

<i>item:</i>	7
<i>report:</i>	CYP17/07

YOUNG PEOPLE & SUBSTANCE MISUSE – THE HIGHLAND PICTURE by Suzy Calder & Pol McClelland

Summary

This report provides an update on performance on the Children's Plan targets and also details the further actions set out within the HDAAT Corporate Action Plan 2007-08.

1 Background

1.1 Substance misuse is an issue affecting all our communities in Highland. One of the many key challenges is in relation to prevention and education for young people.

1.2 The national priorities include:

- 'Reduce hazardous or at risk drinking by children and young people because the particular health and social risks'
- 'Reduce the proportion of young people reporting the use of illegal drugs.'

1.3 There are national targets to:

- 'Reduce the frequency and level of drinking from 20% of 12-15year olds to 18% between 1995 and 2006, and to 16% by 2010.'
- 'Reduce proportion of under 25's reporting use of illegal drugs in the last month and previous year substantially, and heroin use by 25% by 2006.'

1.4 In Highland we have developed the following local targets:

- 'Reduce the proportion of 13 and 15year olds self-reporting using alcohol in the last week by 2% to 35% by 2006 (Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS))'
- 'Reduce the proportion of 13 and 15year olds self-reporting using drugs in the last month by 2% to 14% by 2006 (SALSUS)

1.5 This report presents the 2006 key findings from the Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS). The findings show the prevalence of smoking, drinking and drug use among 13 and 15 year olds attending both state and independent schools in Highland. The report also looks into the attitudes and behaviour of pupils in relation to substance use and compares changes between 2006 and 2002 when the first local survey report was compiled.

- 1.6 29 schools in Highland were asked to take part in the SALSUS survey. 76% agreed and returned the questionnaires. 1366 pupils in Highland took part, which is a pupil response of 91%. Nationally, 69% of all schools took part and out of these schools, 82% of pupils returned questionnaires.

2 Highland Drug & Alcohol Action Team

- 2.1 The Highland Drug & Alcohol Action Team (HDAAT) is a multi-agency partnership, which includes Health, Social Work, Police, Education, Scottish Prison Service and Procurator Fiscal. It is chaired by Dr David Alston, Highland Councillor, who joined HDAAT in October 06.
- 2.2 HDAAT is one of 22 such teams around Scotland which have responsibility for developing and implementing drug and alcohol strategies for their region. HDAAT works closely with communities, supported by local Drug & Alcohol Forums.
- 2.3 The support team are based in John Dewar Building, Inverness, and consists of the Substance Misuse Strategy & Implementation Manager, three substance misuse development officers one of whom focuses on Performance Management (recent appointment) and administrative support. Each agency links with this support team through lead officers.

3 Substance use

- 3.1 Levels of alcohol and drug misuse by our young people are a source of serious concern to our communities. This is recognised by the partner agencies in the Highland Drug & Alcohol Action Team and has resulted in a concerted approach by professionals since 2002, to address the rising levels of our young people who are misusing alcohol or drugs with all the inherent problems this causes to both young people, their families and local communities.

4 Prevalence of alcohol use (SALSUS)

- 4.1 All pupils were asked if they had ever had a 'proper alcoholic drink, a whole drink, not just a sip', so that those who drunk alcohol could be directed to more detailed questions.
- In Highland, 61% of 13year olds and 88% of 15year olds reported that they had had an alcoholic drink.
 - In the last week, 38% of 15year olds and 17% of 13year olds had drunk alcohol.

- There was no significant difference in the proportion of boys and girls in Highland who had had an alcoholic drink in the last week (28% - boys: 28% - girls).
- Pupils aged 13 who drank in the last 7 days in Highland had on average consumed 10units of alcohol.
- Pupils aged 15 who drank in the last 7 days in Highland had on average consumed 14units of alcohol.
- Boys had consumed 13units and girls had consumed 12units.

5 Local Target

- 5.1 Reduce the proportion of 13 and 15 year olds self-reporting using alcohol in the last week by 2% to 35% by 2006 (SALSUS)

Pupils reported having a drink in the past week

	13years	15years	boys	girls
Highland 2006	17%	38%	28%	28%
Highland 2002	24%	49%	38%	36%

Been really drunk

	13years	15years	boys	girls	Total
<u>4 – 10 times</u>					
Highland 2006	10%	16%	14%	13%	13%
Highland 2002	9%	16%	10%	16%	13%
<u>More than 10 times</u>					
Highland 2006	8%	17%	13%	14%	14%
Highland 2002	9%	25%	21%	15%	18%

- 5.2 It is pleasing to report that we have successfully surpassed this target of 35% with a reduction in reported alcohol usage to 28% of young people in the last week. This is considered a very positive reflection of the more coordinated approach by all agencies working with young people and most importantly more young people themselves making positive decisions about healthier lifestyle choices.
- 5.3 However for a significant number of young people this remains a serious problem with the Youth Action Teams across Highland presently working with over 170 young people who are experiencing significant difficulties over their alcohol misuse, providing support, guidance and intensive intervention programmes.

