

Substance misuse policy for working with young people

The policy and procedure to be applied for staff or volunteers who misuse substances is in the staff handbook. It should be read and understood. Support is available for staff with drug or alcohol issues.

Tarner Community Project does not permit:

- drug or alcohol misuse during working hours
- being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work
- encouraging others to misuse alcohol or drugs.

This document advises staff and volunteers on how we work with young people affected by drugs and alcohol.

Young people must be able to access information and informal support. Informal education around alcohol and drugs should take place periodically at youth sessions and information should be available to young people at all youth club sessions. Young people may not recognise their substance misuse as problematic. Such individuals can become marginalised and this in turn can lead to more harm. Maintaining contact with young people is vital, however they may have little motivation and be chaotic and to engage these young people we sometimes have to accept this type of behaviour and work with the young people to gain their trust.

Tarner Community Project should provide young people with access to screening for drug and alcohol problems within the youth project. Appropriate referrals can then be made.

Training in 'Drug and Alcohol awareness is part of the Brighton and Hove youth service training which all youth workers should attend. There are several specialist services in Brighton that either support our work around this issue or accept referrals to work with young people who are affected by drug and alcohol misuse.

These services are:

- Healthy Schools team
- R U OK
- Addaction
- Patched
- Alcohol Brief intervention service
- Brighton Oasis
- Talk to Frank
- BHCC Youth service
- There are details of all these services and more on the Brighton and Hove City Council Website.

Young people's use of drugs and alcohol is a concern but it is also one of the choices young people make. It may also be something they experience through contact with members of their family or social circle. Censorious or condemnatory actions by staff are not helpful and lead to an increase in a young person's determination to misuse substances. Young people should be encouraged to be open about their needs around this issue and be able to seek non judgemental staff support if they need it.

- Drug and alcohol use or possession is not allowed during any youth sessions regardless of where they take place. Staff are allowed to confiscate drugs and alcohol. Substances should be disposed of safely or taken to the police station. When substances need to be handed into the police, the senior youth worker must first call the Brighton police station, to inform them they will be carrying the substance. Any case of this must be recorded on an incident report form and reported to the team leader.
- Staff should only take drugs or alcohol from a young person with their consent and in the presence of another member of staff or colleague. Staff are neither expected nor allowed to confiscate drugs or alcohol by force and must not attempt any

action that may bring harm to themselves or young people. If a young person refuses to voluntarily surrender drugs or alcohol and also refuses to thereafter immediately leave the premises then police support may be summoned. The young people involved should be warned that this course of action will be taken.

- If a young person appears to be at risk of harm, advice should be sought from the team leader to decide if other actions are necessary. Child protection procedures may be implemented and/ or a referral be made to an appropriate support service after screening for a substance misuse problem.
- During detached sessions staff may come into contact with young people consuming drugs and alcohol. When workers go out on detached work, the senior worker will have received training on drug and alcohol use. They should risk assess the situation before approaching young people. Support is available through the team leader who should be made aware that you are trying to engage some young people who may be misusing substances. While workers may, if they feel the situation is right and their assessment of any risk to be low, try and speak with young people who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, their first regard should be their own safety and that of their colleagues. Workers are not required by TCYPP to engage young people who are under the influence of any substance when on detached work, if they do not feel confident to do so.
- Staff should be careful not to over estimate their competence in dealing with serious substance misuse. While staff should be trained to screen and /or support young people who are misusing substances, advice, training and specialist support should be accessed through the team leader and outside agencies.

Reviewed and updated; November 2019

Date of next review; November 2020