



WHAT'S THE SCORE?

GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONALS



www.changegrowlive.org

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USING THE SCREENING TOOL: **GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONALS**



SETTING THE SCENE

The tool is intended for use with young people (YP) aged 13 years old and above. If a young person is using substances aged under 13, the risks are often more complex and we'd recommend a referral/discussion with your local YP drug and alcohol service.

It's important that you get consent from a young person before using the screening tool with them. Not doing so is likely to compromise trust and engagement.

The tool should be used in a quiet, confidential space free from distractions, to allow the young person to speak about their use, and for any concerns they have to be discussed privately.

It's important to discuss with a young person why you're undertaking the screening tool with them, for example: to help you better understand their substance use, and for you to gain more information to help explore what support they may want/require.

An explanation around confidentiality should be provided to the young person, explaining what confidentiality is whilst covering safeguarding concerns and disclosures. Please discuss any concerns you may have around safeguarding or confidentiality with your line manager, or access local training if you're ensure what this entails.

Think creatively to support engagement – the screening tool can be undertaken in a number of different ways, including the young person 'self-screening' if they would prefer to do it this way. The key is for it to be delivered interactively and as an intervention in itself, facilitating information and support as well as rapport building – it is not solely an information gathering exercise. To improve your understanding and confidence in relation to drug and alcohol related advice and support, please speak with your local Change Grow Live service about professionals training.





SECTION ONE

The first section of the tool explores what substances a young person may be using – using route of administration to identify each substance. This method of screening is to ensure that no substances are missed, as with other tools where certain drugs can be missed due to slang terms.

Each route of administration is explored with the opportunity for the worker to note which substances the young person is using in the final column. The time period of use is in the last six months; this is to get a longer term picture of the young person's substance use and ensure we are providing relevant and useful support/advice.

We acknowledge that there can be variations in interpretation of the terms regularly and occasional when applying a score to individual questions. In respect to substance use:

- ⦿ Up to two using episodes in a 28-day period can be considered **occasional**
- ⦿ More than two using episodes over a 28-day period can be considered **regular**.

The below provides further information on each question in section one:

1 Smoked/Vaped anything which isn't tobacco?

This question aims to cover the use of any substance that can be smoked, ensuring we include vaping devices that may be used for taking substances other than e-liquid tobacco.

A natural follow up question is "...what substances?". It could be tobacco (nicotine), cannabis, heroin or crack cocaine – providing harm reduction regarding these substances at this point would be useful, but if you don't feel confident in doing so please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for support.

2 Sniffed/Snorted any powders?

This question aims to cover the use of anything that can be sniffed or snorted using the nasal passages/membrane.

Conversations around nasal membrane and what is used to snort e.g. a rolled up note presents a good opportunity for harm reduction around BBV, infections etc. If you don't feel confident in providing this, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for support.

3 Swallowed any pills/pellets/powders that are not medication?

This question aims to cover the use of anything that can be swallowed – looking at taking pills, ‘bombing’ or even eating substances.

If a young person is using ‘prescribed’ medication, a conversation may be useful about where they are getting it from.

Providing harm reduction at this point would be useful, but if you don’t feel confident in doing so please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for support.

4 Drunk alcohol or any liquid that gets you high?

This question aims to cover the use of anything that a person can drink – please be aware that young people might be drinking something other than just alcohol e.g. Lean, Drank, GHB

If the young person is drinking alcohol it could be useful to explore what kind of alcohol it is – this presents an opportunity for you to explore units, knowing your limit and the risks around consumption. Again, if you would like support in offering this information, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for support.

5/6 If answering ‘yes’ to questions 5 or 6

If the young person answers ‘yes’ to either question 5 or 6, avoid the tendency to be alarmist or prematurely end the interaction. You should continue in your dialogue to gather further information in support of a suitable intervention.

If a young person is injecting or inhaling a substance, there are increased risks associated with their use. You may explain that a referral is likely to be the best option given that this use is more complex and may benefit from a discussion with a worker who specialises in this area. Prompt referral and harm reduction would be suitable in this scenario.



SECTION TWO

The following set of questions are looking at the wider impact that substance use can have on an individual when using drugs or alcohol, exploring:

- ⦿ Why we are asking particular questions;
- ⦿ What information are we looking for when we ask certain questions;
- ⦿ What follow on questions might be useful to consider/use to help workers gather more information;
- ⦿ What safeguarding concerns workers should be aware of when completing the tool.

The information provided below will not cover all eventualities but is designed to support workers to use the tool more effectively with young people.

If you would like support in using this tool, please access training from your local Change Grow Live Young People's service.

1 Used more than one drug at a time (including alcohol)?

There is an increased risk to young people relating to their substance use if using more than one substance at once. This is often referred to by professionals as 'poly drug use'.

Be aware that this not only includes alcohol but also over the counter medication and prescription drugs, in addition to illegal substances.

Using two or more depressant/stimulant substances at once can increase risk of overdose, while using a mixture of substances can confuse the central nervous system and put someone at increased risk.