6 Prevalence of drug use

- 6.1 All pupils were given a list of drugs and asked whether they had ever been offered any of them.

- In Highland, 21% of 13year olds and 45% of 15year olds had been offered drugs.
- There was no significant difference in the proportion of boys and girls in Highland who had been offered drugs (34% - boys : 33% - girls)
- In Highland 0% of 13year olds and 3% of 15year olds reported that they usually took drugs at least once a week.
- The most commonly used drug reported by 13 and 15year olds is Cannabis.

7 Local Target

- 7.1 Reduce the proportion of 13 and 15 year olds self-reporting using drugs in the last month by 2% to 14% by 2006 (SALSUS)

Pupils ever offered drugs

	13years	15years	boys	girls
Highland 2006	21%	45%	34%	33%
Highland 2002	34%	70%	53%	52%

Pupils reporting using drugs in last month

	13years	15years	boys	girls
Highland 2006	3%	9%	6%	6%
Highland 2002	8%	24%	18%	14%

Pupils reported using drugs at least once a week

	13years	15years	boys	girls
Highland 2006	0%	3%	2%	1%
Highland 2002	3%	6%	5%	4%

- 7.2 Within Highland there has also been very positive progress in this area with a significant reduction to 6% of 13 & 15year olds using drugs in the last month in 2006 according to this survey.
- 7.3 There also has been a reported reduction in the number of young people being offered drugs, with 21% of 13 year olds and 45% of 15year olds being offered drugs in 2006 compared to 34% and 70% in 2002.
- 7.4 This is welcome news, but as with the levels of alcohol misuse there can be no room for complacency as it is recognised that the levels of alcohol and drug misuse by our young people remains too high.

8 Drug Misuse Statistics Scotland 2006

- 8.1 A further source of information on levels of drug misuse is The Scottish Drugs Misuse Database (SDMD) which offers a profile of drug misusers based on reports at the time of individuals attending services for their drug problems. The information is collected by services on the SMR25 form.
- 8.2 In 2006, in Highland there were a total of 534 'new individual patients / clients' reported, of which 22 were under the age of 15years.
- 8.3 Nationally, there were 3% of under 15years reporting Heroin use, 2% Dihydrocodeine, 9% Diazepam, 11% amphetamines, 13% ecstasy, 21% solvents 91% cannabis, 65% also reported alcohol use. Unfortunately this data does not offer us a local breakdown of these figures.
- 8.4 The Youth Action Teams in Highland are presently working with over 100 young people who are experiencing significant problems with drug misuse, providing support and guidance to reduce their levels of drug use. Cannabis remains the most commonly used drug by young people in Highland which is also reflected in the pattern of use nationally.

9 Actions

- 9.1 A number of initiatives are being implemented through the Drug and Alcohol Action Plan to build on the progress so far achieved with young people in schools and in the community. The aim is to promote healthier lifestyles for young people, and provide them with the appropriate information to allow them to make more informed decisions on drug and alcohol use. These actions are in addition to the more targeted services such as Youth Action Teams and Blast who are working with young people where there is an identified problem with drug and alcohol misuse, requiring more specialised support
- In 2006-07, a consultation was carried out with key stakeholders and young people to review prevention and education work in Highland. The recommendations from this will be included in the Highland Substance Misuse Strategy.
 - Spot checks were also conducted as part of the 'Safer Scotland' campaign, targeting off sales in relation to young people and offences in general.
 - Awareness amongst young people was raised as a consequence of the 'Safe Highlander' events, held across Highland. These targeted the P7 age group, and around 2500 pupils attended.
 - 'Choices for Life' events also targeting P7 pupils. These provided information on drugs, alcohol, smoking, peer pressure, and bullying delivered to 1700 children through a multimedia show.

- The 'NCH Mentoring' project, focused on 14-18year olds, has attracted additional funding from Lloyds TSB.

9.2 In 2007-08, the following actions have been agreed:

- Pilot a comprehensive and supported Lifestyle Survey in schools with P7, S2 and S4 groups including issues relating to substance misuse.
- Resources are to be identified to continue support of the 'Choices for Life' event, ensuring all P7 pupils have the opportunity to attend, additional events to be run under this banner to support the early secondary years.
- The Youth Action Teams will continue to target those young people who require more intensive support programmes to address their substance misuse.
- Youth Action Teams are to roll out group work initiatives with young people over the next 2 years to all teams in Highland.

9.3 Prevention and education is a key factor in addressing the issues affecting young people. This will be reflected in the Strategy, however it's worth noting the need to develop key support mechanisms as part of the NEET strategy and work is ongoing with agencies such as NCH Mentoring to assist young people to access further education, training and employment opportunities.

Recommendation

The Joint Committee is asked to consider the progress that has been made in addressing the issues of Drug and Alcohol misuse by young people, and to endorse the steps being taken to build on this progress to create a healthier Highland for our young people and their communities.

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