



MISUSE OF SUBSTANCES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to assist workers across all agencies to identify cases where action is needed to safeguard a child or promote their welfare as a result of their alcohol and / or drug use. As such it should be read in conjunction with the Derby and Derbyshire SCB Procedures Manual (www.derbyshirescb.org.uk)

Some children and young people experiment with drugs and / or alcohol as they grow up. Most children and young people who experiment with drugs will never go beyond experimentation. Some will go on to use drugs and / or alcohol in a controlled way ('recreational use'). For some however their use of drugs and / or alcohol may become problematic and affect many aspects of their life.

Drug and / or alcohol misuse is known to contribute to a range of poor outcomes for children and young people, for example: poor health, poor mental health, educational attainment, family breakdown, economic wellbeing, offending behaviour.

Vulnerable groups

Research has shown that certain groups of children and young people have a higher incidence of drug and / or alcohol misuse than the average, and the potential to develop drug and / or alcohol problems as they grow up. These include children and young people who are:

- involved in criminal justice system
- looked after by the local authority
- leaving local authority care
- excluded from mainstream education or persistent truants
- homeless
- being sexually exploited
- affected by someone else's drug and / or alcohol problems, such as a parent or sibling.

This is not to say that all these young people will use substances or develop problems, but it makes it more important that they receive good education, information and advice about substances and substance use, as well as early support and specialist help where necessary.

DERBYSHIRE SUBSTANCE MISUSE SCREENING TOOLKIT

Derbyshire has a substance misuse screening toolkit that competent workers (such as Multi-Agency Team (MAT) workers, Youth Offending Service (YOS) Substance Misuse workers, and School Nurses) can use with children and young people. This is to help them:

- Identify and respond to a young person's alcohol and / or drug use
- Where need be, obtain specialist help for the young person.

If you are unsure who is able to provide screening for substance misuse, please contact the Specialist Children and Young People's Substance Misuse Service, Derbyshire T3 on 01773 522475 or derbyshiret3@cri.org.uk and they will be able to advise.

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A young person should definitely be referred in for screening under the following situations:

- If a young person asks for some advice or information about drugs, alcohol, glues, gases or aerosols
- If a young person tells you they are using substances
- After a substance misuse related incident occurs, for example finding a young person in possession of drugs, or a young person being intoxicated
- When substance misuse has been identified in the young person's household
- Where the practitioner's professional judgement leads them to have other concerns that the young person might be involved in substance misuse
- Where an Early Help Assessment (EHA) is being completed on a young person and concerns are raised that the young person might be using substances
- If a young person receives a fixed term or permanent exclusion from school for a drug or alcohol related incident.

The result of the screening will determine the level of support appropriate for the young person. If there is a need for targeted, non-specialist work to be done (such as information, basic harm reduction, motivational work), this will likely be undertaken by the MAT or YOS Substance Misuse workers. If more specialist work is required, the worker undertaking the screening will refer the young person into Derbyshire T3.

IDENTIFYING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Drug and / or alcohol use by a young person does not on its own constitute significant harm. However, there may be circumstances where the young person's drug and / or alcohol misuse raises safeguarding children concerns, for example:

- The identified substance use is unusual for a person of this age.
- The substance misuse is becoming increasingly chaotic or dangerous.
- The substance use / misuse is leading to crime or exploitation by others, including sexual exploitation.
- The substance use / misuse is life threatening or seriously detrimental to health.
- The young person is caring for another child while under the influence of substances
- An adult is involved with the substance use / misuse (e.g. the young person is being injected by an adult)
- The parent or sibling is using drugs and / or misusing alcohol (refer to the Guidelines for Gathering Information about the Needs of Children whose Parents have Drug/Alcohol Problems (in Section 1.6.18 - Derby and Derbyshire SCB Procedures Manual)
- During contact with the young person non-substance related safeguarding children concerns are identified

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ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY STAFF WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD (Safeguarding Concerns)

Where safeguarding concerns are identified due to substance misuse safeguarding procedures should be followed. A telephone referral should be made to Starting Point. This is Derbyshire's first point of contact for children and younger adults for advice, support and next steps; early help and intervention; MAT; referral into Children's Social Care. This is a 24 hour service all year, 01629 533190 and you will be advised to follow your referral with an electronic form made available on www.derbyshire.gov.uk/startingpoint. If the child has been the subject of an Early Help Assessment then a copy, together with a copy of the multidisciplinary plan, should be attached to the written confirmation. If the professional does not have a copy, reference to the completed EHA detailing who undertook it and their contact details, if known, should be made in the written confirmation.

In addition, a referral to the Specialist Children and Young People's Substance Misuse Service should be considered. This service is Derbyshire T3 and can be contacted on 01773 522475.

Contacting Derbyshire Police

In an emergency, ring 999 to contact Derbyshire Police.

The Child Protection Unit can be contacted on by ringing 101 to report child abuse concerns.

Children with additional needs, but not at risk of significant harm

If a professional believes a child has needs that are not being met by the services currently in place, they should contact the child's health visitor, when the child is aged 0-4yrs or the school, if they are already attending. If the child is 5+yrs, the professional should contact the school or other key professionals known to be involved with the child, and discuss the need to undertake an EHA and establish a multi-agency plan. This discussion will need to include an agreement on who is best placed to undertake the EHA.

Escalation of concerns

If the worker feels they are not happy with the response they receive from Starting Point, they should raise their concerns with their line manager in order that the concerns can be escalated to Safeguarding Service District Managers.

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USEFUL CONTACTS

Starting Point - 01629 533190

Derbyshire's contact and referral service to report concerns about a child as well as request early help, advice, support and safeguarding services for Derbyshire children and young people.

<http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/startingpoint>

Derbyshire T3 - 01773 522475

Derbyshire T3 is a specialist outreach service for young people who are using drugs or alcohol, feel they have a problem and want some support to stop using or cut down. Derbyshire T3 can also offer specialist help to reduce the risks and harm associated with alcohol or drug misuse, or to help young people avoid relapsing if they have already made changes.

derbyshiret3@cri.org.uk

Safer Derbyshire

Safer Derbyshire aim to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime in Derbyshire by providing support, advice and leadership to partners and communities. Safer Derbyshire are committed to working together to reduce crime and maintain quality of life for people who live, work and visit Derbyshire.

<https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk>

Space 4 U - 01246 277422

Space 4 U support children and young people aged 5-18 who are seriously affected by someone else's substance misuse. This could be a parent, sibling or close friend

Space.4u2@actionforchildren.org.uk

Safe and Sound - 01332 362120

Safe and Sound provides support to children and young people who are being, or are at risk of being sexually exploited, along with their families.

www.safeandsoundderby.co.uk

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