



Children and Young People involved in Substance Use

Practice Guidance

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1. Introduction

This practice guidance is for all staff involved in working with children and young people where there are concerns with regard to their use of drugs and/or alcohol.

The Inter Agency Procedure for Vulnerable Children and Young People at Risk of Significant Harm identifies that children and young people can place themselves and / or others at significant risk of harm through their own behaviours or the behaviour of others.

Drug and alcohol use is one of these behaviours which places young people at potential risk of harm particularly where there has been:

- an increase in use
- a change in route of administration e.g. injecting
- evidence of poly substance use
- poor levels of self awareness
- increase in health related problems
- lack of control with regard to substance use
- poor evidence of consequential understanding

2. Scope and Purpose of Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a strategic inter agency framework to help staff respond to the needs of children and young people, in Glasgow, who are involved in significant and harmful drug and/or alcohol use.

It will –

- Raise the issues of children and young people involved in substance use
- Encourage staff from all agencies to work collaboratively in responding to the needs of these young people
- Encourage a consistent approach when addressing the issues of substance use with children and young people
- Provide details of local resources and relevant reading

3. Core Principles

Drug and alcohol use is, in its self, a form of high-risk activity for young people. However, this substance use must be understood within a range of risk behaviours that some young people will engage in.

Recognition must also be given as to how drug and alcohol use can also be set within the context of young people experiencing difficulties in managing relationships (both professional and personal), having experience of trauma and abuse and within the wider sphere of social exclusion.

There are also the immediate and longer-term health implications of drug and alcohol use amongst young people, the impact on their personal, emotional and social development and role that drug and alcohol use can have in reinforcing social exclusion.

All support and care provision must therefore be grounded within;

- an understanding of the individual needs of young people
- the inter-relationship between these needs and young peoples own experiences
- the wider social environment within which young people find themselves.

Young people's drug and alcohol services, as well as all other professionals supporting children and young people, must therefore adopt an approach to care and support which;

- Has a young person's centred approach
- Is able to delineate between adult concerns of young peoples safety and the conceptualisation of risk and behaviour as understood by young people themselves
- Understand the personal and social realities which young people experience
- Views young peoples own energies and potentials as a key resource in engendering appropriate behavioural change
- Accurately comprehend the statutory responsibilities of staff to protect and promote the welfare of young people, and reduce the risk of significant harm

4. Assessment and Interventions

All assessments of children and young people's drug and alcohol use must be undertaken with due regard being given to young peoples stage of personal development, maturity, age and personal experience

Assessment should include, at the least, the following;

- Family composition and significant relationships
- Living arrangements – composition of household, current and previous
- Service history
- Presentation regarding drug / alcohol use
- History of alcohol use, including family history of alcohol use
- History of drug use, including family history of drug use
- Current drug and / or alcohol use
- Physical health (current and previous) including sexual health
- Psychological / mental health (current and previous)
- Education / training experience
- Social functioning
- Legal/ criminal justice involvement

References –

EIU (2004) Young People With, or at risk of Developing, Problematic Substance Misuse – A Guide to Assessment, Scottish Executive

EIU (2003) Services for Young People with problematic substance misuse: A guide to principles and practice, Scottish Executive

All assessment work should include the involvement and consent of young people and staff should work sensitively in ensuring this.

There is also significant benefit in seeking out the child / young person and relevant adults view on current and future needs.

Existing assessments of need, in relation to children and young people, must be considered so as to avoid duplication and distress to the individual

The type of intervention and level of support required will be determined by this robust and consistent assessment process.

A repertoire of interventions will be required, and can range from individual support to group work provision.

Essentially access to information and advice will:

- Increase young peoples awareness of the effects of drugs and alcohol on their physical, social and emotional health and well being
- Provide young people with accurate advice on how to maximise their own self protection from drug and alcohol related risks – i.e. developing protective skills and maximising protective factors
- Allow young people to gain an understanding of the interaction between their own behaviour, emotions and feelings as they impact on their drug and alcohol use
- Provide information and advice on a wider range of services which young people may require (signposting) and support young people in accessing these services

Individual support and care management will:

- Encourage young people to identify problems related to their drug and alcohol use, through active listening, reflection, probing and framing
- Identify and support strategies for behavioural change which are achievable by young people
- Assist young people to set individual targets that will alleviate immediate difficulties
- Introduce strategies for preventing lapse and relapse
- Help young people develop skills for problem solving and action planning

This individual support will develop a range of programmes, which will utilise the following range of researched interventions:

- Problem definition
- Problem solving
- Goal and action setting
- Cognitive behavioural interventions
- Minimal and brief interventions
- Motivational enhancement interventions

5. Children and Young People's Drug and Alcohol use in the wider context

As previously stated young people's substance use cannot be viewed in isolation from the main external factors impacting on their lives. Within Glasgow, there are significant numbers of young people who are particularly vulnerable with regard to their drug and alcohol use and are at risk of developing significant problems.

