

# Education about substance misuse

Evaluation of the implementation and impact in  
schools of the guidance 'Substance Misuse: Children  
and Young People' in Welsh Assembly  
Government Circular 17/02

June 2007



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales



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## Introduction

- 1 In its annual remit to Estyn for 2006-2007 the Welsh Assembly Government asked Estyn to evaluate the implementation and impact in schools of the guidance about 'Substance Misuse: Children and Young People' in Welsh Assembly Government Circular 17/02. This Circular takes account of the 'Tackling Substance misuse in Wales: A Partnership Approach<sup>1</sup>' published by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2000. Circular 17/02 is directed at schools and organisations in the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors that offer educational opportunities to children and young people under the age of 18.
- 2 Circular 17/02 highlights the substances whose use affects the way people think, feel or behave. It addresses all kinds of substance misuse, whether legal or illegal. This includes hazardous substances such as tobacco, alcohol, volatile substances and illegal drugs, as well as over-the-counter medicines.
- 3 Education about substance misuse is provided in schools:
  - to enable children and young people to resist substance misuse in order to achieve their full potential in society;
  - to enable children and young people to make responsible and better informed decisions about their lives;
  - because of the widespread concern that what may start as casual use of tobacco, alcohol or cannabis may lead to immediate harm and may also set the individual on a path leading to dependence and long-term harm; and
  - because this is a cause of public concern as harm can be caused to the users, their families and friends, and the community at large.
- 4 The report draws on a series of visits, meetings and research by inspectors including:
  - a study of recent research and legislation such as the Children Act 2004;
  - analysis of questionnaire responses from 56 of the 75 school schools contacted, which included responses from teachers and pupils in primary, secondary, special and independent schools;
  - visits to a further 30 schools for meetings with teachers, headteachers and pupils in a range of schools, pupil referral units and other educational settings across Wales;
  - a visit to Swansea Institute of Higher Education to see a training session for police School Liaison Officers (SLOs);
  - a visit to Parc Prison Bridgend to see a drug education session for young offenders;

- a meeting with all local education authority (LEA) Personal and Social Education (PSE) advisers and representatives of the Healthy Schools' Co-ordinators;
- meetings with coordinators from Substance-misuse Action Teams (SMATs); Community Safety Partnership Officer; Officer National Public Health Boards (NPHS)/Cardiff Local Health Board; The National Police School Programme Co-ordinator; North Wales Regional Police School Programme Co-ordinator; Drug Counsellor - Swansea Drug Centre;
- scrutiny of school policies and schemes of work; and
- discussions with children's and young people's groups including responses to questions placed on the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Funky Dragon' website.

5 Numbers used for references in the text of this report refer to a list of publications in the appendix.

## Background

- 6 Parents who are drug users seriously harm their children at every age from conception to adulthood. In its report on 'Pathways to Problems'<sup>2</sup> the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs states that:

*'Substance-misuse problems can occur suddenly whilst others take years to develop. Some problems are the direct result of the drug itself. Others result from the way the drug is taken – such as by injecting – or from the lifestyle it may lead to - such as criminal behaviour and prostitution. It is very clear that most young people have little or no idea of the personal risks they may be taking by starting to use a particular drug.'*

- 7 Misusing substances such as drugs and alcohol is a huge problem across the UK. As far as 15-16 year olds are concerned, the UK has one of the worst reputations in Europe. Today, lots more young people, particularly young women, are drinking alcohol and binge-drinking. Binge-drinking involves consuming large amounts of alcohol over a short period of time.

- 8 The UK also has the highest rate of births to teenagers in Europe, with an average of 26 live births per 1,000 to women aged 15-19. In Wales, the figure is even higher. There is a link between young people drinking too much alcohol and having unsafe and unprotected sex. This can lead to both unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

- 9 Policy on education about substance misuse is often based on the assumption that drugs education is always effective. However, recent research (published in September 2006) has cast doubt on this assumption. In Pathways to Problems<sup>2</sup> the UK Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) states:

*'Most young people of school age do not smoke tobacco, drink alcohol or use illegal drugs. Many of those that do start taking drugs at an early age have a parental or family background or circumstances that put them at higher risk or show patterns of behaviour such as truancy or offending which are strongly associated with using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. When these circumstances are combined with an environment in which drugs are readily available, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect a small number of classroom-based exercises to act as a deterrent. Expectations placed on school-based substance-misuse programmes need to be more realistic.'*

- 10 The ACMD report<sup>2</sup> recommends a reassessment of the role of schools in substance-misuse education programmes. It states that:

*'Schools have a clear responsibility to provide all children and young people with accurate, credible and consistent information about the hazards of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs – including volatile substances. In addition schools need to maintain a supportive environment for all their pupils, whilst recognising and responding to the needs of those whose behavioural problems or family background may put them at particular risk of hazardous drug use.'*

- 11 The Children Act 2004 has placed a duty on each local authority in Wales to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Their role is to agree how organisations that provide services for children and young people will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The premise is that key agencies must work together effectively. A key focus of the work is education about substance misuse.
- 12 This report considers the extent to which Circular 17/02 has been effective in providing guidance on education about substance misuse to schools and external agencies in order to safeguard children and young people's health and well-being. Case studies are included, together with recommendations for improvement.

