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**Screening and referral of young people into an alcohol misuse programme in North East England: a qualitative evaluation**

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**Introduction**

Although alcohol intake among young people is decreasing generally, some regions in the UK remain characterized by high rates of alcohol related morbidity in under 18s. Within one such region, the Sunderland Young Persons Alcohol and Drugs Project (YDAP) seeks to provide early brief and complex interventions, as appropriate, to young persons whose adverse life circumstances may increase their likelihood of alcohol-related harm. This study aims to evaluate the YDAP referral process and risk profiling tools for their effectiveness and acceptability and to explore what works best for different groups in which circumstances.

**Methods**

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups with service users are being analysed alongside routinely collected referral and outcome data. Influences on effective engagement and the appropriate referrals are being explored with a particular focus on the influence of different referral contexts.

### **Results**

Early qualitative interviews with key stakeholders have highlighted a range of contextual and organisational factors which impact on the effectiveness of the YDAP referral process in appropriately targeting and engaging young people most at risk. Preliminary findings draw attention to the importance of underlying sociocultural attitudes about alcohol use, help-seeking, and engagement with alcohol services. Related influences include perceptions of responsibility, the role of prevention and the value placed on alcohol behavior change.

**Conclusions**

Findings will help to inform service development and improve our knowledge of the barriers and facilitators in identifying and reaching young people who are most at risk of alcohol-related harm within different contexts.

**Key words: screening, referral, young people, alcohol misuse interventions, cultural attitude**s.