



Moray Council - Whole Family Wellbeing Fund DSM Foundation Interim Report December 2024

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 High 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 High Schools in 2024/25.

Delivery report up to December 2024

Scoping Meetings

In the first term, our Drug Education Coordinator for Scotland had scoping meetings with the leadership of all eight High Schools, typically the Head/Depute. For the pilot schools these meetings were focussed around building on the previous year's work and making any necessary changes from the pilot. Some of the schools wanted us to move

from a whole school delivery of student workshops (S1-S6) to focussing on particular year groups, mainly because some younger years would get more from smaller group work rather than whole year group delivery. For the five new schools these scoping meetings were focussed on an introduction to the work of the foundation, getting to know the needs of the school and how we can best engage with each school.

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 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"

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'.

Student Workshops

Six of the eight schools have had student workshops so far, with 33 workshops being delivered to **2,320 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). 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.

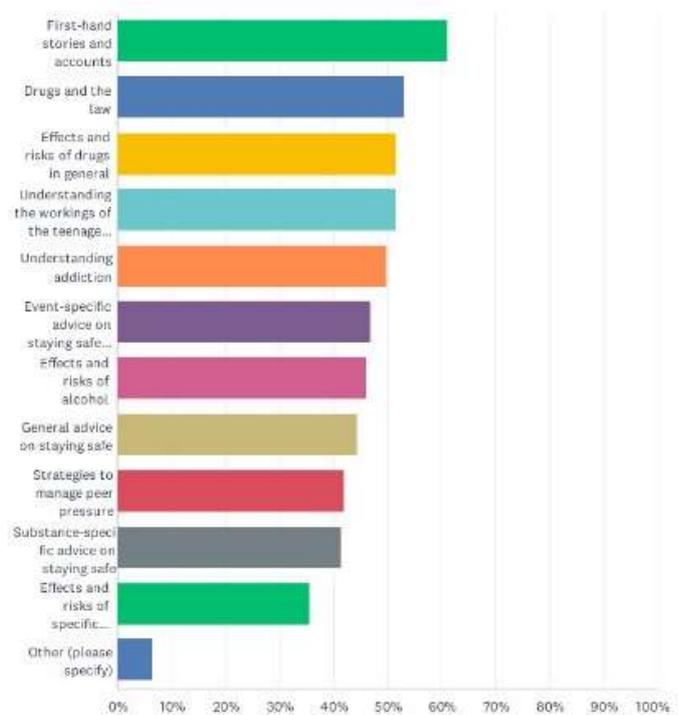


Figure 1

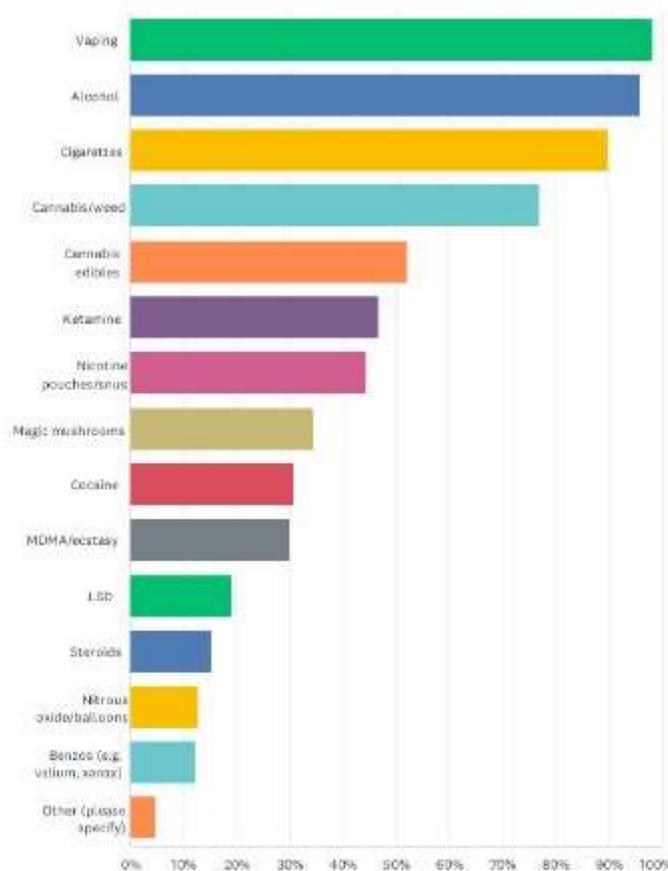


Figure 2

- Vaping – 98%
- Alcohol – 96%
- Cigarettes – 90%
- Cannabis (weed) – 77%
- Cannabis (edibles) – 52%
- Ketamine – 47%
- Nicotine pouches - 45%
- Magic mushrooms – 35%
- Cocaine – 31%
- MDMA/ecstasy – 30%
- LSD – 19%
- Steroids – 15%
- Nitrous oxide – 13%
- Benzos – 12%

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”

Staff Training

We have delivered staff training at three Moray schools to a total of **95 staff members**. This has included 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.

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.

Our **pre staff training survey** (40 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 **72.5%**.

2 // ‘Practical strategies for young people to use to help them stay safe’ came second with **67.5%**

3// ‘Risk factors affecting young people’s misuse of drugs and alcohol’ was third with **62.5%**.

Plans for 2025

Our spiral curriculum of planning and PSE resources have been shared with each school and we are supporting teachers with continuing/starting the Youth Ambassador programme. We have further student workshops, staff training and parent workshops to deliver with the current round of funding in Moray. We hope to secure 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 High Schools in academic year 2025/26.

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