



PARTNER *Argyll & Bute*

DIGITAL BOOKLET FOR PARENTS AND CARERS TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILD'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Developed by the Planet Youth Argyll and Bute Team
May 2025



PLANET YOUTH IN ARGYLL & BUTE

WHAT IS PLANET YOUTH?



Planet Youth is all about:

Communities acting in the best interest of children and young people to make Argyll and Bute a great place to live.

It is a framework focused on improving young people's health, wellbeing, and relationships by working with parents, carers, schools, communities and organisations.

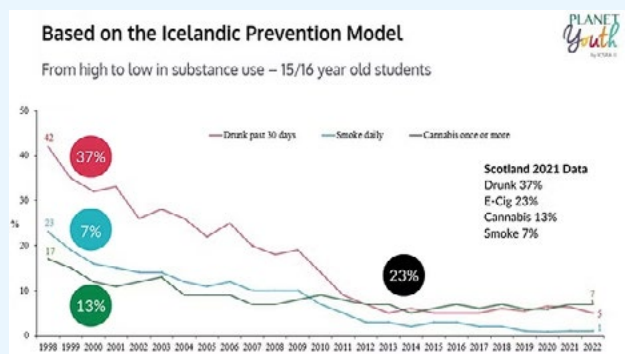
PLANET YOUTH IN ARGYLL AND BUTE

Argyll and Bute, alongside five other areas across Scotland (Highland, Dundee, Angus, Clackmannanshire and West Dunbartonshire) is dedicated to being a part of the change that aims to transform our region to enable new opportunities for young people and reduce substance use.

WHAT HAPPENED IN ICELAND?



Planet Youth originated in Iceland. Iceland went from having the **highest** rates of teen smoking, alcohol and drug use across Europe to the **lowest**.



SCOTLAND IS CURRENTLY IN A SIMILAR POSITION TO WHERE ICELAND WAS IN 1998.

Risk and protective factors for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in young people were looked at across four areas of young peoples' lives: family, peers, school and leisure time.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people have identified local challenges. Now we must create positive change for them through community empowerment and support. We want to create healthier environments for our young people to help them make better choices.

GET INVOLVED!

Planet Youth is being led in Argyll and Bute by NHS Highland and Argyll & Bute Council and we are looking for community involvement from parents, carers, teachers, schools, sport clubs, third sector organisations and more.



Scan here to find out more about Planet Youth in Scotland

Get in touch via:
argyllandbute@planetyouth.scot



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Following the results from Planet Youth Surveys completed by S3/S4 pupils across 5 Argyll & Bute secondary schools in 2023, risk and protective factors were identified.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

Aspects that could **reduce** the likelihood of young people drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, using vapes and cannabis.

- 1. Perception of peers substance use**
If young people perceive that none/ some of their friends are drinking, smoking, vaping and using cannabis.
- 2. Parental perceptions**
If young people think their parents would not allow/ discourage substance use.
- 3. Finding school work meaningful**
If young people find school work meaningful.
- 4. Playing sport/ doing other activities**
If young people participate in a sport team or club or other supervised activities at least once a week.
- 5. Returning home at a reasonable hour**
If young people do not stay out late at night.

RISK FACTORS:

Aspects that could **increase** the likelihood of young people drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, using vapes and cannabis.

- 1. Perception of peers substance use**
If young people perceive that all/ almost all of their friends are drinking, smoking, vaping and using cannabis.
- 2. Parental perceptions**
If young people think their parents did not mind or approved of substance use.
- 3. Finding school work pointless**
If young people find school work pointless.
- 4. Not playing sport/ other activities**
If young people never/ almost never participate in a sport team or club or other supervised activities.
- 5. Staying out late**
If young people stay out late at night.

*It is important for all community members to consider how we can **increase** protective factors and **reduce** risk factors to create healthy environments for our children and young people to help them make better choices and take less risks.*



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & MENTAL HEALTH

Ensuring that young people are developing positive approaches to looking after their mental health & wellbeing is a national and local priority.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These are aspects that could improve mental health.

1. Feeling loved and cared for by parents/carers
2. Feeling safe in their community
3. Not being bullied
4. Having friends at school who care about them
5. Taking part in regular physical activity with or without a club or team
6. Sleeping for 8 hours or more every night

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These are aspects that could worsen mental health.

