

# A journey to harm reduction

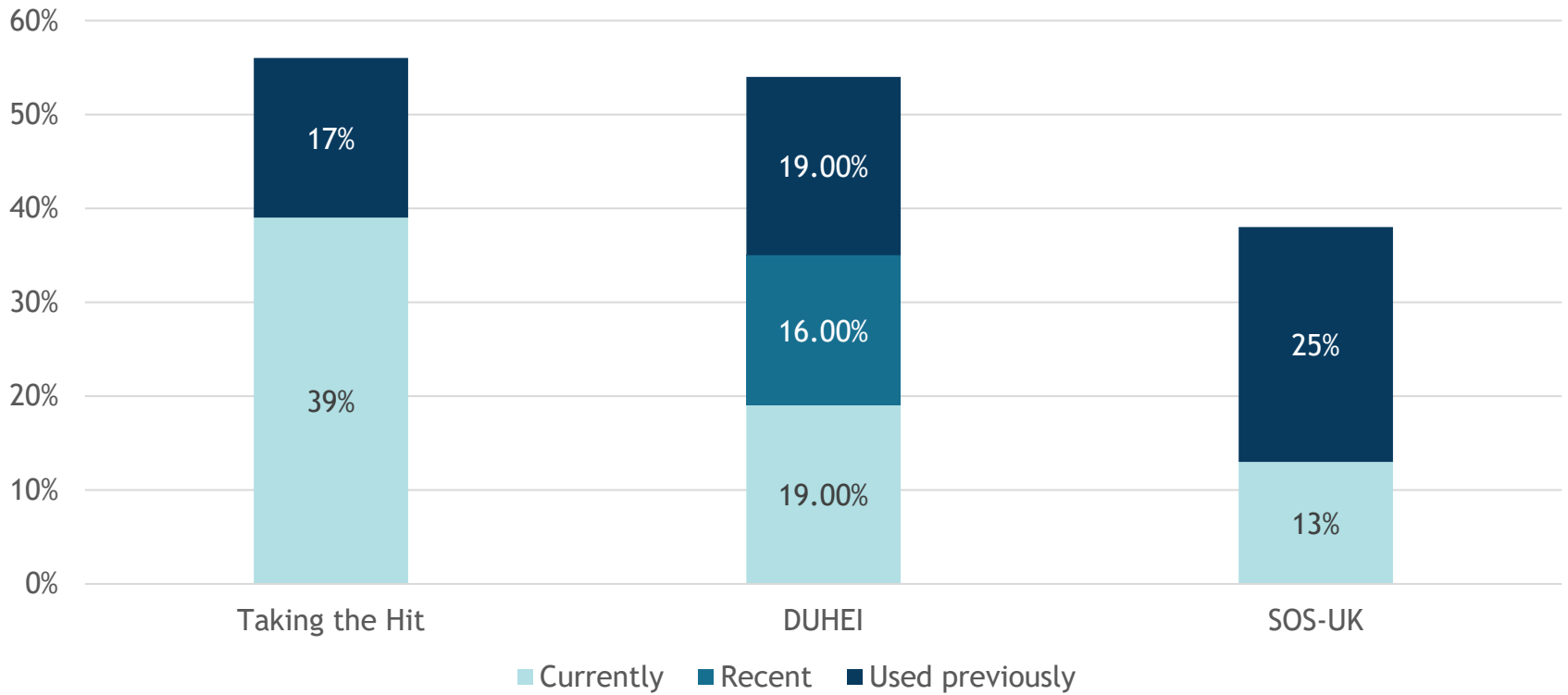


STUDENTS  
ORGANISING FOR  
SUSTAINABILITY  
UNITED KINGDOM

## How many students have used drugs?

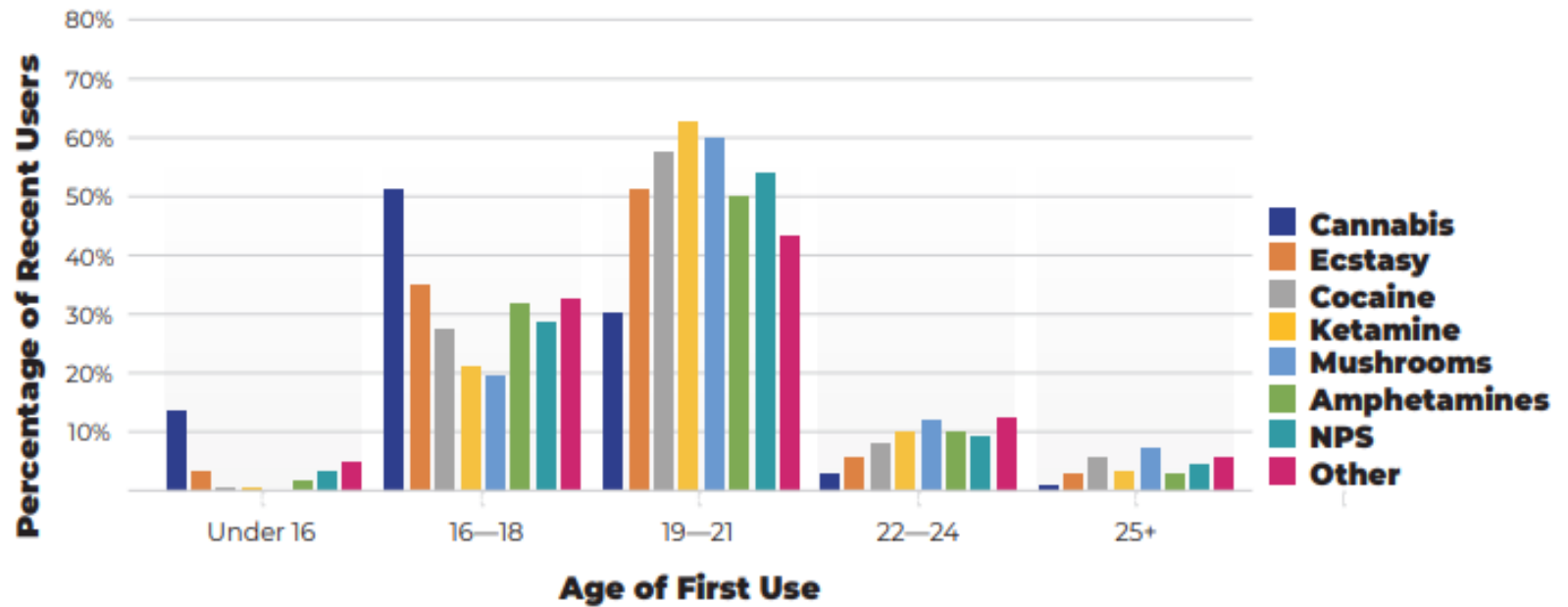
- 65%
- 50%
- 32%
- 20%
- 11%

# How many students are using drugs?



# Age of first use for drugs (recent users).

Figure 27 - Age at First Use (Recent Users)



