

Handout for carers and adoptive parents **Addictions and substance misuse**

Information and resources

www.drugscope.org.uk

in-depth information on drug use

www.adfam.org.uk

resources for people with a family member who takes drugs, including local support groups

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

The Royal College of Psychiatrists publish a range of free leaflets on mental health issues on their website

Handout for carers and adoptive parents **Drug Use Screening Tool (DUST)**

ALTHOUGH many young people will try drugs at some time, most do not progress beyond experimentation. However, research indicates that many factors can increase the risk of a young person moving from 'drug use' to 'drug misuse', whilst some protective factors can reduce these risks. Unless you are a specialist drug worker it can be difficult to distinguish between use and misuse, and to accurately assess these risk factors. This tool should help.

To complete this form you do not need a comprehensive knowledge of drugs but you may need to know how to contact your nearest drugs service for young people (see opposite page). This service will be able to provide appropriate information, leaflets and guidance.

DUST is designed for use with young people about whom there may be concerns regarding drug/alcohol use.

- It will not provide a comprehensive substance use assessment.
- It will indicate when specialist advice should be sought.
- It will help identify risk factors.

Defining the terms

Drug The term 'drug' is used to refer to any psychotropic substance, including illegal substances, illicit prescription drugs and volatile substances (eg. Solvents).

Substance Young people's drug use is often linked together with alcohol use. Drugs and alcohol together are collectively termed 'substances'.

Drug use The consumption of a drug by a young person. When the term 'use' is contrasted with 'misuse', 'use' means the consumption of a drug that does not cause any perceptible immediate harm - even though it may carry some risk of harm.

Drug misuse Use of a drug or combination of substances, that harms health or social functioning - either dependent use (physical or psychological) or use that is part of a wider spectrum of problematic or harmful behaviour.

Vulnerable group Young people are at increased risk of drug misuse if they belong to certain groups and this risk increases if there is membership of more than one group.

Protective factors Increase a young person's resilience to the development of drug misuse problems.

Risk factors Increase the likelihood that drug misuse will occur.

Protective factors	Risk factors		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive temperament • Intellectual ability • Supportive family environment • Social support system • Caring relationship with at least one adult • In education/employment/training 	<p>1 Belonging to a 'vulnerable' group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young sex workers • Young offenders • Looked after children • Mental health problems • School non-attenders • Substance misuse by parents • Abuse within the family • Homeless 	<p>2 Social & Cultural Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of neighbourhood crime • High levels of poverty & decay • Easy drug availability • Areas where there is widespread social acceptance of drug use • Lack of perception of the risks from drugs 	<p>3 Interpersonal and Individual Risk Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiological & psychological factors • Family dysfunction • Behavioural difficulties • Academic problems • Association with peers who use drugs • Early onset of drug or alcohol use

The Under 19's Drug Strategy in Solihull	
<p>Every Child Matters: Change for Children</p> <p>Reducing drug use by young people, particularly the most vulnerable, is central to Solihull's drug strategy. Choosing not to take drugs is an aim within Every Child Matters Outcome, Be Healthy.</p>	<p>Within Solihull there are 4 themes to our strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To ensure all young people receive effective drug education. 2 To focus on prevention and early intervention for those most at risk. 3 To provide effective and timely treatment services. 4 To ensure parents and carers are involved and supported.

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