

The background of the top section is a light grey rectangle with a repeating pattern of green cannabis leaves. The text is centered and reads:

# **CANNABIS**

# **CONSULTATION**

# **REPORT**

**JULY 2021**

**An investigation into the relationship between tobacco and cannabis use amongst young people in Lanarkshire.**

Commissioned by NHS Lanarkshire.  
Facilitated on their behalf by **LANDED**.

Report by Robbie Stevenson – Senior Development Officer – LANDED Peer Education Service.

[www.landed.info](http://www.landed.info)

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## Consultation Aim

This consultation investigates the relationship between tobacco and cannabis use in young people (12-25 years old) in Lanarkshire.

## An Introduction to LANDED.

**LANDED Peer Education Service** is a young persons' health promotion charity based in Lanarkshire, Scotland.

We work with young people across Scotland to promote harm reduction messages on topics such as; drugs, alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, positive relationships and sexual health. We do this by facilitating informal topic-based workshops to groups of young people and providing training opportunities to staff members who work directly with young people. This increases their knowledge and confidence on these topics, enabling them to have informed conversations around the aforementioned risk-taking behaviours and ensures that messages are consistent.

Young people play a significant role in our organisation. We regularly consult with current and past volunteers and partner organisations when developing or improving our services to keep them relevant, exciting and engaging.

You can find out more about us by visiting [www.landed.info](http://www.landed.info).

# An Introduction to This Consultation.

Over the past three years, NHS Lanarkshire has commissioned **LANDED** to take forward some key pieces of work within the [Lanarkshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2013-2023](#)\*.

*\*Due to COVID-19, the strategy has been extended to 2024.*

According to the Lanarkshire Tobacco Control Strategy, this strategy aims:

"To protect children's health, tackle inequalities and reduce the prevalence of smoking in Lanarkshire from 21.8% to an overall 11% by 2022.

The main priorities which will help us achieve our aim are:

1. Prevention – supporting environments where children and young people choose not to smoke and don't see adults smoking.
2. Protection – protecting children, adults and pets from second-hand smoke.
3. Cessation – helping people to stop smoking.
4. Support and leadership – demonstrating the importance of anti-tobacco actions at an individual, team, organisational and societal level.

Prevention is the main driver for change however action is required, particularly in areas where inequalities exist, in the other three areas, to support a cultural shift regarding smoking in Lanarkshire."

**LANDED's** role in delivering the strategy is in *Priority 1 – Prevention* – and is outlined by the Action Points below.

13 – Peer education work will continue in Lanarkshire.

14 - Investigate the relationship between tobacco and cannabis use in young people.

The work completed under Action Point 13 will be reported in a separate End of Year Report submitted to the NHS Lanarkshire Tobacco Control Team in July 2021.

This report will outline the findings from work completed under Action Point 14.

# Advertisement of The Consultation

A combination of four methods were used for advertising and encouraging participation in the consultation. Current and future COVID-19 restrictions had to be taken into account during the planning stages.

The consultation went live on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April and ended on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2021 (56 days).

## 1. Facilitated Sessions

We contacted local charitable and statutory organisations and offered them the opportunity to participate in the consultation by booking a facilitated session.

This allowed the young people attending to ask any questions they had about the consultation, cannabis or tobacco related, and gave **LANDED** the platform to signpost them to local Stop Smoking Services, inform them of cannabis harm reduction messages, and ask them to participate in the consultation.

### **Outcome:**

21 facilitated sessions were organised, resulting in 140 completed consultations.

Organisations who participated included:

<b>New College Lanarkshire - Coatbridge</b>	<b>North Lanarkshire Skills Academy</b>
<b>NLC Community Learning &amp; Development Wishaw</b>	<b>Coltness High School</b>
<b>MADE4U IN ML2</b>	<b>KEAR Campus (Cathkin Base)</b>
<b>Socialtrack</b>	<b>Regen Fx</b>
<b>Action For Children</b>	<b>Healthy Valleys</b>
<b>The Prince's Trust</b>	<b>North Lanarkshire Activity Agreement</b>
<b>Clyde Valley High School</b>	<b>NLC Community Learning &amp; Development Motherwell</b>

## 2. QR Code Posters

We designed three A4-sized posters to catch the attention of cannabis users. The posters were placed in areas around Lanarkshire which have a high footfall of young people. They were printed on waterproof gloss paper to withstand the elements to ensure they remained in place for the duration of the consultation. When talking about cannabis, different terms are used depending on where you live, and sometimes, if you use the incorrect term for that area, you can lose credibility. We know that 'WEED', 'GREEN' & 'CANNABIS' are three of the most popular terms used around Lanarkshire, so we used all three.

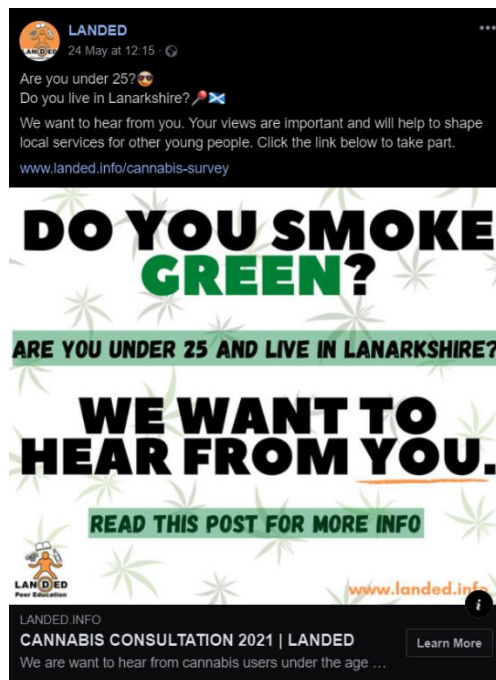


**Outcome:**

150 posters were professionally printed and distributed throughout key areas in Lanarkshire, resulting in 99 completed consultations.

**3. Social Media Posts**

Three graphics similar to that of the above poster design were created and optimised for Twitter and Facebook. The graphics were posted throughout the consultation at different times and days to increase post reach. There was also a small budget allocated to boost two posts as Ads on Facebook.



When wording the paid advertisement posts, we were aware that certain key-words and topics would be against Facebook's Advertising Policy. Being a registered charity and having had our Facebook page for a number of years and posting content of a similar nature, we believe were allowed to boost the post as it did not promote cannabis use.

**Outcome:**

The Facebook posts reached over 12,000 people, resulting in 302 completed consultations.

There is no analytical data available for the Twitter posts.

## 4. Partner Organisations

An e-mail was sent to over 100 key **LANDED** partner organisations. The original e-mail was then disseminated to a further 300+ contacts through networks such as Voluntary Action NL, Voluntary Action SL, Youth Scotland, Young Scot, NHS Lanarkshire, KEAR Campus Youth, Family & Community Learning Service in South Lanarkshire and Community Learning & Development in North Lanarkshire.

Within the e-mail, partners were encouraged to:

- Book a facilitated session.
- Share Social Media Posts.
- Facilitate the consultation themselves with young people.
- Put posters up around their centre & community.
- Share the e-mail with relevant contacts & networks.

**Outcome:**

The original e-mail sent to 100 key contacts and had a reply rate of approximately 50%. More partners replied from North Lanarkshire than South Lanarkshire.

