

Health Scrutiny Panel

George Gallagher, Lifeline



LIFELINE: Who are we?

- Lifeline is the specialist Substance Misuse Agency for Young People in Tower Hamlets who are using drugs and alcohol
- We provide education around different drugs, consequences of use, harm reduction advice and access to further support, using a person-centred and interactive approach
- We work with lots of different partners within Tower Hamlets to ensure harder to reach and vulnerable young people have access to appropriate advice, information and education around substances.

What we offer?

Free and confidential advice and information for young people using drugs and alcohol up to 18 – we also have a transitional worker who can work with those from 19 up to 25 – this group is very hard to get into treatment

- Offering regular 1:1 psycho- social support - usually outreach
- Specialist support for pregnant clients and those with mental health issues
- Tailored training for professionals where appropriate
- Advice for professionals
- Advice to carers surrounding how to approach young people concerning substance misuse
- Reduction planning and advice on how to cut down and avoid triggers
- Staffing- four staff: Includes one manager, three substance misuse workers (one part- time) and one administrator (part time)

How to Refer?

Referral information

- Clients can refer themselves directly to the service by phoning the office and speaking to a worker and providing contact details
- Anyone who is concerned about a young person that may be using substances can talk through their concerns by contacting the office
- Professionals can also contact Lifeline and make the referral over the telephone or email/ send referral form
- If in doubt about referring? Call us for a chat
- **All young people must consent to the referral**

Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:00pm

Unit 26 Skylines Village, Lime Harbour,

E14 9TS

T: 020 3069 7878

NTA: National Drugs Strategy

- Preventing today's young people from becoming tomorrow's problem drug users
- Not just about developing specialist drugs treatment
- Ensuring that all children & YP services are committed to identifying & intervening to tackle drugs problems before they become acute

Drug Use in 16- 24 year olds nationally and local: NTA

Drug	2009/10	2010/11
Cannabis	16.1%	17.1%
Cocaine Sulphate	5.5%	4.4%
Mephedrone	Not collected	4.4%
Ecstasy	4.3%	3.8%
Ketamine	1.7%	2.1%

- **These are mean averages, so higher in 'harder to reach' groups**
- **Data can be misleading as there is some robust evidence that people of all ages will under report use**

The local Picture 2012- 13:

In our clients, the most common substances in Tower Hamlets for under 18's?

There are many drugs available, but the vast majority of referrals are for:

- **Cannabis 83% – usually rolled with tobacco**
- **Alcohol 15%**
- **Heroin 1%**
- **Solvents 1%**
- **It is interesting to note that all of our clients are cigarette smokers**
- **Majority start smoking cigarettes and cannabis at a very early age**

What makes some YP more vulnerable to drug use?

- Living in 'harder to reach' or more closed off communities
- From poorer backgrounds and living in social housing
- Substance misusing parents/ siblings/ households
- Disrupted family life
- Poor education achievement and those at PRU's
- Young offenders
- Those who smoke cigarettes regularly
- Parents/ carers on benefits
- Mental health problems
- Looked after children
- Those NEET, or on benefits
- Homeless/ Vulnerably housed
- Sex Working, organised or otherwise

These are the groups who can ill afford to buy drugs/ alcohol

Protective factors than reduce the likelihood of problematic drug and alcohol use

- Have daily structure and focus
- Being in education or work
- Being more 'employable'
- Recognise that difference situations require different behaviours – 'being yourself' is sometimes not the best of advise
- Good education achievement
- Well informed about health care messages, and open to evidenced based information
- Have a regular income
- Stable mental health
- Life Status
- Those living in better quality housing or parents who are home owners
- Parents/ carers who work
- Smokefree and drugfree role models
- More highly tuned emotional intelligence; Discuss problems, reflect on behaviour and access support when it is needed
- Have aspirations and goals to make medium/ longer term plans for the future

Some reasons for drug and alcohol use

- Peer group pressure, particularly amongst males
- Enjoyment
- Environments- like estates where drugs and alcohol use is normalised and are freely available
- Lack of smokefree and drugfree role models- casual or lax attitude to drugs within the home
- Curiosity
- The defence mechanism- to self medicate
- Natural rebellion
- Promotion and availability of alcohol even to those who are under age
- Cheap cost of alcohol and drugs
- Money given carelessly by carers can easily be spend on substances, even £5 can be put together with another friend to buy a bag of hash or bottle of vodka
- Some parents/ carers have been known to actively give money to YP to spend on drugs and alcohol

Barriers to accessing support:1

- Normalization and desensitization of some drugs, particularly cannabis, amongst both public and professionals- similar to attitude towards cigarettes in 1980's and 90's
- Not knowing where to get free and confidential support
- Attitudes of professionals have an important role to play; Professional attitudes vary; some staff refer clients on but other do not
- Outdated beliefs that certain groups do not take drugs or drink- the opposite is often true

