

Little Guide To... Drugs

Who Are DECCA?

DECCA is the under 18 drug and alcohol service for Sandwell. We work in schools and other education settings, teaching young people all about drugs and alcohol. We are also a treatment service, meaning we help young people who use drugs and / or alcohol.

What Is A Drug?

A drug is anything which when put into the body changes the way the mind or body works. There are many different types of drugs, some legal and some illegal.

This Little Guide will look at Alcohol, Caffeine, Cannabis, Tobacco and Vaping.

Why Do People...?

Why do people use drugs?

- Just To Try It
- Think It Will Be Fun
- Stress / Escape Problems
- Social Events
- Peer Pressure (forced to by friends / peers)
- Peer Influence (own thoughts & opinions affected by friends / peers)
- Peer Acceptance (wanting to fit in with friends / peers)

Can you think of any more reasons why someone might use drugs or alcohol?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Why don't people use drugs?

- Health Harms & Risks
- Don't Like It
- Don't Want To
- Family Relationships
- Focused On Other Aspects Of Life
- Religious Reasons
- Not Socially Accepted

Can you think of any more reasons why someone might not use drugs or alcohol?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Some Nicknames: Booze,
Bevvy, Tipple, Liquor, Beer

Alcohol



What Is Alcohol?

An alcoholic drink contains ethanol, this is the chemical which causes someone to feel 'drunk'. Alcohol is a depressant meaning it slows down the body and its functions.

Alcohol is made by fermenting (a process which converts carbohydrates into alcohol) grains and fruits.

There are many different types of alcohol including; wine, champagne, vodka, alco-pop, whisky and lager.



Wine



Vodka



Whisky



Champagne



Alco-pop



Lager

How Does Alcohol Affect Someone?

Alcohol can affect people differently every time they drink.

Short-Term

Drinking too much alcohol over a short amount of time can cause;

- Headaches
- Feeling & being sick
- Dizziness
- Slower reactions
- Falling over & accidents
- Blurry & double-vision
- Drowsiness
- Co-ordination issues

Long-Term

Drinking too much alcohol for a long time can cause;

- Liver disease
- Heart issues
- Digestive problems
- Brain damage & mental health issues
- Cancers of various parts of the body including; mouth, throat and liver

Alcohol is the 2nd biggest killing drug in the UK!

The Law

A person must be 18 or over to be sold alcohol. If shops sell alcohol to under 18's they can get an unlimited fine. Over 18's cannot buy alcohol for under 18's, they can get a fine of up to £5,000.

Caffeine



What Is Caffeine?

Caffeine is the world's most popular drug! Caffeine comes from the cacao plant. Caffeine is a stimulant drug meaning it speeds the body up making a person more awake and alert.

Caffeine can be found in various food and drinks including; tea, coffee, hot chocolate, some fizzy drinks and energy drinks.



Tea, Coffee & Hot Chocolate

Energy drinks contain a high amount of caffeine. Some energy drinks also have a high sugar content. High amounts of sugar in someone's diet can lead to poor health, weight gain and tooth decay. Energy drinks have very little nutritional value.



Energy Drinks



Fizzy Drinks



Chocolate

How Does Caffeine Affect Someone?

Caffeine can affect people differently. Some people can be sensitive to the effects of caffeine.

Short-Term

Too much caffeine in a short amount of time can cause;

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Faster heartbeat
- Trembling hands
- Rises in temperature
- Restlessness
- Dehydration

Long-Term

Drinking too much caffeine for a long amount of time can have a negative impact on the body. It may lead to stomach problems, mental health problems, sleep issues and even heart damage. Caffeine is addictive so going without can cause some uncomfortable side effects too.

The Law

Caffeine is legal.

It is advised that high caffeinated drinks, such as energy drinks, should not be sold to under 16's.

Some Nicknames: Weed, Marijuana, Bud, Pot, Spliff, Joint.

Cannabis

Some nicknames: Cigs, Rollies, Smokes

Tobacco

What Is Cannabis?

Cannabis is naturally a plant and grows in much warmer countries. Cannabis is a depressant drug meaning it slows down the body and its functions.

There are different types of cannabis including; herbal, resin and oil.



Herbal



Resin



Oil

Cannabis contains around 400 chemicals, including;

- **THC** – The main active chemical responsible for the negative effects of cannabis.
- **CBD** – This chemical is believed to have some medicinal properties.
- **Tar** – A black sticky chemical which can turn the lungs black.

The Law

Cannabis is illegal. It is a Class B drug.

Possession = Up to 5 years in prison and / or an unlimited fine.

Supply = Up to 14 years in prison and / or an unlimited fine.