# Consultation Questions

When developing the questions for the consultation, we aimed to make them simple, easy to read, easy to understand and quick to answer.

The final set of questions was split into sections, noted below, to use the branching feature on *Microsoft Forms*. The branching feature was used to screen the users' eligibility to take part and kick them out if they were not of the correct age or did not live in Lanarkshire.

Details about the question branching can be found in the next section of this report.

## Section 1 – Eligibility Questions

1. Do you live in North or South Lanarkshire?
2. How old are you?

## Section 2

3. How did you find out about this survey?
4. Do you smoke?

## Section 3

5. What do you smoke?

## Section 4 – Cannabis Questions

6. Are you someone who smokes?
7. Did you start smoking cannabis or tobacco first?
8. What age were you when you smoked cannabis for the first time?
9. What is your preferred way of smoking cannabis?

## Section 5 – Influences & Opinions

10. Do the people closest to you smoke TOBACCO?
11. Do the people closest to you smoke CANNABIS?
12. Do you think cannabis has long-term risks?
13. How harmful do you think cannabis is compared to other illegal drugs?



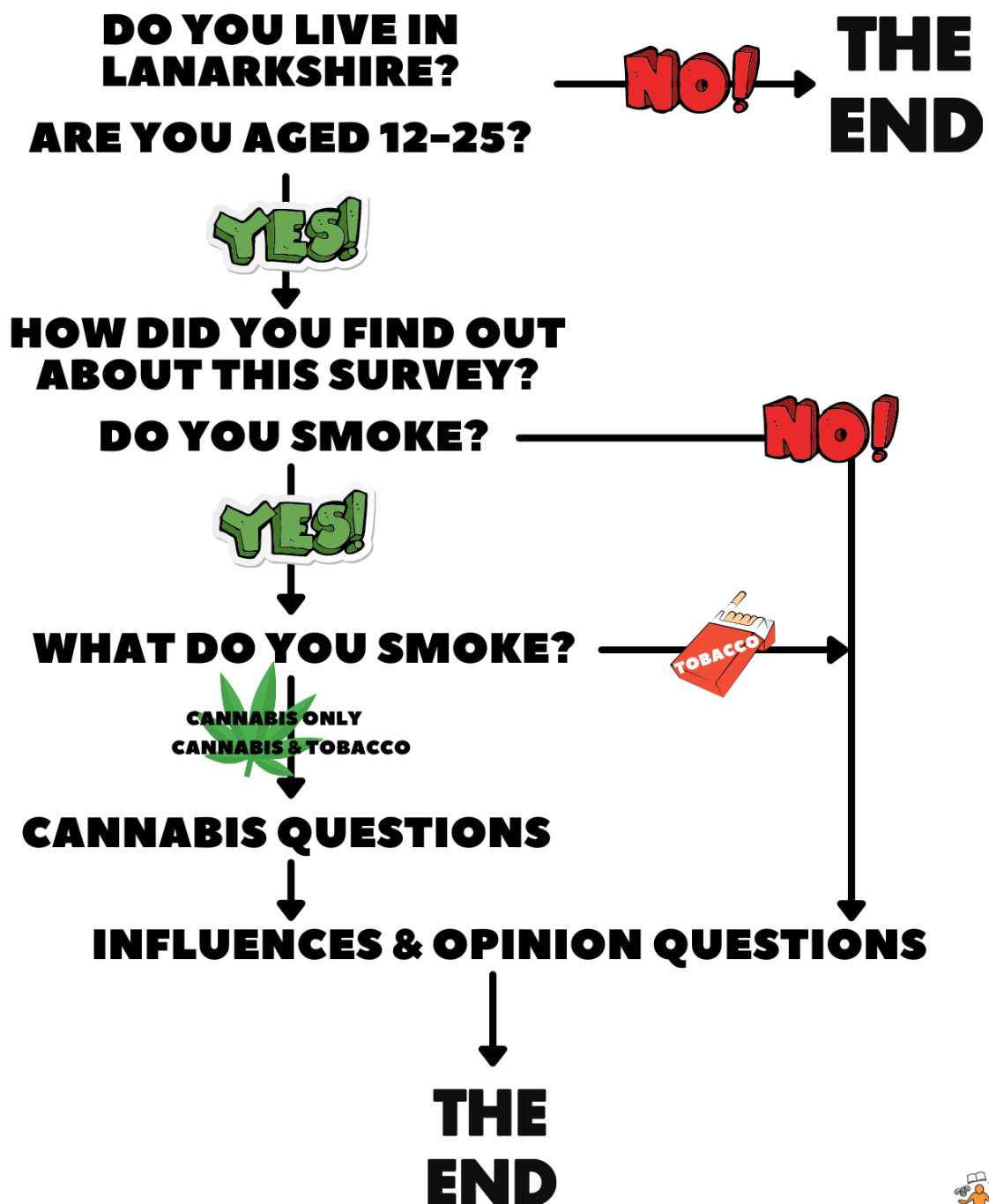
14. Do you think cannabis is more harmful to your body than alcohol?

15. If you or someone you know had a problem with their cannabis use, do you know where to go for help?

16. Is there anything else you would like to add you think would be relevant?

# Question Branching

## **CANNABIS** **CONSULTATION** **QUESTION BRANCING**

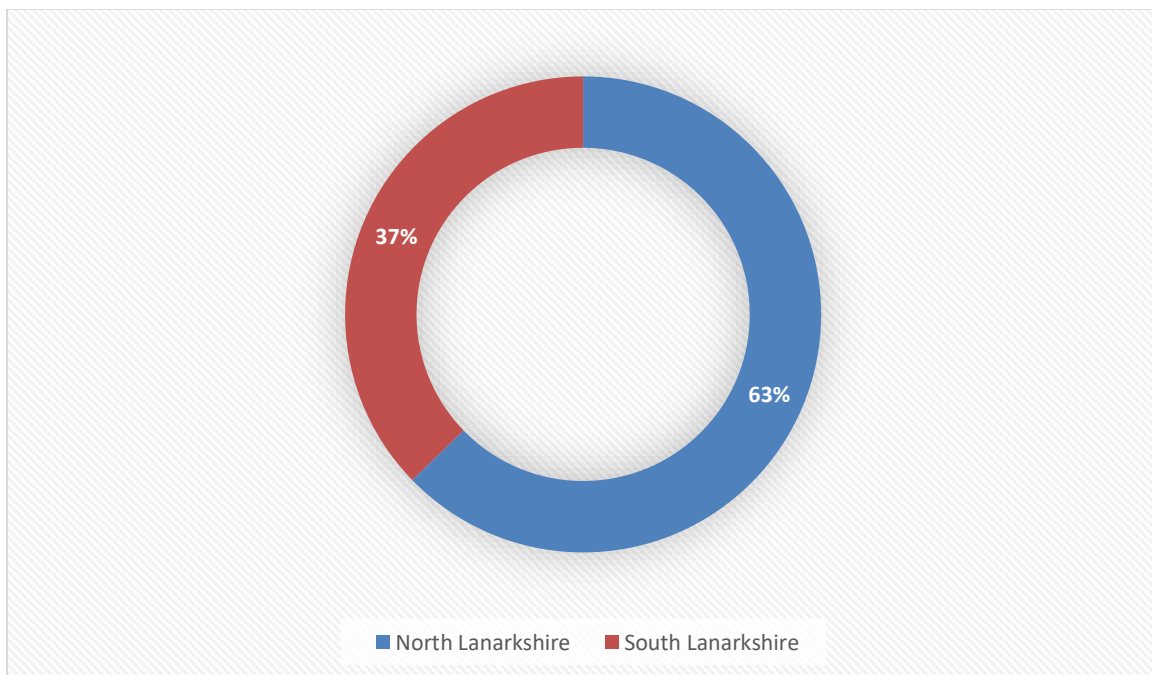


# Consultation Responses

There was a total of 630 responses to the consultation. Due to the eligibility criteria enforced by the question branching outlined in the previous section, the true **total number of responses was 561.**

