





# About the framework

**This framework will help to make sure young people get the right support, from the right services, at the right time!**

To help us write this framework we:

- set up a group of professionals
- looked at reports and read case studies
- gathered evidence
- held events and workshops
- talked to professionals who provide and run services
- talked with university academics
- talked to children and young people.

We talked to lots of professionals and agreed 3 recommendations to improve services across Wales. This framework relies on these 3 things happening.

1

All services for children and young people (up to age 25) are open, available and able to make the right changes to meet their needs.

2

Having one electronic assessment tool for all services so information is gathered and shared better.

3

Having special services that step in early to support young people aged 15-25 who are vulnerable and most at risk.

This framework is for everyone working in:



health services



social care services



the criminal justice system.



## The Welsh Language

This framework supports the Welsh language. It helps to make sure services are available in Welsh and that staff can improve their Welsh language skills.

# 1. Reaching out and stepping in

## Outreach and engaging young people

We want to make sure young people know about the effects drugs and alcohol can have on their lives. We want them to have the right life skills and education so they can make the right choices.

Large media campaigns can work, but they can also make young people feel frightened or ashamed.

We want to use programmes and projects that target what young people need. They should:

- explain what substance use is and the harm it can have on life
- promote positive attitudes towards school, relationships, skills and life.

They should include the knowledge and experiences of other young people.

## Using the internet

Digital technology, social media and other online platforms can be used to engage young people and offer them support. This type of support helps young people who want to stay anonymous or can't access other services.

## Prevention – stepping in early to help young people

Lots of services step in early to stop young people using drugs and alcohol. We also want services to support young people who are using drugs and alcohol and help them reduce what they do or even stop. This will help reduce the harm and lead to fewer people needing support from special services later in life.

This support should be positive and not judge young people. It should include:

- support for education
- health and wellbeing advice
- support for mental health
- housing advice
- sexual health and relationship advice
- resilience training
- life skills and more.

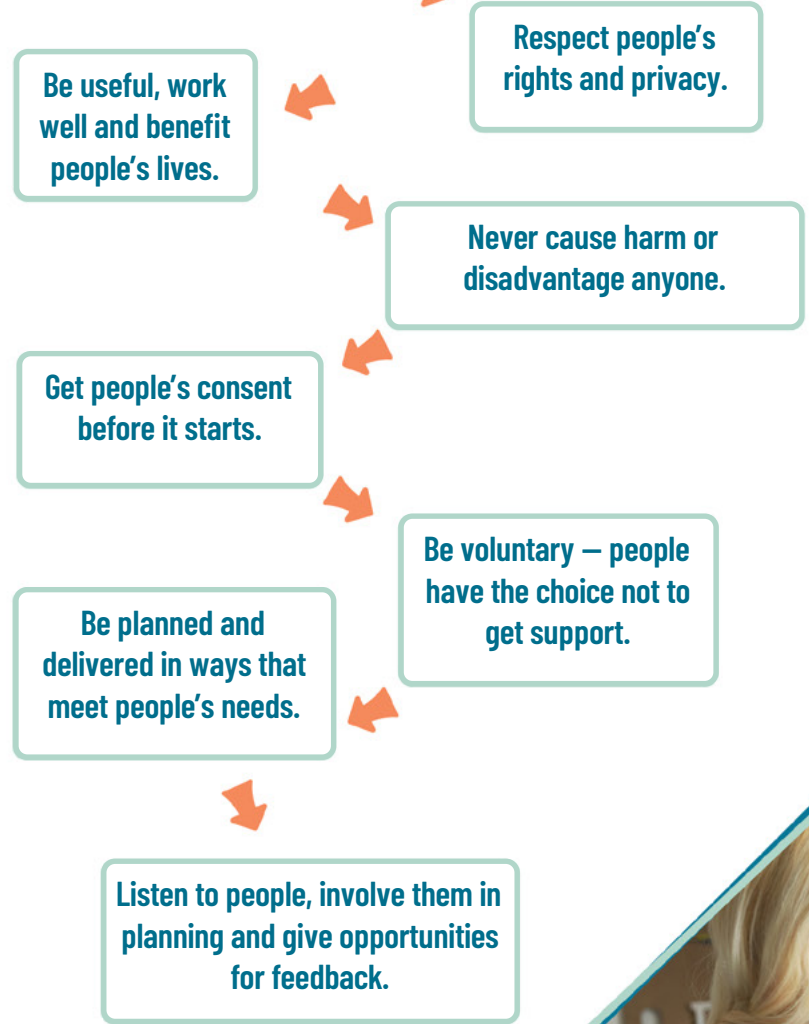
It should also include a range of community services, sports and activities.

