

Substance use awareness event planning guide

You're thinking about hosting an event about substance use, but what could you include? The following suggestions might be helpful.

Consider your audience

Is this just for parents/carers or for parents/carers and pupils?

To encourage attendance, this event could be 'piggy backed' onto another event, such as a parents evening, or careers/subject choices evening.

Refreshments are always welcome. Could you provide tea / coffee / non-alcoholic drinks such as juice or mocktails.

Consider the content

There are topics you may want to consider, however the way in which parents/carers communicated with their children is really important.

Suggested topics to include:

- How to talk to children and young people about drugs (including tobacco and alcohol)
- How to start a conversation about drug use (including tobacco and alcohol)
- Diversionary activities – e.g. sport, volunteering, youth groups etc.
- Support for families (children and adults) affected by drug/alcohol use
- Modelling behaviour – what a child sees their parents/carers/family members or older peers doing, they will copy. This applies equally to smoking, drinking etc.
- Reasons why young people experiment
- Harm reduction – based on the knowledge that young people will try substances (including smoking / alcohol), harm reduction information how to do this in a less harmful way
- Caffeine
- Tobacco, smoking and second hand smoke
- Alcohol, units and impact, alternative drinks to alcohol
- Prescribed and illicit drugs
- New psychoactive substances
- Personal safety
- Sexual health
- Risky behaviours

- Legal information, local policy on dealing with young people using alcohol/drugs.
- The school policy? What does this look like and could it be improved?

Consider the set up

An information stand highlighting the H-SAT and its content.

A market place format, with various participants having tables/displays in a large communal area, can be informative.

For evenings where parents are seated in an audience listening to other information, presentations by a few local organisations could work well. Mixing topics together might ensure the substances messages are heard as well as other information.

If organisations are unable to travel to you, ask them for their poster and other information, e.g. web address etc, on display boards within the venue.

What else will help?

Browse the [H-SAT](#) for resources and ideas.

Could this event support an application to the [Substance Aware School Award](#)?