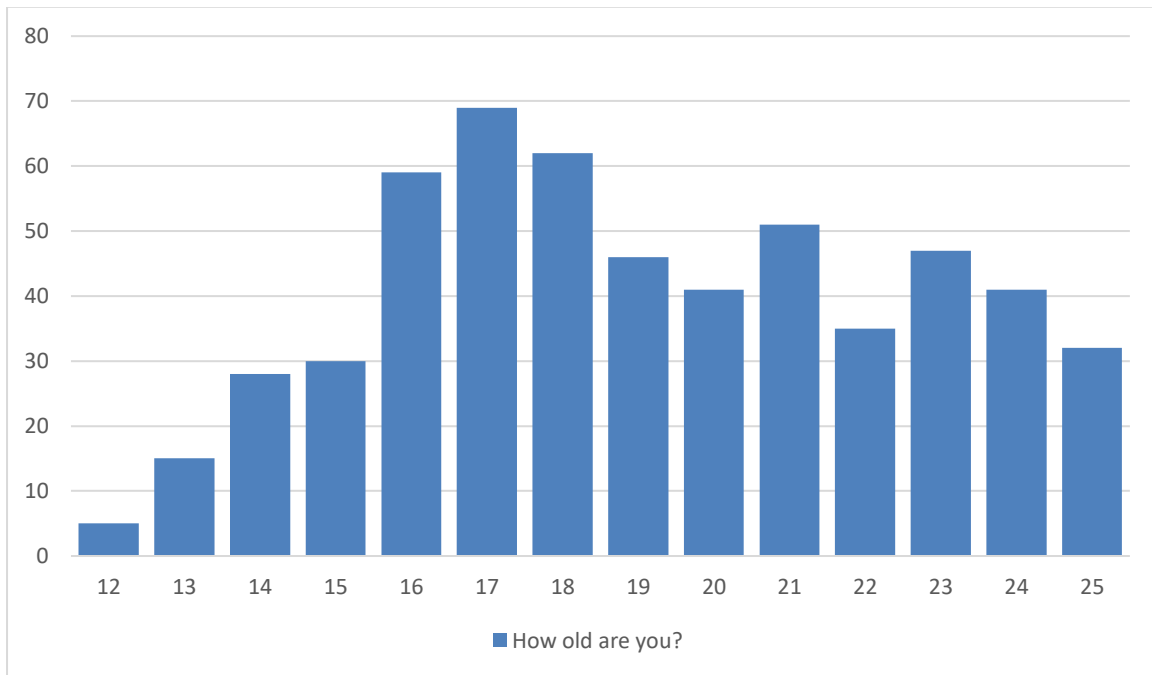
Total Responses	630
11 or under	-15
25+	-31
I don't live in Lanarkshire	-23
<b>Total eligible responses</b>	<b>561</b>

## Question 1 – Do you live in North or South Lanarkshire?



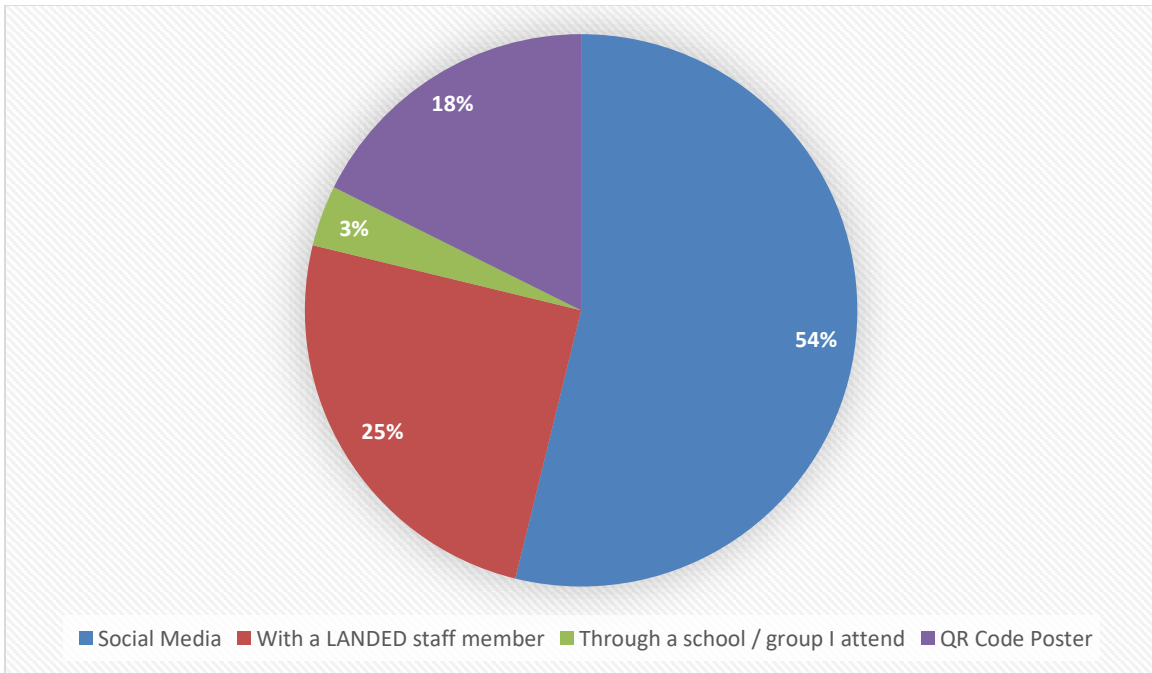
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	352 (63%)
<b>South Lanarkshire</b>	209 (37%)

