



CPFT – Child & Adolescent
Substance Use Service (CASUS)

CASUS Autumn Newsletter 2023



Hello again. We hope you have all had a wonderful summer break.

Cambridgeshire Child and Adolescent Substance Use Service (CASUS) distribute school newsletters on a quarterly basis to update you on current trends and how we can help you to support your students regarding the use of drugs and alcohol.

- We do not operate a waiting list and do not have lower thresholds.
- CASUS provides support to young people (up to 18 years) who are getting into difficulties around substances. We are able to work with 18–21-year-olds (depending on complexity and need) and these will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- We welcome referrals and are happy to announce that we are seeing an increase in school referrals following a reduction over the last two years which is in line with a concerning national trend.
- Please feel free to call us for “*what if*” conversations if you have any reason to suspect use of drugs or alcohol, this may be the result of avoidant behaviour, a change in typical behaviour, language that suggests familiarity with substances, or direct disclosures.
- We have Duty Workers available Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm that can answer any questions or concerns you may have about a young person around drugs/and or alcohol.
- We do not need to go through a full assessment to meet a young person and if making a referral might feel too daunting to them, we can meet to informally discuss what we can offer, this can be a very effective ice breaker.

How we work with young people:

- We typically work with young people on a weekly or fortnightly basis, either face to face (in school, one of our offices, or at home) via telephone or video calls, and the length of the treatment they receive may be as short as one or two sessions or in some cases several years.
- We complete a comprehensive assessment, agree a care plan and our work is informed by these goals.

- We do not tell young people to stop using substances, rather we give them the information they need to make informed decisions.

CASUS COSUP (Child of Substance Using Parent) Pathway:

- CASUS has a wonderful new pathway which we are excited to share with you. The COSUP (Children of Substance Using Parents) Pathway offers support, information, advice, and specialized interventions to Cambridgeshire young people under the age of 18 who are impacted by a family member's substance use. Every situation is unique and therefore the COSUP support will be tailored to an individual's needs. Whilst there is no minimum age limit for COSUP support, younger children (primary school) will be discussed on a case-by-case basis and the COSUP support provided may be in the form of structured consultancy. Consent **MUST** be gained from the young person (if over 13) or parent/legal guardian (if under 13) for the COSUP referral to be accepted and support to be offered. Similar to our other pathways within CASUS, we can offer tailored support and education sessions to schools and professionals regarding COSUP specific advice/education. CASUS will accept COSUP referrals from young people themselves, parents, guardians, schools, family members, or any other person who has concerns for that young person being impacted by family substance use. Our COSUP referral form can be found alongside the other CASUS referral forms on the CPFT website under CASUS.

What we can offer schools:

- **PSHE:** we are here to support PSHE delivery, this is dependent on team capacity as our individual work with young people takes priority, but we are happy to discuss your needs, and have received positive feedback from schools we have worked with in the past. There will be a charge for this service from 2024 (available on request).
- **Structured Consultancy:** we recognise that for some young people additional professionals in their lives can be daunting, so we can guide existing workers to deliver substance use interventions by providing resources and supervision.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** if you have young people who you do not think need a referral for one-to-one work but might benefit from some education or early intervention we can come and deliver a session to a small group.

Warning- Drug Alerts:

Nitrous Oxide (Nos) Concerns, MDMA/Ecstasy and edibles containing THC/cannabis.

- Laughing gas (Nos) to become an illegal class C substance in the UK by the end of 2023. People caught producing or selling nitrous oxide could face 14 years in prison under new rules.
- The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) would like to alert commissioners, police forces and public health, and – through them – their local partners, to increasing reports of harm from nitrous oxide misuse. Nitrous oxide is an odourless and colourless gas inhaled from balloons, or – far more dangerously – directly from canisters, for its psychoactive effects. There are increasing hospital reports of young people with serious nerve damage. This is probably associated with the increasing availability of larger canisters

of gas and people using more of it, perhaps without really keeping track of just how much more they are using. Nitrous oxide inactivates vitamin B12 leading to serious and sometimes permanent nerve damage.

- We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that our young people are frequently buying substances that when tested turn out to not be what they think they are buying and contain other substances, this can be extremely dangerous and associated with overdose.
- There continues to be concerns around edibles containing THC/Cannabis disguised as sweets. The strength of these edibles cannot be known. Taking edibles may also increase the risk of taking something more dangerous than cannabis. There are increasing reports of young people taking what they think are cannabis edibles and getting seriously ill from them.

How to refer to CASUS:

Referrals for one-to-one work can be made by using the form found at <https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/gpandprimarycare>, and clicking on the CAMHs tab. We will allocate within one week and can usually arrange an initial appointment within four weeks. Please return referrals to our CASUS email address below.

CASUS contact details.

Tel: 01480 445316

Email: casus@cpft.nhs.uk

CASUS Staff Team

Dr Dickon Bevington – Child & Adolescent Consultant Psychiatrist (1 day a week only)
Bernie Constable – Team Manager/EMDR therapist
Laura Hutson – Senior Substance Misuse Practitioner
Michael Chouler – Senior Substance Misuse Practitioner
Sam Davies – Senior Substance Misuse Nurse
Veronica Jacquard- Senior Substance Misuse Nurse
Jacqueline Harmitt – Substance Misuse Practitioner
Jacqui Akasha – Substance Misuse Practitioner
Kelly French – Substance Misuse Practitioner
Lisa Chapman – CASUS Administrator
Ivy Constable – Therapy Dog
Daphne Davies- Trainee Therapy Dog

