DSM Foundation comments on the NHS Digital 'Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England' survey 2023, published today

Thursday 17 October, 2024

Fiona Spargo-Mabbs, director and founder of the drugs education charity the DSM Foundation, comments: “It’s so encouraging to see the numbers of 11-15 year olds in England who have taken drugs falling so significantly, after a steep upward trend from 2014 for the next few years. It would be great to think this was down to more of them getting the drug education they need, but we know that the factors at work in decisions about drugs are very complex, and our work as a drug education charity is far from done.

"This data tells us that 44 per cent of 15 year olds had been offered drugs, and around one in four had said yes at least once, and we can see other trends of concern, such as the increased use of ketamine and magic mushrooms. It’s vital that every young person knows how to handle decisions about drugs safely when they come around for them.

"Effective, evidence-based drug education remains essential.”

Information for editors:

The DSM Foundation is a drug education charity established in 2014 following the death of 16 year old Daniel Spargo-Mabbs from an accidental overdose of ecstasy. His family felt that he simply hadn’t known enough to be able to make decisions that would keep him safe, and realized there was a huge gap in the resources and support available to schools, so set up the charity in order to spare other families going through what they had experienced.

The aim of the DSM Foundation is to provide young people with relevant, age-appropriate, up to date and evidence-based information about drugs so they develop the skills to make choices that will keep themselves and their friends as safe as possible. To this end, the charity works in schools, colleges and community organisations with children and young people, and also provides workshops for parents and caregivers, and training for professionals working with young people, eg. teachers. Educational settings are also able to access “I Love You Mum, I Promise I Won’t Die”, a verbatim play by Mark Wheeller that was commissioned by the charity to tell Dan’s story in the words of his family and friends, through studying the work itself (sometimes due to it being a GCSE Drama set text on the Eduqas syllabus), or booking a Theatre in Education performance. Schools and colleges can also download age-appropriate, relevant, up to date and evidence-based drugs education lesson resources free of charge from the DSM Foundation website for delivery by teachers through PSHE/PSE provision.

For more information about the DSM Foundation, go to https://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk/.

Media enquiries about this press release or the work of the DSM Foundation should be sent to media@dsmfoundation.org.uk.

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The Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation

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