These include young people;

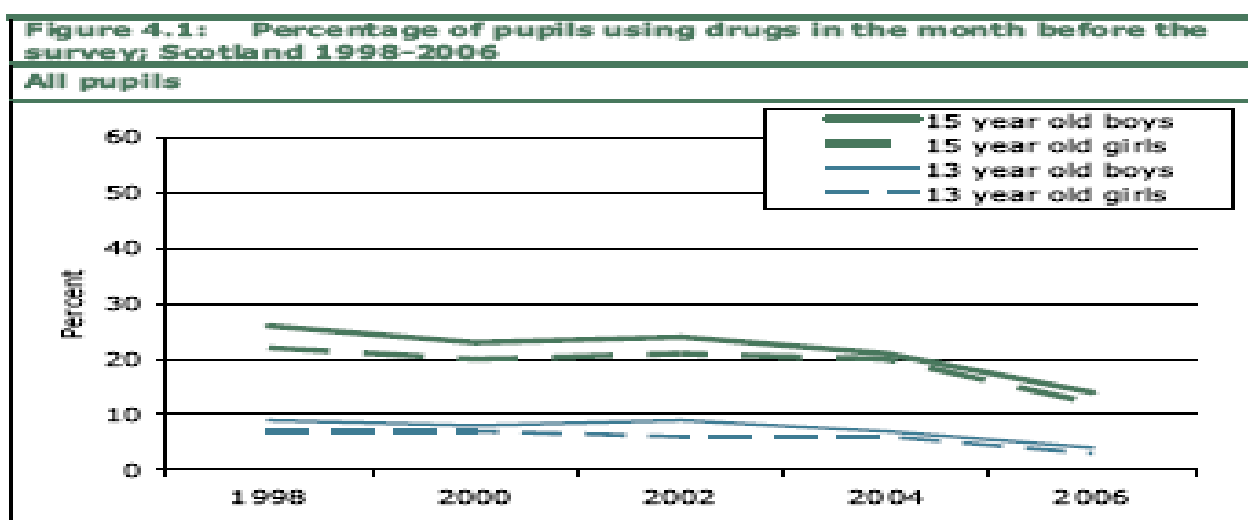
- whose parent and/or siblings are involved in drug/alcohol use
- where there is family conflict
- at risk of exclusion or truanting from school
- involved in offending activity
- experience of being looked after (and accommodated)
- experiencing low parental supervision and guidance
- impacted on by their parents and/or their own mental health issues
- are living in poverty

All these factors must be considered when addressing the young person's misuse of substances and how their behaviour is placing them at significant risk, as these factors may increase their vulnerability.

6. Prevalence and Trends in Drugs and Alcohol

There has been very little work around estimating the prevalence of young people involved in serious problem substance misuse in Glasgow City.

The most reliable trend data we have comes from the **Scottish Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS)**, which is published by the Scottish Executive. This currently shows a national downward trend in relation to alcohol and drug use by young people across the country.



Source: ONS 1998; NCSR 2000; CAHRIJ 2002, 2004; BMRB 2006

The recent report from the **Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2007)** - compared surveys from across the UK and reports on a range of studies which correlate serious problem drug use amongst young people with social class, family and individual problems and history of school and criminal justice problems.

- The trends in young peoples drug use are generally in decline, particularly in relation to amphetamine use, cannabis use and solvent use amongst under 18's.
- However some increases in the use of cocaine and sharp increases in the use of alcohol amongst young people were noted.
- The report also links alcohol and tobacco use with problem drug use amongst young people, confirming that alcohol and cigarettes were the most likely 'gateway' substances, predicting future drug use.

The report highlights the critical stage of development of serious opiate problems amongst young people as being between 18-25 years, reflecting our experience in Glasgow. The vulnerability factors amongst these young people are as previously highlighted – being looked after, involvement in crime, exclusion or truancy from school.

