

The Drinkaware Trust Youth Strategy

Vision

- Children and young people will have the knowledge and self-confidence to make informed choices about alcohol including saying ‘no’ if they are feeling pressured to drink.
- There will be an increase in the age at which a young person has their first proper alcoholic drink from the baseline of 13 years of age (Drug use, Smoking and Drinking survey, 2007).
- Children and young people will have easy and quick access to a range of honest, accurate, comprehensive and relevant information about alcohol and its effects, which responds to the diverse range of needs in the UK environment.

Key principles and values

1. ***Making a contribution to the Government’s agenda*** on alcohol including Every Child Matters outcomes and the Youth Alcohol action plan.
2. ***To be young person centred***. We will ensure young people are consulted and involved in evaluating existing provision and planning and implementing new developments.
3. ***To be partnership based***. The support of all stakeholders including government, practitioners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), drinks producers and retailers will be engaged and their views used to form an authoritative voice. Establishing appropriate links with other existing local and national strategies and partnerships e.g. local Children and Young People’s Plans, National Healthy Schools Programme, Connexions, Youth Work Service.
4. ***Evidence-based***. Local, national and international evidence of effective practice will be used to underpin the development of new initiatives and as a framework for reviewing existing initiatives.
5. ***Long-term and sustained***. Drinkaware is committed to the development of a long-term vision on alcohol misuse.

Core beliefs

We acknowledge a set of core beliefs which have informed the development of our strategy, the work we have undertaken so far and the initiatives which we are planning for the future. These include:

Young people

- That all young people should have the knowledge, skills and self confidence, to make informed choices and withstand peer group pressure in relation to alcohol.
- That young people should be encouraged to recognise that abstention from alcohol is an acceptable and responsible choice.
- That young people should have access to the facts about alcohol, its use and impacts.
- That high standards of behaviour should be expected and looked for in adults responding to a young person’s need for information and support on alcohol.
- That young people should be informed of the health risks associated with very early alcohol use.

Alcohol

- That alcohol misuse may be both a cause and a consequence of social exclusion.
- That alcohol use is part of a broader agenda which should include young people’s general health and well-being.

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- That attitudes to alcohol use are inextricably linked to the wider British culture, and acceptability of alcohol within it.
- That all parents of under-18s should have an understanding of the risks associated with drinking at a young age, the harms related to risky drinking and the affect their drinking patterns may have on their children's attitudes to drinking.

Key messages

Our key messages focus on:

Delay - based on a social normative approach. Wherever possible young people aged 15 and younger will be discouraged from drinking, as advised by the Chief Medical Officer. The difference between their perceptions of their peers' drinking habits and the reality will be a key focus.

Harm minimisation – messages aimed at those who are already drinking will raise awareness of safety tips such as looking after your friends, drinking water and eating beforehand. This message will be targeted at older groups, 16 and 17-year-olds only.

Key priorities: 2009

1. 'Ultimate day' competition for 16-17 year olds: Focusing on the links between alcohol and boredom, young people will be asked to describe their ultimate day without alcohol. Entries will be accepted in video, photo or written format uploaded to the ultimate day website which will have content on alcohol awareness. The competition is due to launch in the second week of July.
2. From October 2009 the Drinkaware website will have a dedicated area for all professionals working with under 18's. As requested by practitioners this area will provide workshop plans and factsheets for use with young people, as well as good practice case studies, reliable organisations and resources which can be used by local areas and key facts around alcohol.
3. Conducting a campaign on, relationships, focussing on unprotected sex and alcohol in November. The campaign will highlight the role alcohol plays in risk taking behaviour, an area of concern highlighted by 13-17 year olds and their parents. Partnerships with sexual health specialists are being explored. Resources for use at a local level will be made available.
4. From November, Drinkaware messages on alcohol will be available through digital channels and networking sites such as Bebo, Facebook and MySpace that we know 13-17 year olds using. Professionals will be informed where the messages are so they can pass on the information to the young people they work with.
5. A factsheet and workshop plan aimed at 13-15 year olds on the journey of alcohol through the body is already available to download on our website. Further factsheets on alcohol and its effects on emotional health; alcohol and risk taking behaviour; and alcohol, sex and relationships will be available in October.
6. Our current leaflet 'A guide for parents' is being updated to reflect the new CMO guidance, and will include more information and practical advice on how parents can talk to their children about alcohol. The new version will be available in September.
7. We are working with the government and curriculum providers on effective alcohol education in the primary, secondary and further education settings.

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