

SORTED

Drug and Alcohol Service

SORTED is Northumberland's substance misuse service for young people.



April 2026

Message from Craig Newbigin-Team Manager

Over recent months, we have continued to see changes in patterns of substance use. In particular, there has been an increase in presentations linked to ketamine, alongside ongoing concerns around alcohol use as we approach the warmer months.

We are also seeing a growing number of referrals for vaping and smoking support, reflecting the challenges many schools are currently managing day to day.

In this edition, we've included further insight into these emerging trends, alongside updates from the service, training opportunities, and practical information to support young people to stay safe.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with you throughout the year ahead.

Highlights & Updates

Some great news over the last couple of months, we have had the funding for the Over 18 workers post and the Stop Smoking/ Vaping post continued.

Ellie and Miriam are doing amazing work to support change across the young people they work with and this has enabled the service to continue to grow.

Trends -Alcohol

Alcohol referrals into Sorted are second after cannabis. With the lighter nights beginning we see an increase in binge drinking across Northumberland.

One of the main concerns with alcohol use is how it changes peoples decision making and risk taking behaviours. Along with that, is the fact that excessive alcohol use can increase the risk of physical harm which can lead to hospitalisation and for some can be fatal.

We can't prevent young people from drinking however giving advice around safer ways to drink such as choosing lower strength drinks, slowing down the pace of drinking, eating before hand and being with people who will look after each other, may reduce the harms that could be experienced.

For further information <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice-and-support/underage-drinking/>

Upcoming Training

Our staff training and group work offer continues to be popular across a lot of schools.

We can be flexible in what this can look like so if you have any queries or are interested how we could support your school, please don't hesitate to contact Helena Swarbrook (email below)

Spotlight: First Aid

Young people often tell us they wouldn't know what to do if a friend became unwell after drinking alcohol or using drugs.

It's important for students to know that doing something is always better than doing nothing or waiting to see if things improve.

If someone is unconscious, not responding, or having seizures, emergency medical help should be called straight away. We should also encourage young people to think about who they spend time with – if they don't feel confident that their friends would get help for them in an emergency, it may not be safe to use substances with those people.

Resources & Support

**Scan to make a
referral**



**Please remember to gain
consent from the young
person, parental consent
is not essential**

**Contact us: sorted@northumberland.gov.uk
01670 536 400**

Resources:

Sorted padlet:

<https://padlet.com/sorted1/sorted-drug-resources-g6yoi1jvgnee31ek>

Email Helena.swarbrook@northumberland.gov.uk for Substance Awareness Training or group work