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The Alcohol Education Trust : alcohol programme for 11- 18 year olds, parents and teachers

The Alcohol Education Trust, a charity established in 2010, was created once it was clear that PSHE, and therefore alcohol education, was not going to be a curriculum subject when dropped from The Education Bill in 2009. The Trust's vision is that young people should enter adulthood having a responsible understanding of alcohol. We are working to achieve this by equipping young people with the knowledge and skills they need to make sensible and informed choices around alcohol. Our goals are to raise the age of onset for youth drinking, if they choose to drink at all, to reduce drinking to drunkenness and its associated harms and hence, to reduce the amount of alcohol related illnesses and harm in adulthood.

The mission of the Alcohol Education Trust (AET) is to ensure that teachers, parents and secondary school pupils are supported directly via schools with evaluated alcohol education resources. Our interactive programme has tailored approaches for different age groups, abilities, experience and learning needs. The AET ensures it remains at the forefront of effectiveness through the continued development of resources, digital approaches and training as well as research and advocacy. Our core values are:

- **Research-led** – We are an organisation that places evidence and research at the heart of our activities. All of our work is based upon strong evidence and our “talkaboutalcohol” programme has been evaluated among 4,000 pupils in 30 schools across England over 2 years.
- **Open and positive** – Many preventative approaches focus on negative behaviour and scare tactics. Many programmes are top-down and do not assess knowledge,

perceptions or attitudes before teaching. In our programme, bottom-up participation encourages young people to share their experiences, worries and attitudes to alcohol resulting in mature dialogue. A social norms approach also highlights that among young people, trends and behaviours for all risk taking including alcohol consumption are improving. By intervening at the tipping point before alcohol consumption begins, pupils are equipped with resilience skills, can develop strategies to avoid and manage risky situations and develop behaviour that encourages positive decisions and choices, for them and their community.

- **Holistic** – Through its three pillars (Training and equipping teachers effectively in alcohol education; Ensuring parents are engaged via schools to be good role models and to set boundaries; and Engaging pupils with role play, film clips, information and interactive resources) the AET integrates alcohol education with development around life skills and resilience. We look to the wider community and ways we can support young people's transition into adulthood. We work with schools, local authorities, youth groups, foster agencies, police and fire school support officers and parents to provide holistic support to young people throughout society, bringing people together across different communities and settings.
- **Innovative** – The AET recognises it must always move forward in order to improve and grow. This includes exploring the latest technology, learning from new evidence and assessing feedback, in order to improve

our outreach to hard to reach groups, different cultures and abilities.

Why alcohol?

The earlier children (under 15) start drinking regularly, the less likely they are to do well at school. If they drink weekly, their GCSE grade predictions drop by 20 points, that's a fall from an A* to a C. School attendance also drops.

Underage drinkers, who consume alcohol regularly, are also more likely to smoke and engage in other risky behaviours such as drug taking and unprotected sex. They are more likely to suffer unintentional injuries, accidents, assault and theft after drinking. So there is every incentive to delay the onset of drinking among our young people.

Background of The Alcohol Education Trust

The Alcohol Education Trust has a very specific remit – the provision of alcohol education in different ways, to pupils age 11 – 18 and their parents and to provide engaging and evidence based resources and lesson plans for teachers. There are five eminent teacher trustees and an extensive review network of over 40 PSHE specialists, Head Teachers, medics, nurses, healthy school coordinators, Governors and parents. There are approximately 3.6 million students in the AET target audience and 3,000 schools have been identified as suitable recipients of the AET programme.

The aims of the Alcohol Education Trust are:

- to increase young people's knowledge, awareness and understanding of alcohol, its effects on the immature body and the social and physical risks associated with its misuse;
- to raise awareness of the laws restricting the consumption of alcohol, and why these exist;
- to promote dialogue about alcohol between teenagers and their parents and teachers;
- to build young people's resilience and life skills, to understand personal responsibility, planning ahead and facilitating informed choices;
- to raise the age of onset of drinking (first whole drink) from the current age 13.5 to at

least the CMO guidance of age 15 in a supervised environment;

- to increase the understanding of units, guidelines and responsible drinking;
- to reduce the incidence of 'binge drinking' and alcohol related harm;
- to ensure parents understand the law, the importance of setting boundaries, being good role models, knowing where their children are and who they are with.