Barriers to accessing support:2

Parents/ Carers attitudes and environments have an even greater role to play

- Lack of knowledge of where to get specialist support
- Users and families often worry that it is illegal and they and their children may get in trouble
- Children often continue to live at home with parents and in environments where drugs are normalized, so potentially nothing changes
- Other boroughs have younger populations that are more likely to move on/ out which can help break the cycle
- Denial and Shame, so keep it a secret and think it will just go away
- Not being aware of what their children are doing even when at home
- Turning a blind eye- Active/ Passive/ Unwitting Environmental Collusion
- Financial Collusion- Not keeping tabs on what money is spent on
- Some parents/ carers/ extended family members giving their children monies that they know will be spent on drugs and/or alcohol
- In some cases some parents and carers will financially benefit from their Childs drug use
- **These issues can unwittingly 'fast track' a young person into addiction**

Health issues for Young People who misuse substances and alcohol

- Poor mental health
- **Impact of smoking both cigarettes and cannabis**
- Lack of exercise
- Poor diet and normalisation of caffeinated, energy and fizzy drinks
- Irregular sleeping patterns
- Binge drinking and its dangers
- Risky behaviour especially around unsafe sex
- Risk of pregnancy
- Risk of exploitation i.e. Sexual abuse
- Risk of Blood Borne Virus'
- Risk of overdose

Harm reduction

- The principle aim of all treatment should be to help the client move away from problem drug or alcohol use towards a healthier and safer lifestyle
- It is recognised that some people with problematic use do not often magically quit substances, some may choose to continue their use despite knowledge of harmful consequences
- Harm reduction (or less commonly known as harm minimization) refers to a range of public health policies designed to reduce the harmful consequences associated with human behaviours, even if those behaviours are risky or illegal
- Cornerstone of substance misuse work, but also commonly used in other fields
- In the UK it started in the 1980's as a response to Heroin Use and HIV, however not all countries incorporate this into front line work
- Very successful at reducing HIV rates amongst I/v drug user, saving lives and extending life expectancy
- Saves a lot of money for the country, in the NHS and criminal justice system et al
- In essence it is a non- judgmental approach that supplies evidence based information on how to reduce the harm from substance use

Marketing and Promotion of service

- To push up referral rates a pro- active marketing plan has already been put in place
- This includes targeted visits to front line services to explain what we offer and how we can support them in their work i.e., Housing Providers, Youth Services, GP's, Schools and Colleges

Partnership working

- **Relationship building with front line services is essential to drive up referral rates**
- **We already have good links with local schools, CAMHT, YOT and other drug services**

What else does Lifeline offer?

- Open mornings for staff and clients-
first Wednesday of the month 11am- 12
noon
- Basic Level 1 Training in Cannabis and
Alcohol quarterly
- Other tailored training as required

Further information and references

- Advice on where to access drug and alcohol support in Tower Hamlets http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/10001-10100/10023_drugs_and_alcohol_advice/where_to_get_help.aspx
- Lifeline National Website <http://www.lifeline.org.uk/>
- Facts on Alcohol: [drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)
- Tower Hamlets Community Alcohol Team- over 18's; <http://www.rapt-thcat.org.uk/>
- Frank: Drugs- Know what's what. www.talktofrank.com/
- National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse <http://www.nta.nhs.uk/>
- DS Daily News on Drugs and Alcohol <http://www.dsdaily.org.uk/>
- Information site on legal highs: [whynotfindout.com](http://www.whynotfindout.com). They also answer email enquiries
- Young Minds Information and support for those with mental health issues <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/> Mind Mental Health Charity, Over 18's: <http://www.mind.org.uk/>
- Antidote: LGBT Service <http://www.antidote-lgbt.com/> Gay Men Health Information: <http://www.gmfa.org.uk/>
- British Lung Foundation <http://www.blf.org.uk/Home>
- Tower Hamlets Mind Khat Project 0207510 1081 info@mithn.org.uk
- Tower Hamlets NHS Stop Smoking Service. Call health hotline 0207364 5016 or visit your local pharmacy <http://www.towerhamlets.nhs.uk/your-health/smokefree/>
- AMP: Voice of Young People in Tower Hamlets <http://amp.uk.net/>
- Motivational Interviewing: <http://www.health.org.uk/public/cms/75/76/313/3082/training%20in%20motivational%20interviewing%20research%20scan.pdf?realName=dF7hmm.pdf>
- Tower Hamlets Council <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/>
- North East London and the City NHS Trust <http://www.elc.nhs.uk/>
- Recovery Maps: <http://www.nta.nhs.uk/routes-to-recovery.aspx>
- Nice guidelines: <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byType&type=2&status=3>
- BBC health: http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/0_1_NHS_Direct: <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>
- NHS 5 a day advice; <http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/5ADAY/Pages/5ADAYhome.aspx>
- NHS Sleep hygiene advice: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Insomnia/Pages/Treatment.aspx>
- Osmani Trust- Mentoring for BME groups aged 10- 21 year olds- 0207247 8080
- Support for Gamblers: <http://www.gamcare.org.uk/>
- NHS Sexual health services in England: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/sexual-health-services/Pages/guide-to-sexual-health-services.aspx>
- HIV support and advice in Tower Hamlets <http://www.positiveeast.org.uk/>
- Hepatitis C Information: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Hepatitis-B> <http://www.hepb.org.uk/>
- Time Out Guide London: <http://www.timeout.com/london>

Finish

Thank You for your time