# Information about drug use

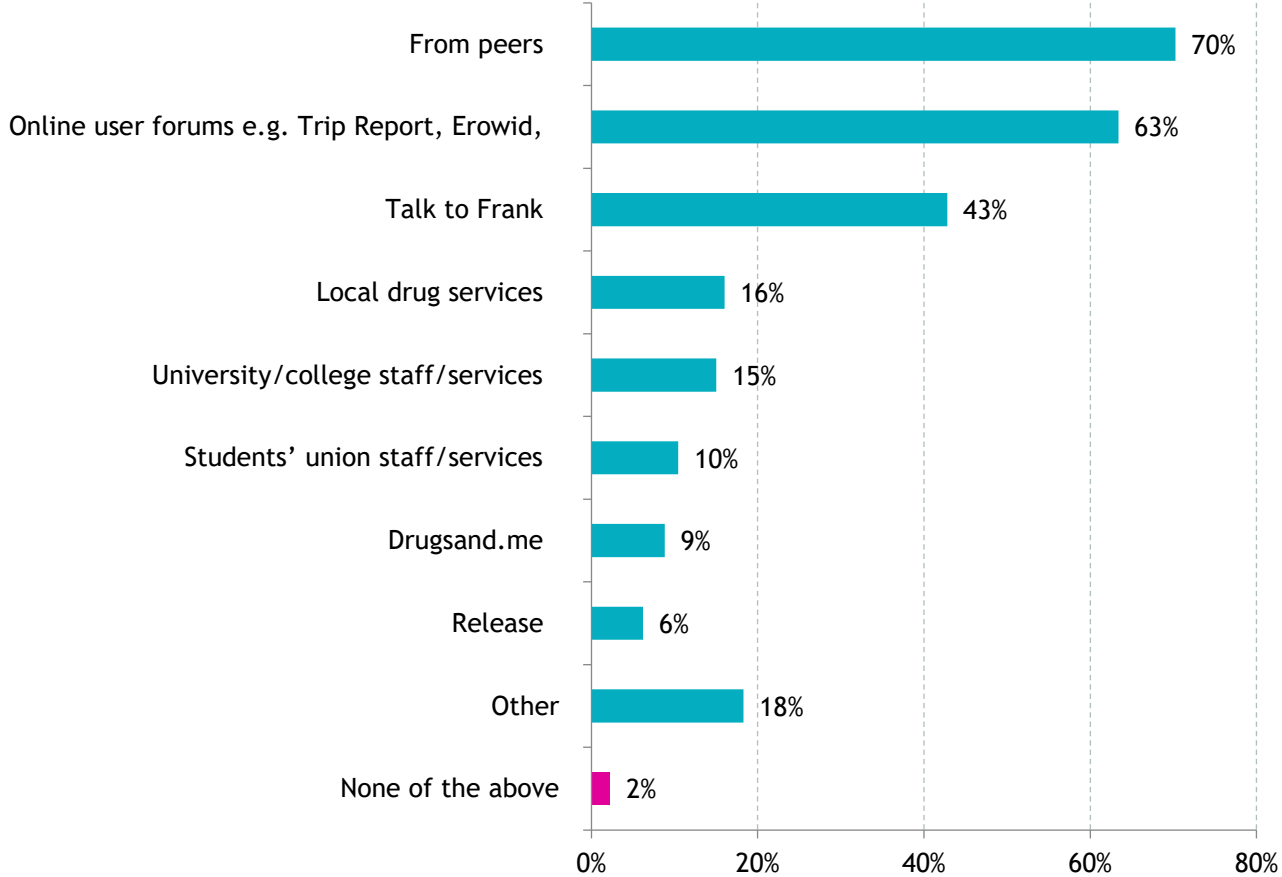


**43%** Do not know where to access advice or education



**39%** Do not know where to access advice or education

# Where is advice sought?



# Other sources where you'd like to find advice or information about drugs

## Main themes

- At university/at school
- Social media/online
- Health centres/NHS
- Student venues

*"No, but more around university SUs would be helpful. Leaflets that people can pick up etc if they want/need them"*

Female, 18-22 HE

*"Advice on drugs and information on the affects of drugs needs to be more promoted on social media."*

Female, 18-22, HE

*"I feel that advice and information on drugs should be more readily available from student unions as well as local healthcare services."*

Male, 18-22, Post Grad

*"students union, local GP's"*

Female, 18-22, HE

*"More information on how to tackle drug addiction and deal with addicts should be a part of the school curriculum"*

Female, 18-22, HE



# WHY DID WE DO THE WORK?

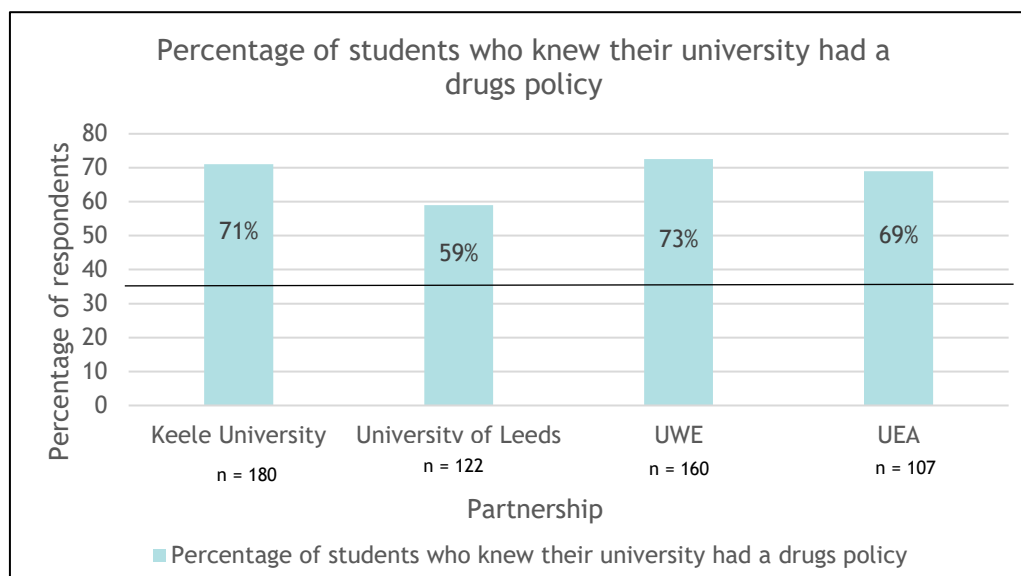


# Drug and Alcohol Impact

The objective was to design and deliver an **accreditation programme** that would enable students' unions and university partnerships to **support and educate students about drug use**, including a clear framework to drive progress, and a package of support for partnerships.