## Main findings

- 13 There are signs that the impact of Circular 17/02 in primary schools may be having a positive effect in helping to delay the age at which the majority of children and young people start smoking and experimenting with other hazardous substances.
- 14 The impact of the Circular in secondary schools is less certain. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of some of the physical effects and legal consequences of substance misuse has improved since the Circular's introduction. This is mainly because the majority of schools have adopted the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme'. Pupils say they prefer this programme's emphasis on real-life situations to the kind of teaching that relies on completing worksheets which may be out of date. On the other hand there is considerable evidence that, when given appropriate training and support, teacher-led programmes can be more effective than those delivered wholly by external contributors.
- 15 The Circular has not been successful in influencing the attitudes and values of young people to the extent that it has not prevented a significant minority from continuing to smoke or drink alcohol to excess or use illegal drugs such as cannabis.
- 16 Most secondary schools and the majority of primary schools have a policy for substance-misuse education. Circular 17/02 has been useful to these schools in helping them to write or revise policies and programmes of work to make their substance-misuse education programmes comply with the Circular's good practice section. The kind of education that works best is one that is embedded across the personal and social education in a school's curriculum rather than one which relies on 'one-off' events.
- 17 The Circular does not provide enough guidance for schools on how to develop an effective multi-agency approach in its teaching programme or how to forge stronger links between schools and local communities to help to prevent some of the underlying causes of substance misuse.
- 18 The Circular has not been updated since its publication to provide schools with guidance about how changes in the law affects their responsibilities.
- 19 Other aspects where the Circular has had little impact include:
  - training for all teachers;
  - the way that schools record and manage instances of illegal use of substances incidents such as smoking, drinking and using volatile substances; and
  - the range of resources and materials used for pupils with different needs including looked-after children and pupils excluded from schools.
- 20 Outside agencies do not always listen enough to the views of teachers, children and young people in planning how to help beat the problems of substance misuse. Few

programmes involve pupils or parents in planning what is to be covered and this means they are less likely to take personal ownership of the issues.

- 21 Some very good local initiatives such as the 'Get Sorted' programme in Rhondda Cynon Taf developed by the Substance-misuse Action Team (SMAT), addresses all the requirements of Circular 17/02. This is a model of good practice in multi-agency substance-misuse education for children and young people up to the age of 25.
- 22 Most schools do not evaluate the effectiveness of their substance-misuse education programme as part of the overall evaluation of their personal and social education programmes. Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation mean that there are gaps in the substance-misuse education prevention programmes.
- 23 Survey evidence shows that children and young people are not fully informed about all the personal risks they are taking by using a particular drug. This is especially true of the physical, emotional and mental health consequences of taking illegal or legal substances and of the consequences relating to violent behaviour, unsafe sex, and damage to an unborn child due to substance-misuse.
- 24 Two distinct types of substance-misuse education are offered: the multi-agency programme that is embedded in a school's personal and social education, which informs pupils about the risks and the underlying issues; and the more interventionist 'harm-reduction' programmes for those already abusing substances, including alcohol. In some parts of Wales there is appropriate use of both types but the incidence and intensity of delivery are patchy.
- 25 The Welsh Assembly Government funds most of its substance-misuse education work in schools directly through its 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme.' This funding by-passes the Substance-misuse Planning and Commissioning Structure. As a result this disadvantages the work of 22 LEAs and the SMATs education and training sub-groups. It means that they cannot easily develop their own initiatives to support multi-agency work and in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of substance-misuse education programmes in schools as required by Circular 17/02.
- 26 A lack of joined-up thinking nationally and locally in terms of planning, coordinating, resourcing, teaching, monitoring and evaluating means that substance-misuse education programmes in schools are less effective than they might be.

## Recommendations

### **The Welsh Assembly Government needs to:**

- R1 revise Circular 17/02 Substance Misuse: Children and Young People, to provide better and more up-to-date guidance for schools and others on how to develop a fully integrated, multi-agency approach to help prevent substance misuse by children, young people and vulnerable families;
- R2 widen the Circular's focus to include all children and young people up to the age of 19 and to reflect changes in the National Curriculum;
- R3 establish a National Substance-misuse Education Communication Group for Wales to provide a coherent strategy and framework for substance-misuse education for children and young people wherever they are educated;
- R4 review the work of the National Substance-misuse Education Communication Group Framework for Wales regularly to provide guidelines for commissioning new work, to review existing programmes, and promote good practice, oversee, co-ordinate and direct the work of all those bodies involved in planning education about substance misuse;
- R5 improve the work of the substance-misuse action teams' education and training sub-groups by providing dedicated funding to allow them to fulfil their role as required by Circular 17/02;
- R6 work with local education authorities to provide better training for staff, including accredited training on substance-misuse education for adults from external agencies who work in schools; and
- R7 require teacher training institutions to offer trainee teachers an initial qualification in personal and social education that trains them to teach life skills, including substance-misuse education.

### **LEAs need to:**

- R8 offer more training for teachers to help them to plan, teach, monitor and evaluate substance-misuse education programmes;
- R9 keep schools better informed about appropriate resources and suitable agencies that can support the whole range of substance-misuse education;
- R10 work more closely with schools and settings such as pupil referral units, to plan programmes that address the specific needs of more vulnerable children and young people such those looked-after by local authorities and those in danger of being excluded from schools; and
- R11 develop robust systems to monitor and report substance-misuse incidents in schools and other settings.

**Schools need to:**

- R12 have a policy for substance-misuse education;
- R13 plan substance-misuse education programmes, to take better account of the views of children and young people and involve a wider range of outside agencies;
- R14 ensure that teachers take a more active role in supporting the learning when outside agencies take the lead in delivering lessons;
- R15 monitor and evaluate substance-misuse education programmes; and
- R16 maintain a supportive environment for all pupils, whilst being responsive to the needs of those pupils whose particular behavioural problems or family background may put them at particular risk of hazardous substance use.