## Question 2 - How old are you?



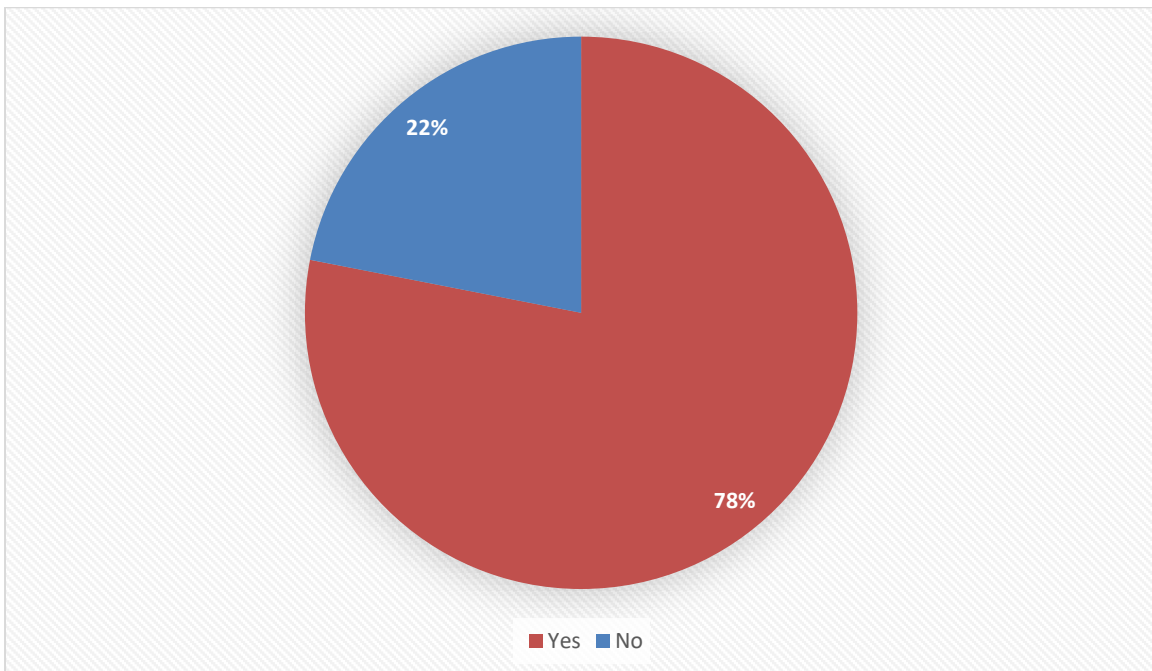
Age	Number of Respondants
12	5 (1%)
13	15 (3%)
14	28 (5%)
15	30 (6%)
16	59 (11%)
17	69 (12%)
18	62 (11%)
19	46 (8%)
20	41 (7%)
21	51 (9%)
22	35 (6%)
23	47 (8%)
24	41 (7%)
25	32 (6%)

### Question 3 – How did you find out about this survey?



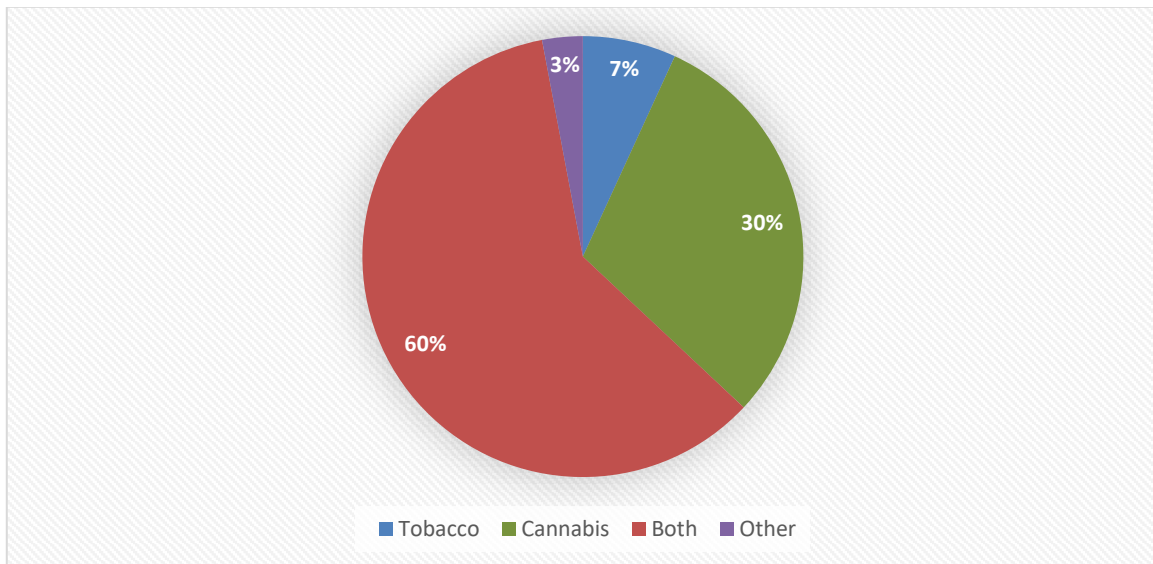
<b>Social Media</b>	302 (54%)
<b>With a LANDED staff member</b>	140 (25%)
<b>Through a school/group I attend</b>	20 (3%)
<b>QR Code Poster</b>	99 (18%)

### Question 4 - Do you smoke?



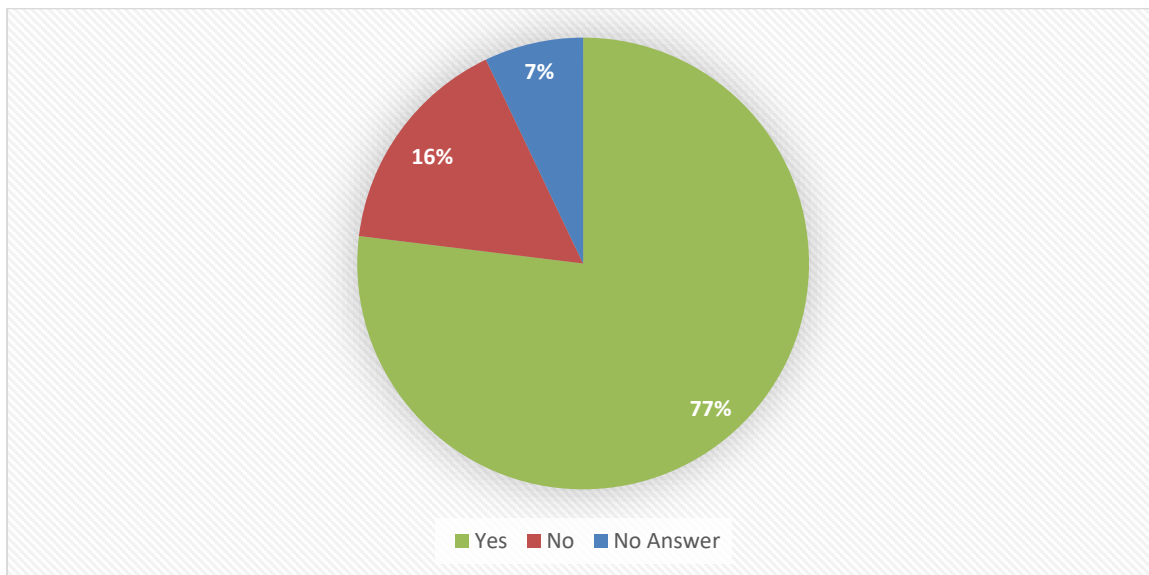
<b>Yes</b>	438 (78%)
<b>No</b>	123 (22%)

