



**SERVICE INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS/CARERS**

Ngage Service



01604 633 848

ypnorthamptonshire@aquarius.org.uk

Aquarius Young People's Service 'Ngage' – Brief Introduction

Aquarius Young People's Service 'Ngage' is the Early Intervention substance misuse service for young people in Northamptonshire.

Aquarius Young People's Service 'Ngage' is a drug and alcohol service for young people under the age of 18 and their families/carers in Northamptonshire.

Aquarius Young People's Service 'Ngage' aims to provide information, education, advice and treatment to young people in relation to drug and alcohol use.

Aquarius Young People's Service 'Ngage' is the specialist substance misuse service for young people in Northamptonshire.

We have dedicated workers for the following areas in Northants: Northampton, Kettering, Corby, Daventry, Wellingborough, South Northants & East Northants.

We have a Youth Participation worker who is committed to promoting the voice of young people in the design and delivery of the service.

The service is funded by Northamptonshire Public Health & Wellbeing team.
We are a **free** and **confidential** service.

Northampton-based, operating countywide

We have an Admin base at:

81 St Giles Street, Northampton NN1 1JF

Tel: 01604 633 848

E-Mail: ypnorthamptonshire@aquarius.org.uk

We only see young people at this office by booked appointment and will always endeavor to find venues close to the young person. We usually see young people in schools, youth counseling offices as well as on occasion in their own homes. We offer a county-wide service.

All permanent staff members have undergone enhanced DBS checks.

**Follow us on Facebook
we can currently be found at Can Young People Northants**

Who can access Aquarius Young People's Service 'Ngage'?

- A young person who is using but would like to reduce the harm caused
- A young person who would like to reduce their drug use or stop
- A young person who needs an opiate substitute prescription (Methadone, Subutex)
- A young person who needs support into inpatient detox for alcohol dependency

What do we offer?

- **1:1 Confidential and voluntary service to young people. Information, education and harm reduction advice around drug and alcohol use. Structured 1:1 care planned sessions/ interventions. We work with young people to achieve their goals and enable them to access positive activities, training and peer mentors through Evolve.**
- **Family work.** With the young persons permission we can deliver brief family interventions or more structured family work.
- **CAMHS.** We regularly liaise with CAMHS regarding young people misusing substances and who have mental health issues and can receive direct referrals from practitioners.
- **A&E clinic.** We offer an outpatient clinic to all young people who attend A&E with a drug or alcohol related injury or illness. Referrals are made by A&E staff to the clinic.
- **Relapse work and Aftercare.** We will support young people leaving Youth Offending Institutes to prevent relapse.
- **Group information, education and harm reduction sessions for targeted groups.** Provided on request at various outreach venues throughout Northamptonshire including; Schools; Pupil Referral Units; Complimentary Education Centre's; Hostels; Children's Homes, youth clubs.
- **Volunteering and training opportunities** for service users who wish to be more actively involved or give something back.

CANNABIS – INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Aquarius Young People's Service has found that over the last few years more young people are accessing the service having experienced problems with their Cannabis use. However, there is still much confusion as to how problematic it can be, when to refer and who can offer support to anyone wishing to address this issue.

What is a "problem"?

A lot of people think that because Cannabis is not physically addictive you cannot develop a problem with it. However, having a problem is not just about a physical addiction. It's about both physical and mental health, lifestyle and motivation, relationships, money, living situation, whether a young person is able to go to school or work. Cannabis is also psychologically addictive. People trying to give up find that their dependence on it to have fun, relax and socialise leads to cravings when they are not using. Also, Cannabis is still illegal so young people face the risk of a criminal record if they get caught.

Why should young people access a drug service?

A majority of Aquarius Young People's Service users solely smoke Cannabis. They may be suffering from mood swings and find that they are having more arguments at home and in extreme circumstances are at risk of becoming homeless. Some may be finding it hard to concentrate and keep up with their schoolwork. Young people who are regularly getting stoned and turning up under the influence run the risk of temporary and permanent exclusions. Friendship groups may have changed where a young person no longer hangs around with the same peers and chooses instead to hang around with other users. They may have become involved in petty crime. Living in hostels, our young people may have found that their Cannabis use has escalated and their tenancy is at risk. All of the above mean that a young person's drug use is no longer a personal issue but that which involves family, friends, schools, employers, housing and the police.

What does AQUARIUS YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE do?

Telling a young person that they may develop mental health problems or become a dependent drug user in the future doesn't do enough to inform them of the immediate risks. It is often quite hard for young people to imagine themselves in these situations when they may know people who have smoked for years without it becoming too much of an issue. Instead Aquarius Young People's Service aims to look at their quality of life; what they are currently gaining from their drug use - feeling relaxed, something to do, not getting angry - and therefore try and look at what could be changed in their lives to make it less stressful.

When setting goals we aim to be realistic. Some young people may only want to cut down but in doing so they are introduced to a service which focuses on their needs. Drug diaries and relapse prevention plans mean that they have a greater chance of achieving their goals. Once these goals are achieved they may feel more confident about stopping altogether.

ALCOHOL – INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Alcohol is viewed by many as a more socially acceptable drug, but that's not to say it is any less harmful than other drugs. Alcohol is a depressant, which means it slows down your body's responses in all kinds of ways. Just enough can make you feel good but too much and you'll have a hangover the next day! In addition, research with young people shows that they are less susceptible to the symptoms of a hangover than older people. Alcohol misuse and binge drinking is becoming more common with young people and Aquarius Young People's Service are working with more young people around their alcohol misuse than in previous years.

Below is a list of risks you can talk to your child about if you are concerned about their drinking. There is also a list of practical tips which may be useful.