## **The overall impact of Circular 17/02 on substance-misuse programmes in schools: good features and shortcomings**

### **Positive outcomes of Circular 17/02**

- 27 There is some evidence that, in primary schools, the Circular's guidance may be helping to delay the age at which the majority of children and young people start smoking and experimenting with other hazardous substances.
- 28 The effect on teaching and learning in secondary schools has been to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of some of the physical effects and legal consequences of substance-misuse. Older pupils currently in Year 11 and above state that, since there have been lessons based on the recommendations of the Circular, younger pupils are now much more informed about the effects and risks of substance misuse than they were.
- 29 It has improved many aspects of policy and planning in schools and LEAs for delivering substance-misuse education amongst children and young people.
- 30 Some aspects of the coordination of schools' work on the substance-misuse education have improved. In most cases, the role is given to a skilled, trained member of staff, usually the school's personal and social education coordinator.
- 31 The Circular has been influential in encouraging the majority of schools to adopt education programmes which use a life-skills approach by focusing on decision-making, countering peer-pressure, and taking responsibility. Young people who took part in Estyn's survey said they preferred lessons that were based on real life situations such as those provided by the police SLOs to ones that relied heavily on completing numerous worksheets and using outdated resources.
- 32 According to pupils interviewed, the Circular has most impact where the substance-misuse education programme is taught across the school year in personal and social lessons as well as in other lessons such as science, religious education and drama. One-off lessons or whole days given over to the topic programmes were less successful.
- 33 Substance-misuse education is most valued by pupils when the lessons are taught by a small, trained team of teachers supported in when appropriate, by a wide range of agencies. These agencies may include the police, the 'healthy schools' initiative programme, voluntary and charitable bodies, peer-support groups, drama groups, and other community-based organisations.
- 34 The police have made good use of the Circular in designing their All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme. This programme is taught in 97% of schools and other education establishments and ensures that children and young people acquire a consistent and relevant understanding of the effects and risks of substance misuse. It is being extended to pupil referral units and to young offenders institutions on a trial basis from January 2007.

- 35 The principle of involving young people in delivering a programme to inform others of the same age of the effects and risks of smoking has been used well by Cardiff and Bristol Universities in piloting the anti-smoking 'ASSIST' programme in secondary schools. Initial findings indicate that the project has been successful in discouraging smoking amongst boys. 'ASSIST' is available to all schools from April 2007 through the National Public Health Boards on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 36 The Circular has also been used in some very good multi-agency partnership training programmes based on local need. One example in Rhondda Cynon Taf is the work of the 'Get Sorted' team, whose aim is to ensure that consistent messages about substance misuse are given to all children and young people. The 'Get Sorted' team also train and team-teach with teachers and police officers. This approach has the advantage of allowing the local authority's substance-misuse action team to fulfil its statutory duty to monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of taught programmes.
- 37 The Circular has also been used imaginatively in pilot projects in some local authorities to develop family intervention programmes. Multi-agency programmes such as 'On Track' in the upper Rhondda Fach valley and 'Strengthening Families' in east Cardiff were designed to improve parenting skills, encourage a stable family life and promote good parental role models amongst disadvantaged and vulnerable families. These programmes are a way of preventing some of the underlying causes of substance misuse often referred to as 'hidden harm.' 'Hidden harm' is the term used where children and young people are at risk because they are exposed to family members who already abuse substances.

### **Shortcomings of the Circular**

- 38 The impact of the Circular in secondary schools is less marked in influencing the attitudes and values of young people in relation to substance misuse. In this survey almost all pupils on leaving primary schools at the end of year 6 say they would never engage in substance misuse. However, recent research<sup>2</sup> in the United Kingdom shows that, by 15 years of age, 20-25% are regular smokers with girls outnumbering boys. Also, around 40-50% of 15 year olds are drinking alcohol at least weekly, with binge-drinking becoming increasingly common. Twenty to twenty-five percent of this age group are also using other drugs – mainly cannabis – at least once a week.
- 39 The Circular does not take enough account of and provide enough guidance for schools and other educational settings about the views of children and young people from a range of different socio-economic backgrounds including looked-after children and those pupils excluded from schools.
- 40 The Circular does not stress enough the importance of offering PSE to trainee teachers as a specialist subject. Generally, most teachers, especially in secondary schools lack confidence and expertise in this area and this hampers the effectiveness of the teaching and learning.
- 41 The Circular has had a limited impact in ensuring that teachers and external agencies work together to plan and deliver lessons. In around a half of secondary schools that have adopted the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' teachers

take little or no part in the lesson. They are either passive observers or are not present when the lessons are taught by the police SLOs. This limits opportunities for teachers to develop their own professional expertise in this area and to continue the theme of the lesson once the police officers have left.

- 42 The emphasis on the development of inter-agency protocols is undeveloped. In most local authorities, different agencies know little of each others' work. There are also weaknesses in communication between schools, pupil referral units, youth clubs, further and higher education colleges and other educational settings in planning joint approaches in reinforcing messages about substance-misuse education.
- 43 The requirement to record instances of substance misuse is dated and does not reflect changes in the law since the Circular was published in 2002. Schools need better guidance about their responsibilities in recording and managing instances of illegal use of substances including the full range of substance-misuse incidents such as smoking, drinking and using volatile substances.
- 44 The Circular is also out-of-date in the information it gives about schools' responsibilities in respect of:
  - ensuring that all people working with children and young people have clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau;
  - dealing with confidentiality; and in
  - responding to requests for information under the Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Acts.
- 45 The Circular does not say how materials and approaches can be adapted to be sensitive to the cultural and religious practices of children and young people from minority ethnic groups.
- 46 The Circular has had little impact in supporting the role of local education authorities and the substance-misuse action teams in providing training courses for teachers, in promoting multi-agency working and in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of new and existing initiatives. As a result most LEAs do not ring-fence funding from the Better School Fund (BSF) for substance-misuse education within their personal and social education programmes. There is little awareness in LEAs of the Substance-misuse Action Plan Capital Fund (SMAP) for developing projects targeted at the needs of individuals and groups of young people in pupil referral units, youth clubs colleges for example.
- 47 In addition, the Circular has had little impact nationally on allocating funding for training and resources and the dissemination of good practice. Funding for initiatives, projects and resources comes from a range of sources and organisations. This has led to the uncoordinated development and duplication of resources.
- 48 Lastly, there has been no central monitoring of national and most local initiatives. Schools' own monitoring and evaluation programmes have been limited. This means that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially about the consequences of substance abuse.