How Does Cannabis Affect Someone?

Cannabis can affect people differently each time they use it. Cannabis can be used in different ways but it is usually smoked.

Short-Term

Smoking cannabis can cause;

- Feeling 'High'
- Feeling & being sick
- Feeling hungry
- Being too relaxed
- Slower reactions
- Falling over & accidents
- Tiredness
- Red eyes
- Coughs
- Sore-throats
- Mood changes

Long-Term

Smoking cannabis for a long time can have a negative impact on the body. It may lead to lung problems, cancers, heart problems and mental health problems.

What Is Tobacco?

Tobacco is naturally a plant. It is harvested, dried and then made into different tobacco products. Tobacco is a stimulant drug meaning it speeds the body up making a person more awake and alert.

There are many different types of tobacco including; cigarettes, loose tobacco and cigars.



Cigarettes



Loose Tobacco



Cigars

Tobacco contains around 7000 different chemicals including;

- **Nicotine** – A very addictive drug
- **Tar** – A black sticky chemical which can turn the lungs black
- **Carbon Monoxide** – A very poisonous gas
- **Arsenic** – A chemical used to make poison
- **Ammonia** – A chemical used to make household cleaners

The Law *

It is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after the 1st Jan 2009.

If shops sell tobacco to someone born after the legal cut-off date they can get an unlimited fine. Adults cannot buy tobacco for someone born after the legal cut-off date, they get can get a fine of up to £2,500.

*Changes to law may occur due to the implementation of Tobacco & Vapes Act

How Does Tobacco Affect Someone?

Tobacco can be used in different ways but it usually smoked.

Short-Term

Smoking tobacco can cause;

- Coughs
- Sore-throats
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Feeling or being sick
- Light-headedness

Long-Term

Smoking tobacco for a long time can cause;

- Lung damage
- Heart damage
- Stained teeth & nails
- Tooth loss
- Older looking skin
- Weaker bones & muscles
- Cancers of various parts of the body including; lungs, mouth and throat.

Tobacco is the biggest killing drug in the UK!

Some nicknames: E-Cigs,
Shisha Pens, Mods.

Vapes/ENDS

What Are Vapes / ENDS?

They are electronic nicotine delivery systems, better known as vapes. ENDS heat up a combination of chemicals to create a vapour. The main ingredient, inside most ENDS, is nicotine, the same addictive stimulant drug which is found in tobacco.

There are different types of ENDS, including; Rechargeables, Pod Vapes and Disposables. Disposables were banned in 2025 so are no longer allowed to be sold in the UK.



Rechargeables



Pod Vapes



Disposables

The Law *

A person must be 18 or over to be sold ENDS. If shops sell ENDS to under 18's they can get an unlimited fine. Over 18's cannot buy ENDS for under 18's, they can get a fine of up to £2,500.

*Changes to law may occur due to the implementation of Tobacco & Vapes Act

How Do Vapes / ENDS Affect Someone?

Short-Term

Vaping may cause;

- Dizziness
- Coughs
- Sore-throats
- Headaches
- Feeling or being sick
- Stomach aches
- Cramps

Long-Term

The long-term effects of vaping are still unknown. They are just too new, so not enough research has been done regarding their potential long-term health risks. Vaping for a long time may potentially lead to damage of the lungs and heart.

Vaping is not risk free and should only be used by adults who are quitting the use of tobacco! ENDS **SHOULD NOT** be used by young people, by pregnant people or by adults who have never smoked.

Staying Safe

Sometimes things go wrong and bad things can happen. Especially when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

People may faint, pass out or fall unconscious for lots of reasons, but they should be placed in the recovery position and 999 should be called!

DECCA's Top 3 Safety Tips

- 1) Always tell a trusted adult where you are going, what time you should be home, and who you will be with.
- 2) If your gut instinct is telling you something isn't right, listen to it and **GET OUT OF THERE!**
- 3) Always look out for your friends, if they are in a bad way, **HELP THEM!**

THE RECOVERY POSITION

Open their
airways by tilting
the head back and
placing their hand
under the chin

Place the person
on their side with
their arm bent -
to prevent them
rolling over

Leg bent to
support position

Do you have any safety tips of your own? What else could someone do to keep themselves safe and out of trouble?

Getting Help

Who To Talk To

Have a go at the word search below. There are 10 people to find who we could talk to about something we were worried or concerned about (no matter how small or big).