Ask the young person what substances they are mixing. This will provide an opportunity to offer basic harm reduction information. Contact Change Grow Live local services for further support if required.

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

2 Used drugs and/or alcohol when you've been by yourself?

Here, you are looking for increased risk associated with substances being used whilst alone. It's likely to open discussion around why lone use could be more dangerous. For example:

- If anything bad were to happen, there is no one with them to seek help/support.
- It could be a sign of dependency if someone is using alone rather than in a group.
- Using alone can sometimes be a sign of compromised emotional wellbeing (e.g. depression, anxiety)

This question may also open up an avenue to discuss who they are using with which could represent increased risk/harm (for example, older peers).

Location is worth discussion (place, time, safety, familiarity). Is the location in which they are using putting them at more risk? E.g. At home in their own bedroom or out in a park alone at night?

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

3 Spent more on drugs and/or alcohol than you could afford?

This question is looking at risks associated with finance – is this young person using more than they can afford to pay?

This is sometimes linked to more dependent use if a young person is unable to manage their use in line with personal affordability.

Where is the young person getting the money to pay for substances from? How do they afford their drugs? May open up conversations in relation to criminal activity to fund use. This may also give an insight into their family situation, if family members are either funding or providing access to drugs and/or alcohol.

If they have received substances without paying, do they currently owe money? How much is the debt? Who is the debt to and what risk does this represent for the young person? (consider gang association).

How have they paid/do they intend to pay off any debts? Is this done financially or through another form of payment – explore exploitation if needed.

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

4 Got so drunk/high that you don't remember everything that you've done?

This question is looking for the risks that the young person may be placing themselves in when under the influence.

Exploring binge use and the increased risks associated with getting so 'high' or 'drunk' that they can't remember anything. Risks associated with young person putting themselves in risky situations when vulnerable. Explore harm/risk reduction regarding this where possible.

Discussion around limits and tolerance – what these are, does the young person know their limits? Strategies to stay within these is using drugs and/or alcohol.

Has the young person later become aware of something that they did or something that happened to them during the period they can't remember? How do they feel about what may have happened? There could be possible links to exploitation, sexual assault, poor choices – explore these where appropriate.

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

5 Regretted something you've done when you've been using drugs and/or alcohol? (E.g. an argument, decision, or sexual experience)

Linked to question 4, this question explores whether a young person is putting themselves at increased risk by the choices they are making when under the influence.

Discuss inhibitions and how substances can affect the choices we make while under the influence. Is the young person happy to share their regrettable experiences? (e.g. regrettable sexual encounters, anti-social behaviour). Discuss learning to avoid future episodes where possible.

Explore risks around exploitation and criminal activity – someone under the influence is more vulnerable to the impact of these.

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

6 Realised your friends and/or family are worried about your drug and/or alcohol use?

Conversation with the young person on whether others could be recognising a problem before they have.

Explore the cycle of change (contemplation and pre-contemplation) and where a young person might be in the change process.

Who is worried? What has made them worried? Have they shared specific concerns with you (mental health, physical health, money and friendships)? What has become a concern for them?

Would a referral on to another service be appropriate?

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

7 Worried about your own drug and/or alcohol use?

Linked to question 6, explore the cycle of change (contemplation and pre-contemplation) and where a young person might be in the change process.

Give the young person a safe and confidential space to discuss their worries or concerns. Avoid the temptation to ask too many questions and allow them the time to speak openly about what may be worrying them (allow periods of silence).

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

8 Used drugs and/or alcohol because you felt unhappy, or because it helped you to cope/feel better?

Discussion around emotional wellbeing and mental health. Explore what is concerning them and behaviours they use as coping strategies. Offer risk management and consider potential for self-harm or suicidal tendencies. Ensure onward referral for further support where appropriate.

Focus on the young person's protective factors in building their resilience and coping mechanisms.

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.

9 Ever felt that you couldn't stop/cut down using drugs and/or alcohol, even if you wanted to?

If the young person indicates this is the case, explore dependent use and what this might look like for the young person. Discuss impact on both physical and mental health.

Has the young person tried (how many times?) – what did that look like and what was the outcome? What worked well and what do they feel resulted in 'relapse'?

Assess their motivation to change. Does the young person want to make changes? If so, explore these and support them in positive decision-making, including supported referral into their local young person's drug and alcohol service.

Safeguarding

Be aware of dependency and how this could affect a young person's physical or mental health. Any immediate concerns for that young person needs to be reported to a safeguarding lead or other professionals involved in their care.

10 Recognised your drug and/or alcohol use has caused you problems in your everyday? (E.g. education, work, police, relationships)

If the young person does not recognise this, offer prompts to suggest potential impact of use on key aspects of their life, particularly those that they value. If they do recognise, acknowledge and praise their ability to reflect effectively. Explore the issues they feel are most problematic to them. with an emphasis on solutions.

Explore the associated risk but keep the emphasis on solutions and resilience building.

