



## **News Release**

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For immediate release

### **Young people challenging the culture of binge drinking**

Tacade is working with over thirty secondary schools to help them develop peer education projects focusing on alcohol education. Young peer educators in these schools recognise that alcohol use is a major issue for many teenagers. They want to help challenge the culture of binge drinking. For many years the focus of drug education in schools has been on illegal substances yet alcohol is the most commonly used drug amongst teenagers. The Tacade project aims to increase the focus on alcohol education.

Studies have shown that peer education can be a particularly effective method of drug education. The Health Development Agency *'Drug use prevention among young people: a review of reviews'* (2004) noted that *'Overall, research results appear to be positive and suggest that peer-led approaches are more effective than other approaches'*.

Tacade has undertaken a scoping activity to find out what peer alcohol education work was already taking place with young people in the United Kingdom. This established that, while peer education projects about drug education and sexual health are prevalent, very few projects focus on alcohol education.

This was followed by in-depth work with four schools in England and Wales during 2003/2004 to develop effective models of peer alcohol education. A briefing paper outlining the learning from this first phase of the project has been disseminated throughout the UK.

Chris Davies, Deputy Head at Melbourn Village College said, 'It is easy to create an impetus with the peer educators where they take responsibility for their input with an enthusiasm which sometimes eludes teaching staff.'

Tacade are now working with over thirty secondary schools in Barnsley, Cambridgeshire, Cardiff, Leicester, London, Manchester, Salford, Portsmouth and West Sussex. A toolkit providing practical tools for developing peer alcohol education projects in schools will have been produced and disseminated across the UK.

Partnership working has been crucial to the success of the project. Local Education Authority Advisory Teachers have provided the schools with ongoing support and guidance. Within the schools a variety of staff and students have been involved including teachers, learning mentors, Connexions Advisors and school nurses. The work has been funded by Diageo Great Britain.

Peer education is an excellent way of involving and empowering students at the same time as prioritising alcohol education.

A peer educator at one school said, 'I'm less inclined to get drunk now – I think it is less normal now I know all about the stuff behind it.'

Another peer educator from the school said, 'Younger kids, a majority, can see us as role models'.

(ends)

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## Notes to editors

- Tacade is a leading voluntary sector organisation in the field of personal, social, health and citizenship education, with over thirty years of experience supporting alcohol and drug education with young people. Tacade provides support for professionals, professional groups, parents and carers by delivering effective training, consultancy, project management and publications. [www.tacade.com](http://www.tacade.com)
- Alcohol is the most commonly used drug amongst secondary school students. 60% of 11 to 15 year olds drink alcohol. 18% of 11 to 15 year olds drink alcohol at least once a week. 39% of young men and 33% of young women aged 15 to 16 consider themselves regular drinkers. Young people are drinking double the amount they did ten years ago. ('Young People's Drinking' [www.alcoholconcern.org](http://www.alcoholconcern.org) )
- A pdf of the 'Peer Alcohol Education Project with Secondary School Students 1<sup>st</sup> Briefing Paper' can be downloaded from <http://www.tacade.com/Resources/Newsletter.pdf>