# IMPACT

1. Improved knowledge and understanding of student drug use.
2. Harm reduction statements and policies



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS REPORTING KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR UNIVERSITY'S DRUG POLICY, DRUG AND ALCOHOL IMPACT SURVEY 2021

# IMPACT

## 3. Increased support for students seeking help

- Provision of in-house senior drug and alcohol practitioner

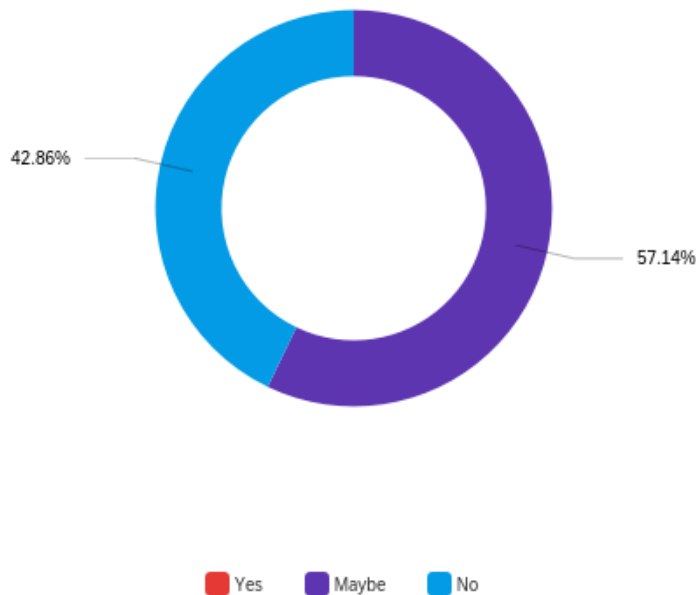


FIGURE 2: SURVEY OF STUDENTS WHO ACCESSED THE UWE BRISTOL DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICE BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2021 - MARCH 2022, IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION “WOULD YOU HAVE ACCESSED DRUGS AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT EXTERNALLY TO THE UNIVERSITY IF THIS SERVICE WASN’T AVAILABLE?”.

- Improved referrals to external support

## 3. Increased support for students seeking support

- Peer-led support schemes

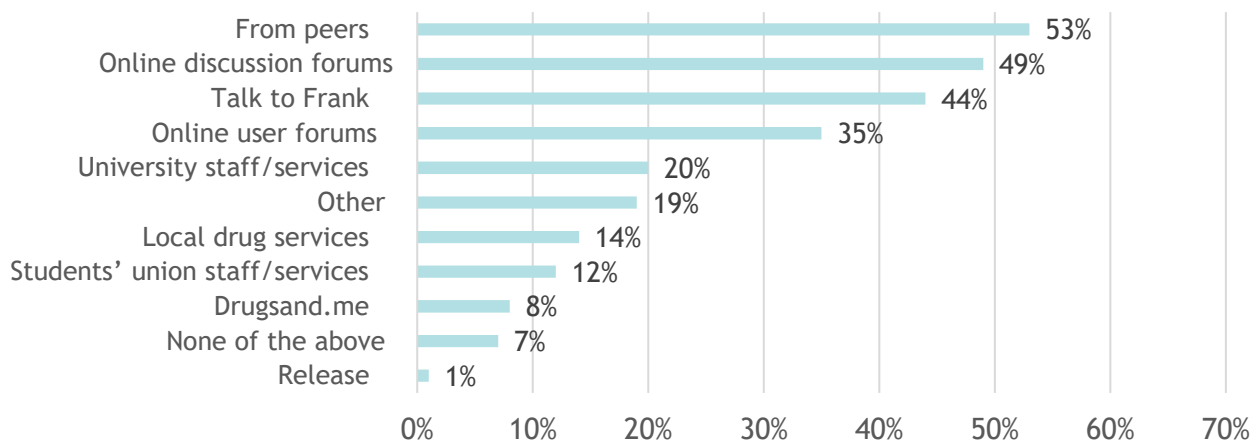


FIGURE 3: [2021-22 SOS-UK DRUG AND ALCOHOL SURVEY](#), QUESTION "WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES WHERE YOU ACCESS DRUG ADVICE AND INFORMATION?" BASE: 197

