

University Harm Reduction Approach

The Harm Reduction Strategy highlights the need for a university-wide approach, working with partners like the NHS and local health services. Recognising the challenges of drug and alcohol use, we've developed a plan that supports our ongoing commitment to student wellbeing.



Aberystwyth University

Education



Support



Safety



Due Date: August 2024

Trigger Warning

This document includes references to drug and alcohol use, which some readers may find distressing. If reading this document raises concerns or brings up difficult emotions, we encourage you to discuss it with a friend or colleague.

If you would like to talk to someone, please contact:

Student Wellbeing at <mailto:studentwellbeing@aber.ac.uk> or [01970 621 761](tel:01970621761)

Your line manager, or Human Resources on 01970 628 555 – you can also contact [Care First](#), the University's Employee Assistance Programme.

If you are affected by drug or alcohol use either personally or by association, you can confidentially self-refer to [Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service](#) (DDAS) for support:

Why do we need a Harm Reduction Strategy at Aberystwyth University?

Aberystwyth University's Harm Reduction Strategy is crucial not only to follow national best practices but also because we care about the wellbeing of our university community. By adopting effective approaches from [SOSUK](#) and [Universities UK](#), we aim to provide practical support and create a safer environment. This strategy helps us address drug and alcohol use responsibly, focusing on education, support, and safety to prevent harm and ensure our campus is a supportive place for all students.

Our Shared Commitment:

In implementing this Harm Reduction Strategy, we are dedicated to working closely with the [Undeb Students' Union](#) and DDAS & Choices to provide effective support and guidance for both staff and students. Using evidence-based practices, we aim to reduce drug and alcohol harm and provide targeted support where it's needed most, focusing on both individual and community needs. Our goal is to address the wide-ranging impacts of substance use—physical, mental, and social—and make this a core part of our approach. Together, we strive to create a safer, healthier, and more supportive environment at Aberystwyth University. Drug and alcohol-related harms are preventable. Substance use significantly affects health and safety, especially among young people, impacting millions worldwide each year. At Aberystwyth University, we recognise these challenges and are committed to using evidence-based harm reduction strategies. Our goal is to create a supportive environment that prioritises safety and wellbeing, addressing the risks associated with substance use through comprehensive support and resources to foster a healthier community.

Our Vision: Our vision is straightforward: we recognise that drug and alcohol use is a reality in society, so we aim to create a safe and supportive environment at our university. Our goal is to reduce harm by providing practical tools and support, and to build a culture of understanding and responsibility around substance use.

Strategic Objective:

Our vision is straightforward: by creating a safe and supportive environment with practical tools, we aim to reduce the risks associated with drug and alcohol use within our university community. Our goal is to build a culture where everyone actively works to minimise harm and support one another.

1. **Lead:** Promote a university-wide approach that prioritises harm reduction, ensuring all policies and practices support safe and responsible behaviour regarding drug and alcohol use.
2. **Educate and Learn:** Offer ongoing, relevant training for students and staff to ensure everyone is informed and prepared to handle substance use issues effectively. Commit to regularly updating our policies based on new insights and feedback.
3. **Communicate:** Maintain clear, open communication about our harm reduction efforts. Make information and support services easily accessible across campus to keep everyone informed.
4. **Care and Support:** Provide continuous, compassionate support through resources, outreach, and training. Ensure that students and staff have access to the help they need for managing substance use.
5. **Community and Partnership:** Adopt a community-wide approach by collaborating with external partners and local organisations. Strengthen relationships to provide comprehensive support and enhance our harm reduction efforts.

Actions:

Lead: Implement a robust drug and alcohol policy that has a harm reduction approach, and ensure regular updates and reviews are reported to key university committees.

Educate and Learn: Provide essential training for everyone in our community. Include substance use education in student inductions, offer Naloxone training for student nurses, and ensure university staff receive DDAS & Choices training to support students effectively. We will continuously improve our approach through feedback and by adopting best practices from SOSUK and other universities.

Communicate: Launch awareness campaigns and leverage digital platforms to keep the university community informed about harm reduction resources. Promote open dialogue about concerns through the 'Raising Concerns' feature in Report and Support. Maintain strong connections with partners, statutory services, and DDAS & Choices to stay updated on best practices and share critical risk information.

Care and Support: Provide comprehensive support services by integrating DDAS & Choices on campus for staff and students. Ensure access to dedicated resources and external support networks to address individual needs effectively.

Community and Partnership: Collaborate with local and national organisations, including Hywel Dda Health Board, Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service (DDAS), Barod, and other universities. Engage in SOS UK Harm Reduction accreditation and provide joint training to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to harm reduction.