

## GUIDEBOOK

Published January 2023

Downloaded from <https://guidebook.eif.org.uk/programme/talk-about-alcohol>

# Talk About Alcohol

Review: September 2017

**Note on provider involvement:** This provider has agreed to EIF's terms of reference, and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the programme provider.

**Talk About Alcohol is a school-based intervention aimed at reducing alcohol related problems in young people between the ages of 11 and 18.**

Teachers teach young people about the harmful effects of alcohol and provide them with strategies for refraining from alcohol use.

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Evidence  
rating: **2**

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Cost rating: **1**

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# EIF Programme Assessment

Talk About Alcohol has **preliminary evidence** of improving a child outcome, but we cannot be confident that the programme caused the improvement.

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Evidence  
rating: **2**

## What does the evidence rating mean?

**Level 2** indicates that the programme has evidence of improving a child outcome from a study involving at least 20 participants, representing 60% of the sample, using validated instruments.

This programme does not receive a rating of 3 as its best evidence is not from a rigorously conducted RCT or QED evaluation.

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## Cost rating

A rating of 1 indicates that a programme has a low cost to set up and deliver, compared with other interventions reviewed by EIF. This is equivalent to an estimated unit cost of less than £100.

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Cost rating: **1**

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## Child outcomes

According to the best available evidence for this programme's impact, it can achieve the following positive outcomes for children:

### Preventing substance abuse

#### Delay in onset drinking

Based on study 1a

Based on study 1b

#### Improved knowledge about alcohol

Based on study 1a

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## Key programme characteristics

### Who is it for?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to the following age-groups:

- Preadolescents
- Adolescents

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### How is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to implementation through these delivery models:

- Group

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### Where is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation in these settings:

- Secondary school

The programme may also be delivered in these settings:

- Secondary school
- Sixth-form or FE college

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### How is it targeted?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation as:

- Universal
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## Where has it been implemented?

United Kingdom

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## UK provision

This programme has been implemented in the UK.

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## UK evaluation

This programme's best evidence includes evaluation conducted in the UK.

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## Spotlight sets

EIF includes this programme in the following Spotlight sets:

- school based social emotional learning
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## About the programme

### What happens during delivery?

#### How is it delivered?

- Talk About Alcohol is delivered in six sessions of 50 minutes duration each by one teacher to groups of children.

### What happens during the intervention?

- Teachers are provided with free tools to encourage students to make informed decisions and feel confidence to manage difficult situations.
- The Talk about Alcohol programme is designed so that teachers can 'pick and mix' from a range of activities, films, activity sheets, and resource according the age, ability and experience of the group.
- Six lessons are developed under the following topics: Assessing knowledge, alcohol and its effects, social and physical, units and guidelines, alcohol and the law, and staying safe.
- Information booklets are also made available to students and their parents.

### What are the implementation requirements?

#### Who can deliver it?

- The practitioner who delivers this programme is an PSHE professional, teacher, or youth leader with QCF-6 level qualifications.

## What are the training requirements?

- Practitioner training is recommended but not obligatory.
- The practitioners have two hours of programme training. Booster training of practitioners is not required.
- The PSHE professional, teacher, or youth leader are trained By AET specialist staff. The TAA programme can be self-administered but two hours training in its methodology and interactive resources is recommended.

## How are the practitioners supervised?

- Practitioners (PSHE leads, teachers and youth workers) are supported with six newsletters of updates and implementation/guidance advice each year as well as with phone/email support ongoing.

## What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

- Training manual
- Other printed material
- Other online material
- Face-to-face training
- The TAA programme is fully supported online via [www.alcoholeducationtrust.org](http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org), organised by topic and by year group and with an interactive learning zone via [www.talkaboutalcohol.com](http://www.talkaboutalcohol.com)
- Practitioners are further supported with bi termly updates, new resources, changes in the law or policy.
- They can also email or phone for advice on the programme and its implementation or delivery.

## Is there a licensing requirement?

There is no licence required to run this programme.

## How does it work? (Theory of Change)

### How does it work?

- Talk About Alcohol assumes that young people will be more likely to delay the age at which they start drinking and refrain from drinking too much if they know about the social and physical effects of alcohol, the law, social norms and resilience strategies.
- Young people are therefore taught about the harmful physical and social effects of alcohol and are provided with strategies for making healthy balanced decisions about when to drink or if to drink, and how much to drink.
- In the short term, young people are more confident in resisting the temptation or peer pressure to drink.
- In the longer term, young people will delay the age at which they start drinking (after age 15) and will be less likely to binge drink.

### Intended outcomes

Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing  
Enhancing school achievement & employment  
Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour  
Preventing substance abuse  
Preventing risky sexual behaviour & teen pregnancy

### Contact details

**Kate Hooper** [kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org](mailto:kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org)

<http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org> <http://www.talkaboutalcohol.com>

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## About the evidence

Talk about Alcohol's most rigorous evidence comes from a QED which was conducted in the UK. This is a 2-level study, which has identified a statistically significant positive impact on child outcomes.

A programme receives the same rating as its most robust study, and so receives a level-2 overall.