1. Not feeling loved and cared for by parents/carers
2. Feeling unsafe in their community
3. Being bullied
4. Not having caring friends at school
5. Not participating in regular physical activity with or without a club or team
6. Sleeping for 7 hours or less every night

We need to reduce risk factors

ADVICE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

- ✓ Check in regularly and make time for your child(ren) to talk about how they're feeling even if they do not appear to be struggling.
- ✓ Look out for any signs of poor mental health (e.g., being distant, a change in appetite etc.)
- ✓ Ensure the home environment is as healthy, safe, happy and as stress free as possible.
- ✓ Encourage them to do things they enjoy.
- ✓ Encourage daily exercise for at least 1 hour.

WEBSITES FOR PARENTS/CARERS

- [Minds \(Advice for Parents/Carers\)](#)
- **NHS 24:** Call '111' and choose mental health option
- **Samaritans:** Call: '116 123' or email jo@samaritans.org
- **Emergency Services:** Call '999' if there is a serious risk to life
- **The Exchange:** [Supporting psychological wellbeing and resilience](#)
- **Mental health hub:** [Mental Health Support for Children & Young People | Argyll and Bute Living Well](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & PHYSICAL HEALTH

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Physical activity and participating in sports teams/cubs is a protective factor for:

1. Good mental health and mood
2. Good physical health and energy levels
3. Healthy weight
4. Good quality sleep
5. Sense of community and belonging
6. Reducing likelihood of substance use, getting drunk and using vapes.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

Not participating in physical activity, sports teams/cubs is a risk factor for:

1. Poor mental health and low mood
2. Poor physical health and low energy levels
3. Becoming overweight
4. Poor quality sleep
5. Lack of community and belonging
6. Increased likelihood of substance use, getting drunk and using vapes.

We need to reduce risk factors

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- ✓ Any physical activity is better than nothing!
- ✓ Children aged 5-18 should do 60 minutes of activity every day (see NHS Guidance in for younger children and those with disabilities).
- ✓ Encourage less time spent sitting or lying down and try to break up long periods of not moving with some activity.
- ✓ Consider small increases of exercise such as walking the dog and visiting a local play area.
- ✓ Consider if there are there any fun clubs or teams your child could participate in.

WEBSITES

- [NHS Inform: Physical Activity Guidance](#)
- [NHS Inform: The benefits of being active](#)
- [Live Argyll: See what physical activities are available in your area](#)

Top Tip: *Physical activity really is for everyone, we just need to find what we enjoy. It is easier to do more when we're having fun!*



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & CAFFEINATED DRINKS

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Reducing caffeinated drink intake is a protective factor for:

1. Good quality sleep: getting 8+ hours of sleep every night is so important for children and young people.
2. Good oral health and keeping smiles healthy.
3. Maintaining a healthy weight.
4. Good overall health and wellbeing.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

Drinking too many caffeinated drinks is a risk factor for:

1. Sleeping problems.
2. Dental problems such as tooth decay, erosion & staining.
3. Weight gain (when drinks contain sugar).
4. Loss of appetite (sweet drinks are full of energy and can make children feel full).
5. Increased anxiety, restlessness, upset stomach, twitching muscles, agitation, palpitations and headaches.

We need to reduce risk factors

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- ✓ Try to limit your child's intake of tea, coffee, cola and energy drinks and completely avoid them after lunchtime.
- ✓ Caffeinated drinks can contain large amounts of sugar, which can be very harmful.
- ✓ Encourage good toothbrushing twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste.
- ✓ If your child drinks a lot of caffeine, help them cut back slowly (or they could get withdrawals)
- ✓ Water is the best drink for children!

WEBSITES & APPS

- [NHS Highland: Caffeine and Energy Drinks](#)
- [NHS Fife: Caffeine Quantities Guidance](#)
- [NHS: Being Sugar Smart](#)
- [ChildSmile: Healthy Drinks](#)
- [ChildSmile: Info for Parents and Carers](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SAFETY

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These are aspects that could help enhance young people's safety:

1. Parent/carers knowing who their child is socialising with and where they are hanging out.
2. Parents/carers communicating regularly with other parents/carers.
3. Living in a caring home free of physical and/or psychological harm.
4. Returning home at a reasonable hour.
5. Not getting drunk and/or taking drugs to reduce likelihood of being in unsafe/vulnerable situations.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These are aspects that could reduce young people's safety:

1. Parents/carers not being aware who their child is socialising with and where they are hanging out.
2. Parents/carers not communicating regularly with other parents/carers.
3. Living in a home where they are subject to violence, physical and/or psychological harm.
4. Young people staying out late.
5. Getting drunk and/or taking drugs can make young people very vulnerable.

