partnership with local school children and Head Teachers across the County to ensure what we produce is piloted, trialled and really makes an impactful difference, informed by pupil needs, abilities and addressing the pressure they face both in person and online.



The Prince of Wales School, Dorchester



The Prince of Wales School · Following
31 March at 14:26 · 📍

Trialling New Vaping Education Resources with Year Four - Following our insightful roundtable discussion with The Talk About Trust, we are now trialling some of their specially designed resources with our Year Four pupils. These workshops are helping children build awareness and make informed choices about vaping and other substances in an age-appropriate way.

It's fantastic to see our pupils engaging in thoughtful discussions and developing their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

A big thank you to The Talk About Trust for their support in this important area!

Find out more about their work here:

<https://talkabouttrust.org/about/>

#InspiredToLearn

LOCAL ALLIANCE GROUPS

In Dorset, we work closely with all six Local Alliance Groups and even feature in their information video!



Sarah Boyle Midlands, South and West Regional Trainer

Since I joined the Trust in March 2025 it has been a time of growth, collaboration, and meaningful conversations for me personally and for the charity. Through partnerships with schools, colleges, youth services, and community organisations, I have aimed to create safe spaces where young people and professionals can have open, honest conversations about the issues that currently matter. From vaping and spiking awareness to mental health and festival safety, alcohol and drug understanding. My work has reached diverse audiences and sparked important dialogue across Dorset and beyond.



Key Highlights have included

Dorset Council Youth Training Day – Lytchett Minster School: training Youth workers in how to best use our resources and informing them of the ever-changing landscape regarding the drug and nicotine market.

Ferndown Upper School and QE School Staff Training): Empowering school staff with tools to have effective conversations with students through the use of our suite of resources.

Piloting Year 6 Vaping Materials: Collaborated with multiple schools — Baden Powell & St Peter's Junior School, Bincombe Valley Primary, St Mark's C of E Primary (Talbot Village), and St Mary's C of E Primary (Bridport). Feedback was also gathered with heads at a meeting held at Prince of Wales Primary (Dorchester) to refine resources for future roll outs. I loved the opportunity of being able to use the resources directly with classes of Year 5 and Year 6 children. It proved to me how valuable early intervention prevention is, particularly regarding vaping as it is marketed to children through social media platforms.

"The assembly, delivered by The TALK ABOUT Trust, about the dangers and harms of vaping was delivered to our cohort of 180 children. The assembly was informative and pitched well for the year group. The children learnt about the harms and peer pressures of vapes and this was pertinent due to their transition to secondary school.

The workshop was delivered to each class of 30 in a more personal setting which allowed the children to ask questions with greater detail. This workshop also allowed the children to reflect on the courage to stand up for what they believe in." Mr Dan Tompson, Year 6 Lead

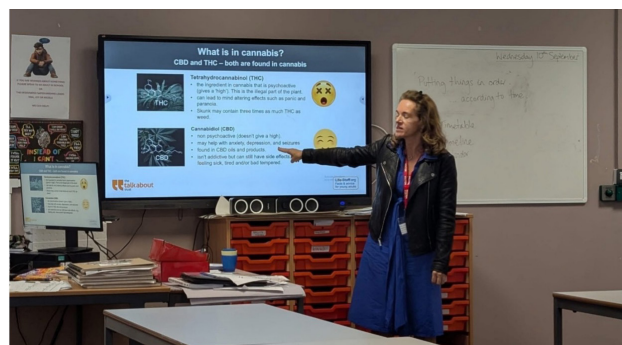
Sixth form assembly on spiking and festival awareness:

Delivered in the summer term, equipping students with practical knowledge and safety strategies at QE School in Wimborne. A positive experience seeing older students engage with practical advice that could keep them safe.

- **Alternative Provision – Solihull:** Staff training followed by a powerful face-to-face student session with eight THC users at Daylesford Academy, demonstrating the impact of direct engagement. Their honesty reminded me exactly why these conversations matter.
- **Freshers' Fairs:** Connected with students at **Falmouth Marine College, St Austell College, and Bournemouth University.** These events sparked open and honest conversations, helping me to understand student perspectives and strengthen trust. I loved the open, honest conversations that students were willing to have and it gave me such an insight into what this generation of young people are facing on a daily basis.



Lunchtime stand at Southampton College



Daylesford Academy, Solihull



A Freshers' fair at Falmouth Marine College in Cornwall

IMPACT & REFLECTION

Looking back, what stands out to me most is the diversity of the people I've been able to work with. Every session reinforced for me that young people want to talk — they just need safe, respectful spaces to do it. Being part of creating those spaces has been an absolute highlight of my year. I would like to keep creating opportunities for those raw, honest, and sometimes challenging conversations that can make such a difference.

London, South and East Outreach, Amy Hebben Wadley

We were sad to see Sophie move on this year, but happily she has joined us as a Trustee. She has been an amazing lead in developing our Primary vaping resources as well as our LGBTQ+ focus groups and sessions, ensuring our support in preventing drug and alcohol related harms is always appropriate and tailored to the needs of those we work with.



Amy Hebben-Wadley who is our new member of staff covering London and the South East. You can contact Amy if you would like to book any training sessions via amy@talkabouttrust.org.

Amy is a teacher with 18 years' experience as a subject lead of Art and DT, English, PSHE and History and as head of year. She also

worked in TV production, advertising, and media before training as a teacher.

