

12/3060 Using peer support to prevent illicit drug uptake and use in young people

Research Question(s)?

What is the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of using peer support to prevent illicit drug uptake and use in young people?

- **Population:** Young people of secondary school age. Researchers to specify and justify.
- **Intervention (non-NHS):** Intervention using peer support. Intervention may be organised in various ways and delivered in various settings.
- **Comparator:** Usual practice.
- **Outcomes:** Incidence of illicit drug uptake, illicit drug use. Other health related outcomes may also be included (researchers to specify and justify).
- **Duration of follow up:** Researchers to specify and justify. Consideration should be given to sustainability of the intervention and natural history of illicit drug uptake and use over a period of time.
- **Impact on inequalities:** Research should consider the impact of the intervention on health inequalities. Researchers to specify and justify.
- **Design:** Primary research, researchers to specify and justify. Loss to follow-up is likely to be a significant problem in this group. Please consider how this can be minimised.
- **Setting:** Educational establishments or communities. Researchers to specify and justify.
- **Public engagement:** Proposals should incorporate a mechanism for public involvement.

Background to commissioning brief:

The use of illicit drugs by young people is associated with immediate health risks, which varies with the type of drug used. Evidence suggests that young people using illicit drugs run the risk of damage to mental health including suicide, depression and disruptive behaviour disorders. Regular use of illicit drugs may also lead to dependence and psychotic symptoms. Among 10 to 15 year olds, an increased likelihood of illicit drug use is linked to a range of adverse experiences and behaviour, including exclusion from school, homelessness, time in care, and serious or frequent offending. Reducing illicit drug use by young people, particularly the most vulnerable, is central to the Government's *Updated National Drug Strategy*.

For young people, peers, family and social context are strongly implicated in early drug use. Prevention of drug misuse thus should focus on school-aged children and adolescents, before their beliefs and expectations about substance use are established. The evidence in the prevention of illicit drug use using peer-led programmes is not conclusive. However, studies using peer-led support for alcohol and smoking prevention have been shown to be effective.

A life course perspective should be considered in the proposed research.

Remit of Call:

All proposals submitted under this brief must fall within the remit of the Public Health Research programme. Please go to <http://www.phr.ac.uk/> for details.

General Notes:

The PHR programme evaluates public health interventions, providing new knowledge on the benefits, costs, acceptability and wider impacts of non-NHS interventions intended to improve the health of the public and reduce inequalities in health. The scope of the

programme is multi-disciplinary and broad, covering a range of interventions that improve public health delivered in a non-NHS setting.

Notes to Applicants

The NIHR Public Health Research programme is funded by the NIHR, with contributions from the CSO in Scotland, NISCHR in Wales, and HSC R&D, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland.

Researchers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are eligible to apply for funding under this programme.

Applicants are recommended to seek advice from suitable methodological support services, at an appropriate stage in the development of their research idea and application. It is advisable to make contact at an early a stage as possible to allow sufficient time for discussion and a considered response.

The NIHR Research Design Service

(http://www.nihr.ac.uk/infrastructure/Pages/infrastructure_research_design_services.aspx) can advise on appropriate NIHR programme choice, and developing and designing high quality research grant applications.

Clinical Trials Units are regarded as an important component of any trial application and can advise and participate throughout the process from initial idea development through to project delivery and reporting. NETSCC CTU Support Funding

(http://www.netscc.ac.uk/supporting_research/CTUs) provides information on the units receiving funding from the NIHR to collaborate on research applications to NIHR programmes and funded projects. In addition UKCRC CTU (<http://www.ukcrc-ctu.org.uk>) provides information and searchable information resource on all registered units in the UK.

Transparency agenda

In line with the government's transparency agenda, any contract resulting from this tender may be published in its entirety to the general public. Further information on the transparency agenda is at:

<http://transparency.number10.gov.uk/>

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/policy_and_standards_framework_transparency.asp

<http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/>