

CASUS

How CASUS can help

Cambridgeshire Child and Adolescent Substance Use Service



CASUS uses 'evidenced-based interventions' - this means the treatments we offer have been found to be helpful. These interventions are recommended by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence), Public Health England and the Department of Health.

Assessment

When you first meet with your keyworker they will complete what's called an 'assessment'. This means they will ask you a range of questions about your drug and alcohol use, mental health, physical health and social situation. This is to help them to get a really good picture in their mind about what areas of your life you are finding difficult and how they can best support you. At the end of the assessment they will help you to write a 'care plan', this is the agreement you make with your keyworker, which identifies the goals you want to achieve and how you will work with your keyworker to achieve them.

Mentalization-based talking therapy/ Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

At CASUS we use a mentalization-based approach. What this means is that, through talking, we will be helping and encouraging you to think about what is happening in your mind, and also what is happening in the mind of others around you, particularly parents and family members. What we know about this approach, from what other young people tell us, is that it can be really helpful to enable you to take time to 'think before acting'. When wanting to change patterns of behavior, particularly around substance use, this is a really valuable way to learn to think.

Your keyworker will use the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in your sessions. This approach helps you to think about how your 'thoughts, feelings and behaviours' all connect with each other and will help you to find ways to challenge negative/difficult thoughts that might be a part of why you are using substances.

Psychoeducation on substances

When you first start working with CASUS your keyworker will ask you if it would be helpful for them to bring a 'drug box' to a session. This is a box full of replica samples of various illegal and legal substances. Your keyworker will check what drug and alcohol education you have had in the past and what you remember from it. They will then go through the drug box with you and tell you all about the effects of different substances and what their risks are, this is so that you can make an informed decision about whether you want to use that particular substance. If you like we also have some 'drink/drug' goggles which you can use to complete a game – they give you a sense of what it is like to be under the influence of substances.

Motivational work

During your sessions, your keyworker will think with you about why you like using substances and why you don't, what might be good about stopping/reducing and what would be bad about stopping/reducing.

To do this we use a 'decisional balance' sheet which your keyworker will complete with you and you will be able to take the sheet away with you after the session. Your keyworker will encourage you to keep this in a place where it is easy to see.

Relapse prevention

Once you have taken control of your substance use your keyworker will go through the principles of relapse prevention with you. Relapse prevention is about how to stay stopped from substances and keep control. During your sessions your keyworker will identify triggers for you using substances and high risk situations and help you to come up with a cravings plan and high risk situations plan.

Working with other professionals who are supporting you

Your keyworker will encourage you to give consent to share information with the other professionals you may be working with. Our experience is that by being able to speak to other professionals involved in your care, we can help to make sure your care is coordinated and the professionals involved with you are working together to ensure you do not feel overwhelmed and confused about 'which professional is doing what' and so we all really understand what you feel your top priorities are for your care.

Harm reduction

Your keyworker will offer you advice on making the healthiest choices around substances. For example offering you advice and education on reducing alcohol intake safely, not sharing snorting straws/notes and we can also offer you a course of Hepatitis B vaccinations. Your keyworker will talk to you in detail about this and can give you a leaflet about, too.

Family work

At CASUS we offer meetings with young people and their families/ carers, if this is what they want. Young people have told us that involving important people in their care can be really helpful to make significant change. If you do not want meetings with your family/ carers, CASUS will respect this, however they may talk about your family members/carers in the discussions they have with you. We call this 'virtual family work'.

Medications

The doctors and nurses in CASUS are able to prescribe medications to help those young people who are using opiates and alcohol at a dangerous level. We can also think about offering medications to help with mental health that support healthier choices around substance use.

If you have any questions please either speak to your keyworker or contact CASUS:

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