



Moray Council - Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

DSM Foundation End of Year Report June 2025

Background

The Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation

The Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation is a drug education charity founded in 2014 by Fiona and Tim Spargo-Mabbs in response to the death of their sixteen-year-old son Dan from an unintentional overdose of MDMA. The DSM Foundation works with young people, parents and caregivers, teachers and professionals working with young people in schools, colleges and community organisations across the UK. We provide a multi-component programme of drug education consisting of workshops for young people, workshops and webinars for parents and caregivers, training for professionals, a Youth Ambassador programme and a spiral curriculum of planning and resources for teachers to deliver in PSE (Personal and Social Education) lessons for every secondary year group.

We also have a Theatre in Education (TIE) production of 'I Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won't Die', a verbatim play by award-winning playwright Mark Wheeler, commissioned by the DSM Foundation in 2014. This TIE version, specially adapted by the playwright, has been touring schools professionally since 2017 as part of the DSM Foundation drug education programme, with interactive workshops with the cast to follow performances. The full published play (Bloomsbury/Methuen, 2017) has been a GCSE Drama set text in England and Wales since September 2022.

Moray context

Following on from our 2023/24 Grampian pilot in three Moray Secondary Schools (Elgin High, Keith Grammar and Buckie High) we received funding from Moray Council/the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to deliver every element of our multi-component programme in all eight Moray Secondary Schools in 2024/25 including: Buckie High, Elgin Academy, Elgin High, Forres Academy, Keith Grammar, Lossiemouth High, Milne's High and Speyside High.

This report follows on from our interim report published in December 2024 – read the interim report [HERE](#).

2024/25 - Final Delivery Report

Additional setting

Evidence and feedback from our interim report showed that our work with Moray schools has been highly effective. It came to our attention that another education setting in Moray would benefit from the work we are doing and this resulted in a meeting with Mark Norrie, the Principle Teacher for Moray SEBN Service, and our drug education coordinator, Don Thomas, to discuss what provision for Pinefield SEBN in Elgin would be beneficial. It was agreed the best approach would be to deliver in person training for their staff, followed by working with their students, parents and carers in the next academic year post-summer 2025.

There were 7 staff who took part in the Pinefield training and on a scale of 1-10, on average the survey showed (per person) a **40% increase in knowledge of drugs and young people** after the training compared to before, with one individual showing 100% increase in knowledge pre and post training.

When attendees were asked what they found most useful about this training, responses included: *“learning how to bring up the topic of drugs with young people in a transparent way”* and *“to have a better understanding of drugs, drug use and its effects”*.

When asked for any other comments, staff said: *“Excellent training and a valuable insight into current drugs and their associated side effects, how they present”* and *“Really good session and thoroughly enjoyed the Q&A”*.

Live Theatre in Education (TIE) production of ‘I Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won’t Die’

In November 2024, all eight schools had our live Theatre in Education (TIE) production of ‘I

From the **post play student survey** (90 responses) we learned:

87% of students said that they have learned more about the risks of drugs from the play/workshop.

89% of students said they have learned more about the impact of drugs on others.

90% of students said that they have learned more about the possible consequences of taking drugs.

92% of students said that the play/workshop gave useful information and advice.

In the survey, when students were asked:

“Do you feel you’ll be able to cope with negative peer influence better?” **92%** answered ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’.

“Will you use some of the practical strategies you learned to stay safe?” **94%** answered ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’.

“Do you know where to go for more information and advice?” **94%** answered ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’.

“Do you feel more able to talk to a parent or carer about these issues?” **80%** answered ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’.

Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won't Die which includes a student workshop and Forum Theatre at the end of each performance.

Each school had a choice of which year group(s) would see the play, with five schools choosing S3 and three schools choosing S4-S6 (these schools had smaller year groups and were therefore able to accommodate more years in one sitting).

In total, **1,357 students** watched the live production.

When students were asked ***“what was best about the play?”*** here are some of the responses:

“The realisation of how impactful drugs can be”

“It educated you without someone speaking at you, the story meant you really listened”

“I liked hearing and watching the interviews, being able to see Dan's mum and dad really impacted me”

Student Workshops

All eight schools have now had student workshops, with 47 workshops being delivered to **3,019 students** ranging from S1-S6.

In our pre-workshop student survey for S5-S6, we had **130 responses** about what young people want included in drug education, with ‘first hand stories and accounts’ coming out on top (figure 1).

Based on perception alone (not confession), students were also asked in the survey what are the main substances they think are used by people in their year group (figure 2, page 4). We were therefore able to tailor our workshops accordingly and, for some schools, we delivered more content about Ketamine and Cannabis in response to what the school requested.

