

Development of 'Have a Safe Night Out' alcohol awareness campaign at UWE

Summary

With alcohol abuse and the dangers caused by excessive drinking a concern among young adults, especially university students, the Healthy University Group at the University of the West of England-Bristol (UWE Bristol) aim to promote responsible drinking and alcohol awareness. The university have developed a 'Have a Safe Night Out' campaign, as well as online resources and the Healthy University Group are working to raise their profile and objectives, including responsible drinking, at a variety of student events.

Aims

- Raise awareness of alcohol related health promotion at UWE through communications and events.
- Develop the 'Have a Safe Night Out' campaign.
- Ensure all students know where to go for help with any alcohol related issues.
- Promote responsible drinking across UWE.

Overview

Context / background

UWE aim to support student learning and well-being in a vibrant, healthy and sustainable learning environment. We aim to enhance productivity, avoid unnecessary absences and ensure students keep themselves safe with our 'Have a Safe Night Out' campaign and by promoting sensible and responsible drinking with the help of The Healthy University Group. Alcohol awareness is a main focus of the UWE Healthy University Group. The Group was established in 2006 as a sub-group of the Sustainability Board. The Healthy University Group ensures that a whole university approach is taken to health, well-being and sustainability, endorsing membership from academic staff, Senior Management Team, Student Services, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Environmental Management, Student Experience, Student Union, Centre for Sport

Drivers and levers for change

Studies have shown that, for many young people, particularly university students, drinking to excess is considered 'the norm'. Getting drunk is often seen as a group activity and plays an important role in socializing and group identity formation, with some students feeling peer pressured into binge drinking and unaware of safe drinking limits. Both medical and social negative impacts of excessive drinking among young people have been well documented. As a healthy university UWE are committed to ensuring our students have the knowledge and resources to make important decisions regarding their health and well-being in the context of alcohol use.

Who led the work internally and externally?

Internally the project was led by the alcohol and drugs steering group, a sub-group of the Healthy University Group. The 'Have a Safe Night Out' campaign was developed and managed by the Community Liaison Manager, Nigel England. Externally the project has been supported with materials from Drinkaware, the NHS and Bristol Drugs Project.

Who was the strategic lead, who was the operational lead?

The Healthy University Group, chaired by Judy Orme, Professor of Public Health and Sustainability took the strategic lead. Ideas were brainstormed during a Healthy University Group meeting then Community Liaison Manager, Healthy University Co-ordinator and Healthy University Intern took the operational lead in organising events and resources such as the Welcome weekend and Fresher's Fair.

Resources needed

Minimal financial resources were used. Freebies for the Fresher's Fair and Welcome Weekend, including drink diaries, unit calculators and leaflets were supplied by Drinkaware, the NHS and the Police. 'spikeys' and ingredients for 'mocktails' were paid for by facilities. The only other financial cost was for the graphics and printing of posters and wallet-sized cards which was shared amongst stakeholder departments.

The campaign mainly required staff input and time in the development of the campaign, writing the web content and organizing the stalls for events. Student volunteers from 'Bar School Society' also helped at Fresher's Fair by making non-alcoholic cocktails (mocktails) which proved really successful amongst the students with positive feedback from them.

What we did

This campaign required cross-department partnerships from Student Services, Community Liaison, Accommodation, Marketing, Facilities and the Students Union. A campaign was developed with a clear, concise message highlighting the benefits of target behaviour. The Healthy University Co-ordinator developed a new 'Staying Healthy' student services web page with advice about alcohol and drugs and how to keep safe. The new pages are easier to find with clear, simple titles and a quick link to the 'safe night out' page. The Healthy University Group have been present at a number of events promoting the 'Have a Safe Night Out' campaign and dispensing information, unit counters, drink diary's and spikey's to help students keep on top of their alcohol consumption and stay safe from drink spiking. The Students Union have also supported the campaign with 'UWE Bar School' making non-alcoholic 'mocktails' at fresher's fair, helping to draw people to the stand and the SU holding their own NUS Drinkaware evening just before Christmas. The SU also display the Have a safe night out posters in all their bar areas. It was imperative that messages from all departments involved were consistent in supporting the campaign objectives, this included advisory information being displayed where alcohol is for sale in UWE and SU outlets and the removal of a drinking game from the shelves of the university shop.

Methods of communication

A variety of communication methods were used. 'Have a Safe Night Out' posters were displayed in accommodation and in big light boxes across campuses. Wallet-sized cards with key tips, local taxi numbers and alcohol units were included in welcome packs for all new students and distributed at various events as well as to Night clubs in Bristol. Verbal communication came from the Healthy University Group at various events and academic staff included a 'Have a Safe Night Out' slide in induction presentations. The 'Staying Healthy' web page is under the 'students' section of the UWE website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Critical success factors

- Increased profile of the Healthy University Group from presence at events
- Student health promotion high on the universities agenda, with raised awareness of key messages
- Cross-department partnerships, supporting each other in delivering a clear message
- High levels of interest from students
- Campaign presence across all campus'

How we measured impact

- Focus groups and surveys with students to measure the impact and effectiveness of the campaign
- Uptake of promotional material at various events
- Very high footfall at Fresher's Fair stand
- Website statistics and reports: visits to new 'Staying Healthy' web pages increased by 700% in the first month of going live
- Increased partnership with UWESU, with support for the campaign and Bar School Society's help at Fresher's Fair

Key Learning Points

Challenges / barriers

The campaign aimed to challenge dangerous excessive drinking behaviour that has come to be considered 'the norm' among many students and to make students think about their own safety and the safety of their friends when on a night out. It was important that the campaign didn't rely on scare tactics and moralising as research has proved this to be counterproductive when communicating to young adults. Instead the focus was on educating students with regards to safe drinking limits and encouraging them to have a safe night out. Another barrier was competing for student attention against the more 'fun' stands at events, freebies and enthusiastic staff helped with this. There was not a huge budget for this campaign so financial costs were kept to a minimum, with stakeholder departments sharing costs.

How we achieved success

Commitment from UWE's leadership and management, demonstrated through the UWE Sustainability Strategy which focuses on a 'Healthy University' as one of its defined areas of work. The dedication, enthusiasm and effective communication of the Healthy University Group, Community Liaison Manager and partners ensured a strong campaign with a clear, concise message was delivered.

How did the work contribute to the three key focus areas of healthy universities?

1. Create healthy and sustainable learning, working and living environments

The 'Have a Great Night Out' campaign encourages students to enjoy themselves and socialise whilst taking care of their health and personal safety as well as that of their friends. The campaign is imbedded into student life with posters in all accommodation, wallet cards for them to carry and online resources available.

2. Integrate health and sustainability into core business

We feel that encouraging students to consider their health and personal safety with regards to alcohol consumption will help with academic achievement and student retention. The key points of the campaign are delivered to students in their introduction, demonstrating the universities commitment to student health.

3. Contribute to the health and wellbeing and sustainability of local, regional, national and global communities

Limit problems associated with excessive drinking such as anti-social behaviour, strengthening student and community partnerships. The Have a safe night out campaign is forming part of an overall alcohol, noise and ASB campaign across Bristol Night clubs helping to raise awareness amongst students across Bristol about the key issues of safety, consideration for neighbours and reduction in anti social behaviour and thereby helping the well being of communities in Bristol.

Thematic Categories

Method		Topic		Population Group	
Campaign / Event	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol /Substance Misuse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	Built Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Project	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food / Healthy Eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wider Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Policy / Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whole System Approach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Physical Activity / Active Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Health	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Sustainable Development	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Tobacco	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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