We have supported 155 settings across London and the SE with resources and provided 45 training or student engagement in the last 12 months, from Herts, to Kent, Essex, across Sussex and Greater London. We support some groups of schools year on year, such as Barnet Healthy schools, East Sussex Schools, Campden Learning, The Harris Academies and Military Preparation Colleges (MPCT). It's been very pleasing to support 15 special education needs settings such as Meadow High School, Brent Knoll Schools, Your Healthcare CIC, Elm Court School and The Harlington School.

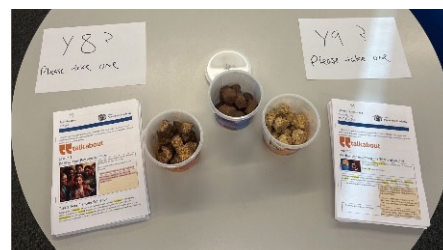
Our geographical reach to schools across London embracing all drug alcohol and nicotine topics as well as spiking and preparing for transition has increased widely to Wandsworth STCG, Riverside school, Bromley High, The Grey Coat School, Hampton School, Orleans Park School, Sydenham High School, Rivers Academy, London Academy of Excellence, Atam Academy, King's College School of Maths, Henrietta Barnett School, Charter School, Saffron Valley School and Kensington Park School, for example. It's been pleasing to work in depth with settings supporting particularly vulnerable students, such as The Capitol College Group this year with student workshops.

We have held whole staff teacher and pastoral care staff training sessions for Hampton school and The London Academy of Excellence, for example, and a seminar on how to make drug education interactive, engaging and effective for 137 schools across London. It was also an honour to raise awareness of early intervention and prevention in averting young people from the criminal justice system with the High Sheriff's Association, with regional leads on probation, youth offending teams, a prison governor, chief constables, magistrates and judges culminating in a reception at the Old Bailey. This builds huge cooperation and understanding across policing, courts, probation, targeted youth workers and the education sector.

LEIGH STATIONERS' ACADEMY

The TALK ABOUT Trust delivered an in-person training session at Leigh Stationers' Academy for Year 8 and 9 tutors. The focus

of the session was on vaping and alcohol, with a strong emphasis on understanding peer pressure and legal boundaries around substance use. The training was designed to support the school's long-term PSHE curriculum at Key Stage 3. Tutors were provided with practical tools and knowledge to help them facilitate meaningful and informed discussions during their PSHE lessons. The session was well received and the resources are now being used as part of the school's regular teaching.



SOUTH THAMES COLLEGE GROUP

The TALK ABOUT Trust was pleased to provide CPD for Student Services teams across



South Thames College Group, including Merton College, Kingston College, Carshalton College, and South Thames College. The training addressed current trends and risks associated with vaping, THC, nitrous oxide (NOS), and ketamine.

EALING YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

A CPD session on vaping was delivered by the TALK ABOUT Trust to staff at the Ealing Youth Justice Service. The training highlighted key legislation, health implications, and social trends. One of the most surprising findings for participants was the data showing that the majority of young people do not vape regularly, which helped to challenge common misconceptions. Staff responded positively, particularly appreciating the video content, and noted they felt better equipped to support young people going forward. One attendee remarked, "Fantastic training! Feel equipped to discuss with young people now I know the legislation/legalities."



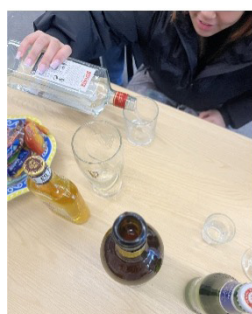
CROYDON DROP-IN CENTRE

The Drop-in Centre offers counselling services for young people and frequently collaborates with secondary schools in the local area. The staff team brought great energy and curiosity to the cpd session. They engaged fully in the session and responded enthusiastically to the resources provided, supporting their ongoing commitment to young people in both clinical and school settings.



EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Kingston College



The TALK ABOUT Trust took part in the “Be Safe” fair at Kingston College, where an information stall was set up to engage students on the topics of alcohol and vaping. Students were invited to take part in interactive conversations, including a spinning wheel true-or-false game that helped spark discussions around cannabis and vaping myths. Additionally, the team used Drink Aware cups to visually demonstrate alcohol units and discuss

safe drinking practices. The session was well attended and prompted many thoughtful questions.

Westminster Kingsway College



A workshop on vaping and alcohol was delivered to students at Westminster Kingsway College. The sessions included interactive elements such as the alcohol-clock game, which the students found both entertaining and educational.

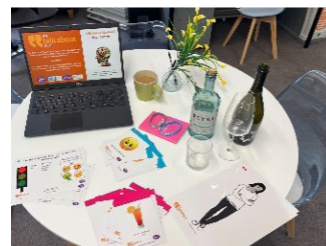
Rutlish School

At Rutlish School, we delivered a targeted vaping session to a Year 9 tutor group involved in a social justice initiative. The students demonstrated a high level of engagement, asking insightful questions and taking detailed notes.



Sister System

The TALK ABOUT Trust delivered a one-to-one session on alcohol and vaping through the Sister System, working with a young person and her “big sister” mentor. The session allowed for in-depth discussion around substance use, particularly focused on vaping.