### Study 1a

**Citation:** Lynch et al., (2013) Lynch et al., (2014)

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**Design:** QED

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**Country:** United Kingdom

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**Sample:** 33 schools, 4410 children aged 12-13

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**Timing:** Baseline (T1); 6-months post-baseline (T2); 16-18 months post-baseline (T3)

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**Child outcomes:**

- Delay in onset drinking
  - Improved knowledge about alcohol
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**Other outcomes:**

- None measured
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**Study rating:** 2

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Lynch, S., Styles, B., Dawson, A., Worth, J., Kerr, D., Lloyd, J. (2013). Talk about alcohol: an evaluation of the Alcohol Education Trust's intervention in secondary schools.

**Available at:** <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications>

Lynch, S., Dawson, A., & Worth, J. (2014). Talk About Alcohol: impact of a school-based alcohol intervention on early adolescents. *International journal of health promotion and education*, 52(5), 283-299.

**Available at:** <http://www.tandfonline.com>

### **Study design and sample**

The first study is a QED.

The intervention group was selected from schools that had expressed an interest in the materials but which had not yet received them. Comparison schools were selected using propensity score matching to ensure that the school-level characteristics of both groups matched as closely as possible. Comparison and intervention schools were matched according to region, percentage of students eligible for free school meals, urban/rural, Ofsted school effectiveness.

This study was conducted in England. The sample included 33 schools, with a total of 4410 children aged 12-13. There were 2142 children in 16 intervention schools, and 2268 children in 17 comparison schools. Approximately 50% of the entire sample were female. 65% of the intervention group were white, and 79% of the comparison group were white.

### **Measures**

- Onset of drinking was measured using a survey questionnaire (child self-report)
- Knowledge of alcohol and its effects was measured using survey questionnaire (child self-report).
- Frequency of drinking was measured using a survey questionnaire (child self-report).

### **Findings**

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This includes onset of drinking, and knowledge of alcohol and its effects.

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes. The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are limited by methodological issues pertaining to the treatment and comparison groups not being generated by sufficiently robust methods and unequivalent groups, hence why a higher rating is not achieved.

## Study 1b

**Citation:** Lynch et al., 2015

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**Design:** QED

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**Country:** United Kingdom

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**Sample:** 33 schools, 4410 children aged 12-13

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**Timing:** 3 years post-baseline (T4)

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**Child outcomes:**

- Delay in onset drinking
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**Other outcomes:**

- None measured
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**Study rating:** 2

Lynch, S., Worth, J. and Bradshaw, S. (2015). Evaluation of the Alcohol Education Trust's Talk about Alcohol Intervention: Longer-Term Follow up. Slough: NFER.

**Available at:** <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications>

Study 1b describes follow-up findings from study 1a.

- Follow-up assessments were one year post-intervention.
- Outcomes measured included: Onset of drinking (survey questionnaire, self-report), Knowledge of alcohol (survey questionnaire, self-report), and Frequency of drinking (survey questionnaire, self-report).
- This study identified statistically significant positive impact on child outcomes. This includes onset of drinking (questionnaire survey, self-report).

## Other studies

The following studies were identified for this programme but did not count towards the programme's overall evidence rating. A programme receives the same rating as its most robust study or studies.

Gutman, L, (2016). An evaluation of the Alcohol Education Trust 'Talk about Alcohol' Programme in three areas of England where alcohol related indices of harm are highest for under 18's (LAPE). UCL. Institute of Education - **This reference refers to a quasi-experimental design, conducted in the UK.**

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## Guidebook

The EIF Guidebook provides information about early intervention programmes that have at least preliminary evidence of achieving positive outcomes for children. It provides information based on EIF's assessment of the strength of evidence for a programme's effectiveness, and on detail about programmes shared with us by those who design, run and deliver them.

The Guidebook serves an important starting point for commissioners to find out more about effective early interventions, and for programme providers to find out more about what good evidence of impact looks like and how it can be captured. As just one of our key resources for commissioners and practitioners, the Guidebook is an essential part of EIF's work to support the development of and investment in effective early intervention programmes.

Our assessment of the evidence for a programme's effectiveness can inform and support certain parts of a commissioning decision, but it is not a substitute for professional judgment. Evidence about what has worked in the past offers no guarantee that an approach will work in all circumstances. Crucially, the Guidebook is not a market comparison website: ratings and other information should not be interpreted as a specific recommendation, kite mark or endorsement for any programme.

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[How to read the Guidebook](#)

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[EIF evidence standards](#)

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[About the EIF Guidebook](#)

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## EIF

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) is an independent charity and a member of the What Works network. We support the use of effective early intervention for children, young people and their families: identifying signals of risk, and responding with effective interventions to improve outcomes, reduce hardship and save the public money in the long term.

We work by generating evidence and knowledge of what works in our field, putting this information in the hands of commissioners, practitioners and policymakers, and supporting the adoption of the evidence in local areas and relevant sectors.

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[www.EIF.org.uk](http://www.EIF.org.uk) | [@TheEIFoundation](https://twitter.com/TheEIFoundation)

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