### Question 5 – What do you smoke?



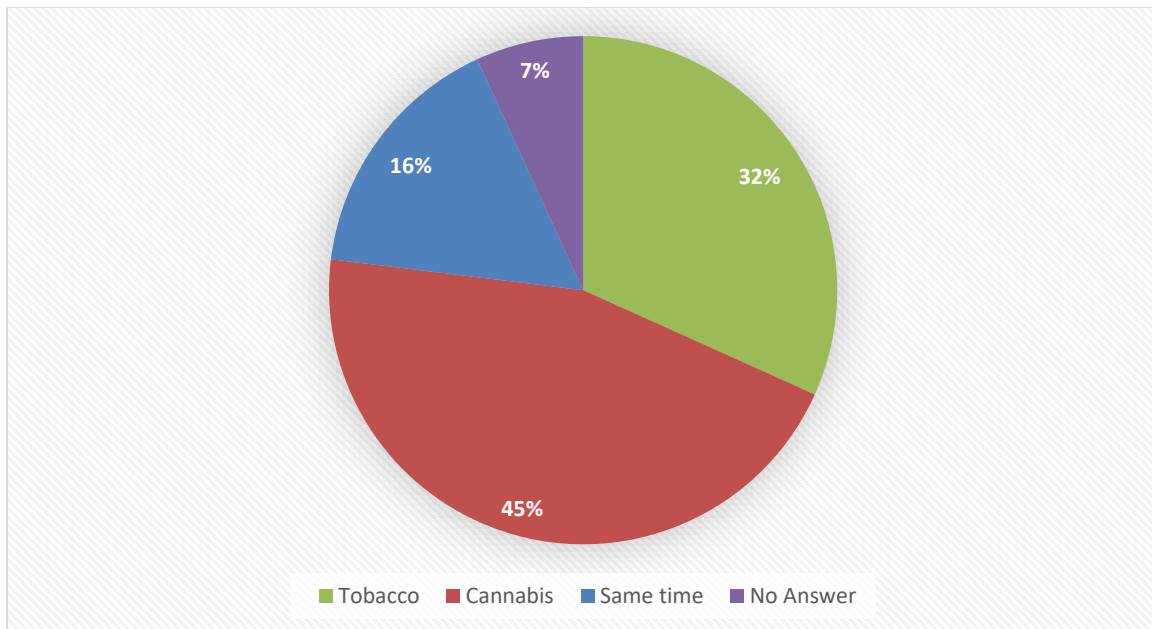
<b>Tobacco</b>	30 (7%)
<b>Cannabis</b>	132 (30%)
<b>Both (tobacco &amp; cannabis)</b>	263 (60%)
<b>Other</b>	13 (3%)

### Question 6 – Are you someone who smokes?



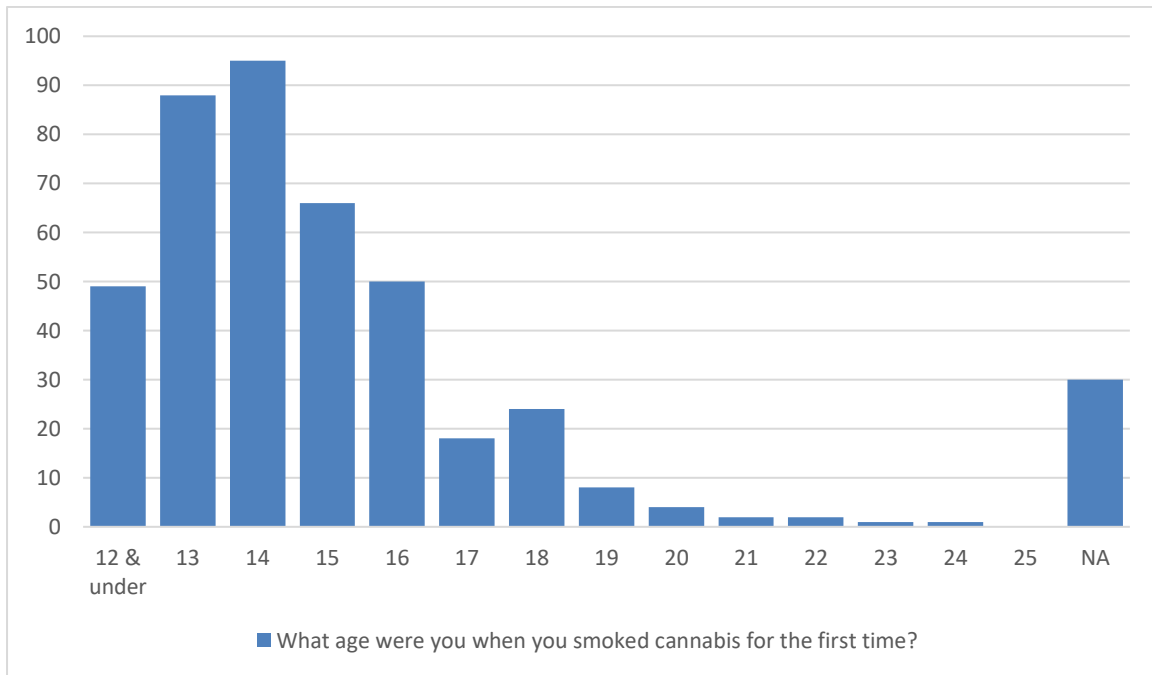
<b>Yes</b>	337 (77%)
<b>No</b>	70 (16%)
<b>No Answer</b>	31 (7%)

### Question 7 – Did you start smoking cannabis or tobacco first?



<b>Tobacco</b>	139 (32%)
<b>Cannabis</b>	198 (45%)
<b>Same time</b>	71 (16%)
<b>No Answer</b>	30 (7%)

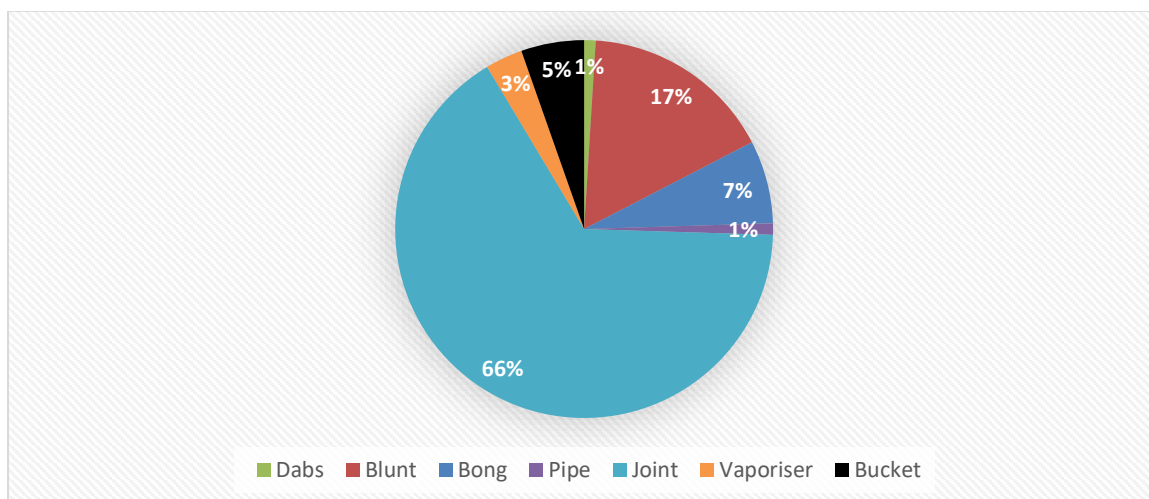
### Question 8 – What age were you when you smoked cannabis for the first time?



Age	Number of Respondents
12 & under	49
13	88
14	95
15	66
16	50
17	18
18	24
19	8
20	4
21	2
22	2
23	1
24	1
25	0
No Answer	30



## Question 9 – What is your preferred way of smoking cannabis?



Joint (with tobacco)	269 (66%)
Blunt (without tobacco)	67 (17%)
Pipe	4 (1%)
Bong	29 (7%)
Bucket	22 (5%)
Vaporiser	13 (3%)
Dabs	4 (1%)

### JARGON BUSTER

words in orange are clickable for more info (content may be blocked)

#### Joint

Tobacco and cannabis rolled together in a cigarette paper.