## Planning and policy

- 49 Most schools are familiar with Circular 17/02. About three-quarters of primary schools find the guidance helpful for reviewing or developing a policy. Many independent and special schools also find the Circular useful as an aid to developing or reviewing their policies on substance-misuse education. In the best practice, the Circular has been used in conjunction with the PSE framework to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values. These schools have also used LEA guidance based on the Circular.
- 50 In schools where planning for PSE is good the substance-misuse education programme provides teachers with appropriate support. For example, children aged five to seven years of age are taught in 'Circle Time' to understand that medicines are taken to make them better, but that some drugs are dangerous.
- 51 In schools where there is good practice, teachers are developing a curriculum on a spiral pattern where each aspect of the personal and social education curriculum is revisited every year to build on previous learning. In this way they can apply the 10 aspects of the personal and social education framework to substance-misuse education throughout all key stages.
- 52 The recommendation in the Circular that outside agencies plan programmes of work with schools has had a very limited impact. Most schools have adopted the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme', and for a few, it is their only course about substance-misuse education. Not enough use is made of:
- the expertise of health professionals such as the School Health Nursing Service;
  - the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS); and
  - referrals for children and young people involved in substance-misuse incidents, to outside agencies.
- 53 As a result of weaknesses in planning, gaps remain in most schools' programmes and in pupils' knowledge and understanding. There is rarely any discussion to raise pupils' awareness of the health implications of a range of hazardous substances especially of the mental health problems and the effect that these may have on the individual, family, and friends in the short or long term.
- 54 Many secondary, independent and special schools have adopted some appropriate policies and teaching strategies since the publication of the Circular. This means that there is a significant issue in many schools for pupils in Year 11 and above, as these pupils have received little, if any, substance-misuse education. These pupils state that, since schools have implemented lessons based on the recommendations of the Circular, younger pupils are now much more informed about the dangers of substance misuse than they were.

- 55 Schools need more information to make policies, practices, materials and teaching approaches appropriate for the children, young people and families of minority ethnic groups.
- 56 Most schools have child protection and confidentiality policies which impacts upon substance-misuse disclosures. The policies make it clear that teachers cannot offer pupils unconditional confidentiality if they disclose information that is of concern. However, a minority of both primary and secondary schools do not have such a policy. This means that pupils do not know how different members of staff or visitors would react to requests for confidentiality. Should a disclosure arise in such circumstances it would be difficult for staff to ensure that they act in a consistent manner. In some instances, older pupils in secondary schools consider confidentiality policies a barrier to communication fearing that what they say might not be kept confidential. This inhibits them from speaking to members of staff.
- 57 The Circular gives appropriate guidance about managing substance-misuse related incidents. However, this information needs to be updated to take account of legislation such as the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts in relation to issues of confidentiality and child protection.
- 58 In nearly all schools, parents tend to be informed about rather than involved in planning substance-misuse education. In just over half of primary schools, parents are informed about what their children will be taught through parent governors, parent-teacher associations, the school prospectus or letters sent home.
- 59 Where there is good practice in primary schools, parents are invited to look at the materials that children will be shown and they are encouraged to discuss the content and make their views known. In some substance-misuse education programmes such as 'SAFE', Year 6 pupils from local primary schools, together with their parents, are invited to attend a meeting in the local secondary school to celebrate increased awareness of the hazards of substance misuse and successful completion of the SAFE course.
- 60 Few schools have a named governor responsible for substance-misuse education. In the majority of the schools surveyed, governors have approved the school's policy on the teaching of substance-misuse education, but have little other involvement.
- 61 In the best practice, in a few schools, personal and social education co-ordinators raise governors' awareness of substance-misuse education through presentations of resource material and lesson plans which governors can then discuss and comment upon.
- 62 Few schools involve pupils in planning what is to be taught in relation to substance-misuse education. For example, young people say that they have a lot of education about drugs, but not enough information about alcohol and its effects in the short and long term. However, where there is good practice, pupils are asked to evaluate their lessons through questionnaires or confidence boxes. Their views are taken into account when programmes are revised.

- 63 An increasing number of schools indicate that, as their school councils develop, there will be greater opportunity for pupils to have a view about what is taught in personal and social education lessons and about the topic of substance-misuse education in particular.

## Training

- 64 Schools find it increasingly difficult to release teachers for training in non-examination aspects of the curriculum such as personal and social education courses because resources tend to be prioritized for the mainstream curriculum.
- 65 In an effort to overcome the difficulties of providing PSE training and to overcome teachers' lack of confidence in teaching this aspect of the curriculum, a minority of secondary schools now ask staff to identify an area of PSE that they do feel confident to teach. By continuing to teach the same topic/s staff confidence and expertise grows. This is especially important for the teaching of life-skills such as substance-misuse education and sex and relationships education.
- 66 The police school liaison officers (SLOs) who deliver the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' provide relevant and useful in-service training for experienced teachers in schools and training for newly qualified teachers as part of their induction programme. The officers also provide training for school governors on request.
- 67 The police SLOs undergo a two-year part-time training course currently offered at Swansea Institute of Higher Education. Successful completion of the course leads to the award of the University of Wales Post Graduate Diploma in Education.
- 68 The 'Get Sorted' project produced by Rhondda Cynon Taf substance-misuse action team (SMAT) is a very good example of the efficient use of resources in training teachers to deliver substance-misuse education as part of a multi-agency approach. The case study below is an example of one of the 'Get Sorted' projects for pupils in Year 6 of primary schools. It is called the Substance Awareness for Everyone (SAFE) project. This supplements the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' but has the added advantage that teachers are more involved in the planning and active delivery of the lessons alongside police officers.