Southbank College

At Southbank College’s Clapham Campus, the TALK ABOUT Trust delivered a workshop on vaping to a group of curious and engaged students. The conversation naturally turned toward the legal status of various vaping products, and students were eager to clarify the boundaries between legal and illegal use. The session prompted thoughtful dialogue and was supported by college staff throughout.



Southbank College’s Nine Elms campus followed. The session was part of a wider initiative aimed at encouraging student-led social justice projects. The workshop provided practical information on vaping and substance use and was tailored to support both the immediate learning goals of the students and the longer-term aims of their social advocacy work.

Merton College

Four workshops were delivered by the TALK ABOUT Trust at Merton College, focused on vaping and THC. Each workshop was attended by support staff, who were keen to observe the sessions as part of their own training. These staff members plan to deliver similar sessions independently in the future, extending the reach of the work beyond the initial audience.



Carshalton College

The TALK ABOUT Trust facilitated several workshops at Carshalton College, similar to those delivered at Merton. The sessions were attended by students from the Beauty, Sports & Physical Activity, and Carpentry departments. Students asked informed questions about the health risks and legal aspects of vaping. The support staff present played an active role in the discussions, helping to foster a supportive and open learning environment.



UCL Behaviour Change and King’s College, London Masters student lectures

Lecturing to the leaders of the future in public health and psychology is always a huge pleasure, both face to face with Masters Students on the Behaviour Change programme at UCL and via a recorded lecture for King’s College London Masters students for the first time this year.



LGBTQ+ INCLUSION WORK

Free2be Youth Group (29 December 2024)



The TALK ABOUT Trust organised a focus group with Free2be's LGBTQ+ youth group, where a range of engaging tools such as the vaping emoji quiz, alcohol unit cards, and Drink Aware cups were used to facilitate conversations. Discussions focused on the health risks of illegal vapes, binge drinking, and the developmental impact of substance use on young people. The team also explored

healthier alternatives to substance use and encouraged young people to consider positive coping strategies.

Workshops at the Mosaic Trust



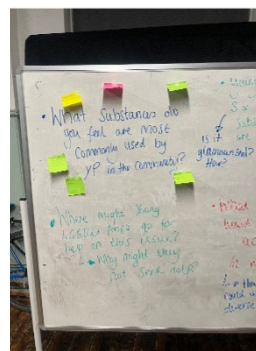
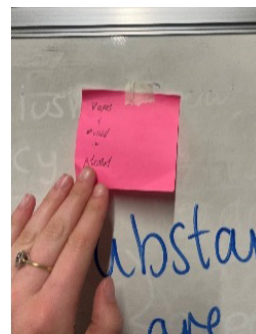
Two interactive workshops were delivered to LGBTQ+ young people through the Mosaic Trust. These sessions covered topics including alcohol and vaping, peer pressure, and building resilience. Participants were highly engaged and appreciated the honest and inclusive approach. Feedback included positive remarks such as: "didn't shame, had honest conversations with creative activities,"

which reinforced the value of a non-judgmental and youth-led approach to harm reduction education.

LGBT+ Focus Group

We facilitated a focus group with LGBTQ+ young people to gather insight into their experiences and needs around substance use. The young people noted that substance use was often described as a coping mechanism for bullying, lack of family support, and broader social stigma. Many referenced the lack of LGBTQ+ role models - particularly for trans and non-binary individuals - and described a sense of isolation.

Alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis were commonly used for escapism, while drugs such as ketamine and LSD were seen as more accessible to wealthier young people. Trends such as Charli XCX's "Brat Summer" and celebrity endorsements like Troye Sivan for Smirnoff were cited as examples of how substance use is glamorised in queer spaces. Participants expressed concern about the lack of accessible mental health or substance-related support. They described barriers including oversubscribed CAMHS services, lack of continuity with GPs, and a fear of police involvement. The group strongly advocated for harm reduction education, practical first-aid knowledge, and crisis response guidance. They also called for more peer-led, LGBTQ+-specific support structures, such as mentoring schemes and community groups.



Vaping and the Law

To buy cigarettes, pouches, e-cigarettes and vaping liquids a person must be 18 or over and be able to prove it. It's also illegal for adults to buy vapes for anyone under 18 (proxy purchasing).

Legal nicotine products like pouches, vapes and e-liquids have health warning labels covering 1/3rd of the pack. It will be an illegal product or clearly labelled nicotine-free if there isn't a health warning on the packaging.

All nicotine products in the UK must comply with safety laws to ensure they don't pose a risk to health and safety, but 25% of vapes traded in the UK are illegal and when tested contain harmful substances such as Spice or THC.

Vaping, like cigarettes, are restricted in certain places and situations. Most public transport, planes, healthcare facilities, schools and colleges have a ban on all nicotine products like vapes. Many employers choose to ban vaping inside offices and shared spaces because of the effect on others.

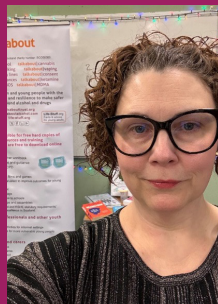
Life-Stuff.org
Facts & advice for young adults

TRUE OR FALSE EMOJI QUIZ - VAPING QUESTIONS

- Vaping is less harmful than smoking
- Most vapes contain nicotine
- Vaping can help someone quit smoking
- Scientists are sure that there are no long-term risks from vaping
- Second-hand vapour is not as harmful as second-hand smoke
- There are currently no laws in the UK around who can vape

Ailsa Christie, Scotland Manager

This year marked a period of growth for The TALK ABOUT Trust in Scotland. Through positive relationships with schools, youth organisations, community teams and public health partners, the TALK ABOUT Trust in Scotland has empowered educators and support workers to engage in open, honest and practical conversations about alcohol, vaping, cannabis and emerging substance risks.