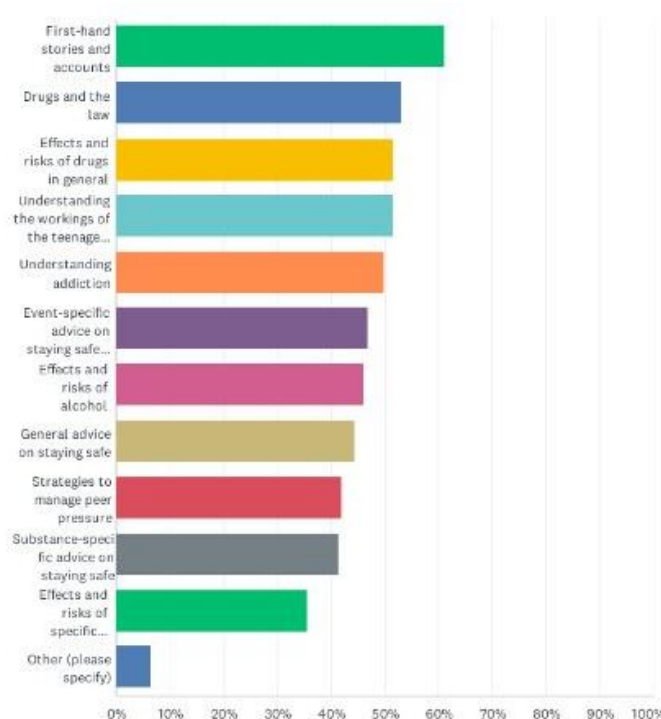


Figure 1

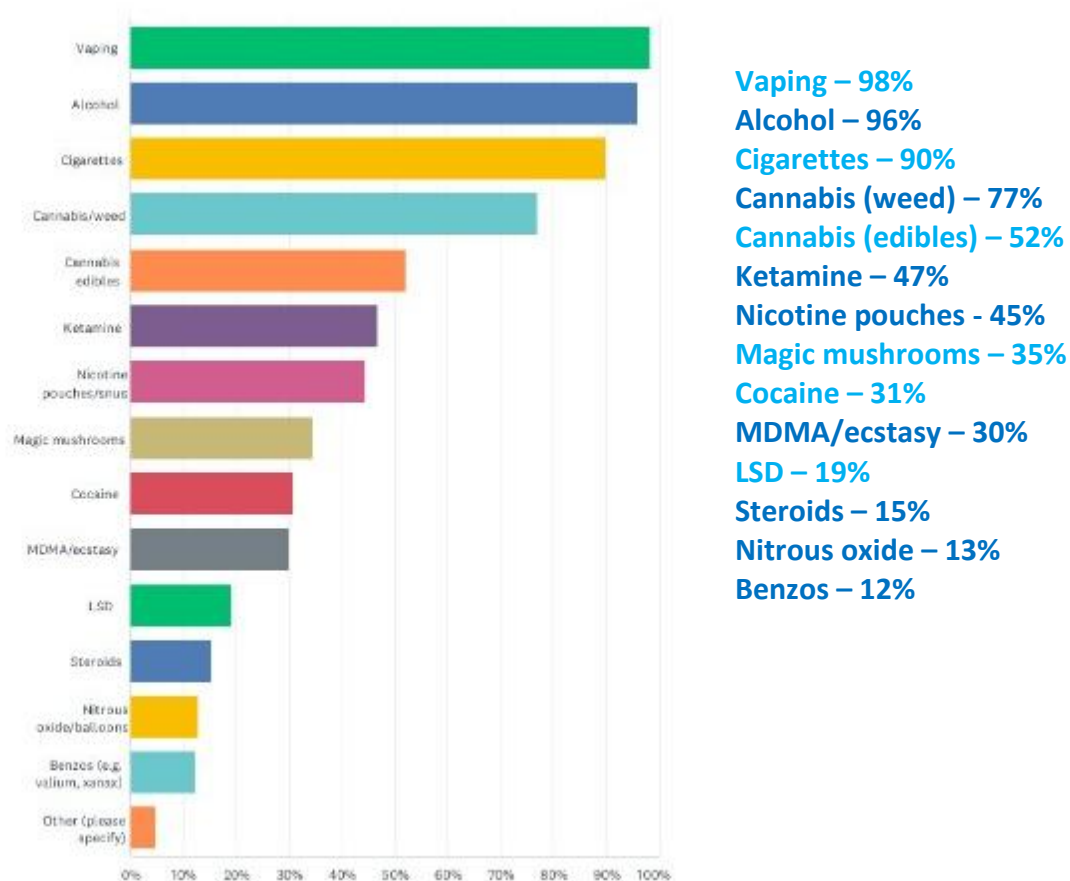


Figure 2

In a post workshop survey, staff were asked what was best about the drug education students had received, the following is some of the feedback:

“Pace and depth of information covered tailored to each year group”

“Informative and concise. Tailored to suit the audience delivering too excellently. I attended staff training and workshop for S5-6”

“Very powerful and hard hitting, and yet accessible and clear”

“Up to date and relevant to our context”

“This session was pitched perfectly at the age group of pupils in attendance. It was interactive, engaging and relevant”

