

Substance Misuse Awareness Evening

On Thursday 25 April a substance misuse awareness evening was held at Castle Douglas High school. DC Anna Parker, Substance Misuse Coordinator for the Police, PC Nicola McFadzedan, Youth Engagement officer, Stewartry High schools, Mrs Cathro, Castle Douglas High school and Paul Chisholm, Youth Information worker were present.

The evening was to raise awareness of substances which young people may be exposed to, how young people are sourcing substances, peer pressure and strategies to deal with it and signs that a young person may have taken a substance. The evening was also to reinforce the messages pupils are getting through PSE subjects at the school, through special events such as 'Do The Right Thing' and through the information given by Youth Information Workers and other professionals working with young people in and out of the school environment.

I would like to stress that in the Stewartry the majority of Young people do not take drugs. But there has been a small rise in the number of incidents due to the availability of these substances mainly through friends, the dark web and social media.

It is important to talk to our young people about the use of illegal substances and about the possible consequences and huge risks from becoming involved.

Risks such as:

- Criminal convictions
- Fines and prison
- Travel (many countries will not let people in with drugs convictions, however, large or small)
- Reputation in community
- Cost/petty crime
- Relationships with family and friends are affected
- Some Mental health conditions are linked to substance misuse
- Strain on vital organs, increased risk of heart attack and in some cases death.

Cannabis, Ecstasy, Cocaine and new psychoactive substances were spoken about in relation to what they are, what they look like, the possible effects on the body and the risks involved.

More information can be obtained on these substances through websites like Choices for life and Talk to Frank.

Handouts were available on peer pressure and strategies to deal with it and also how parents/carers can deal with a young person in their care who they suspect is abusing substances.

(These hand outs are available on school website)

Laws were also discussed with regards to drugs, tobacco and alcohol and the powers of search which are available to the Police with regards to these three substances.

Tobacco and alcohol can often be the start of a young person taking risks. When a young person is under the influence of alcohol their poor judgements can lead to risk taking behaviour such as taking illegal substances and becoming involved in criminal behaviour. Cannabis is known as a gateway drug and unfortunately leads to other stronger substances.

Drug misuse in our society is an issue which everyone has a responsibility for helping to combat, one drug related incident or death is one too many.

We need your help to identify any issues/concerns and work together to resolve.

Speak to children and young people about drugs and continue drugs education messages.

Interact with them about who they are spending time with and where they are hanging out.

Advise young people to confide in an adult they trust if they have any concerns

Tell organisations any intelligence that you hear.

Help is available Adult Substance Services

NHS – 10387 244 555

Alcohol and Drug support South West Scotland – 01387 259999

Addaction – 01387 263 208

Young People Substance Service

ISSU 18 01387 244 662

Police Scotland 101

Thank you to all those parents and carers who attended and for those who didn't make it please do not hesitate to contact PC McFadzean/DC Parker on 101 or your child's pupil support teacher if you need any help or advice. If we can't help we will try to find out the information or sign post you to someone who can.

If you attended this evening, it would be really helpful if you could email the school with any feedback you have.

Thank you

Nicola McFadzean

Susan Cathro