Driven by a commitment to prevention and harm reduction, the work across Scotland has combined training, resource development and direct delivery with young people.

THE TALK ABOUT TRUST IN SCOTLAND AT A GLANCE

- o Training delivered across **16 Scottish local authority areas to over 100 schools and youth organisations.**
- o **Over 347 professionals trained** across schools, youth work, employability teams, family support services and health.
- o **Piloting of direct delivery with young people** through targeted group work and supported sessions.
- o **Strengthening of our partnerships** with national organisations and local authorities.
- o **Co-produced resources** with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde informed directly by young people's voices.
- o **Growing regional demand** with repeat bookings demonstrating trust and long-term value.



Training Education and Health staff in East Dunbartonshire Council

BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH OUR TALK ABOUT TRUST TRAINING SESSIONS

This year saw strong demand for The TALK ABOUT Trust's training across Scotland. Staff in schools, youth work, social care, employability projects and community support services took part in core sessions on:

EXPANDING REACH IN EDUCATION AND YOUTH SECTORS

In 2024 – 2025 we worked with over 100 schools, alternative learning settings and youth services. We supported:

- o Secondary schools rewriting Personal & Social Education (PSE) curriculum content
- o Community Learning & Development (CLD) teams and their modern apprentices to develop workshops for the young people of North Ayrshire

- o 16+ employability groups supporting vulnerable young people into employment
- o Campus police officers and school partnerships to better understand vaping and substance trends to support their direct work and ongoing dialogue with young people.



Action for Children Glasgow staff taking part in our 16- 25 yrs toolkit training



TALK ABOUT Trust training with Street League in Paisley, January 2025

DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Alongside professional training for trusted adults, this year marked a meaningful expansion in direct work with young people.

Pilot projects included:

- o **Action for Children** groups in Glasgow and Edinburgh
- o Youth clubs in Scottish Borders Council
- o **Focus Groups in Glasgow City Council and East Renfrewshire Council.**

These sessions helped young people explore real-world decisions around substances, wellbeing and peer influence in a safe and respectful space. Also serving as opportunity to ensure our work holds the voice of young people at the centre.



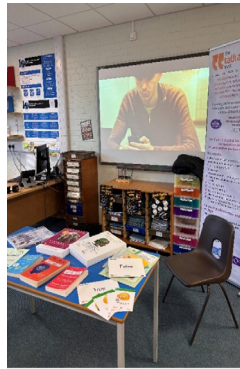
Youth Futures Team, Glasgow City Council at the King's Trust Building

YOUTH VOICE SHAPING RESOURCES

Young people have been central to The TALK ABOUT Trust's development in Scotland. Two major co-production projects shaped new educational resources:

- o **Greater Glasgow and Clyde Vaping and Tobacco Resources** – developed with young people and health specialists, now being piloted regionally.
- o **Inverclyde Primary Vaping Project** – over 250 pupils contributed to new P5–P7 lessons through focus groups exploring risk, peer influence and online trends.

Young people described the sessions as “honest”, “helpful” and “realistic”, and reported feeling more confident supporting peers.



Rolling out training across Clackmannanshire Student Support Service Staff Team

Feedback highlighted Ailsa’s ability to **balance honesty about risks with a supportive, young person-led approach**. Many noted that this helped challenge stigma and myths while maintaining empathy and trust. Feedback from school staff shared that they plan to embed updated PSE content on vaping and alcohol following training. Participants highlighted using The TALK ABOUT Trust resources directly in lessons.



With the pastoral team at Lenzie Academy in East Dunbartonshire Council

STRONG PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Partnership has been central to our successes. Collaborative working has grown with:

- Schools, local authorities and PSE networks
- Youth work organisations and CLD teams
- Community health improvement teams
- Campus policing and Community Alcohol Partnerships
- Care and employability providers
- National third sector networks

These partnerships have enabled wider delivery access and built momentum towards improving substance education in Scotland.



Focus Groups across Greater Glasgow and Clyde, March 2025

TESTIMONIALS FROM PARTICIPANTS

“Great day, looking forward to developing our PSE course with this included.”

“I just wanted to say a massive thank you for delivering your session for us yesterday! It was absolutely brilliant and you managed to keep all of the Modern Apprentice’s engaged and captivated throughout. The range of topics was so diverse and I found I came away with lots of new knowledge, especially on pouches!”

“Great training and resources – practical, realistic and very usable with young people.”

“Ailsa was brilliant – knowledgeable, non-judgemental and really easy to learn from.”

“Ailsa was great and very informative, engaging and helpful. She was great at leading activities and checking in”

“Really useful training that will help me deliver more confidently to young people.”

“Very informative training – I came away with practical ideas and resources I can use straight away.”

“Excellent training, delivered so well, really interesting topics, much needed for our service users.”



Enable Works, Motherwell

SUMMARY OF OUR TRAINING EVALUATIONS

In Scotland last year we reached **347 participants** across a wide range of organisations. Feedback from participants was extremely positive, with an **overall training session rating of 9.44/10** and **resource quality rating of 9.24/10**.