- Support for students in recovery

# IMPACT

## 4. Harm reduction advice made available to students

- General harm reduction advice



## IMPACT

### 4. Harm reduction advice made available to students



## 4. Harm reduction advice made available to students

- Targeted harm reduction advice

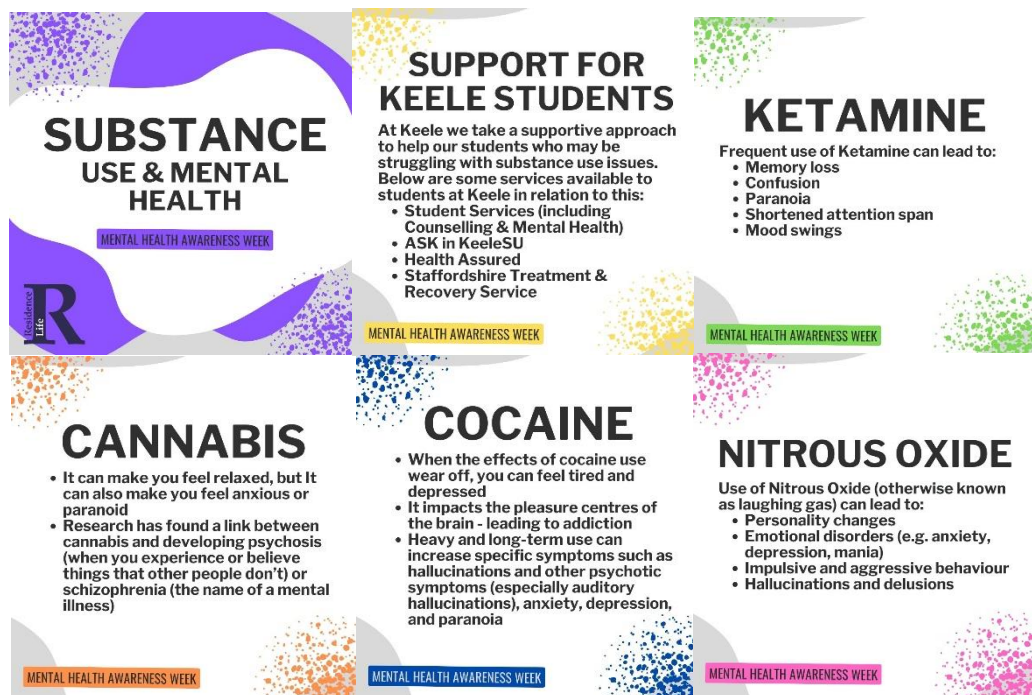


Figure 6: Examples of social media communications linking substance use and mental health produced by Keele University and Students' Union

# IMPACT

## 7. Training

All partnerships demonstrated that they now included drug training to key members of staff, including:

- All accommodation staff at UWE Bristol received drugs awareness training.
- All residence advisors at Keele University receive training on drugs and alcohol, university initiatives, and support available.
- All “street team” volunteers at Keele University receive training focussing on handling alcohol and drug-related incidents and support available.
- Leeds University Union introduced Wellbeing Event Reps responsible for supporting students during alcohol-based events. These reps have received training on identifying students needing help due to drug use, the support available, and how to engage in conversations about their drug use.

## 6. Redevelopment of disciplinary procedures



## 7. Drug testing

- Keele Students' Union launched a drug testing scheme, whereby students could anonymously collect testing kits for MDMA, ketamine, cocaine, and LSD from several locations on campus, including the students' union and Student Services buildings.
- Inside each test kit is harm reduction information about the specific substance, including the potential risks and harms, and how to dispose of the substance safely if the student no longer wished to use it.

# FEEDBACK

# FEEDBACK FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Providing direction for this work

Supporting collaboration and sharing of good practice between institutions

Giving recognition for achievements in this area, which served as especially important in engaging senior management

Facilitating a joined-up approach between the students' union and the university

Providing support and guidance

Providing a tangible framework of actions to guide and prioritise action

## What can you implement:

- Data on student drug and alcohol use
- Links with mental health
- Statement/policy of harm reduction
- Clear support pathways
- Communication of support to students
- Information available
- Training of students and staff
- Link to other existing work and institutional aims – consent, bystander, cost of living

## Key dates

Summer 2023: UUK framework into student drug use

7<sup>th</sup> September: Online Drugs awareness training.

1<sup>st</sup> October: 2023/24 cohort of Drug & Alcohol Impact begins

20<sup>th</sup> November - 10<sup>th</sup> December: Student Drug and Alcohol Survey

27<sup>th</sup> November - 1<sup>st</sup> December: Student Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week