Specialist services will be available for young people who need them.



# Standards

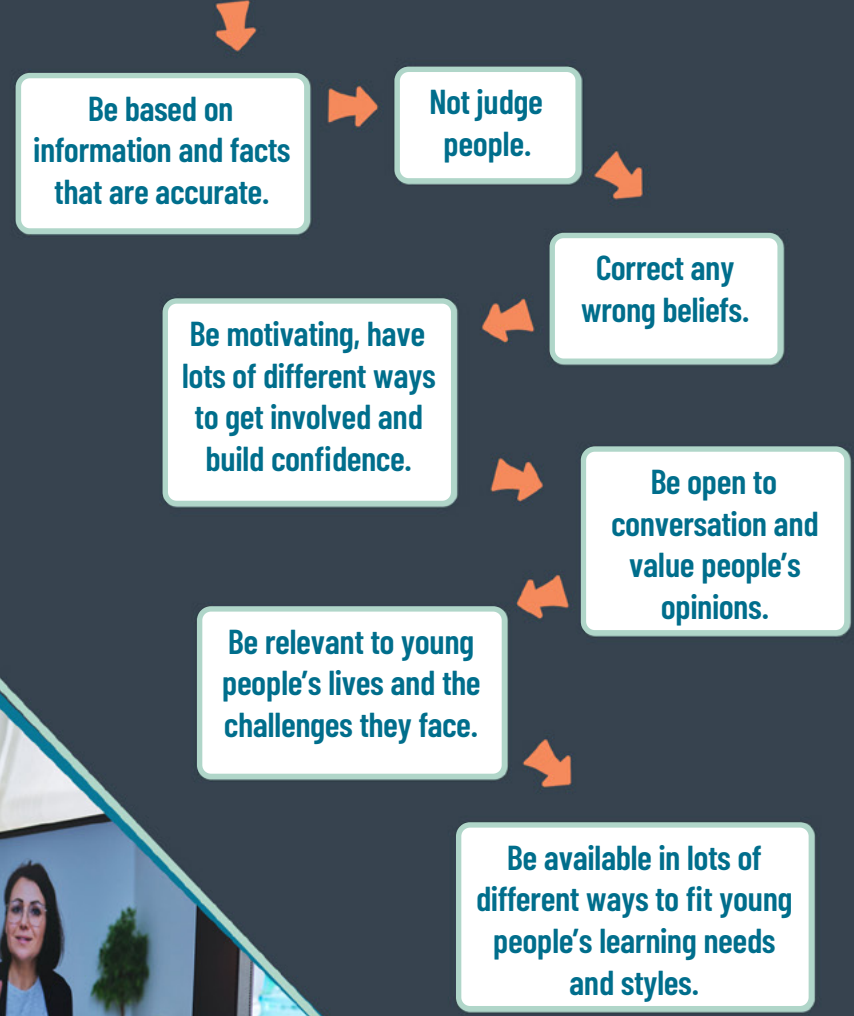
All support services should:



European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)



All programmes or projects that engage young people must:



## Working together

When services work together, they can offer young people better support. They can help them with lots of different issues in their lives and improve their future.

Lots of services already do this – for example schools often work with youth services, social care services and health services.

Support services should be available where young people are:

- street outreach projects
- nightclubs, festivals and events
- doctors' surgeries and other health services
- parks and recreational areas
- hostels or supported accommodation
- gyms and leisure centres.

## Supporting young people in the right ways

There are lots of people, from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs living in Wales. It's important everyone is treated with respect and has support that meets their needs.

This includes the needs of:

- **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people**
- **LGBTQ+ young people**
- **young people who are at risk of entering care.**

Services should respect cultural differences, language needs and build trust with communities. They should understand how difficult it can be for some young people to ask for support and know how to connect them to other services.

Support should be available in:

- schools, colleges and universities
- community centres and youth clubs
- men's groups, women's groups and gender-specific venues.



## Keeping young people safe

### County lines

Some criminal gangs use young people to move, store and sell drugs across the UK. This is called 'county lines'.

Services need to spot signs that young people are possibly at risk, like:

- missing lots of school time
- going missing from their home or family
- often going out of the area
- having lots of money they can't explain
- having lots of new things like make-up, clothes or mobile phones
- getting lots of text messages or phone calls.

### Young people at risk of homelessness

Young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or sofa-surfing often use drugs or alcohol to cope. Services should work together and support them to find housing, build healthy relationships, build resilience and other life skills.

## Connecting to specialist services

Young people should get support from specialist services when they need it as quickly as possible. Professionals should be able to spot when someone needs extra help.

