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ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG CHILDREN ON RISE

EXCLUSIVE
by NEIL JOHNSTON
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HUNDREDS of young people – including dozens of children – have been admitted to York Hospital for serious alcohol related incidents, the Press can reveal.

Over the last year, 33 children and a total of 152 young people under 24, were admitted to hospital wards in the city with problems linked to drinking.

Their conditions ranged from acute intoxication, nausea, and vomiting to more extreme causes such as wounds to the head or

temporary and partial paralysis.

Children as young as 13 were admitted for intoxication from drinking too much, while a two-year-old was admitted for consuming methanol and a one-year-old for drinking “other alcohols”, possibly from a household product.

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Picture: David Harrison

All aboard the love train

GAVIN Redshaw, a volunteer on the Derwent Valley Railway, and **Jodie** Wallace-Hill who accepted his marriage proposal on the footplate of the Mallard at the National Railway Museum in York.

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Plane crazy...



Picture: Anthony Chapel-Ross

ELVINGTON Airfield was buzzing with a breath-taking display of large radio controlled model air-

craft flown by some of Europe's top pilots over the weekend. The two days of show-stopping

excitement included Lancaster bombers, Spitfires, jets, stars of civilian aviation, and aerobatic

displays. Topping the bill was a 20 per cent scale model of the full size Vulcan, flown by Dave

Johnson. Stalls were stacked with model aircraft and full size planes were also on display.

Alcohol abuse cases among young on rise

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The figures released under the Freedom of Information Act have been described as worrying by York doctor Dr Neil Metcalfe, who works as a locum in North Yorkshire and warned "young alcohol abusers are putting themselves at risk" and of the many costs associated with such alcohol abuse.

The statistics relate to those whose condition was serious enough to be taken into wards rather than typical accident and emergency cases, where an estimated ten per cent of attendances involve alcohol.

Over the last year admissions on to wards included a 14-year-old known to have consumed drink and drugs and four 14-year-olds, a 13-year-old and a 15-year-old with acute intoxication and related mental and behavioural problems.

Since April 2008 there have been 169 alcohol-related underage admissions on to wards and 833 admissions for people under the age of 24.

Dr Metcalfe said: "These statistics are worrying, but not surprising based on what is seen in the NHS in primary and secondary care at a local level. These young alcohol abusers are putting themselves at risk not just in the years ahead, but very much the present."

"There are a range of medical and mental health conditions associated with alcohol and particularly these young alcohol abusers are at higher



risk of self-harm and suicide whether the alcohol has led to such behaviours or the conditions have led to such behaviour."

He said hospital admissions can be used as an accurate indicators of local alcohol problems and pointed out that

those in contact with abusers can be affected such a drink fuelled road traffic collisions.

He said alcohol abuse did not just cost the NHS, but also society and the family unit, adding that young people in particular are an important group to target and further efforts are needed to try and change public perception.

The number of children admitted has risen from 22 in 2010/11 by 50 per cent to 33 over the last year.

Other under 24s were admitted over the last year for drink-related reasons including open wounds to the eyelid, head, arm, for complications with diabetes, drugs, emotional problems and

A&E 'full with intoxicated patients'

THE figures come as police, the NHS and City of York Council has expressed its concerns about alcohol abuse in the city.

Speaking at an alcohol-focused crime summit attended by public services and charities, this year, Dr Gillian Kelly said of her work in York's Accident and Emergency unit that "on a Friday night, it does seem the entire world except our department is intoxicated. It's such a huge, huge problem."

She said ten per cent of attendances at York Hospital's casualty department involved alcohol, equal to 7,700 people a year, costing the department

about £2.5million a year. Nationally, it has been revealed the UK's struggling A&E units are to receive a £500 million bailout. The council has proposed to tackle policing and street cleaning in the city with a late-night drinking levy for bars, pubs and clubs staying open beyond midnight.

Meanwhile, extra police have been drafted into the city centre on weekends and "dry trains" have been proposed from Middlebrough to York.

An alcohol exclusion zone is also in the pipeline for the area within the city walls and the train station, allowing police to confiscate drink from people deemed to be behaving antisocially.

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