

Information

for County Councillors

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From:	Nicola Crocker, Tobacco Control Specialist
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To:	All County Councillors

Smoking Prevention Programme

DECIPHer-ASSIST is an evidence-based smoking prevention programme which aims to reduce adolescent smoking prevalence. The programme encourages new norms of smoking behaviour by training influential Year 8 students to work as 'peer supporters'. Peer supporters are trained and supported to have informal conversations with other Year 8 students about the risks of smoking and the benefits of being smokefree.

ASSIST has been evaluated by a randomised controlled trial funded by the Medical Research Council. The trial found the ASSIST programme to be effective in reducing smoking prevalence over a two year period of follow-up, with the trial results published in The Lancet. Internationally and in the UK no other schools-based smoking prevention programme has been found to be as effective in such a rigorously conducted large scale randomised trial.

The ASSIST programme has been delivered in Somerset for over four years and six schools are taking part in the programme for 2015/16, Kingsmead School; Stanchester Academy; Bridgwater College Academy; Holyrood Academy; Westfield Academy; and Maiden Beech Academy.

However our licence enables us to deliver the programme in ten schools, and we have availability within the Spring and Summer Terms. We are continuing to promote the programme through various methods, but would welcome your help with this in any way possible, for example in your role as School Governor, if applicable. We are particularly keen to recruit schools from the Mendip and Taunton areas.

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