**Case study: Substance Awareness For Everyone (SAFE) project  
A partnership training project between teachers, the LEA 'Get Sorted' team and the Police SLOs**

SAFE was piloted in 24 schools in the Rhondda Fawr during 2005-2006. The 'Get Sorted' team train and team-teach with teachers and police officers developing their competence and confidence in teaching effectively about the dangers and consequences of substance misuse.

SAFE is a project that takes a multi-agency approach to substance-misuse education programme in the primary phase across RCT. It has been developed in partnership with 'Get Sorted' which is the LEA's substance-misuse education team, South Wales Police through their All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme, the schools advisory service ESIS and primary headteacher representatives from RCT. The programme introduces a number of community safety issues to pupils. Sessions promote pupil participation as well as encouraging parental participation. The delivery of these sessions is shared between teachers and police officers and supported by the 'Get Sorted' team. The programme consists of eight lessons. The first and last lessons are taught by the class teacher, supported by members of the 'Get Sorted' team. The other six lessons are taught by the police school liaison officers. Topics taught include attitudes to drugs and drug use, including illegal drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and anti-social behaviour. Workbooks have been produced for pupils and have been designed to provide opportunities for parental involvement in home tasks.

At the end of the SAFE programme, clusters of primary schools celebrate their achievement in the local comprehensive school and parents and carers are invited to attend. By involving primary pupils in the secondary school in this way the approach helps to improve pupils' progression from primary to secondary phase. The celebration also positively engages parents and carers in the programme. The authority's substance-misuse team work alongside teachers and police officers to fulfil their statutory duty of monitoring, evaluating and reporting to the SMAT on the effectiveness of taught programmes as required by Circular 17/02. Following a positive external evaluation this project has been made available to all primary schools in RCT.

## Funding

- 69 Most local education authorities find it difficult to provide training in personal and social education for teachers due to a lack of funding. Difficulties in providing training for teachers in PSE is mainly because LEAs tend to allocate their share of the money from the Better Schools Fund predominantly to basic skills support and training activities.
- 70 Most LEAs and other institutions have not explored fully the possibility of including the work of external agencies funded through the Substance-misuse Action Plan Capital Fund (SMAP) in the organisation and delivery of their substance-misuse education programmes. This fund supports work with young people who already have substance-misuse problems.
- 71 This fund could be used by LEAs to strengthen their work, for example, in providing 'harm reduction' information and other substance-misuse education strategies within pupil referral units, youth clubs and other educational settings.
- 72 The fund may also be useful to further and higher education colleges in developing their substance-misuse education programmes. The SMAP fund has risen to over £4 million per annum, and will continue to be available to service providers in Wales until 2009. Recently it funded the Powys Drug and Alcohol Centres (PDAC) Mobile Outreach Unit which provides confidential advice on substance-misuse issues to the outlying areas of Powys.
- 73 Other money for substance-misuse education initiatives, projects and resources comes from a range of sources and organisations which include:
- the Welsh Assembly Government for example paying for the All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme and the Healthy Schools Initiative;
  - the Cymorth fund;
  - the Trading Standards Division of Unitary Authorities;
  - voluntary and charitable bodies;
  - Local Health Boards;
  - lottery grants; and
  - substance-misuse action teams.
- 74 There is no national co-ordinating body to oversee the allocation of funding in order to disseminate good practice and to prevent the duplication of materials. Little or no funding is left over to the substance-misuse action teams sub-groups to develop their responsibilities in education and training and in working with families and communities. This is because SMAT resources are used almost wholly for frontline services and rehabilitation work.

## The role of external providers and multi-agency working

- 75 External providers give a real-life perspective on the hazards of substance-misuse. The case study below outlines the work of the 'All Wales Police Liaison Programme' in warning pupils about some of the dangers and consequences of substance-misuse.

### Case study: The All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme

The All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme is taught in 97% of all schools across Wales. During the 2005-2006 academic year, police school liaison officers (SLOs) delivered lessons to just under half a million children and young people in 1,609 primary and 282 secondary schools in Wales. The programme was initially developed in the Gwent Police area. In 2004-2005, it was rolled out across Wales. The programme is delivered by SLOs, working in partnership with teachers and personal and social education coordinators.

The programme has three main strands: drug and substance-misuse; social behaviour; and community and safety. Police liaison officers have a dual role. Approximately 80% of their time is devoted to delivering The All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme. The remainder of their time is devoted to supportive school policing such as helping schools to deal with substance-misuse incidents.

Because of their specialised knowledge, police liaison officers can quickly tailor the programme to reflect changing trends in substance misuse at a local and national level. The 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' is match-funded between the police and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The programme is highly regarded by most schools. The programme also tackles specific issues in the school and community such as truancy, anti-social behaviour and personal safety, which are often associated with substance-misuse. The programme is being introduced for excluded young people in pupil referral units and in young offenders institutions on a trial basis from January 2007.

- 76 In its 2006 publication 'Joining Forces – Drugs: Guidance for Police Working with Schools and Colleges'<sup>3</sup> the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland states:

*'Ideally, police involvement should be part of a wider school 'Alliance in Education' that establishes quality standards from all external contributors to a school's drug programme. The alliance may be facilitated by the local authority school drugs adviser and will aim to ensure that external contributors are consistent with the school's drug education programme and its drug policy.'*

- 77 Many primary schools are extending and consolidating their work in PSE through regular meetings with the Healthy Schools Initiative Coordinators and the police SLOs. However, few of the schools surveyed have set a target that relates to the teaching of substance-misuse education as part of this scheme. An example of the

work of the Healthy Schools Initiative is the 'ASSIST' anti-smoking project currently undergoing external evaluation.