We also received student feedback from the student workshops. When asked **“what was best about the workshop?”** students said:

“You can learn a lot on how to stay safe in certain situations”

“The salty water among the 5 normal shots of water was a good demonstration of you don’t know what is in the drugs if they all look the same”

When asked, **“What was the most useful or important thing you learned?”** students said:

“Where to find reliable info about substances”

“You never know what you’re getting”

“Where you can get help”

In our post-workshop student survey for S1-S4s, we had **184 responses** with the responses showing a very high level of effectiveness of the workshops. **95% of students** reported they know more about ‘the impact of drug and alcohol use on other people’ and ‘the risks and effects of drugs’ than they did before the workshop. We also found that **98% of students** reported that the information was ‘useful, clear and easy to understand’ and **94% of students** said ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’ that they will ‘use some of the strategies I learned to keep myself safe’. We hope to also see a **positive impact on student and parent/carers relationships** because **78% of students** reported they now ‘feel more confident to talk more to my parents or carers about drugs’.

Importantly, we recognise that most young people don’t intend to use illegal drugs. However, there are some that do and our survey results show a potentially **significant positive change in behaviour** among the minority of students who were already intending to use illegal drugs: This is shown when asked **“Has the workshop changed your ideas about using drugs?”**, with nearly 10% of students reporting that as a direct result of the workshop they are ‘now less likely to use drugs’ or ‘now never intend to use drugs’. If we apply this figure at scale across all the 3,000+ students we worked with over the last year, that could mean that over **300 young people** who have already taken, or were going to take, illegal drugs might now choose not to, which is quite an astonishing figure.

Staff Training

We have delivered staff training at nine schools (including Pinefield SEBN) to a total of **194 staff members**. This has included senior leadership teams, guidance teachers, other subject teachers and school support staff like janitors. One school requested training specifically for all their support staff to help them be better equipped in their interactions with students.

Across all the staff training, on a scale of 1-10, on average there was a **41% increase in people’s knowledge of drugs and young people** after the training compared to before.

Our **pre staff training survey** (75 responses) showed that staff would find the following most useful in the training session:

1// ‘Current data on young people’s exposure to drugs and alcohol, access and availability’ came out on top with **78%**

2 // ‘Practical strategies for young people to use to help them stay safe’ came second with **63%**

3// ‘Risk factors affecting young people’s misuse of drugs and alcohol’ was third with **62%**.

100% of staff members who filled out our post training feedback said they would be likely/extremely likely to recommend our work to a friend or colleague.

Parent and Carers Workshops

Over the last year we have delivered **5 parent and carer workshops** offered across the eight Moray Secondary Schools, with 4 being delivered online and 1 in person. These were delivered in the evening time to allow working parents/carers to engage, and they were attended by approximately **23 family households**. Each of these parents who attended would likely have children who received drug education from us, whether that be through student workshops, our live play performance, or through PSE lessons for schools using our free to access PSE resources, which means families as a whole will be better equipped to navigate the challenges around young people and drug use.

In our parent/carers pre-workshop survey (21 responses), when given multiple choices on what they hope to learn from the workshop, the majority wanted to **‘learn more about the substances available to young people today’ (76%)** followed by wanting to **‘learn more about factors that affect young people’s decision making including adolescent brain development’ (67%)**. These topics are both prominently featured in our parent/carers workshops and unpacked through Q+A.

Key Learning Points from 24/25 delivery

Our main learning points from 24/25 delivery have been around how to best engage parents and carers. We found that there was a low attrition rate of those who attended compared to the much higher number that signed up for parent webinars/workshops. In conversation with each Moray school, it was clear that either having the delivery online or in person wouldn’t have made any difference, as they face similar challenges getting parental engagement for other events both online and in person.

Most Moray schools felt that it may work better for the coming year to partner us with an existing evening where parents are already scheduled to come into the school. This could be a parent’s information evening, school wellbeing event or anything similar which would hopefully allow us to engage with a higher number of households. However, some schools still wish to have a dedicated online parent workshop and are happy to combine with other local schools to make it an effective use of time and increase participation numbers.

We also had some learning around a wider engagement event planned that was cancelled due to low expected attendance. This was mainly down to the timing of the event coinciding with exam period and the time of year (June). In future, we will look to host events at other times of the year. We also received feedback around challenges with using Eventbrite for sign up, so alternative methods of sign up will be explored for future events.

Plans for 25/26

We are incredibly grateful to have secured ongoing funding through Moray Council/the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund so we can continue to deliver our multi-component drug education programme in all eight Moray Secondary Schools, and Moray SEBN service, in the academic year 2025/26. Our Scottish play tour will be coming to Moray in September 2025 and schools will get further student workshops, staff training, and PSE resources provided along with parent/carer input. On behalf of the DSM Foundation we would like to say thank you for the ongoing support of all the schools in Moray, the Education department at Moray council, Police Scotland and all the local partners who are working to help young people in Moray make safe and informed decisions.

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