



Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week

Guidance for getting involved



A big thank you for pledging to take part in Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week!

We are so excited that you are committed to improving student wellbeing on campus, and we have put together this guide to support you in making the most of the week.

Any questions should be answered in this guide, but if not please feel free to reach out to us.

The SOS UK Wellbeing Team

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Introduction

Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week takes place **16th November – 20th November**.

If you have any questions about getting involved in the awareness week, please contact the SOS UK wellbeing team.

What is Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week?

At SOS UK, we support universities and colleges to take a holistic approach in creating healthy and inclusive cultures on campuses around drugs and alcohol. Every year we invite universities, students' unions, treatment providers and charities to join us in our pledge to bring the conversation around student drug and alcohol use to their campuses and organisations.

Our vision for the future is that all campus cultures will be rooted in drug and alcohol harm reduction, and that students will feel empowered to seek support without the fear of punishment. By pledging to take part in Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week you are helping us to achieve this, and we are really excited to hear more about your work!



2025 was the biggest year so far for Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week, with over 70 organisations taking part across higher education, charities and specialist services!

We've pledged to take part, what next?

Before the awareness week

In preparation for the awareness week, we would encourage you to start to think about:

- What local organisations could support you in having conversations about drugs and alcohol?
- How could you get students involved?
- What engagement activities have worked well for other wellbeing related work before?
- What other teams on campus should be involved?

You can also sign up to attend our webinar to hear more about teams who have taken part in previous years to get ideas and ask questions.

Date: 28th October, 12 – 12:45PM

Joining link: [join the Teams meeting here](#)

In addition to this guide, we have prepared a range of resources for colleagues to use on social media which can be [accessed here](#).

During the awareness week

Please take lots of photos, and remember to think about how you are measuring success! We would love to have updates about how your activity has gone, so don't forget to tag SOS UK on any posts about your activity. We will be in touch during the week to check in, and to share examples of activities and would love to include your work in this!

We recommend making note of staff and students who you interact with who would like to be involved in similar initiatives in the future, so you can keep this conversation going after the week ends.

After the awareness week

When you've completed your week of activities, we would love to hear your thoughts on how it went. SOS UK will send a request for feedback, and will also be posting a follow up blog including highlights from work on campus.

All activity should be evaluated, so you can see what worked well and what changes you may want to make for next year. We also suggest reaching out to any colleagues and students who supported you in delivering activity, or who indicated they'd like to support similar work in the future, with an update on how the activity went with potential next steps.

Resources

In addition to [our resource page](#), we also wanted to provide some additional signposting to resources which may be helpful for your information, or for sharing more widely with students.

Helpful sector information for you and your team

- [UUK guidance](#) on adopting a harm reduction approach to student drug use.
- [Legal guidance regarding the risks to a university of maintaining a zero tolerance approach](#)
 - News articles about this guidance: [Wonkhe](#), [THE](#)
- Research into student drug use: [SOS UK surveys](#), [DUHEI research](#) and [Taking the hit](#) survey.
- [Release legal requirements of university/students' union](#)
- [HEPI report](#) regarding zero-tolerance vs harm reduction approaches on campus
- [Why drug policy reform should be a high priority for universities. | Wonkhe](#)
- [How to embrace harm reduction on campus | WonkHE](#)

Additional resources on drugs and alcohol

- [Alcohol Change UK](#) is an alcohol charity which focuses on alcohol education. Their website includes free alcohol factsheets, as well as an alcohol calculator to support students to reflect on their alcohol use.
- [Benzo Research Project](#) is a youth led grassroots initiative seeking to understand and improve the lives of young people who take benzos.
- [Crew](#) is a drug and alcohol charity based in Scotland. Their website includes harm reduction guidance on specific drugs, as well as information on how to access further support.
- [Drugs and me](#) is a social enterprise focused on accessible harm reduction information. Their website includes harm reduction guidance on specific drugs, as well as information on interactions and poly-drug use.
- [Frank](#) provides a support service finder, which can be used to find your local service or to share with students.
- [Nacoo](#) provide information, advice and support for everyone affected by a parent's drinking.
- [The Mix](#) is a support service specifically for young people, offering advice and support on a range of issues including drug use.
- [Release](#) is an independent charity which provides free non-judgmental, specialist advice and information on issues related to drugs and the law.

Ideas for taking part

On campus activity

Hosting pop ups, stalls and other activity on campus can be a great way to engage students and start conversations around drugs and alcohol.

This could be led by student services in main areas, sabbatical officers in the students union or venue, residence staff in accommodation or anyone else you can think of. You could also consider how other organisations could support in person activity – your local drug and alcohol treatment service may be willing to host a stall alongside yours!