#### Blunt

Cannabis rolled in cigarette paper with NO tobacco.

*n.b. The term blunt is sometimes misused in Lanarkshire. A blunt is cannabis rolled in a tobacco leaf taken from the outside of a certain type of cigar ([Backwoods](#)) or rolled in a blunt wrap ([Double Platinum](#)).*

*To avoid confusion with this question, we added "(without tobacco)" for clarification.*

#### Bong

A large pipe, usually made of glass that uses water to diffuse and cool the smoke as [you breathe it into your lungs](#).

#### Pipe

A handheld pipe, usually made of metal or glass.

#### Bucket

A homemade smoking device made from plastic or glass bottles and used [similarly to a bong](#).

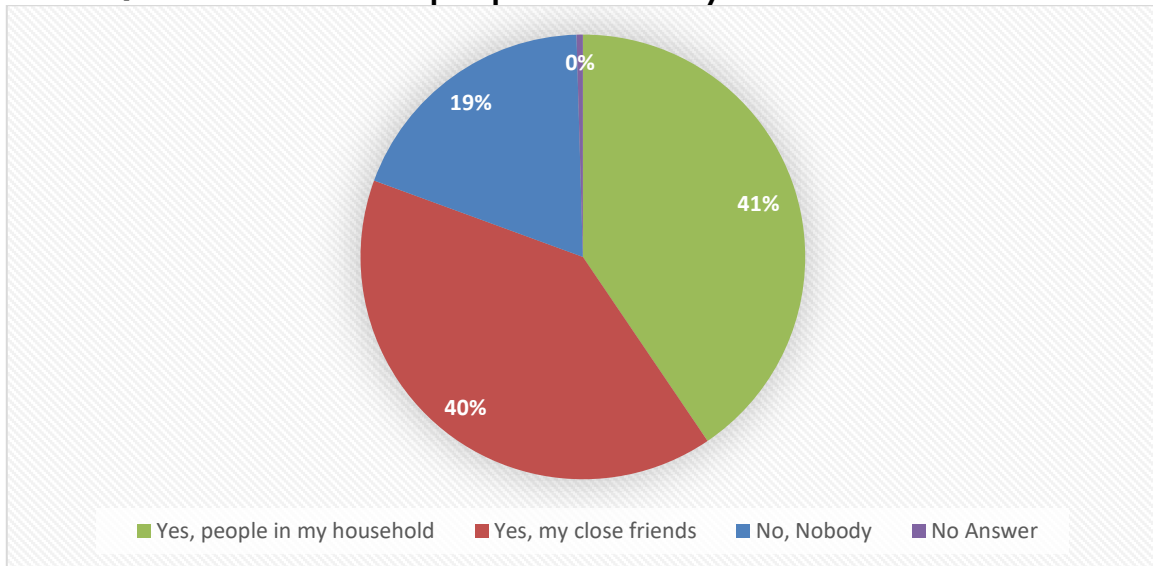
#### Vaporiser

It heats cannabis or oils to a temperature that produces vapour to inhale. Similarly to e-cigs, vaping cannabis is less harmful when compared to smoking it.

#### Dabs

A dab is a slang term used to refer to a method of consuming [cannabis concentrates](#) involving a glass bong, [blowtorch](#) and [dab nail](#).

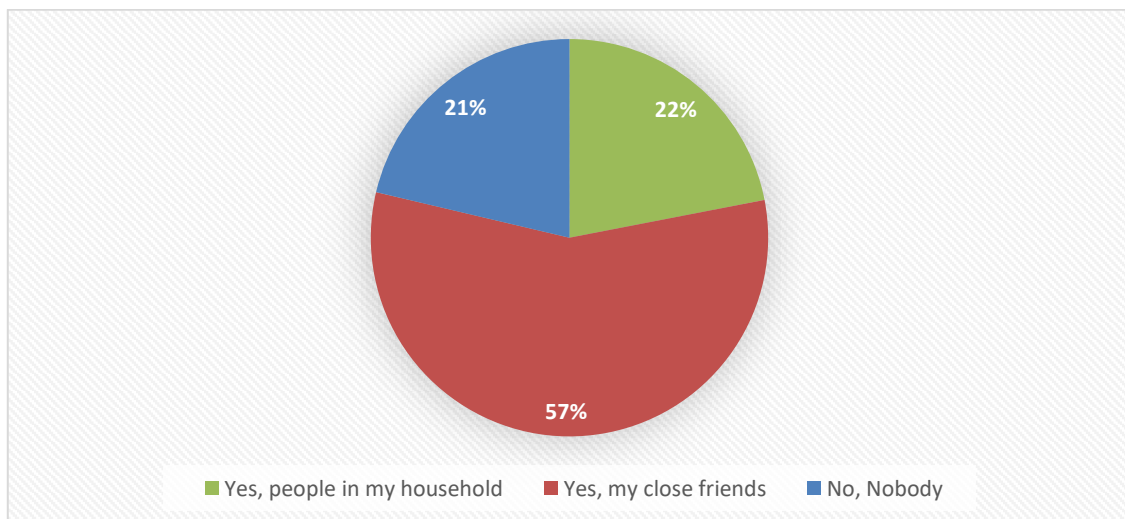
### Question 10 – Do the people closest to you smoke TOBACCO?



n.b. This question was multiple choice.

Yes, people in my household smoke tobacco	265 (41%)
Yes, my close friends smoke tobacco	262 (40%)
No, nobody around me smokes tobacco	124 (19%)
No Answer	3 (>1%)

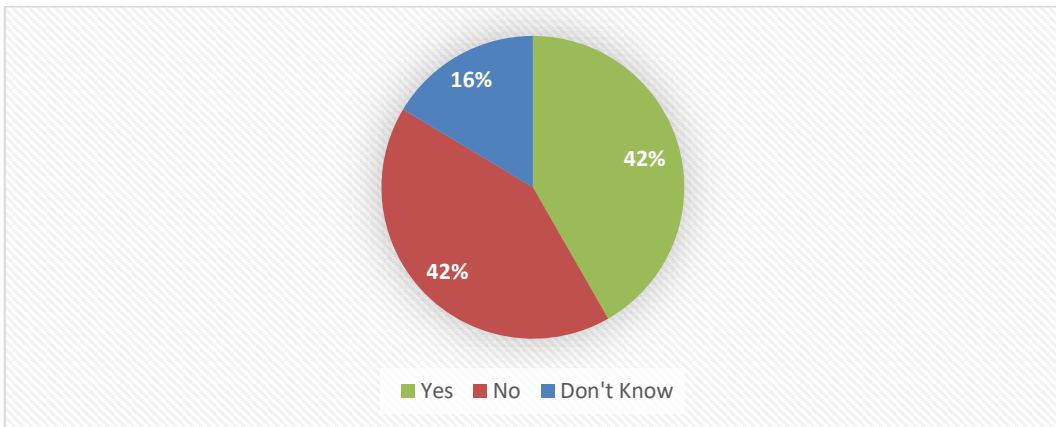
### Question 11 – Do the people closest to you smoke CANNABIS?



n.b. This question was multiple choice.