Almost all participants stated they would recommend the training to others, highlighting both its relevance and practical value.

Importantly, the training demonstrated a **significant impact on learner knowledge and confidence**. Across before-and-after measures, participants reported:

- A +2.6 point increase in knowledge of the topic (6.1- 8.8)
- A +2.5 point gain in feeling equipped to discuss and deliver related content (5.8- 8.4)
- A +2.4 point rise in confidence signposting young people to support (6.- 8.6)

The training approach – combining current evidence with realistic case examples and adaptable classroom materials – was consistently praised as **engaging, accessible and immediately useful**. Common themes in feedback highlighted Ailsa’s clarity of delivery, subject expertise and responsiveness to participant questions.

OUR LEARNINGS

This year highlighted:

- Ongoing demand for accessible, harm reduction education across Scotland
- Rising concern around vaping & other nicotine products, particularly unregulated products
- The need for **delivery approaches** that are ASN aware, and trauma informed
- The importance of **partnership relationships**.

We are grateful to every school, youth organisation, guidance team, community worker, health partner and young person who made this work possible. Together, we have not only delivered training – we have built understanding and strengthened ways of working with young people that has real future impact.



North Ayrshire’s Youth Work Modern Apprentices Team, August 2025

TREASURER'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL REVIEW

Julie Sutton - FINANCE, HR and Governance Manager

We welcomed our new CEO Steve Morton in September 2025 and our previous CEO, Helena Conibear, will remain with the charity and move into a new Founder role. We worked to expand our range of resources in 2025 to meet the evolving needs and challenges faced by young people around substance use. We completed the development of a new suite of drug, alcohol & nicotine resources (DANE) for secondary schools and are now providing these resources and teacher training across both Dorset and the UK. In response to the increasing use of vapes and other nicotine substances by young people, we developed vaping resources and training for primary schools in Dorset and for primary & secondary schools across Glasgow, Clyde & Inverclyde. We amended our charitable objective during the year to extend our age range down to 8 (from 11) to enable us to work with primary schools for the first time to provide this much needed vaping support.

We continue to provide our existing resources across England & Scotland:

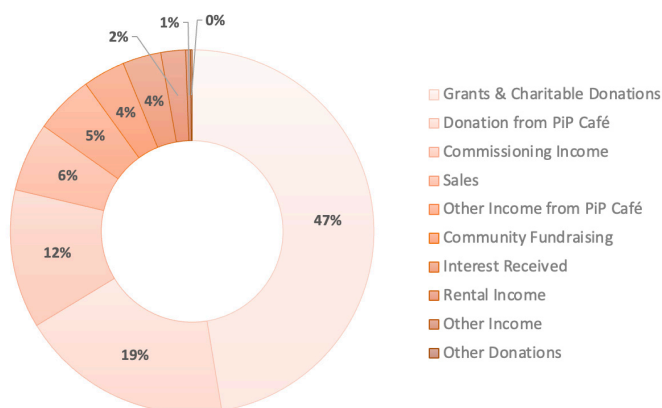
- o Our core 'Talk About Alcohol' programme
- o Our tailored activities and resources for children with SEN and ASN for informal settings such as youth and sports clubs
- o Our 16+ work on alcohol, cannabis and spiking.

We aim to support teachers and youth professionals with training, developing the knowledge, skills and resilience of children and young people to enable them to make safer choices and supporting parents and carers through our network of highly experienced regionally based staff.

Locally, we run a variety of very successful community activities and diversionary activities for young people from the Pavilion in the Park in Poundbury.

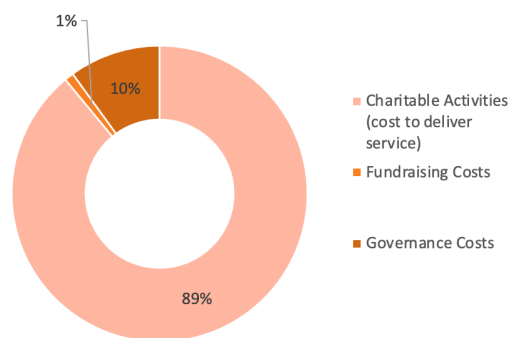
Income for the year amounted to £364,893 (up 7% on last year) and expenditure amounted to £314,882 (up 10% on last year).

INCOME 2024-25



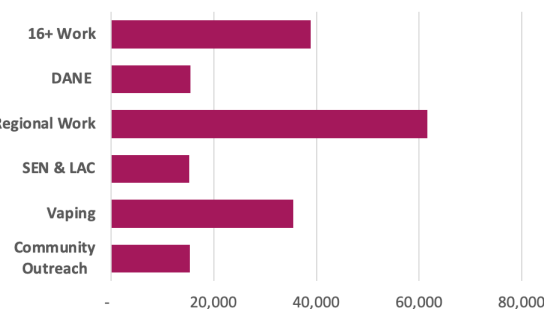
Incoming restricted funds during the year amounted to £188,695.

EXPENDITURE 2024-25



Expenditure from restricted funds during the year amounted to £181,989.

RESTRICTED EXPENDITURE 2024-25



This was principally expended on:

- o Our 16+ work on alcohol, cannabis and spiking across England & Scotland including our annual spiking campaign during Freshers' week
- o Our Drug & Nicotine Education project in Dorset to provide education to young people around drugs which is now available across the UK
- o The continued delivery of training and resources by our regional co-ordinators for Scotland, the Midlands, South & West regions and London & South East region and funded areas in the North
- o Our continued work with schools and organisations with a high degree of special education needs and looked-after children

- Our new work to develop vaping training & resources in Dorset & Scotland for both primary & secondary schools
- A wide selection of community events at the Pavilion, working with local organisations and schools with a range of activities.