Your in-person activity could:

- Provide information for students on where to seek support if they want to change their relationship with drugs and alcohol
- Provide harm reduction information and resources for students
- Create engaging ways to ask students what they'd like to see your institution doing to support students
- Be led by student groups who work on wellbeing and related activity

Involving students & student networks

In everything we do, we encourage getting students directly involved. What this could look like on your campus will vary, but some ideas from us:

- Recruit teams of students to deliver your activity – could your wellbeing ambassadors or reslife students deliver engaging events for their peers?
- Consider which students may have an interest in wellbeing, or drug and alcohol related issues – are there any academic courses where students may want to be involved in shaping and delivering activity on campus, if so reach out to the academics in those areas to explore how you could work together.
- If you have previously done research or work on drugs or alcohol, reach out to students and ask how they would like to be involved.
- Use existing networks and mailing lists to get students to engage with your activity – such as course rep networks, and clubs and societies lists. You could even encourage them to host an alcohol-free event or activity to increase opportunities for student involvement.

Social media

Social media is a helpful tool for creating awareness of resources and support available for students, and on the resource page you will find several graphics you can use for this purpose.

We encourage you to think about the range of accounts this could come from, across both the university and the students' union. We have previously seen posts from central accounts, but also from individual sabbatical officers, campus venues, support team pages and residences.

In addition to using resources we provide, we encourage you to consider how you can embed your campuses perspective into this – have you recently changed your policy? Does your wellbeing team provide advice on alcohol? These messages will be key in shaping what your comms could look like.

Examples from previous Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Weeks

Activities (& freebies!)

Student drug and alcohol awareness week provides an excellent opportunity for institutions to connect with students on campus, and we see so many amazing activities, events and conversations happening during the week. We've shared a couple of highlights below:



Queen's University Belfast launched a harm reduction flowchart campaign, to support students in navigating substance use and sexual health more safely, including information on the risks of mixing substances and engaging in unprotected sex. Students were able to self-direct through the flowchart and take away the relevant harm reduction materials. The flowchart was proudly placed in central spaces across campus, including the main students' union foyer.

Bath Spa University offered students free harm reduction goody bags during the week to students who engaged with the students, alcohol and drugs survey 2025/26. These goody bags contained anti-spiking resources, alcohol measuring cups, condoms, sweets and lots of helpful signposting information for students. Over 200 goody bags were given out across the week!





The University of Northampton Students' Union hosted a hydration station in their students' union, full of harm reduction resources such as drink covers, hydration drinks and drug testing kits. They also set up listening rooms throughout the week, which is a private space for students to access confidential advice from trained members of staff.

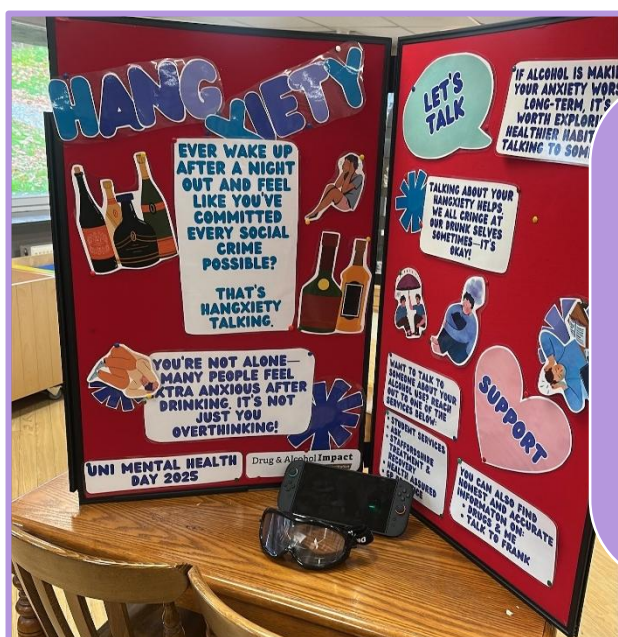
Working together!

We see lots of great examples of collaboration during the week, with many institutions highlighting support from local drug and alcohol treatment providers, mental health charities and organisations focused on wellbeing. We love seeing students connecting with local organisations and having access to specialist knowledge and expertise on campus!



University College London hosted a harm reduction week, broadening their support to include information on gambling, video gaming and pornography dependencies. To support this, they hosted colleagues from CGL, gamcare and their wider harm reduction team. Students had the opportunity to learn about individual substances, with CGL bringing example substances on campus to educate students, as well as learning about local support both internally and externally.

Bath Spa University hosted a local wellness service, who provided students with free mini health checks on campus. Students were offered optional blood pressure, weight and carbon monoxide readings, which proved popular with students. We love to see this week as an opportunity for students to reflect on their health and wellbeing.



Keele University used this week to advertise the mental health support available to students, through highlighting 'hangxiety' which is the anxiety some people experience following a period of alcohol consumption, and encouraging students to reflection the impact of alcohol on their mental health.