We need to reduce risk factors

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- ✓ Start a conversation with your child about safety (especially when they are not with you).
- ✓ If your child tells you they do not feel safe in a particular space and/or around a certain person, listen, and see what can be changed.
- ✓ Consider using 'Project X' - a secret code word or emoji between you and your child so they can tell you if they are in an unsafe situation.

[X-Plan: Giving your kids a way out \(#xplan\) | Bert Fulks](#)

WEBSITES

- [NSPCC: Keeping Children Safe](#)
- [NSPCC: Support and Advise for Parents](#)
- [Barnardo's: Talking to Your Child about Safety](#)
- [You and your child can download the free 'What3Words' app \(which tells you your exact location based on 3 unique words\)](#)
- Consider using location sharing apps
- [Practical strategies » Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SOCIAL MEDIA

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These are aspects that could reduce the likelihood of harmful social media use.

1. Using social media from 13 years old or older.
2. Having adequate privacy settings in place.
3. Only connecting with people they know online.
4. Never sharing their location on social media.
5. Never sharing naked/ revealing photos of themselves.
6. Spending limited time on social media (i.e., max. 30 minutes per day).
7. Engaging with age-appropriate suitable content.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These are aspects that could increase the risk of harmful social media use.

1. Using social media before 13 years old.
2. Not having privacy settings in place.
3. Connecting with strangers online.
4. Sharing their location on social media.
5. Sharing naked/ revealing photos of themselves (even if they know the person).
6. Spending too much time on social media.
7. Engaging with and being influenced by harmful/ violent/ racist/ sexist/ homophobic content.

We need to reduce risk factors

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- ✓ Social media before 13 years old is not advised.
- ✓ Ensure your child has privacy settings on their social media accounts and does not reveal their personal information.
- ✓ Help your child understand that photos posted online will be there forever (even if deleted).
- ✓ Start a discussion about peer pressure/ pressure to post or send inappropriate photos.
- ✓ Speak to your child about online bullying.

WEBSITES

- [NSPCC: Safeguarding on Social Media](#)
- [NSPCC: Cyber Bullying](#)
- [Police Scotland: Social Media](#)
- [Parent Club: Online safety at all ages](#)
- [CEOP Education](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & VAPES (E-CIGARETTES)

Vaping among children and young people is a rising concern nationally and locally. If we work together, we can discourage youth vaping.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These are aspects that could reduce the likelihood of vaping.

1. Young person does not think their friends vape.
2. Young person knows their parents/carers disapprove of them vaping.
3. Young person mostly enjoys school work.
4. Young person participates in activities out of school.
5. Young persons spends time with parents/carers on evenings and weekends.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These are are aspects that could increase the likelihood of vaping.

1. If young people think all/most their friends vape.
2. If young people think their parents/carers allow or do not mind them vaping.
3. If young people find school work pointless.
4. Young people not participating in activities out of school.
5. Not spending time with parents on evenings and weekends.

We need to reduce risk factors

ADVICE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

- ✓ Start open and honest conversations with your child(ren) around the topic of vaping - mention the harms and risks.
- ✓ Set clear rules and boundaries around not using vapes.
- ✓ Try to keep the home environment vape free.
- ✓ Have a chat about managing peer pressure.
- ✓ If needed, share information with your child about services who support a vape free lifestyle.
- ✓ Remember, adults in Scotland cannot sell, buy and give vapes to under 18s.

WEBSITES

- [NHS Inform: Vapes](#)
- [Parent Club: Information and Factors about Vaping](#)
- [Smoke Free Highland: If your child would like free and confidential support around smoking or vaping please contact Smoke Free Highland.](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SMOKING CIGARETTES

Children and young people smoking cigarettes is a concern nationally and locally. If we work together, we can discourage youth smoking.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These are aspects that could reduce the likelihood of cigarette use.