Risk

- One drink too many can leave you feeling out of control and behaving differently – like slurring your words, losing your balance, being aggressive and vomiting.
- Psychological and physical dependence on alcohol can creep up on you. The more you drink on a regular basis, the more your tolerance gradually increases, so you may find you'll need more alcohol to gain the same effects. In other words, you may seem to be getting better at holding your drink when really it is a sign of a developing problem.
- Serious overindulgence can lead to alcohol poisoning which could put you in a coma or even kill you. Alcohol is toxic to the body; it depresses the brain stem, which is responsible for life processes such as breathing, heartbeat, and the swallowing reflexes.
- Alcohol causes and contributes to all kinds of problems in Britain, such as personal injury, violent crime, domestic violence and road traffic accidents.
- Long-term use of alcohol can lead to illnesses such as liver damage, stomach cancer and heart disease.

Practical tips

- If you are looking to cut down why not alternate alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic ones.
- If you're drinking alcohol with high units try swapping it for drinks with less.
- Start an alcohol diary to keep tabs on how much you are drinking.
- Make a list of the things you enjoy doing that doesn't involve alcohol.
- To avoid getting drunk, try to eat before you go out and avoid mixing drinks.
- If you're drinking to deal with problems, talk to someone. Alcohol can mask the problem for a short period but when you sober up the problem is still there and may seem a great deal worse.
- Although it is important not to leave your drinks unattended or accept drinks from strangers as they may be spiked, it is also very important not to get too drunk as you can become an easy target for sexual or physical assaults or a target for robbery. If you are drunk, make sure you stay with friends and try not to walk home alone.
- If you want to cut down but still want to hang out with your friends who drink, arrange to meet them later than usual, delaying your 1st drink but also make arrangements to leave earlier than usual - if possible before you have had too much.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE in adolescence questionnaire

(SMAQ; SWADI, 1997)

If you are unsure about whether a young person you know needs help with their substance misuse or they are telling you everything is ok you can use this questionnaire with the young person and it may help highlight if there are any concerns.

Answers with a "yes" score 1, and answers with a "No" score 0. A total score of 5 or more is a strong indication a further detailed assessment may be needed.

1. Are the effects of the drug more important to you than the thrill or adventure of using?
2. Do you have a favourite drug?
3. Do you ever use alone?
4. Do you use to suppress feeling sad, bored, lonely, confused or anxious?
5. Are you thinking a lot about drugs and drug use?
6. Do you plan your day to make sure you can use?
7. Do you need to use more to get high now than before?
8. Do you feel depressed, irritable or anxious if you do not use?
9. Do you crave for or "miss" your favourite drug?

What Should I Do Next?

- If you suspect that your child is using drugs or alcohol talk to them about it and try not to get angry or judge them.
- Keeping the channels of communication open and showing an interest in what they are doing will be far more productive than telling them that you're disappointed or annoyed – even if you are.
- Don't confront them when they come in from a night out and appear to be under the influence, let them sleep it off and have a discussion in the morning.
- Find out if they would like to talk to one of our workers to get some more information on the drug that they are using – most young people get their drug knowledge from peers and there's a lot of urban myths out there. (You may find the questionnaire on page 6 useful – ask your young person to do it in private if they do not want to share the info with you. This may help them realise they need support.)
- Assure them that our service is **confidential** and that we won't feed the information they share with anyone unless we have been given signed consent from them.
- Your child must be aware of, and consent to the referral being made.
- **Aquarius Young People's Service – Ngage worker** can meet with them informally to provide an introduction to the service.
- If your child agrees to a referral being made you can then call **Aquarius Young People's Service** on **01604 633 848** and speak to one of our workers
- You or your child can also email us at **ypnorthamptonshire@aquarius.org.uk**

Drugs & The Law

It is very important to have firm boundaries with your young people. To knowingly allow them to use cannabis on your premises, which includes your garden means **you** are committing an offence.

It is important you have good communication and understand why they are using and seek to get them help however it will help them if you are clear with your boundaries about what you will and will not allow in your home.

The Misuse of Drugs act 1971 section 8 states that a person commits an offence if, being the occupier or concerned in the management of any premises, he knowingly permits or suffers (or is in possession) any illegal drug use to take place on those premises. For more information please consult the Misuse of Drugs act 1971.

OTHER YOUTH SERVICES YOU MAY FIND USEFUL:

Time2Talk

The Abbey
Market Square
Daventry
NN11 4XG
24 hour answer phone:
01327 706706
Confidential Text Info Service:
07765 210869
www.time2talk.org.uk

The Lowdown

3 Kingswell Street
(Just off Gold Street)
Northampton
NN1 1PP
The Lowdown Helpline: 01604 622223
For online help & general enquiries:
info@thelowdown.info
thelowdown.info

Service Six

26 Rock Street
Wellingborough
NN5 4LW
Tel: 01933 277520
01933 273746
e-mail: help@servicesix.co.uk
www.servicesix.co.uk

Family Support Link

West End House
60 Oxford Street
Wellingborough
NN8 4JJ
Support Line: 01933 227078
General Enquiries: 01933 224632
e-mail: fslcontact@yahoo.co.uk
www.familysupportlink.co.uk

Youth Works Northamptonshire

Keystone Centre
97 Rockingham Rd
Kettering NN16 9HX
Confidential Service
Tel: 01536 518339
e-mail: info@ketteringyouthinformation.co.uk
www.youthworksnorthamptonshire.org.uk

Frank

Tel: 0300 123 6600
Text: 82111
www.talktofrank.com

NHS Direct

Tel: 0845 4647

Solve-It

Solve It
Ringstead Business Centre
1-3 Spencer Street
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