The AET takes a general population approach (i.e. a class wide approach) and is developing visual rich resources for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and has evidence that its programme works equally well for minority ethnic students.

The screenshot shows the Alcohol Education Trust website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo, social media icons for Facebook and Twitter, the website URL talkaboutalcohol.com, and a 'Donate online' button. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'Our Mission' section with a photo of two women talking. The 'The Programme' section describes the school-based approach. The 'Impact' section features a bar chart showing that 85% of pupils took up drinking over the 18 months from year 8 to the end of year 10 compared to 20% following other programmes. There are also sections for 'Teachers Area' and 'Parents Area' with links to newsletters.

Activities – Pupils are supported with www.talkaboutalcohol.com a five hundred page web resource of interactive games, quizzes and activities for 11 – 16 year olds. 4 BAFTA-winning films assist learning and there is an information leaflet for older teenagers.

There is a stand alone website for teachers www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/teacher-area/ which details resources by subject and year group, such as alcohol and its effects (social and physical) and staying safe. The site has short film clips as 'conversation starters, facts and figures, worksheets and games. Teachers are supported with bi-termly newsletters, email and phone support and, if requested, in house training.



There is a detailed 100 page teacher workbook of lesson plans, implementation advice, pictorial rich sheets for less able students all indexed by subject and year group available free of charge for schools. You can download a copy here: <http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/teacher-area/download-teacher-workbook/>

The Evidence base shows parents need to be engaged, if alcohol education is to be effective. Hence parents are encouraged to be good role models regarding alcohol, to set boundaries and engage their children in a knowledgeable way. The AET :

- maintains a dedicated parent website - www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/parent-area/
- produces a bi-termly newsletter and supports direct presentations in schools to parents.

Contact : kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org

How do we know it works?

The AET has supported 1400 secondary schools across the UK directly since 2010, as well 700 organisations such as youth clubs, school nurses, fire and police school officers, health and wellbeing boards, healthy school teams, local government providers and sports clubs who deliver alcohol education . Teacher feedback and repeated use assures us that the programme is liked by pupils and teachers, is easy to implement and adapt to differing time frame, settings, abilities, facilities and cultures. Delivery of a programme does not ensure it is effective in meeting its objectives; therefore, the AET talkaboutalcohol programme has been independently evaluated by The National Foundation for Education Research (NFER).

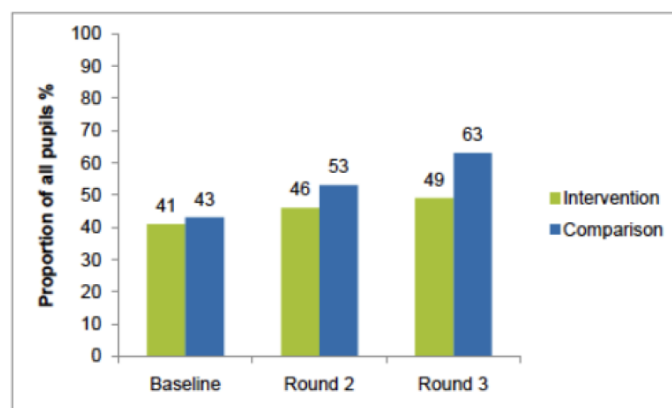
Evaluation

A longitudinal matched evaluation took place September 2011 - July 2013 to test the impact of the talk about alcohol programme on the key objectives , namely to raise the age of onset of whole alcoholic drink, to improve knowledge and reduce binge drinking and drunkenness. The National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) led the evaluation involving 4,000 pupils in 15 intervention schools and 15 control schools between 2011 - 13. Teachers in the intervention schools delivered 4 lessons in Year 8 covering assessing knowledge, units and

guidelines and alcohol and its effects social and physical. In Year 9, a further two lessons were delivered on alcohol and the law and staying safe. In addition pupils spent at least an hour on activities on www.talkaboutalcohol.com.