N	W	N	T	H	F	N	S	R	E	H	C	A	E	T
A	E	N	H	B	A	H	A	T	R	A	W	E	R	S
I	F	I	Y	O	M	K	I	F	N	M	U	E	W	V
D	E	C	C	A	I	R	S	O	R	E	K	X	E	B
R	L	R	U	G	L	L	C	O	W	R	R	A	B	M
A	V	G	Y	R	Y	T	L	J	O	I	L	A	E	H
U	D	T	Z	N	V	L	E	W	T	Q	W	N	P	L
G	H	O	G	M	E	Z	H	O	I	I	T	F	A	Y
R	R	B	C	S	P	T	I	U	I	O	J	L	Y	W
K	I	B	N	T	U	S	V	S	R	Q	L	A	M	K
M	P	U	K	O	O	J	F	D	H	G	Y	N	B	N
X	O	X	Y	R	L	R	L	V	I	Q	R	X	W	N
C	B	E	T	J	O	K	T	J	F	J	H	D	F	R
X	X	N	B	K	Y	X	L	V	V	M	C	O	A	X
P	O	L	I	C	E	N	P	L	T	T	D	P	J	I

COUNSELLOR

DECCA

DOCTOR

FAMILY

GUARDIAN

MENTOR

PARENTS

POLICE

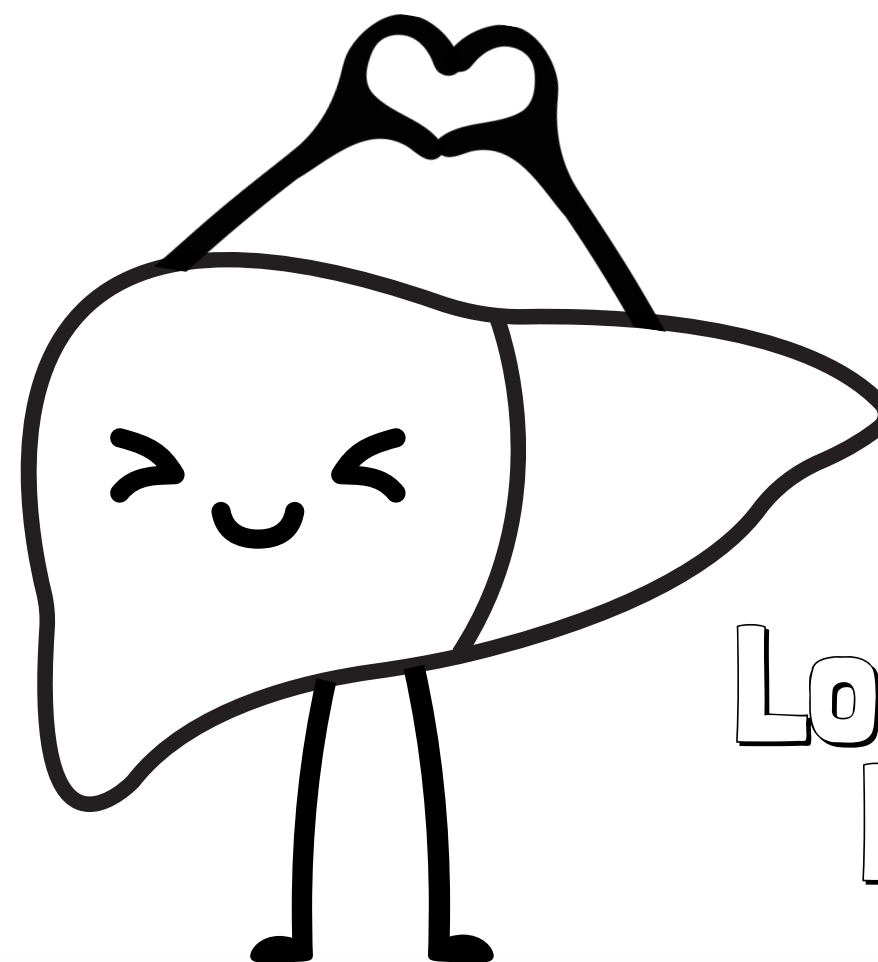
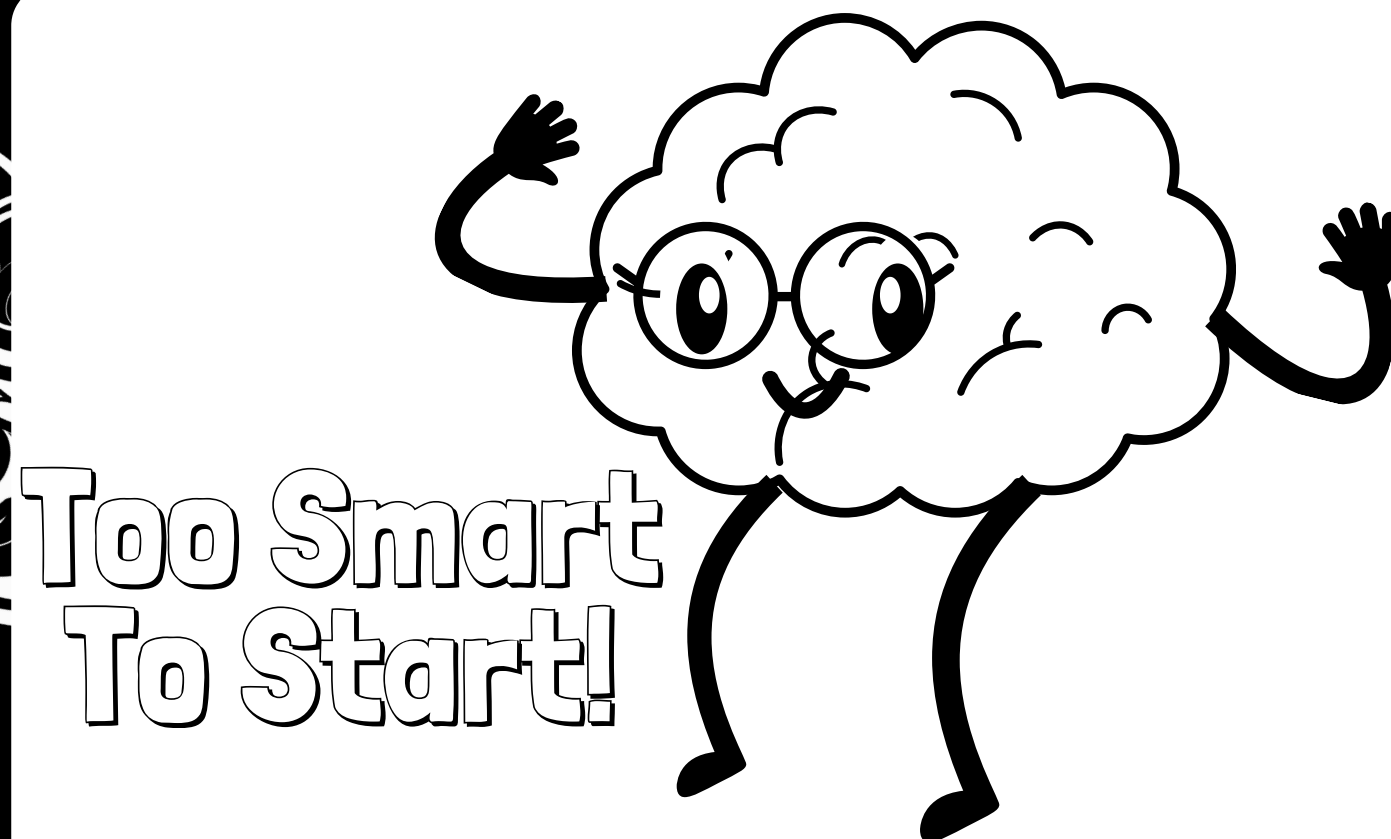
TEACHER