1. If young people do not think their friends smoke.
2. If young people think their parents/ carers would disapprove or not allow them to smoke.
3. Young person mostly enjoys school work.
4. Participating in organised activities out of school.
5. Returning home at a reasonable hour.
6. Spending time with parents on evenings and weekends.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These are aspects that could increase the likelihood of cigarette use.

1. If young people think all/ most their friends smoke.
2. If young people think their parents/ carers would allow or not mind them smoking.
3. If a young person finds schoolwork pointless.
4. Not participating in activities out of school.
5. Staying out late at night.
6. Not spending time with parents on evenings. and weekends.

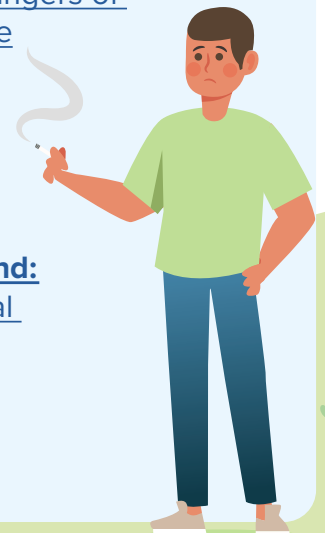
We need to reduce risk factors

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- ✓ Initiate open and honest conversations with your children around the topic of smoking.
- ✓ Help your child understand the harms and risks of smoking cigarettes.
- ✓ Set clear rules and boundaries around not smoking cigarettes.
- ✓ Try to keep the home and car smoke free.
- ✓ Open up a conversation with your child about how to manage peer pressure.
- ✓ If needed, let your child know about services that can help them stop smoking.

WEBSITES

- [ASH Scotland: Talking to Children about Smoking](#)
- [NHS Inform: The Dangers of Second Hand Smoke](#)
- [ASH Scotland: Scotland's Tobacco Free Generation by 2034 Goal](#)
- [Smoke Free Highland: Free and confidential support around smoking or vaping.](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & ILLEGAL DRUG USE

Drug misuse among children and young people is a concern nationally and locally. If we work together, we can discourage youth drug use.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These are aspects that could reduce the likelihood of drug use.

1. If young people do not think their friends take drugs.
2. If young people think their parents/ carers disapprove of them taking drugs.
3. Playing sport/ doing other activities.
4. Returning home at a reasonable hour.
5. Spending time with parents on weekends.
6. Ensuring the home environment is drug free.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These are aspects that could increase the likelihood of drug use.

1. If young people think all/ most their friends take drugs.
2. If young people think their parents allow or do not mind them taking drugs.
3. Not playing sport/ not doing other activities.
4. Staying out late (especially past midnight).
5. Not spending time with parents on weekends.
6. Normalising drug-use.

We need to reduce risk factors

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- ✓ It is better to have these conversations early.
- ✓ Try to help your child understand the risks of drug use and give them space to talk and ask questions.
- ✓ Chat to your child about managing peer pressure (i.e., have an agreed code word).
- ✓ Set boundaries (i.e., set a reasonable curfew, establish how they will get home safely, how they will keep in contact with you)
- ✓ Agree safety steps for if they take drugs and become unwell/ there is an emergency.

WEBSITES & APPS

- **Alcohol & Drug Partnership (ADP)**
School Support Service support prevention by engaging with young people affected by alcohol and drug use and support substance misuse messages. You can contact them through your child's secondary school.
- [NHS Children's Health: Drug Misuse](#)
- [NSPCC: Children and Drugs](#)
- [Young Minds: Supporting your child to make safe and healthy decisions](#)
- [Argyll and Bute \(ADP\)](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & ALCOHOL

Children and young people drinking alcohol and getting drunk is a concern nationally and locally. If we work together, we can discourage youth alcohol use.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These are aspects that could reduce the likelihood of drinking/ getting drunk.

1. If young people do not think their friends drink alcohol/ get drunk.
2. If young people think their parents/carers disapprove of them drinking/ getting drunk.
3. Playing sport/ doing other activities.
4. Returning home at a reasonable hour.
5. Spending time with parents on weekends.
6. Creating an alcohol-free home environment.

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These are aspects that could increase the likelihood of drinking/ getting drunk.

