



## Hertfordshire Drug Education – Key Principles

- Drug education should enable young people to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding about drugs and appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, relating this to their own and others' actions.
- Given that drug problems rarely occur in isolation, drug education programmes, resources and support services need to consider a holistic approach rather than focus solely on drugs.
- When planning drug education programmes, organisations need to establish and take account of young peoples existing knowledge, beliefs, experiences, understanding, level of maturity, religion and cultural backgrounds.
- Drug education programmes aimed at young people should consider the importance of the transition from primary to secondary schools. Drug education in Years 7 and 8 should reinforce and build upon drug education in primary schools.
- Staff working with young people must have general drug awareness and a good understanding of their organisations drug and other related policies. This understanding should include managing drug incidents, local and national support services and resources, identifying and responding to a young persons needs.
- Organisations (including schools, further educational settings) working with young people should ensure that young people have access to up-to-date information on sources of help, which is prominently displayed.
- Drug education programmes should include details of services and helplines, explain how they work and develop young peoples confidence in using them.
- Drug education programmes should be evaluated to find out how effective the teaching activities and materials have been in achieving the aims of the programme and meeting the needs of the target audience.
- Drug policies need to be reviewed and updated to ensure that its content is current and that it is effective in practice. A policy should be clear about the definition of a drug incident and have agreed responses and procedures for managing drug incidents. These should be understood by all including staff, parents, young people, youth workers etc.
- After a careful investigation to judge the nature and seriousness of a drug related incident, there should be a range of responses in line with local protocols. Sources of help (e.g. specialist drug agencies, helplines, websites or family support groups) for both young people and parents/carers should be made available from the onset.
- External contributors should not be used as substitute teachers, nor should they constitute the entirety of a drug education programme. When working directly with young people they should add a dimension to the drug education programme that the teacher/youth worker etc alone cannot deliver.