**KICK ASH - FAQs**

**What is Kick Ash?**

Kick Ash in Cambridgeshire is a young person led smoking prevention programme. Young people in Year 10 (or Year 9 if the school prefers) are recruited to work as Kick Ash mentors to promote a 'proud to be smoke-free' message. The Kick Ash mentors lead activities in their own schools as well as in partner primary schools.

**What activities do young people lead on?**

There are a variety of options that young people can lead on including:

* Developing a Kick Ash marketing communications campaign for their school.
* Mentoring younger students between the ages of 11 and 13 around issues relating to smoking and vaping.
* Helping the development of stop smoking services for young people.
* Delivering workshops to feeder Primary Schools

**Why do young people lead on activities?**

* The mentors are encouraged to lead on Kick Ash activities to help develop their own confidence and awareness so they can make their own informed decisions about smoking/ tobacco/ vaping/ cannabis use.
* Through gaining greater personal confidence and awareness, the Kick Ash mentors are able to support as well as influence their friends and other young people to understand the importance of being smoke/vape free and not succumbing to peer pressure.
* Through creating and promoting their own “Proud to be smoke/vape free” messages, the Kick Ash mentors generate a smoke/vape-free social norm.

**Do youth smoking prevention programmes like Kick Ash work?**

Evidence from the pilot programme indicated that not only was the programme positively received by all involved - the young people, teachers and parents - but the smoking data collected through the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People’s Healthy Related Behaviour Survey has shown a continuing down ward trend in the uptake of smoking across the county amongst young people. For example in 2016 6% of pupils reported that they had smoked a cigarette in the 7 days prior to participating in the survey compared to 5% in 2018. Most significantly of the students reported to smoke regularly (weekly) 42% said they wanted to give up in 2016 compared with 51% in 2018.

The peer mentoring aspect of the programme is also considered to contribute significantly to a smoke/vape free social norm in school.

Another Health Related Behaviour Survey was due to be issued to Schools/Colleges in Spring 2020 but, due to the Coronavirus, this will now take place in Spring 2021. Whilst the 2018 survey concentrated on smoking specifically, it is likely young people’s views on vaping will form part of the questionnaire in the future.

**What do young people learn about?**

Students on the Kick Ash programme learn:

* How to work as a team to organise “smoke/vape free” events and activities in school
* How to influence and mentor young people
* About the effects of peer pressure
* About health-related issues regarding smoking
* About the law and the sale of age-restricted products including tobacco/e-cigarettes
* About the facts and current issues relating to e-cigarettes
* The current scientific/medical thinking in regard to e-cigarettes within the UK
* About health related issues in respect of cannabis use.
* About local smoking cessation support

Notably the majority of mentors who have taken part in the Kick Ash programme have reported increased confidence and ability to communicate with both younger and older people.

**Why are the Kick Ash mentors targeted to work with 11 and 13 year olds?**

Young people volunteering for Kick Ash are encouraged to work with the Year 8 (13 year old) students in their school because the data collected through the Cambridgeshire Health Related Behaviour Survey continues to show a rise in the number of regular smokers between Year 8 and Year 10. Whilst 2% of Year 8 students are regular (weekly) smokers this increases to 8% in Year 10. (2018 data)

The Kick Ash mentors also work with Year 6 students to help them begin to think not just about the risks associated with smoking but the reasons why some young people start to engage in risk taking behaviour. This has proved valuable for transition from primary to secondary school.

**How is the programme being evaluated?**

A detailed evaluation framework supports this programme with key components which include:

• The Cambridgeshire Health Related Behaviour Survey

• Year 10/Year 9 mentor feedback through focus groups and interviews.

• Student and teacher evaluation forms at both primary and secondary level

Work is on-going to improve the systems of evaluation and to establish more specific outcome measures over time.