



SCOTCH WHISKY
ACTION FUND

MANAGED BY



U-Evolve



@ScotchWhiskySWA

Organisation: **U-Evolve**
Date of Award: **2019**
Amount Awarded: **£2,000**
Project Name: **TALK**



U-Evolve established in August 2015 to increase the physical and mental wellbeing of the young people aged 11-18 years old, thus allowing them to reach positive destinations in life. They achieve this by offering therapeutic coaching to support young people in the midst of a crisis, following this up by utilising workshops that focus on technology and the arts to engage and inspire young people with positive life messages.

The Project: Talk

In 2019, U-Evolve received a grant of £2,000 from the Scotch Whisky Action Fund (SWAF) to contribute to a Project Lead salary to deliver the new innovative project, TALK: the creation of a podcast to discuss approaches for tackling alcohol misuse and its consequences such as anti-social behaviour.

Through its work U-Evolve started to notice an increasing prevalence of alcohol misuse among the young people they support, who often come from a home environment where heavy drinking is common and have noticed some of the attendees arriving to sessions under the influence of alcohol or hungover. They have therefore moved from working with young people, to also working with their teachers and families, to help them better understand the effects and possible dangers of alcohol before it is too late.

U-Evolve went on to consult with the young people they currently support who expressed a desire for a new type of learning. The creation of a podcast is therefore a new and engaging way of supporting local young people with a method that meets their specific wishes. These young people often have difficulty speaking in front of large groups, and the podcast will offer them an opportunity to speak without pressure or feeling threatened allowing them to open up more about their own situations than they might through more traditional clinical methods of counselling and in turn increase their confidence, self-esteem and resilience.

U-Evolve set out to achieve the following three outcomes:

- increased awareness among young people about the dangers of alcohol
- increased understanding of the short and long-term effects of alcohol to their bodies
- a reduction in the number of alcohol related anti-social behaviours.

The Process

In the early stages of the project, two promising young individuals, Kat and Callum, were identified who could support in co-hosting the podcast series. Both were heavily involved in local youth organisations whilst maintaining a wide and diverse social circle giving them first hand, relevant, and current information on the topic of teenage alcohol misuse within their community.



After identifying Kat and Callum, meetings were held to help develop their communication skills, confidence and understanding of the podcast process. This gave them the tools to be able to appear on the first episode of the podcast as guests. It became apparent quite quickly they could become more active participants in the project with effective support from staff at U-Evolve. Staff continued to work with them and decided to prepare them for co-hosting the series.

They spent time with them working on hosting technique and effective listening skills before giving them the opportunity to participate in episode two where they took part in interviewing guests including MSP Jeremy Balfour and Douglas Meikle from the Scotch Whisky Association.

The podcasts provided an opportunity to gain insight into the relationships young people in the community had with alcohol and the issues involved in drinking from an early age. It became apparent that young people had experience of dealing with alcohol in their lives and offered valuable insight, providing different ideas to prevent and manage alcohol misuse with more effective education and communication. This conversation was brought up when they interviewed the guests in episode two which was a great success.



The first episode can be accessed [here](#) and the second episode with Jeremy and Douglas [here](#).

Once restrictions lifted a further four episodes were recorded which can be accessed [here](#).