**Case study: ASSIST – an anti-smoking programme that uses peer support**

ASSIST involves young people in schools informing others of the same age about the dangers and consequences of smoking. Through a period of training the programme aims to give peer supporters the skills and confidence to discuss the risks involved in smoking and the benefits of being smoke-free. This is done through informal conversations rather than as part of a taught lesson. Early evaluations funded by the Medical Research Council suggest that the programme is having some impact in reducing the numbers of young people who are at risk of becoming regular smokers.

- 78 The Welsh Assembly Government also has a number of other initiatives to help young people not to start smoking and to help those who are trying to stop. These initiatives include 'Smoke Signals' and 'Smoke Bugs Club' for pupils in primary schools. In secondary schools pupils can take part in the Smoke Free Class Competition and the Burning Issues programme. Ten secondary schools have also taken part in the pilot project – Tobacco Action Groups – to decide what can be done about smoking in public places. This is a good example of multi-agency work which includes pupils, teachers, health promotion officers, trading standards officers and local businesses. The website [www.healthschools.org.uk](http://www.healthschools.org.uk) includes items on tobacco issues for both primary and secondary schools.
- 79 Many primary and secondary schools take advantage of productions by Theatre in Education companies to engage pupils in considering the real hazards of substance misuse. The performances pose dilemmas for discussion. Pupils appreciate such opportunities and find them valuable in extending their knowledge and understanding. The case study below illustrates this.

**Case study: The work of Theatre in Education in substance-misuse education**

**Wings to Fly**

As part of the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' a play tackling controversial drug issues was staged by pupils at Glyncoed Comprehensive in Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent. The play 'Wings to Fly' focuses on a young girl character named Penguin, who dies after taking an ecstasy tablet at a nightclub.

Two groups of GCSE pupils staged the play throughout the week to raise awareness of the dangers of drug use, aimed at younger pupils. The play is based on the assumption that, if young people have information about the hazards of drugs and the context in which drugs are taken, they will be able to make up their own minds.

The play shows the consequences of taking drugs and the serious impact on people's lives. The young people taking part had to think about Penguin in terms of the peer pressure on her and the reasons why she took the drug. As a result of this performance, pupils were asking questions about drugs and gaining better understanding of the pressures and the consequences.

- 80 A minority of schools have drop-in sessions organized by the school or community nurse and a local doctor. Here pupils can receive advice and support on personal issues relating to the use of substances as well as sex and relationships guidance. However, not all schools are good at providing information for pupils on where they can go for support if they want to talk. One example of a support organisation is the Treatment and Education Drug Services (TEDS) based in south east Wales.
- 81 Few schools make young people aware of other ways in which they can obtain information about the effects and consequences of using substances. Some young people may be too shy or feel awkward in asking teachers or other people working in school questions about these matters. Talk to Frank [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com) is an independent government funded web site where young people can correspond anonymously on-line about a range of substances including Class A drugs in the strictest confidence.
- 82 Around a half of secondary schools now have either a full-time or part-time youth worker based in the school. Many pupils feel that these adults provide useful points of contact for advice and support, especially in relation to substance use or sex and relationships issues.
- 83 In the best practice, schools have dedicated personal and social education lesson time either on a weekly or a fortnightly basis where the framework is delivered through a modular approach. Many schools are still developing a comprehensive, multi-agency approach to substance-misuse education.
- 84 Although several different external agencies can provide support to schools in delivering aspects of substance-misuse education, there is a lack of overall co-ordination at national level. At the local level, most of the SMATs and LEAs are not sufficiently involved in monitoring or evaluating of substance-misuse education programmes. In the vast majority of cases there are few links between the different agencies to ensure that a comprehensive, co-ordinated programme of outside support is delivered. Overall, there is a lack of understanding and clarity in schools and between external agencies about the role that each should play.
- 85 Most local education authorities have produced appropriate guidelines for the use of agencies and visitors in schools. One local education authority has produced detailed guidelines outlining approaches to teaching and learning and providing checklists for teachers to develop good practice.

## Curriculum organisation and delivery

### a) substance-misuse education taught through schools' PSE programmes

- 86 Nearly all schools have a designated teacher who is responsible for co-ordinating their personal and social education programme. Many of these co-ordinators take the lead responsibility for developing overall policy. However, not all co-ordinators are involved in the teaching of the PSE lessons and substance-misuse education.
- 87 In primary schools, the liaison with and co-ordination of external services and support is often undertaken by the headteacher. In secondary schools, this role is usually carried out by PSE co-ordinators.
- 88 Many co-ordinators keep themselves up to date about substance-misuse education, through the Healthy Schools Initiative, the police SLOs and meetings with LEA personal and social education advisers.
- 89 Many LEA personal and social education advisers and all Healthy Schools Co-ordinators hold regular meetings to disseminate information. Staff who attend these find them useful as opportunities to exchange ideas. A few LEAs have provided co-ordinators in primary schools with training on the use of 'Circle Time' to help pupils to get better at talking and thinking about issues about substance misuse.
- 90 In those schools, where PSE is a well-organised and integrated part of the curriculum, pupils develop confidence in thinking, listening and talking about substance misuse. These schools use effective strategies such as establishing ground rules and distancing techniques so that pupils can talk about real personal experiences without identifying individuals or situations directly. Pupils can then reflect on these and discuss the issues more freely.
- 91 Where teaching is organised so that substance-misuse education takes place in a 'one-off' event on one day, not enough time is provided for pupils to discuss, reflect on and learn from all aspects of what they are taught.
- 92 In the best practice, the teaching of substance-misuse education is based on a combination of input from outside agencies and lessons in science, religious education and PSE. Where programmes are effective they are supported by detailed schemes of work. Teachers work with outside agencies to ensure that all aspects of the programme are delivered.
- 93 When PSE is organised so that non-specialist teachers follow up lessons taught by the external agency, the teachers involved often lack expertise and confidence. These lessons often become a 'filler' activity with no real purpose or impact. This has an adverse effect on the quality of learning. In such cases, pupils are often employed in completing worksheets, rather than discussing issues. Many schools are not aware of the failure of this approach as they do not seek feedback from pupils.