Pupils were assessed at three time points, before the intervention, at the end of Year 8 and one year later and the end of Year 9 [Figure 1 below]. Teachers were supported by email and by phone, but did not receive face to face training.

Figure 1: % responding Have you ever had a whole alcoholic drink? Yes



The findings showed a statistical improvement in knowledge in the intervention schools versus the comparison [control] schools and a significant rise in engagement with PSHE lessons as a source of useful information.

Most importantly, the evaluation shows a statistically significant delay in the onset of drinking in the intervention group, 8% increase [41%-49%], in take up of first whole alcohol drink over 18 months versus the comparison group's 20% increase [43%-63%] take up.

The intervention programme was shown to be even more effective for minority ethnic pupils. Finally, the intervention schools showed less binge drinking and drunkenness although not enough pupils were engaging in these behaviours to be able to make statistically significant associations, hence the cohort is being evaluated further in 2015 now that more pupils (at age 15/16) may be drinking more riskily.

You can read the complete evaluation via : www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/AETE01/AETE01.pdf
... and ... www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14635240.2014.915759

In addition, the AET “talkaboutalcohol” programme has been assessed by the PSHE Association and is PSHE Association Quality Assured.



Furthermore, external evaluations by The Centre for Analysis for Youth Transitions [appointed by the Department for Education] awarded the talk about alcohol programme 3/3 for effectiveness and 5/6 for the quality of the evaluation:

<http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/6904>

“talkaboutalcohol” is also selected by The Early Intervention Foundation in the 50 best early intervention programmes across all disciplines 2014. You can download the ebook here: <http://guidebook.eif.org.uk/>

Partnerships and Testimonials

The Alcohol Education Trust “talkaboutalcohol” programme is used across Britain. Delivery partners include, local authorities, PSHE leads, groups of academies, Public Health Directorates, Health and Wellbeing boards, commissioned service providers, Healthy school partnerships, youth groups, charities, police forces, community interest companies and school nurses. Some of the endorsements of our programme can be found here:

<http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/Pages/testimonials.html>

What else we need to achieve?

OFSTED found in 2013 that alcohol education was still ‘not yet good enough’ in 40% of secondary schools, this is an improvement of 10% since it’s last assessment, but there is still considerable work to be done in schools where there is little or no PSHE provision. The AET wishes to reach the balance of estimated 1,500 schools across the UK identified as suitable for the programme. The AET wants to ensure that the 20% of students with English as a second

language and 10% SEND pupils have access to appropriate visual rich alcohol education and this is a priority for 2015. Please do contact us if you would like to consider a joint bid for funding or to help us with this project.

The AET aims to extend its network of specialist Alcohol Education coordinators based regionally across the UK to deliver parent seminars, teacher CPD and liaise with schools in areas where alcohol related harms for U18 are highest. We have dedicated coordinators in the North East and North West at present.

The AET is working to ensure its digital and on line games and interactive teaching resources on the www.talkaboutalcohol.com website are updated and are useable on smart phones and tablets. The 500-page website is increasingly looking dated and this is a large and complex project that will require significant funding.

The AET hopes that newly-qualified teachers are provided with PSHE and alcohol education as part of ITE. The first steps are in place with Public Health England hosting a joint seminar with the PSHE Association for ITE providers. In our survey of ITE providers, under 20% provided any PSHE training for their students.

Finally, the AET wishes to ensure that its key resources of a 100-page teacher workbook, parent and student information leaflets and online offerings remain free of charge for schools. If you would like to commission the AET to work with schools in your area, each school costs an average of £147.50 to support with a workbook and enough information leaflets for one year group per annum. Train the trainer and familiarisation sessions cost an average of £500 to facilitate. The programme is sustainable in that confident teachers who know their pupils well, can then deliver effective alcohol education year on year ensuring talk about alcohol is cost effective and strategies that reduce all risk taking become embedded in teaching methods used in PSHE.

If you would like to learn more, get involved with the Trust and its work - or as a school, receive our workbook free of charge, book a teacher training or parent workshop, then please email kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org or phone 01300 320869. Do follow us on twitter via @talkalcohol or Facebook via <https://www.facebook.com/talkaboutalcohol>