

## NHS Wales News

### Family programme to prevent children turning to drugs and alcohol

The Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Jane Wilkinson, has visited a programme which helps prevent young people from turning to drugs and alcohol.

Research has shown that two in every five Welsh 15 year olds have said they drink alcohol weekly and that half of them have been drunk at least twice in their lifetime.

Children who drink alcohol are not only risking their health both physically and mentally, but they are more likely to become involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour.

The Strengthening Families Programme (SFP), which is part-funded by a Welsh Assembly Government grant of £370,000, helps parents and their children gain a better understanding of the harms of alcohol and other substance misuse, and how to reduce the likelihood of children experiencing health-damaging behaviour.

Seven-week long courses are run throughout the year across Wales, teaching children aged 10 – 14 how to resist peer pressure and the natural temptation to try new things such as drugs or alcohol.

The courses also help parents understand the influence they have on their children. Children develop ideas and attitudes about alcohol from an early age and parents and carers play a key role in encouraging a responsible attitude to alcohol.

Six of the programmes in Wales are currently being evaluated as part of a randomised control trial. Researchers led by Cardiff University will examine the success the programme has on young people in reducing drinking, smoking and drug use, against those who have not attended the course.

For full story [CLICK HERE](#)