

Substance Misuse tool for use with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

A series of questions have been developed to help assist in identifying the need for early intervention where drugs and/or alcohol may be an influential factor within the home environment and/or social group of children and young people.

There should be no assumption that a child/young person is using drugs and/or alcohol when completing the substance misuse section of the CAF.

Is substance misuse covered in the CAF?

Yes, under the behaviour development section in the CAF Assessment Summary (Strengths and Needs-development of unborn, infant, child or young person). However, it is not covered in great detail and doesn't provide necessary prompts to approach the topic with children and young people.

Have these questions been used before?

These questions were piloted in Barnet Council's Corporate Parenting Team and with looked after children's nurses, health visitors, Education Welfare Officers and Teachers Advisers between November 2006 to July 2007.

The feedback received was that the questions were easy to understand and user friendly.

'The questions are much more sensitive, less intrusive or assuming which makes the child/young person feel able to answer with relative ease'.

The nurses believe that these questions have given them the confidence to have dialogue with the children and young people and feel that they are now better able to initiate support on their behalf as and when required.

How do I use the questions?

There are a total of 13 questions, of which three target pre-teen (10-12) age group. The responses from these questions will demonstrate their understanding of drugs and alcohol and determine whether it is appropriate to continue.

If they answer 'yes' to one or more of these questions, please continue with the remaining questions.

The questions should be used to aid dialogue with children and young people.

What if they answer 'yes' to more than one of the questions?

If a child/young person answers 'yes' to one or more of the questions, the result is not necessarily an indication of problematic drug or alcohol use, but perhaps there may be risk of family/friends influencing future substance misuse behaviour.

Do I need to complete another form?

No, the child/young person's responses should be recorded under the behaviour development section in the CAF, discuss a possible referral with the young person and refer to the appropriate agency.

Pre-teen questions

Questions to be asked to determine whether it is appropriate to screen a child, aged 10-12:

'Do you know what drugs are?'

'Can you give me some examples?'

'What about alcohol?'

Substance Misuse Questions

Has anybody ever offered you drugs?	YES	NO
Has anybody ever offered you alcohol?	YES	NO
Have you ever tried drugs?	YES	NO
Have you ever tried alcohol?	YES	NO
When you have taken drugs or alcohol has it stopped you doing your school work?	YES	NO
When you have taken drugs or alcohol has it stopped you doing things at home that you should do?	YES	NO
Do you ever feel in danger because you take drugs or alcohol?	YES	NO
Have you had any problems with people you don't know because you use drugs or drink alcohol?	YES	NO
Do you have problems with people you know because you use drugs or drink alcohol?	YES	NO
Do you still use drugs or alcohol? (Sometimes Often never)	YES	NO

If a child/young person answers 'yes' to one or more of the questions, the result is not necessarily an indication of problematic drug or alcohol use, but perhaps there may be risk of family/friends influencing future substance misuse behaviour.

Note: findings in the CAF, discuss a possible referral with the young person and refer to the appropriate agency