Incoming general funds amounted to £176,198. This included an impressive £96k from PiP Café (up £12.5k) comprising a donation from their 2024 profits of £69,100, rental of £8,000 plus a contribution of £6,818 towards the shared costs of the Pavilion and £12,213 for shared staff costs.

TAT – SUMMARY OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS		
INCOME	2024-25	2023-24
Grants & Charitable Donations	£172,930	£216,632
Other Donations	£525	£21,000
Donation from PiP Café	£69,100	£57,139
Community Fundraising	£13,696	£721
Commissioning Income	£45,103	£0
Sales	£22,435	£13,716
Rental Income	£8,000	£8,000
Other Income from PiP Café	£19,031	£18,500
Interest Received	£12,489	£4,155
Other Income	£1,584	£2,169
TOTAL INCOME	£364,893	£342,032
EXPENDITURE	2024-25	2023-24
Charitable Activities (Cost to Deliver Service)	£280,063	£243,985
Fundraising Costs	£4,191	£14,659
Governance Costs	£30,628	£27,768
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£314,882	£286,412

Gross expenditure from general funds during the year amounted to £225,122 with the majority funding our central staff and school and regional co-ordinators (plus their associated travel costs) of £180,817, office expenses and associated ground rent for the Pavilion £17,880, printing and postage of resources of £3,878, IT & Software £2,556, accountancy & other professional fees £2,535, Community Fundraising expenses of £4,191, other costs £5,378 and depreciation of £7,887.

This was offset by the cost recovery of £31,244 for resources and £69,325 for staff costs, both relating to the delivery of fully funded training & resources as part of our project work.

We celebrated the **15th anniversary** of the charity with a 'Gardeners Delight' fundraising event in June 2025 which yielded a surplus of just over £12k (after associated costs) and a 2nd event took place in October 2025 with a celebratory 15th anniversary dinner at 'Minterne' yielding a further £19k towards our 2025-26 income.

We delivered two NHS Vaping projects during the year providing one-off commissioning income of £45k. Our bi-annual conference and the contribution to our resources & training by organisations (schools, youth and sports clubs are supported free of charge) generated £16,984 and we generated £3,970 from the hire of the community room and £586 commission on arts and crafts sold in the cafe for local artists and other donated items. We offered CPD accredited training and resources for the first time in 2025 generating a small income of £894 which we hope to build on in 2026. This brought our **total sales** figure to £22,435. Our partnership with Dorchester Town Council remains strong and their annual contribution towards the provision of public toilets at the Pavilion was £4.8k to include a share of the water rates and toilet repairs/maintenance.

Our SJP investment saw continued good growth in 2025, providing an unrealised gain of £11,223 for the year and the return on our savings accounts increased to £12.5k.

Our **reserves** at the 30th September 2025, comprised £51,660 in the CEO Succession Reserve - £8.3k was spent on the CEO Recruitment during the year and we expect the balance to be released over the next 2 years to cover the increased costs of the combined CEO/Founder roles. We also have £69,978 in our Pavilion Maintenance Fund for future repairs/replacement of the Pavilion Building. After placing these designated funds aside and adjusting for Stock, Fixed Assets & our investment in PiP Café, our balance of **'Free Reserves'** at the year-end was £310,598 providing 14 months cover for our gross budgeted operating costs of £264,947 which is in line with our reserves policy.

Our **budgeted costs** for next year are £376k, being an increase of 19% on 2024-25 costs. This is partly due to increased costs for our combined CEO & Founder roles and partly due to the fluctuation in our planned project work, which varies from year to year depending on availability of funding. Our focus for 2026 is to create a long term development and funding strategy, building on our successful delivery model to reach more children and young people. With the launch of the DANE and Primary Vaping programmes we expect to continue to reach more schools whilst developing new drug resources and training for primary schools. A digital communications review will ensure we continue to have a strong online connection with young people and the trusted adults who support them.

PIP CAFÉ

The charity runs PiP Café via a trading subsidiary called Pavilion in the Park (PiPs) Ltd. Café trading continued to exceed expectations this year with turnover for the year being £320k (up 16% on last year). Our gross profit was £235k and expenditure amounted to £148k resulting in an operating profit of £87k (an impressive 28% increase on last year).

For 2025-26, we have budgeted sales at £328k (up 2.5% versus 2024-25) and we expect a trading profit of £84k being slightly under the 2024-25 figure reflecting the additional increases expected in the minimum wage and national insurance. Our reliance on the weather continues to have a big impact on both turnover and staffing and the flexibility of our workforce is key as the café manager constantly reviews staffing levels to balance the variations in trade from day to day.

PiP Café continues to make a significant contribution to the charity. In addition to the taxable profits which are donated to the charity, there is also an annual rental of £8k and a contribution towards the shared Pavilion costs and shared staff costs.

'The total contribution received by TAT over the last few years has risen from £30k in 2021-22 to £81k then £84k then £96k in 2022-23, 2023-24 & 2024-25 respectively.

