

From: Dinah Morley

Sent: 19 December 2002 18:04

To:

Cc: Gavin Baylis; Tracey Maher

Subject: Response from YoungMinds to the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

YoungMinds(YM) is the national children's mental health charity formed from a coalition of the professions which work with children and support their mental health in the broadest sense.

Our concern is therefore only with this strategy as far as it affects children and young people.

YM would expect that all those professionals working with adults who abuse alcohol would be mindful of, and take some responsibility for, the care of the children of those adults, where these are under 18. these children are a thigh risk of mental health disorders themselves and need to be appropriately supported so that this risk is minimised.

Young people abuse alcohol usually as a result of serious trauma in their lives. It will not be helpful to manage them in the same way as adults altogether. These young people need to have their underlying problems assessed and supports put in place to alleviate problems where this can happen. It is most likely that they will have problems related to family and to relationships. Sorting these out may require medium to long term involvement of mental health professionals.

Places of access to these services need to be developed in non-stigmatising settings which are adolescent-friendly, where appropriate therapies can be quickly put in place, possibly alongside physical health services, financial advice, housing advice etc. failure to provide services which can work with the underlying problem may result in on-going alcohol dependency.

I hope this is helpful. for further information about YoungMinds please visit our web site - www.youngminds.org.uk