A recent study that looked at the latest prevalence report¹ estimates that there are:

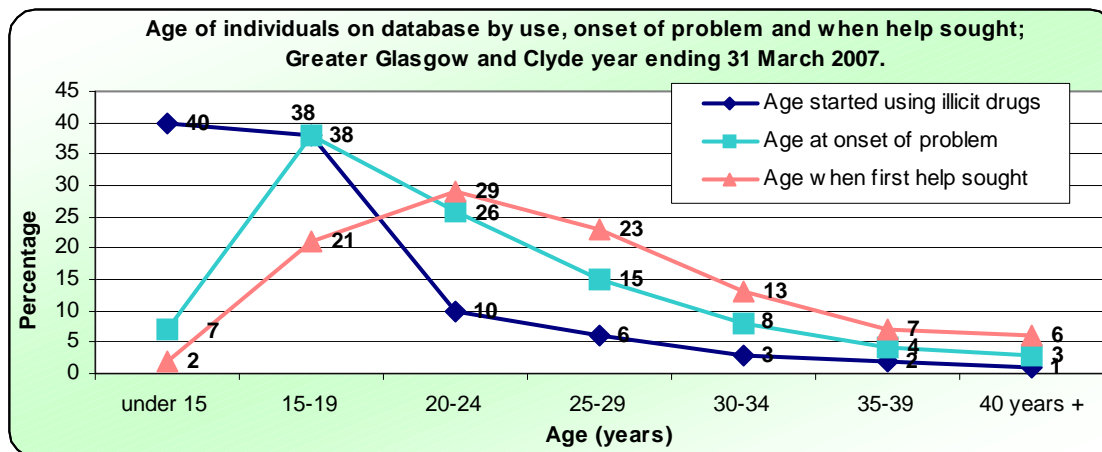
- 13,228 problematic drug users within the Greater Glasgow area, and is the highest prevalence of any health board area within Scotland.
- 11,235 problematic drug users within the Glasgow City area, and again this is the highest prevalence rate of any local authority area within Scotland and equates to almost 22% of the total estimated number of drug users within Scotland.

Age Breakdown of service users

- Age distribution within frontline services has been, in the main, consistent over the last three years.
- However the number of service users in the age range <15 years and 20-24 years (eligible for Youth Services support) have decreased by 14% and 6% respectively.
- Within the 15-19 year age banding (also eligible for youth service support) although the number of service users has increased, this age-band now represent 3% of the total caseload compared to 4% in 2004'5.

Hay, Gannon, McKeganey et al. Estimating the National and Local Prevalence of Problem Drug Misuse in Scotland in 2003. Published 2004.

Despite the evidence suggesting a decrease in drug use amongst young people around 75% of individuals within Greater Glasgow and Clyde area reported that they first started using illicit drugs before they were 20 years old and over one quarter reported that their drug use had become problematic between the ages of 20 and 24 years.



Source: SDMD

The graph above demonstrates a full breakdown of individual's within GGCNHSB age in relation to onset of problems and age when first help sought. From this it is evident that the majority of individuals sought help in the 20-24 year age banding, despite having had problematic drug use in their earlier years.

The Youth Addictions services located within Glasgow Addiction Service had contact with 1,345 young people in 2008. When looking at these young people in relation to gender, age and substance we find that:

- In relation to gender we are currently working with 58% of males in comparison to 42% of females.
- In relation to age 44% of our current caseload are 12-16 year age banding with a further 56% being within the 17-21 year age banding.
- In relation to substance use our figures tell us that 24% of these young people are reporting issues with drug use, 40% reporting to have issues with their alcohol use and a further 36% reporting to have issues with poly substance use

7. Resources

There are Youth Addiction Services located within every Community Addiction Team including the homeless addiction team. These teams provide a direct access service for young people aged 12-21 (local teams) and 16-25 (homeless addiction team).

Our Youth Addiction Service will have one central point of access within their community to which young people will be able to self refer and be provided with access to direct services. They will offer a central point of access for referring agencies to support good working relationships and direct contact with staff.

Priority will be given to young people who are:

- Reporting problematic substance use
- Involved in offending behaviour
- Looked after and accommodated
- Young care leavers
- Homeless

- Vulnerable young women
- Young people from black and ethnic minority community.

