

The Youth Substance Misuse (YSM) Teams in Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness work with children and young adults across the spectrum of need from those children and young adults, who may not be open to any services other than universal ones (such as school), right through to those children and young adults, who are care experienced or open on Child Protection. Officers in the teams work directly with children and young adults on a 1:1 basis to deliver personalised interventions and harm reduction advice relating to substance misuse and related risk-taking behaviour, coaching them to make change.

Within the Cumberland Youth Substance Misuse Team, we have seen a significant increase in our referrals for solvent use over the past month.

What does solvent abuse look like?

There are lots of glues, gases, and aerosols which, when inhaled, can cause you harm. Many are normal household products – such as:

- butane gas lighter refills
- aerosols containing hairspray
- deodorants and air fresheners
- tins or tubes of glue
- some paints, thinners and correcting fluids
- cleaning fluids
- surgical spirit
- petrol



The glues, gases, solvents, and aerosols can be breathed in, sprayed directly into the mouth, sprayed through a cloth, or inhaled from something acting as a container or holder such as being sniffed inside a plastic or paper bag, inhaled from a balloon/mask or dipping material in the solvent and then held over nose and mouth.

Whilst our approach is always focused on harm minimisation, there is no message that we can share to reduce the harm of Solvent/Household/inhalant use; solvent abuse does kill.

What does solvent abuse look like?

The immediate symptoms of solvent abuse can appear a lot like alcohol use. They might include:

- Slurred speech
- Dilated pupils
- Euphoria and excitement
- Difficulty with coordination
- Feeling drowsy, dizzy or light-headed
- Feeling nauseated and not interested in eating
- 'Drunken', withdrawn, irritable or inattentive behaviour
- Hallucinations and/or delusions

Other physical signs suggestive of use might include a chemical smell, runny nose, watery eyes, irritation of the throat and rashes or spots around the nose and mouth.



What are we doing?

The Cumberland YSM team run an Instagram page @DrugHubUK, which is aimed at providing children and young adults with accurate information on different substances including harm minimisation messages 24/7. The team will focus posts on solvent use throughout May to offer education around signs, symptoms and risks.

The YSM Team have completed up-to-date training on Solvent use from Re-solv -a national specialist organisation; this will be shared on our social media platform and we will signpost parents and carers to the Re-solv website.

What can you do?

Please give the Instagram page @DrugHubUK a follow and direct your young people to it for any drug information and advice.

How to make a referral:

Cumberland

- drughubuk@cumberland.gov.uk.
- **Abi Macrae**, Youth Substance Misuse Officer, Carlisle Locality, abi.macrae@cumberland.gov.uk
- **Barry Arnison**, Youth Substance Misuse Officer, Allerdale & Copeland Locality Barry.arnison@cumberland.gov.uk

Westmorland & Furness

- YouthSubstanceMisuse.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk

Further information and support can be found:

Re-Solv : [Solvent abuse advice and support - Re-Solv: UK's solvent abuse charity](#)

TalktoFrank: [Glues, gases and aerosols | Effects and Risks | FRANK \(talktofrank.com\)](#)