1. If young people think all/most their friends drink alcohol/ get drunk.
2. If young people think their parents allow or do not mind them drinking/ getting drunk.
3. Not playing sport/ doing other activities.
4. Staying out late.
5. Not spending time with parents on weekends.
6. Normalising underage drinking at home.

We need to reduce risk factors

ADVICE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

- ✓ Talking about alcohol early can help prevent teenage binge drinking.
- ✓ Try to not lecture your child but highlight the risks and harms of underage drinking.
- ✓ Speak to your child about managing peer pressure (i.e., have an agreed safety word).
- ✓ Role model healthy behaviour to your child.
- ✓ Set boundaries (i.e., set a reasonable curfew, establish how they will get home safely etc.)
- ✓ Agree safety steps for if they drink too much.

WEBSITES & SUPPORT

- **Alcohol & Drug Partnership (ADP)** School Support Service support prevention by engaging with young people affected by alcohol and drug use and support substance misuse messages. You can contact them through your child's secondary school.
- [**NHS Children's Health: Alcohol Abuse**](#)
- [**Young Minds \(Alcohol and Drugs\)**](#)
- [**NSPCC: Underage Drinking**](#)
- [**NHS Inform: Alcohol Support**](#)
- [**Alcohol Focus Scotland: Young People**](#)



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SEXUAL HEALTH

The sexual health and wellbeing of children and young people is a concern nationally and locally. If we work together, we can improve good and safe sexual health.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

These increase good/ safe sexual health:

1. Talking to your child about sex, sexual health and wellbeing by giving them accurate, non-judgemental information.
2. Knowing how to access and use contraception and condoms.
3. Knowing what to do and who to see if something goes wrong.
4. Understanding consent and feeling empowered to say 'no'.
5. Being safe and free to explore their gender and/or sexual identity (i.e., if they are LGBT+).

We need to increase protective factors

RISK FACTORS

These reduce good/ safe sexual health:

1. Not talking to your child about sex, sexual health and wellbeing and what to do if they have any concerns.
2. Having unprotected sex – which risks pregnancy and STIs.
3. Having sex while under the influence of alcohol and/or other substances.
4. Not understanding consent and/or not feeling empowered to say 'no'.
5. Being judged for exploring their gender and/or sexual identity (i.e., if they are LGBT+).

We need to reduce risk factors

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- ✓ Talking to your child about sex and sexual health may feel awkward but it is very important. Consider talking about: changes to their body & emotions; feeling ready (or not) for sex; relationships; understanding consent; contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancy; what to do if something goes wrong (e.g. a condom breaks); safety - including online and porn.
- ✓ It is completely normal for your child to explore their gender and sexual identity.

WEBSITES

- [**RSHP:** See what is being taught in school. Young people receive age appropriate, accurate relationship, sexual health and parenthood \(RSHP\) at school but it is important that this is reinforced at home. The RSHP website offers information to support your child at home.](#)
- [**NSPCC:** How To Talk To Children About Sex, Safety and Relationships](#)
- [**Order Free Condoms by Post \(13+\)**](#)

YOUNG PEOPLE IN ARGYLL AND BUTE HAVE IDENTIFIED LOCAL CHALLENGES

NOW WE MUST CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE FOR THEM THROUGH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SUPPORT

We can all work together to help children and young people be healthier, happier, safer and make better choices.

PLANET YOUTH IS HAPPENING IN ARGYLL AND BUTE

Visit: www.planetyouth.scot/ or

Contact: argyllandbute@planetyouth.scot



We are happy to consider any support you may need to help you to understand this information or to provide it in a different language or format.

Please contact Argyll and Bute's Health Improvement Team on:
nhsh.abhealthimprovement@nhs.scot for further information.

IF YOU HAVE IMMEDIATE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH OR WELLBEING, PLEASE SPEAK TO YOUR GP, CALL NHS24 ON '111', OR CONTACT '999' IN AN EMERGENCY.

YOU CAN ALSO VISIT THE LIVING WELL MENTAL HEALTH HUB FOR MORE INFORMATION: [MENTAL HEALTH HUB – LIVING WELL](#)

IN THE LONGER TERM, PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL INFORMED. THEY CAN OFFER SUPPORT OR HELP YOU ACCESS THE RIGHT SERVICES.