Information needs to be shared at the right time, in the right ways.



## 2. Assessments and planning care

### Assessments

To work out what young people need – services do an assessment. The assessment looks at all areas of the young person's life to see where they need support.

The new online assessment tool for Wales will make it easier for services to gather and share information.

Young people should be involved in decisions and the assessment should include:

- what they do and where they go
- what activities they are involved in
- who is in their lives and who influences them
- what they know about drugs, alcohol and the risks
- what substances they use, how they use them, and where they get them
- how they see their life and their future
- what their goals are
- what support they hope to get.

After the assessment, support should start as quickly as possible.

### Spotting risks

The assessment should be used to find out if the young person:

- has a history of drug use
- if they have overdosed in the past
- if they have other mental health issues
- if they're involved in crime or other risky behaviours.

**i** There is a new **Trauma Informed Wales Framework**. It helps services be more aware of how trauma affects people's lives. The assessment should include information about any traumas young people have experienced.





## Consent

**Young People under 16 years** can give their consent to receive health care. They can decide against treatment. But professionals can use the Gillick test to check if they are capable of making decisions for themselves.

**Young People over 16 years** must be involved in all decisions about their health care. They can legally consent to receive health care or also decide not to take treatment.

They are protected by the Mental Capacity Act (MCA). This means that professionals decide if they are capable of making decisions.

### Parental consent

Parents should know about any treatment or plan and give consent. But if a young person doesn't want their parents to know, then their wishes should be respected, as long as it's safe.

## Planning care

After the assessment, the young person will be given a **key worker**, this is someone that is there for them and they can trust. The key worker:

- will involve them in planning their care
- will help them develop their care plan
- make sure everyone knows the part they play in supporting the young person
- make sure the plan has information about the different services involved and the treatment.

The care plan should be checked and updated regularly. This will keep track of any new risks and make sure support is still meeting the young person's needs. It will also give an opportunity to celebrate when a young person reaches their goals.



### 3. Reducing harm

Stopping permanent damage to a young person's health or keeping them alive is a priority. There are lots of policies and programmes that aim to reduce the risk and harm of drugs and alcohol.

Professionals in specialist services will work with the young person to decide what treatment programmes are best for them. They will also make sure they are connected to a range of services that help all areas of their life.

### 4. Treatments

There are lots of different types of treatments and therapies that can help reduce substance use. They can include all sorts of different methods, in different settings, with different levels of skilled professionals. Young people should be involved in choosing what's right for them.

### 5. Using medicines

Sometimes young people need medical drugs to help them reduce or stop using drugs and alcohol. This is always used with other support from services including education services, social services, mental health services.

This type of treatment isn't given to young people very often. When it is, professionals will make sure the young person is monitored, has updated records and is safe from harm.

Young people and their families will be given all the information they need to make decisions and consent to treatment.



## 6. Moving to adult services

Becoming an adult isn't an event that happens on the day you turn 18. All young people have different needs and we want them to move from child services to adult services when they're ready, if possible.

**Young people under 18** should get their support from child or young person's services.

If they're **18 to 24**, the assessment should be used to decide if they get support from young persons or adult services.

Young people should:

- be involved in decisions about when they move services
- have a key worker who stays with them as they move
- have opportunities to visit adult services so they know what to expect
- meet the new team of professionals who will be supporting them
- feedback on the move and how they feel.



## 7. Ending treatment

Young people who complete their treatment are more likely to have a better future.

### Dropping out and stopping treatment

Sometimes young people drop out of treatment. If a young person starts to miss appointments, then it's important to follow-up and find out why. After 8-weeks, it is marked as an unplanned exit from support.

If they come back to ask for help, services should see them as soon as possible.

Services should do a new assessment that looks at the reasons why they dropped out and how it could be avoided in the future.

### Finishing support

The time treatment ends should be part of the care plan. This helps everyone know what is happening and when. Even after they finish, young people should be given all the information they need about Keeping in Touch (KiT) so they can reach support services if they need to in the future.

# The workforce

Having the right people working in services makes a big difference to young people's lives.

We want the workforce to have enough well-trained staff at every level. We want them to grow their skills and knowledge so they can support young people in the right ways.

There is training for staff across each region in Wales, including training to:

- improve staff knowledge and understanding of drugs and alcohol
- help staff spot young people at risk
- develop skills so staff can support young people in the right ways
- help staff grow their Welsh language skills.

This training also helps staff understand the link between substance use and the harm it causes.

## Thanks for reading this

You can read the full framework here:

[www.gov.wales/substance-use-service-provision-children-and-young-people](http://www.gov.wales/substance-use-service-provision-children-and-young-people)