Youth Addiction Services will offer therapeutic approaches including cognitive behavioural therapy and motivational enhanced approach in their assessment and caremanagement process. Youth Addiction Services will offer advice and support on harm reduction and will use the above approaches to support young people with goal and action setting to reduce or cease their substance use. They will also work closely with young people to minimise the risks associate with their substance use.

The Youth Addiction Services will identify opportunities for collaborative health promotion work with young people as part of a wider preventative strategy for individual or targeted groups of young people. This will also include offering minimal and brief interventions; in addition they will offer advice and information to a wider group of young people and related adults, together with informal support or referral to other agencies.

The Youth Addiction Services work collaboratively with existing providers to ensure they are delivering appropriate services to young people and ensuring that young people have access to these services; this also involves supporting all staff involved in working with children and young people identify appropriate resources. The Youth Addiction Service has close links with a number of more specialised services for young people such as:

Ar Caladh - This is an 8-bedded residential unit for young people with intensive support needs in relation to drugs and/or alcohol with associated mental health issues including self-harm and/or previous history of abuse, the first of its kind in Scotland. The Mungo Foundation manages this service on behalf of Glasgow Addiction Service.

The James Shields Project - This is a 16-bedded accommodation resource for homeless young people which offers a range of intervention programmes fully developed, including comprehensive groupwork programme, individual support and alternative therapies. Quarriers deliver this service on behalf of Glasgow Addiction Service.

Youth Alcohol & Drug Service - This service offer a direct treatment function to young people aged from 12 to 18 years residing within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde catchment area who are vulnerable as a result of alcohol and/or drug misuse/dependence and who may also be experiencing issues with their mental health. They also provide advice & support to all health and social work services including GPs, youth justice, specialist NHS adolescent services and residential services. **Interventions include:** mental health assessment, alcohol & drug assessment, motivational enhancement, detoxification, relapse prevention, education & health promotion, support & advice. The team consists of 4 Community Mental Health Nurses.

All young people aged 16 years or over who are involved with The Youth Addiction Service have access to the above services. In addition youth addiction staff will work closely with all staff involved in working with children and young to ensure these services are available to all young people. Youth Addiction staff will also be involved in the review and monitoring of all young people involved in the above programmes.

Glasgow Addiction Partnership understand the importance of assessing the impact of parental substance use on children and young people therefore have recently developed a practice guidance and assessment framework for all addiction staff working with children and young people affected by parental substance use. This guidance and other relevant information can be found at the following link:

http://connect.glasgow.gov.uk/YourService/SocialWorkServices/Sections_Teams/GlasgowAddictionServices/OurServices/SpecialistHealth_SocialCare/childrenaffectedby.htm

Commissioned Services	Telephone No.
Ar Caladh 196 Nithsdale Road Pollokshields Glasgow G41 5EU	0141 423 4765
James Shields Project 100 Pollokshaws Road Glasgow G41 1PZ	0141 429 2663
Youth Alcohol & Drug Service 5 th Floor The Twomax Building 187 Old Rutherglen Road Glasgow G5 ORE	0141 300 6367

Glasgow Addiction Service Key Contacts Tel: 0141 276 6600	
Neil Hunter Joint General Manager Glasgow Addiction Service	Eric Steel Community Service Manager
Gemma McNeil Senior Officer Children And Youth Services	Angela Reilly Senior Officer Children and Youth Service
Phil Roberts Resource Worker	TBA Development Officer Getting Our Priorities Right/Hidden Harm
Community Addiction Teams	
North East CAT Westwood House 1250 Westerhouse Road Glasgow G34 9EA 0141 276 3429	South CAT Twomax Building 187 Old Rutherglen Road Glasgow G5 0RE 0141 420 8100
North CAT 7 Closeburn Street Glasgow G22 5JZ 0141 276 4580	South East CAT 10 Ardenraig Place Glasgow G45 9US 0141 276 5040
East CAT The Newlands Centre 871 Springfield Road Glasgow G31 4HZ 0141 565 0200	Greater Pollok CAT Social Work Services 130 Langton Road Glasgow G53 5DP 0141 276 3010
West CAT 7-19 Hecla Square Drumchapel Glasgow G15 8NH 0141 276 4330	South West CAT Southern General 1345 Govan Road Glasgow G51 4TF 0141 276 8740
Homeless Addiction Team 55 Hunter Street Glasgow G31 0141 552 9287	