

Think you need further help?

The Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP) is a specialist drug and alcohol service for people under 18 living in Sunderland.

YDAP provides help and support around substances to young people* and their families, as well as honest and factual information about different drugs and their effects.

We recognise that asking for help can be the hardest step, as one parent we worked with recently told us:

“When my husband and I found out our son was taking drugs we were absolutely devastated. We didn’t want to tell friends or colleagues in case they judged us. The school put us in touch with YDAP and we felt as if a huge weight had been lifted off our shoulders!”

How to contact us

Youth Drug & Alcohol Project,
176 High Street West, Sunderland SR1 1UP

Telephone: 0191 561 4000

Further information: www.togetherforchildren.org.uk

*Young people must consent to work with YDAP, but you can contact us and we will be happy to talk it through with you and arrange to visit you and your child to discuss our service.

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A parents' guide to young people and drugs/alcohol

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I am worried my child may be using drugs or is drinking

The sad truth is that you probably can't prevent your child from ever coming into contact with drugs or alcohol.

However, most young people won't try drugs, and the majority that do experiment won't continue using them. Only a small minority of young people will end up with a drug or alcohol problem.

And how you interact with your child can be crucial in influencing whether or not they make the right choices.

Talking about drugs and alcohol

Having an open, transparent and on-going conversation about drugs/alcohol is the best way to keep everyone safe.

It's likely that your child trusts you – even if they don't show it! Your opinions do matter to them.

- Let them know that you are there for them and that they can talk to you
- If they say they have used drugs/alcohol stay calm and don't panic
- Absorb what they say and hold back on judgments
- Listen with respect to what they have to say and don't lose your temper
- Take a balanced approach and bear in mind that, when it comes to drugs, information is everything
- Giving your child the facts from reliable and credible sources will make them feel empowered and informed rather than chastised

- Be sure to talk about specific drugs rather than lump them all together. Make the necessary distinctions and discuss the relative levels of harm.

Understanding why your child might be trying drugs/alcohol

There are many reasons why young people might try drugs and/or alcohol such as:

- Rebellion and the need to fit in
- Peer pressure
- Recreational use (enjoyment/relaxation)
- Experimentation/curiosity/risk-taking
- Availability (cost/value for money)
- Family, social and environmental factors

Sources of information

Talk to Frank

Find out everything you need to know about drugs, their effects and the law. Talk to Frank for facts, support and advice on drugs and alcohol (talktofrank.com).

Drinkaware

Offers independent alcohol advice, information and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking (drinkaware.co.uk).