94 The effective delivery and teaching of substance-misuse education are also hampered in some schools because of limited time. As the personal and social education framework is provided to schools for guidance only, lessons following the work of outside agencies are sometimes not taught regularly. In a few secondary schools, pupils in key stage 4 miss some lessons in substance-misuse education if they choose to study exam subjects. In addition, lessons, such as those given by peripatetic music staff can also mean that some pupils are withdrawn from personal and social education lessons.

**b) substance-misuse education taught through 'harm reduction' programmes to meet the additional needs of individuals, groups of young people and families**

95 Recent research in 'Pathways to Problems'<sup>2</sup> published by the Government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has shown young people to be at the greatest risk of hazardous substance misuse in the period after leaving school during their late teens and early twenties. It states:

*'Despite the evidence that large numbers of young people only start using tobacco, alcohol and other drugs once they have left school, very little seems to be done to provide information or support in the higher and further education sectors.'*

96 Education programmes are not tailored sufficiently or co-ordinated well enough to meet the needs of this group or individuals to help them deal with their existing level of involvement with substance misuse. For example, 'harm reduction' guidance for those already drinking alcohol regularly, binge drinking and/or taking harmful substances.

97 Two authorities – Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff – have developed family intervention programmes. These multi-agency programmes such as the 'On Track' programme in the upper Rhondda Fach valley and the 'Strengthening Families' in east Cardiff are seen as a way of helping prevent some of the underlying causes of substance misuse often referred to as 'hidden harm'.

98 A survey by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs entitled 'Hidden Harm'<sup>4</sup> (ACMD 2003) revealed that for every adult who has a problematic drug use, there is a dependent child or young person under 16 i.e. 300,000 children or 2-3% of all children under 16 in the UK. Children of problematic drug users are seven times more likely than their peers to develop a drug problem themselves and are at increased risk of harm from accidental poisoning, needle injuries or neglect.

- 99 The case study below shows how one pilot initiative identifies and works children and young people exposed to family members who are engaged in risky activities such as drug use and criminal behaviour. It aims to improve their ability to avoid truancy, crime and anti-social behaviour. These are factors that are frequently associated with substance misuse.

**Case study: 'On-Track', a pilot Family Intervention Programme in the upper Rhondda Fach Valley**

The On-Track initiative brought agencies together by providing package of support services for children and families living in deprived areas such as those in the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Communities First' areas.

- On-Track showed how each of the services needed by vulnerable families such as health professionals social services staff, parenting and youth justice professionals could work together to support children and young people's development.

**Impact of On-Track**

The immediate impact of On-Track can be seen in the following outcomes:

- referrals to social services fell by from 207 in 2001 to 75 in 2003;
- school referrals to social services fell from 88 in 2002 to seven in 2004;
- no increase to CAMHS between 2000 and 2003 compared to an area increase of 18%;
- increased inclusion and engagement of pupils; and
- better pupil attainment, attendance and behaviour.

The long-term impact is harder to judge. It is hoped that such intervention programmes continue to be funded to strengthen and sustain communities by making children, young people and adults more confident and resilient through lowering truancy rates, anti-social behaviour and other crime-related activities often associated with substance misuse. The community-focused schools initiative whereby external agencies are based within one school in a local area can also help to develop this work further.

## The management, monitoring and evaluation of substance-misuse education

- 100 Since the publication of Circular 17/02, the vast majority of schools have managed their substance-misuse education through a partnership with the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' in line with the recommendations laid down.
- 101 A minority of schools that are not involved in the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' manage their own arrangements. These arrangements are often not comprehensive nor well co-ordinated. They tend to involve issues raised in school assemblies, or in discussions, in a visit by the community policeman or through a theatre presentation on an ad hoc basis.
- 102 A few primary school co-ordinators monitor and evaluate the work in substance-misuse education through observing the teaching of police SLOs, discussions with staff and scrutiny of pupils' work. This is usually effective in informing them about the gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- 103 In its 2006 publication 'Joining Forces – Drugs: Guidance for Police Working with Schools and Colleges'<sup>3</sup> the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland states:
- 'There is currently a lack of evaluation of police support for schools on drug issues with respect to measures of effectiveness such as drug-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. Most evaluations of police input are concerned with issues such as how satisfied schools are with the input, monitoring the number of lessons delivered and evaluation of the methods used.'*
- 104 In another report 'Drug Education in Schools: Identifying the Added Value of the Police Service within a Model of Good Practice'<sup>5</sup> published in 1999, there was no evidence that delivery of drug education by police officers in uniform offers any particular advantage over delivery by teachers with respect to delaying or preventing drug use by young people. There is considerable evidence that, when teachers are given appropriate training and support, teacher-led programmes can be more effective than those delivered wholly by external contributors.
- 105 In the best practice in secondary schools, co-ordinators monitor and evaluate the contributions of external contributors, review schemes of work regularly and amend these in light of feedback from pupils, staff and lesson observations. However, in many secondary schools, the monitoring and evaluation of personal and social education, and in particular substance-misuse education, are not good enough.
- 106 With the exception of a few programmes such as the 'Get Sorted' project in Rhondda Cynon Taf, most monitoring of initiatives in schools as required by Circular 17/02 is external to the programme. Most schools are not involved in this monitoring and few local education authorities monitor the effectiveness of substance-misuse education in schools.