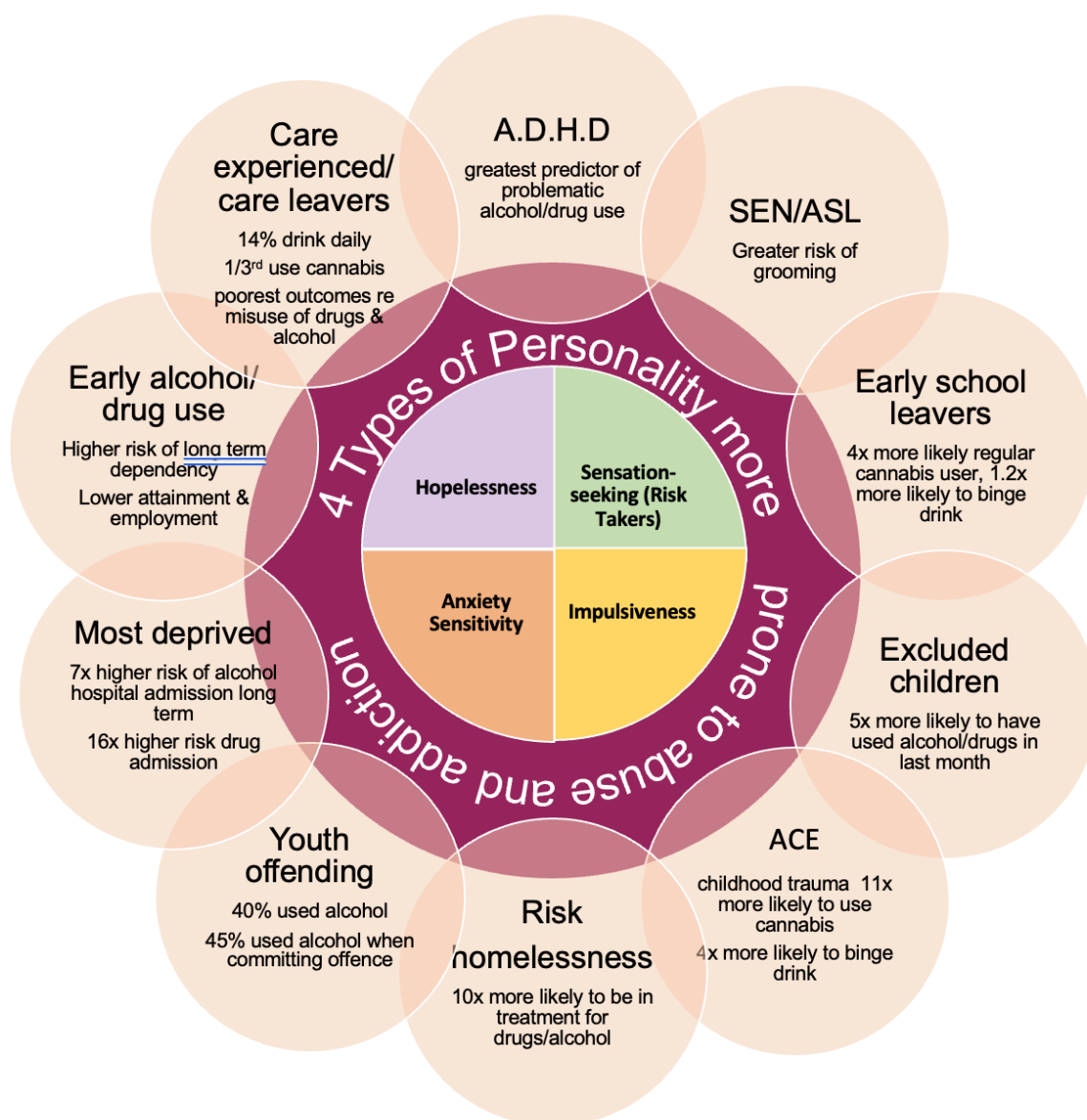
We expect the contribution to increase further to £113k in 2025-26.

PiP Café provides an invaluable income stream for our work with young people across the UK, contributing over 75% of our net core operating costs last year and it continues to provide an incredible return on the original investment.

PIP CAFÉ – SUMMARY OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS		
INCOME	2024-25	2023-24
Sales	£319,892	£276,774
Less Purchases	£84,785	£75,762
GROSS PROFIT	£235,107	£201,012
EXPENDITURE	2024-25	2022-23
Staff Costs	£120,158	£105,395
Other Costs	£21,214	£20,517
Shared Costs from TAT	£6,818	£7,418
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£148,190	£133,330
OPERATING PROFIT	£86,917	£67,682

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VULNERABILITIES FOR ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE RELATED HARMS

The complexity of the task:



KEY TALK ABOUT TRUST INTERVENTION POINTS:

- Transition from Primary to Secondary school
- Tipping point Age 13
 - Average age of first whole drink
 - Look away from family to peers
- Transition to college/ university & leaving home

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION



BETTER SOCIETY AWARDS 2024

TEACH SECONDARY AWARDS 2024
Highly commended SEN resource



ERA
Best secondary resource for RSE



TEACH SECONDARY AWARDS 2024
Winner - best free resource



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NOW! 2022
Finalist for best early intervention awards

A JOINED UP APPROACH

REDUCING ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCE RELATED HARMS

Ensuring young people learn to stay safe around alcohol and other substances



Support children And young people

- Online games and activities
- Story and picture-led activities for children with learning disabilities
- Films, role play and engaging information and resources
- Assemblies, workshops and peer to peer development.



