

Response to the 'National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy' consultation document:

- Education and communication section

Q 41 Young People have developed a culture of inappropriate drinking both in terms of quantity and frequency; that is they drink too much alcohol in too short a period of time. There will not be a 'quick fix' to reverse this problem and the challenge to change their approach to drinking should be seen as a long-term issue.

Q 46 Consideration should be given to a long-term approach that incorporates education and communication from a variety source. Education in schools although in place in the form of PSHE & Citizenship should be expanded to include a progressive education programme that encompasses primary, secondary and further education through well-trained and knowledgeable personnel.

Solid partnerships should be in place that do not duplicate effort but send a consistent message to both young people and to the population as a whole.

Model of good practice

Alcohol Services in Cheshire

Young People's Service

Community Care Awards 2001, Drugs & Alcohol category – Highly Commended
Community Care Awards 2002, Drugs & Alcohol category -Nominated (awaiting result)

Alcohol Services in Cheshire (CIC) is a not for profit organisation that operates an equal opportunities policy, providing confidential community based alcohol services for a population of approximately 400,000 people within 600 square miles of Cheshire.

Employing 3 full time, 8 part time and 5 volunteers, we are the only agency of its kind in the area and work in partnership with Social Services, Health and the voluntary sector.

Alcohol Services identified an increase in young people contacting the agency requiring help and information. To address this issue a Young People's Service was introduced in October 2000 through a 3-year Community Fund grant to deliver facts and dispel myths surrounding alcohol, providing a full time dedicated counsellor and an education worker to work with young people aged 11-25 years.

Aims of the Young People's Service:

- To work to reduce the harmful use of alcohol
- Raise alcohol awareness in young people and those associated with young people
- Increase self-esteem in young people motivating them to make valued judgements

Q 42, 43

In the last 2 years:

- 3850 young people aged between 11-25 years have been educated within the school and college environment in class size.
- 99.8% of the young people educated have shown an increase in their knowledge of alcohol related issues.
- 64% of schools and 24% of youth groups within the geographical area have used the Young People's Service. The Youth Offending Team and the young people disengaged from mainstream schooling operated through Connexions are now utilising the service.
- 95 young people have used the Young People's counselling service showing an increase of 62% prior to the service being available, many as a result of education and manned displays.

Q 41

Innovation

To stimulate and engage young people to discuss issues around alcohol a 10 minute animated video has been produced that features a mythical family 'The Dregs', who are affected by alcohol. This allows young people to discuss problems related to 'The Family' without disclosure of 'real' identities. This has been an overwhelming success with comments such as "Brilliant" – pupil; "very good enjoyed that, very informative" – college student; "better than videos with people" – Year 8 pupil; "Brilliant...excellent the language is just right" – Teachers; "Excellent...be brilliant for young kids" – Youth Workers.

The video has now been requested by Alcohol agencies throughout the country and is supported by a workbook that can be used as a 'stand alone' resource or in conjunction with the video and contains guidance notes for the educator/trainer.

Q 50

Advertising should carry at least alcohol unit information, preferably a message with regards to inappropriate use e.g. Binge drinking can seriously damage your health; exceeding government guidelines may damage your health.

Miles Couchman