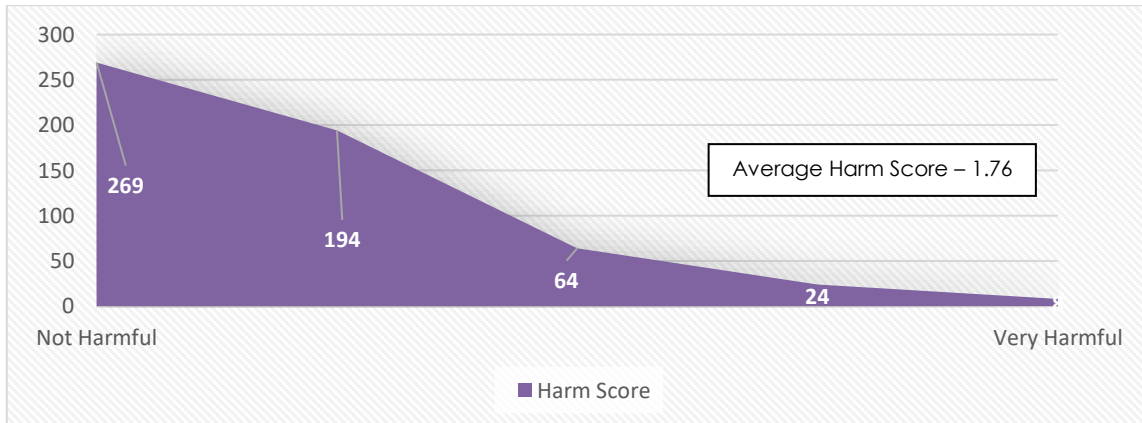
Yes, people in my household smoke cannabis	137 (22%)
Yes, my close friends smoke cannabis	354 (57%)
No, nobody around me smokes cannabis	133 (21%)
No Answer	0 (0%)

**Question 12 – Do you think cannabis has long-term risks?**



Yes	234 (42%)
No	235 (42%)
I don't know	92 (16%)
No Answer	0 (0%)

**Question 13 – How harmful do you think cannabis is compared to other illegal drugs?**

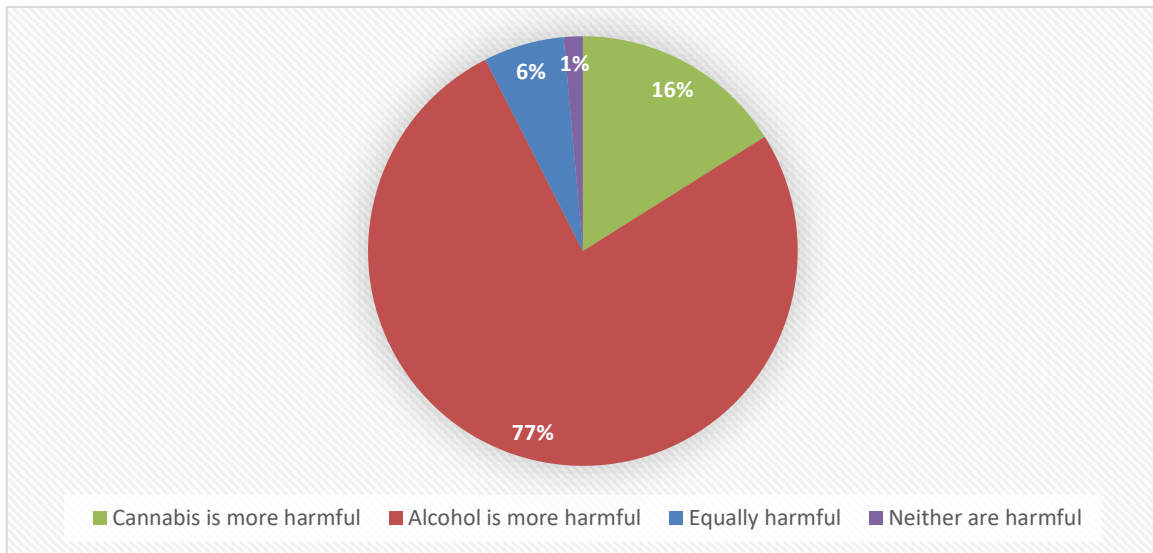


n.b. This was a scale question, respondents were asked to select a number between 1 & 5.

1= Not harmful at all | 5= Very harmful

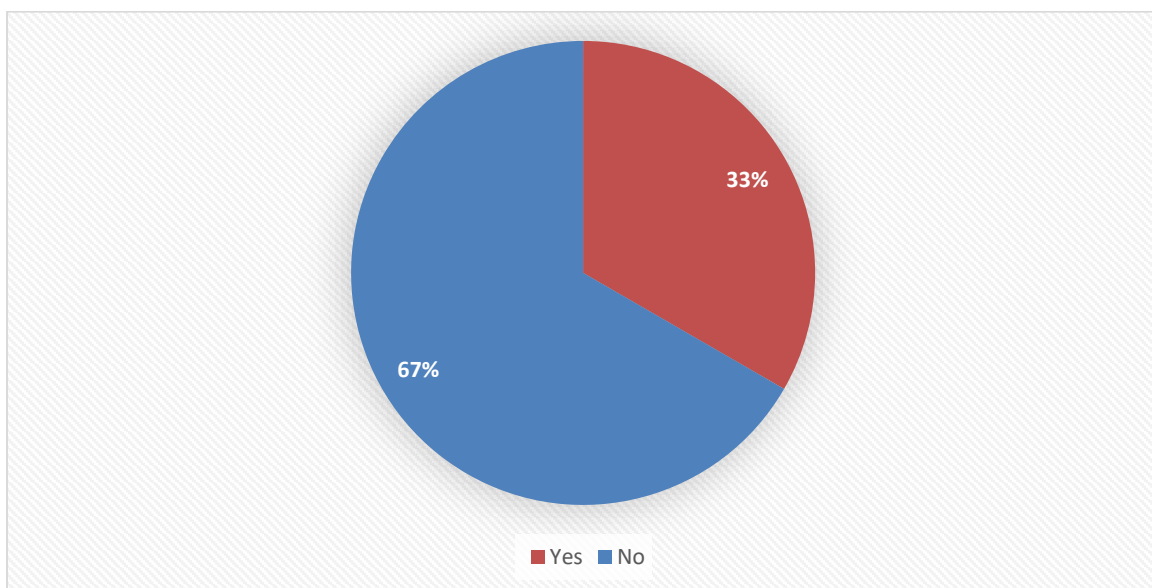
1	269 (48%)
2	194 (35%)
3	64 (11%)
4	24 (4%)
5	8 (<1%)
No Answer	2 (>1%)

**Question 14 – Do you think cannabis is more harmful to your body than alcohol?**



Cannabis is more harmful than alcohol	34 (16%)
Alcohol is more harmful than cannabis	428 (77%)
They are both are equally harmful	90 (6%)
Neither are harmful	8 (1%)
No Answer	1 (>0%)