Safeguarding

Use information provided to make a professional judgement as to any immediate risk of harm/abuse. If you have concerns, contact the designated safeguarding lead within your service/organisation for support. If you would like to develop a further understanding of safeguarding in relation to substance use, please contact your local Change Grow Live YP service for training.



SECTION THREE: SCORING AND FEEDBACK

Both sections are added up together to create one final score.

(Please be aware that if the young person has injected or inhaled any substance you will not need to score the tool – this should result in immediate contact with your local Change Grow Live service for advice/support and a referral if the young person agrees).

The scoring will fit into one of two sections:

- ⦿ **5-20** sign of experimentation and opportunity for prevention/early intervention
- ⦿ **20+** sign of more regular use which puts a young person at increased risk of harm

WHAT DOES THE SCORING MEAN?

The professional completing the screening tool should be aware of the options for support available to the young person before starting the tool and have explained these to the young person previously. They are detailed on the reverse of the tool. If the young person does not agree to further information, support or referral, there is harm reduction on the tool itself. You could talk the young person through this or encourage them to take the tool away with them for later reading.

- ⦿ A young person scoring between 5-20 is possibly engaging in experimentation or low level recreational use. A score of 5-20 is not suggestive of problematic use and higher levels of risk. However, they will still benefit from a brief (early) intervention to offer further information on drug/alcohol awareness, health and wellbeing to ensure positive lifestyle choices. Many of these themes will have been discussed when completing the screening tool so offer naturally progressive conversations. You should have received training from Change Grow Live to equip you with the knowledge and understanding to deliver this



type of intervention. If not, please refer into your local Change grow Live YP service who can offer support to both the young person (subject to consent) and professional/service.

- ⦿ A young person scoring 20+ is likely to be using substances either recreationally, regularly and in some instances dependently/problematically. The nature of this substance use is likely to subject the young person to greater levels of risk.

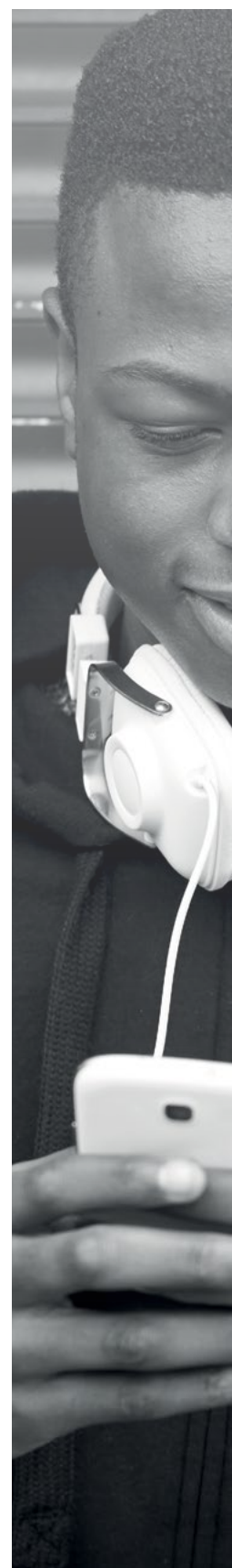
In this instance, a supported referral into your local Change Grow Live young people's service should be discussed for further, more specialist support. Timely referral is helpful to avoid escalation of risk, although you should seek consent before making a referral. The professional completing this tool should encourage and support this referral using motivational techniques and encouragement.


A referral into Change Grow Live services is straightforward and can be made online, by phone, in person or by email. Please contact your local service for more details. It will be helpful to enclose a copy of the screening tool to support the referral. A friendly member of the Change Grow Live team will contact the young person and offer an initial appointment (assessment) within five working days.

A potential referral should be discussed with the young person before arriving at a score so this suggestion does not surprise or disengage them. Remember, the young person needs to consent to the referral.

OTHER KEY TIPS:

- ⦿ Please ensure you explain all actions to the young person at every stage, ensuring they are involved with all decisions and actions and are in agreement with them.
- ⦿ All young people should be over the age of 13 and have been assessed as competent to consent to treatment/support from drug and alcohol support services.
- ⦿ Keep a healthy balance between a focus on risk and resilience. The last thing you want is the young person feeling worse after completing the screening tool than they did before it. Keep it positive, motivational with a focus on solutions, including protective factors. The key is to deliver this as an intervention, building their resilience and motivation.
- ⦿ Please be aware of the possibility of referral on to other services if there is a specific need for support beyond substance use e.g. social care,





sexual exploitation, mental health provision, sexual health services etc.

- ☉ Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. If you have safeguarding concerns, discuss these proactively with your organisational safeguarding lead and don't wait for Change Grow Live to pick up post-referral. Timely intervention is often key to ensuring young people are safeguarded from harm.
- ☉ Access Change Grow Live training. Completing this screening tool will be a better experience for both you and the young person if you attend the relevant training. **Knowledge = confidence.**

For further support, please contact your local Change Grow Live young people's service. Visit www.cgl.org.uk