Support schools and organisations

- Evidenced resources fully supported online
- Age and ability appropriate
- Training + CPD
- Regular updates
- Printed online guidance/ resources/ evaluation.



Empower parents And carers

- Face-to-face support sessions
- Confidential email advice
- Dedicated online advice and guidance and regular newsletter updates.

Quality assurance measures

- Third party evaluation to assess impact and regular reporting on outcomes
- Piloting with young people and professionals to assure fidelity and fit for purpose
- Baseline and long term follow-up
- Advisory panel of experts.

Focus areas

- Special educational needs and looked-after children
- Geographical areas where alcohol-related hospital admissions are highest for under 18s
- Vulnerable young adults up to age 25.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

Independent evaluation of our impact, fidelity and effectiveness

- The Talk About Alcohol programme is evidenced to significantly raise the age of onset of drinking through the delivery of 4 lessons in Year 8 and 2 top up lessons in Year 9 (NFER 2013).
- This effect gets significantly stronger as teenagers get older (NFER 2015).
- It is equally effective for ethnic minorities (NFER 2013).
- It is effective in areas of multiple deprivation where alcohol-related harms for under 18s are highest in England (2016 UCL Institute of Education).



The Talk About Alcohol programme is selected as best practice by:

EARLY INTERVENTION FOUNDATION



EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN PROMISING PRACTICE

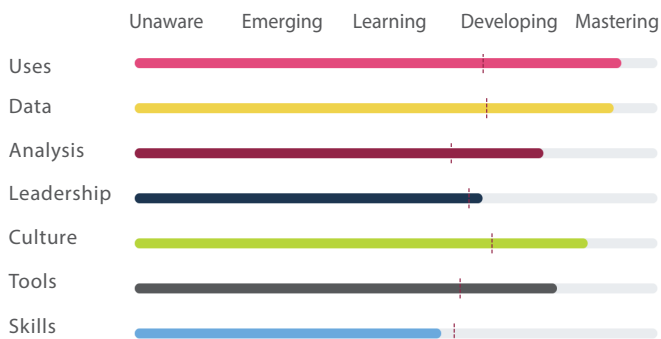


NCVO CHARITY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The trustees carried out their annual review of the NCVO Charity Ethical Principles which provide a framework for the ethical execution of charitable purpose and help guide decision-making and development of policies and procedures. The trustees report that they are confident that the charity is upholding the Guiding Principles to put Beneficiaries First, act with Integrity and Openness & protect everybody's Right to be Safe.

DATA MATURITY

The TALK ABOUT Trust recently used the Data Orchard Self-Assessment tool to update the status of our Data Maturity. We were delighted that our average score across seven themes had increased over the last 3 years from 3.8 to 4.1. Our main focus for improvement will be developing more training for our staff and trustees.



The TALK ABOUT Trust strictly incorporates the principles of evidenced Health Education which are detailed in the [International Standards on Drug Use Prevention \(unodc.org\)](http://International Standards on Drug Use Prevention (unodc.org)).

The standards clearly define the Characteristics of programmes for prevention education based on social competence and influence deemed to be associated with efficacy and/or effectiveness based on expert consultation.

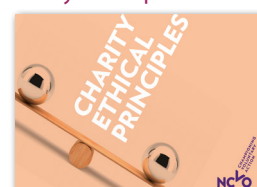
Namely:

- ✓ they use interactive methods;
- ✓ they are delivered through a series of structured sessions (typically 10–15 sessions), taking place once a week, often providing booster sessions over multiple years;
- ✓ they are delivered by a trained facilitator (also including trained peers);
- ✓ they provide an opportunity to practise and learn a wide array of personal and social skills, in particular, coping, decision-making and resistance skills, especially in relation to substance use;
- ✓ they change perceptions of the risks associated with substance use, emphasizing the immediate consequences;
- ✓ they dispel misconceptions regarding the normative nature and the expectations linked to substance use.

Approaches are detailed which are associated with lack of efficacy and/or effectiveness or with adverse effects based on expert consultation which we emphatically avoid;

- x they use non-interactive methods, such as lecturing, as a primary delivery strategy;
- x they rely heavily on merely giving information, in particular to elicit fear;
- x they are based on unstructured dialogue sessions; they focus only on the building of self-esteem and emotional education;
- x they address only ethical and moral decision-making or values;
- x they use former drug users to provide testimony of their personal experience.

The principles below from CEOP are also embraced. icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Key-Principles-of-Effective-Prevention-Education-CEOP-UK.pdf





Teacher guidance

Vaping Education (Primary)

A programme of activities, games, lesson plans and resources on vaping, designed to complement schemes of work from Year 5 to Year 6. The KS2 pop and resources explore peer and on-line influences, choices, healthy life style choices and norms with age appropriate content on vaping and associated risks.




Quizzes for 11-16 year olds

Choose a quiz topic

Alcohol

Vaping

Cannabis

Energy drinks



Accepting secret gifts...

An older child hands a gift to you. The older student whispers "Don't tell anyone!"

Is this post an advertisement?

Is this post an ad?
 • What are they trying to make the product look like?
 • Does this ad highlight the risks of vaping? Why/why not?

Group chat mystery...

You receive a message saying "Join the group! The older kids are having" "Join the group! The older kids are having" "The name of the group chat is "Cool Kids"."