YOUTH-

WORKER

Safety Poster

Take some time to complete the poster below, colour it in, make it bright and colourful as a reminder to keep those organs nice and healthy!



Knowledge Quiz

1) List 3 short-term effects of drinking too much alcohol

2) What may be dangerous to do after drinking alcohol?

3) What type of drug is caffeine?

4) Name 3 items that contain caffeine

5) Cannabis can affect someone's mental health (Circle your answer)

TRUE

FALSE

6) In the law, what class is cannabis?

7) The sticky chemical which turns a smoker's lungs black is called ...

8) Someone born after the 1st Jan 2009 can never legally buy what drug?

9) List 3 short-term effects of vaping

10) Name one group of people who should not be vaping

Answers

When you have finished the quiz turn the booklet around to reveal the answers. NO CHEATING!

- 1) Nausea, dizziness, headaches, blurry vision, slow reactions, accidents, drowsiness, lack of co-ordination, memory loss.
- 2) Driving a car/bike/scooter & cooking, walking, running etc.
- 3) Stimulant
- 4) Coffee, tea, energy drinks, chocolate, cola etc.
- 5) TRUE
- 6) Class B
- 7) Tar
- 8) Tobacco
- 9) Dizziness, coughs, sore throats, headaches, nausea etc.
- 10) Young people, pregnant people, adults who have never smoked before



Drug Education, Counselling and Confidential Advice

Want to get in touch with us, you can reach us at the following places;

decca_team@sandwellchildrenstrust.org

07781472746

www.ourguideto.co.uk

Published June 2026