- 107 Most substance-misuse co-ordinators are based in health or social services departments of local authorities and are usually appointed on a part-time basis to co-ordinate school-based, substance-misuse education. The exception is Rhondda Cynon Taf which has a full-time substance-misuse education coordinator and three further full-time members of the substance-misuse action team.
- 108 As a result of a lack of monitoring and evaluation there is a mistaken assumption that direct funding from the Welsh Assembly Government for the 'All Wales Police Liaison Core Programme' covers most of the substances-misuse action teams responsibilities for substance-misuse education in school. Insufficient funding prevents these teams from contributing to their own training and support programmes and to evaluate and monitor substance-misuse education in schools as required by Circular 17/02.

## Resources

- 109 Much of the material produced for substance-misuse education is good. However, schools and other educational settings often know very little about such publications or are unable to access them. Resources for teaching about the effects of smoking are more widely known, due to their availability through the 'Healthy Schools' initiative and the work of their 22 co-ordinators.
- 110 Most schools do not ensure that their practices, materials and approaches for teaching and learning about substance-misuse education is appropriate for the children, young people and families of minority ethnic groups. Few use sources such as the Drugscope and Alcohol Briefing Paper '*Developing Culturally Sensitive Alcohol Education Resources*<sup>6</sup> (2005), which examines the cultural sensitivities around alcohol education and provides an understanding of the issues to be considered when providing alcohol education or when developing resource materials for culturally diverse groups.
- 111 Some LEAs and schools are making good use of information and communications technology to keep up to date with the most recent information and resources on PSE. This is very useful for teachers and young people who wish to find out more about the hazards of substance misuse.
- 112 Swansea LEA produces a personal and social news sheet available on the internet at <http://www.swanseapse.blogspot.com>. This contains references to and reviews of recent and new publications, news, information on training courses, archives, and links to other relevant sites such as The Children's and Young People Partnerships. Recently it contained a guide for those working with young people on the links between cannabis and mental health and this is outlined in the case study below.

**Case study: Use of an LEA internet blogspot to access recent research into the link between cannabis and mental health problems**

<http://www.swanseapse.blogspot.com>

**New Survey Links Cannabis and Young Brains**

A recent survey by Young Minds has shown that more than 80% of the 727 young people in their teens and early 20s polled by Young Minds had tried cannabis – the vast majority before 18 years of age. Around half of the young people polled said that using cannabis had caused side effects such as paranoia and blackouts. Studies show that young people who use cannabis regularly or heavily are at least twice as likely to develop a psychotic mental disorder by young adulthood than those who do not smoke. There is evidence that cannabis not only worsens existing mental health problems but may trigger some conditions. The link below takes you to the leaflet: <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/cannabis/cannabisleaflet.pdf>

- 113 The website also reviews a publication titled 'Drunk in Charge of a Body'. This provides information to support young people to think carefully about the consequences of drinking alcohol and about binge drinking in particular. It reminds

young people that alcohol has a significant impact on the numbers of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

- 114 Another example of a computer-based resource dealing with the neglected aspects of the health and social impacts of substance misuse is the 'WASTED!' programme developed by the Trading Standards Service of Caerphilly County Borough. The case study below shows expands on its usefulness.

**Case study: WASTED! – An ICT based resource for teaching aspects of health and social impacts of substance misuse**

WASTED! is an ICT based programme on the health and social impacts of abuse of substances that are controlled by age-restricted products legislation. The resource explores alcohol, tobacco and volatile substance misuse.

WASTED! has been written to link into the personal and social education curriculum for key stage 4 in Wales. The resource is bilingual. The content is relevant to personal and social education co-ordinators in secondary schools, healthy schools co-ordinators, substance-misuse teams, community safety specialists, health promotion specialists, police schools liaison officers etc.

The programme is designed for use in schools and colleges at key stage 4 (14-17 years old).

WASTED! comprises two-hour lesson plans and associated supporting material including detailed teacher/trainer notes, statement cards, task sheets, homework, and information on the Trading Standards service.

Included is video footage of a mock purchase where the shopkeeper refuses a sale. The resource culminates in the WASTED! quiz allowing participants to gauge the knowledge they have gained.

The programme is produced in CD-ROM format in sufficient quantity to be sent to every secondary school in Wales plus any youth group settings supported by Local Authorities. Funding has been provided from the Welsh Assembly Government.

- 115 Overall, the absence of a national body to oversee and coordinate all aspects of substance-misuse education, including the financing of publications and initiatives at local level, has led to the ad hoc and uncoordinated development and adoption of resources.

## Appendix

### A list of references

- 1 *Tackling Substance misuse in Wales: A Partnership Approach*. National Assembly for Wales, 2000.
- 2 Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD). *Pathways to Problems. Hazardous use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs by young people in the UK and its implications for policy*. Crown Copyright September, 2006.
- 3 *Joining Forces. Drugs: Guidance for Police Working with Schools and Colleges*. Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland in association with the Home Office and Department for Education and Skills, 2006.
- 4 Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. *Hidden Harm – Responding to the needs of children of problem drug users*, 2003.
- 5 *Drug Education in Schools: Identifying the Added Value of the Police Service within a Model of Good Practice*. O'Connor, L. Evans, R. and Coggans, N. Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Roehampton Institute, London, 1999.
- 6 Drugscope/Alcohol Concern, *Developing Culturally Sensitive Alcohol Education Resources: A Briefing Paper for Drug Education Practitioners*, 2005.