

# [News story: Home Office funding to combat substance misuse by young people](#)

More than 140 young people in the Blackpool area will be helped to build the skills and resilience they need to make healthy choices and avoid falling into drug and alcohol misuse and related crime.

The Real-Life Skills project, developed by the charity Mentor UK, is being backed by more than £90,000 of funding from the Home Office as part of the [Serious Violence Strategy](#).

The training will be delivered in two schools and two education facilities for those outside of mainstream education. It will be led by project officers, youth workers and trained peer-group facilitators aged 14 to 15.

A total of 144 youngsters aged 12 to 14 will benefit from the three-month programme through weekly hour-long sessions. The aim is to increase their knowledge around alcohol and drugs including their effects on mental and physical health.

They'll be educated about links between drugs and organised crime and helped to improve their ability and confidence to make positive choices.

Real-Life Skills will also build capacity among teachers for alcohol and drug prevention education.

Victoria Atkins, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, said:

A crucial part of our approach to tackling serious violence is engaging with young people at an early stage to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to stop them being drawn into substance abuse and crime.

I'm delighted to be able to support the excellent work done by Mentor UK as every young person deserves to lead a healthy and productive life away from crime and violence.

Boris Pomroy, Mentor UK CEO, said:

Mentor UK is excited about this opportunity to engage young people through our innovative approach to alcohol and drug education. We look forward to working with schools and community organisations in Blackpool to support young people in building the knowledge, skills and self-confidence they need to make positive choices and thrive, even in the most challenging situations.

The project builds on existing work to improve support and opportunities for young people in Blackpool, as one of the government's 12 Opportunity Areas to drive social mobility. A key priority in Blackpool is to improve attendance at school, reduce school exclusions and the numbers of young people in pupil referral units, through targeted support for children at risk of exclusion using specialist staff to work with pupils and parents.

While law enforcement is a key element of the [Serious Violence Strategy](#) which launched in April, it also looks at the root causes of the problem and how to support young people to lead productive lives away from violence. The overall strategy is supported by £40 million of Home Office funding.