

Drugs, Alcohol & Young People Agenda

Learning Objectives, Agenda & Capability Framework Alignment

A 3 hour online course helping workers to recognise drug and alcohol issues among young people, respond appropriately and know when to refer to specialist help — covering NPS, cannabis, vaping, prescription medication, county lines and adolescent trauma

Trainer: Tony D'Agostino

Company: TD Consultancy

Delivery: Online — 3 hours

Edition: 2026

Aims & Objectives of the Course

- Describe the nature and extent of substance use amongst young people in the UK
- Provide substance-related advice and information to young people in an age-appropriate way
- Clarify their role in supporting a young person experiencing substance misuse
- Understand the effects of drugs and alcohol on health, development and psychiatric wellbeing in young people
- Understand the relationship between adolescent trauma and substance use
- Identify signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use in young people
- Understand the role of county lines and criminal exploitation in young people's drug involvement
- Understand when and how to involve other agencies and refer to specialist services

Session Agenda

Drugs, Alcohol & Young People: Substances, Trauma, Health & Safeguarding

10:00am Start — Welcome & Course Overview

10:10am The UK picture — prevalence and patterns of substance use among young people

10:25am Substances commonly used by young people — cannabis, alcohol, vaping, NPS, Xanax

10:50am Adolescent trauma and drug use — understanding the relationship

11:15am Break (15 minutes)

11:30am Health & psychiatric implications — effects on development, mental health and behaviour

11:50am Signs & symptoms — recognising drug and alcohol use in young people

12:10pm County lines & criminal exploitation — risks and safeguarding responsibilities

12:35pm Roles, referral & multi-agency working — supporting young people to access services

1:00pm Close & Q&A

Capability Framework Alignment

This course is aligned to the Capability Framework for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce (NHS England / OHID, 2024), which underpins the 10-Year Strategic Plan for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce 2024–2034.

Capability Domain (NHS England / OHID, 2024)	Framework Section
Knowledge of the nature, prevalence and patterns of drug and alcohol use among young people in the UK, including trends in NPS, cannabis, vaping and prescription drug misuse	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Knowledge of the developmental and neurological effects of substance use on young people, including impacts on mental health, behaviour and educational outcomes	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Knowledge of the relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), adolescent trauma and substance use	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Ability to recognise signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use in young people and respond in an age-appropriate, trauma-informed way	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Engagement, Assessment and Care Planning</i>
Ability to provide age-appropriate substance-related information and advice to young people and the workers who support them	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>
Ability to identify the indicators of county lines involvement and criminal exploitation and respond in line with safeguarding responsibilities	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Engagement, Assessment and Care Planning</i>
Ability to clarify professional role boundaries and know when and how to refer young people to specialist drug and alcohol services or other agencies	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Engagement, Assessment and Care Planning</i>
Recovery-oriented approach — working with young people to build personal, social and community recovery capital	<i>Underpinning Principle: All Roles</i>
Challenging stigma — being alert to the ways negative perceptions of young people who use drugs can influence practice	<i>Underpinning Principle: All Roles</i>

Underpinning Principles Embedded in This Course

Trauma-informed care • Recovery-oriented approach • Evidence-based practice • Person-centred working • Forming a working alliance • Therapeutic optimism • Challenging stigma • Co-occurring needs and multidisciplinary working

Note: National Occupational Standards (DANOS/NOS) are retained within the National Occupational Standards library but are no longer the primary workforce development reference for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery sector. This course uses the NHS England / OHID Capability Framework (2024) as its primary alignment standard.