**Question 15 - If you or someone you know had a problem with cannabis use, do you know where to go for help?**



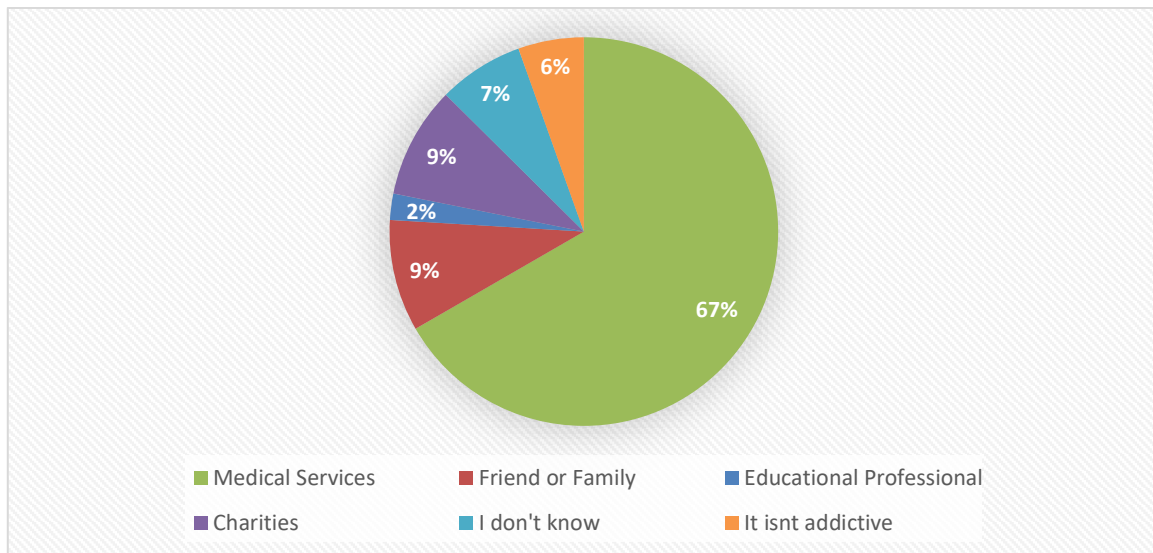
Yes	187 (33%)
No	347 (67%)

**Question 16 - If you answered 'YES' to the previous question, where would you suggest they go for help?**

<b>Responses</b>	177 (41%)
<b>No Answer</b>	261 (59%)

n.b. This was an open question, where respondents typed their answers.

**Summary of Answers**



Due to the volume of varied *open answers* to this question, I have categorised them into six headings. For clarification on what these categories mean, please refer to the list below.

**Medical Services**

Any mention of:  
NHS, GP, Doctor, Therapy, Counselling & Statutory Addiction Services etc.

**Educational Professional**

Any mention of:  
Teacher, Pupil Support and other school-based services.

**Charities**

Any mention of:  
LANDED, Beacons, NA & National Helplines etc.

**Friend or Family**

Any mention of:  
Reaching out to friends or family for help or advice.

## Question 16 - Is there anything else you would like to add you think would be relevant?

<b>Responses</b>	167 (30%)
<b>No Answer</b>	349 (70%)

The following were removed to shorten the report as they did not constructively contribute to the aim.

- 20 answers in favour of cannabis legalisation (12% of overall responses)
- 53 spoiled answers/nonsense/profanity (32% of overall responses)

This is not the full list of responses. These responses are unedited.

You can view the **redacted** responses in the excel file attached.

Is there anything else you would like to add you think would be relevant?
I dont smoke cannabis regularly. recreational once every few months. I only smoke tobacco if im in a pub environment and drinking alcohol Never regularly
there is long term effects on people's mental health
Should be available with correct cannabis card like America for treatments and Medicine
Cannabis can be and is used as a replacement for anxiety medication, and is often an easier source than prescribed dosages of anti-anxiety meds.
It should be regulated the same as alcohol and tobacco.
Weed is not even a drug if anything it helps u a lot it's also time to spend with your friends me and my friends have became really close due to this
i used to be additeted to weed for a long time and i didnt think i was till i tryed to get off it and i took it for a long time and its mentally affected me a lot
I quit tobacco on 2021 new year resolution, only smoking cannabis and have never been happier or felt healthier. sometimes make edibles instead of smoking (healthier)
personally, from experience of other things, I find that most addiction is mental based and can be overcome in 2 weeks
I feel that cannabis is a medicine can be enjoyed recreationally if used responsibly. It's one of the safest drugs, you have no chance of OD'ing and I think it should be legal and regulated in the UK.
As someone who uses cannabis to help with anxiety, I fully understand the possible long term effects, yet weighing the pros and cons, I would rather self medicate with cannabis rather than pills etc. Personally, the long term effects associated with pills scares me far more than cannabis does. What I would like to see in the next few years is cannabis becoming decriminalised and regulated. I do not believe that I am what most people would think as a 'criminal' and I would also like the opportunity to medicate myself legally and without the fears that come with buying on the street. A lot of long term side effects come from so called 'skunk' and that is solely because it is unregulated. If it was regulated it would help a lot more people than the current laws do.
Needs so be legalized so people can us it for depression,anxiety,pain reliever stress reliever . There are so many reasons why cannabis could be legalized .
I don't regret smoking cannabis but I wish I didn't do it so young
Cannabis isn't as bad as what the media makes out to be, yes it can harm you if not used right and are abusing it but there is also medical benefits from it. Cannabis isn't like alcohol or any other drug you can't just black out and have it control you, your chilled, you get munchied, you have a laugh and the last thing on the back of your mind is getting up and attacking someone. Never heard from anyone dying on weed but I've had mates die on Eccies and I've had to phone ambulances and police many times for alcohol and other drugs. I've seen mates having seizures from being spiked, drinking to much. I've had mates overdose right in front of me and I've been the only one knowing how to help them. Weed never met anyone or seen anyone dying or having other medical conditions because of weed never had to help a friend having a seizure because of weed. I have friends who are smoking weed to help with seizures to help with there pain. I have friends who smoke weed just to help them smile everyday and friends who smoke weed to connect with others in different ways. Cannabis is a plant and it helps the world go round. People need to stop treating it as a drug and

start treating it like nature. Tell folk how to use drugs instead of telling them not to use them. Teach children to do it properly and stop it that way rather teaching them the wrongs makes kids sneaky has more effect.
Cannabis helps a lot of of young people
I think cannabis has a lot of good medical and recreational uses, it should definitely be legalised, I used it to help with depression and prevent anxiety.
3 joints a day keeps the doctors away
I have smoked nearly daily since 14, I have mental health problems and feel it helps massively with my bipolar.
Until recently, I smoked tobacco in my joints every day, but now I just smoke single paper blunts and smoke less often in the day so I use the same amount of green (just over a gram on average) but no tobacco. I also bought a dry herb vaporiser recently and have been using that sometimes instead of a blunt.
While weed has been proven to be very safe, underage use and cause brain development issues and heavy use no matter what age can also cause problems but I believe it is a lot safer than most other drugs.
Inhaling any form of smoke is bad and anyone who says green is completely healthy is stupid. Smoking green under 21 can delay your mental growth but it's not spoke about enough. Same with alcohol, all in moderation.
Why is this drug illegal while thousands pump there livers full of poison every weekend and are addicted to useless prescribed medications 🤔
Helps ptsd
People talk as if cannabis isn't harmful but it clearly is. More needs to be done to change this belief
I've never heard of anyone going to rehab for cannabis
I feel that the only problem that you can get from cannabis is short term memory loss
Cannabis is not a addictive substance I have been smoking on and off for over 10 years never once seen or hear or experienced a cannabis addiction allways been addicted to tobacco
Weed is safer than other drugs and it will help deprest people
There are medicinal benefits to using cannabis
You might have long term effects if you use it often.
I prefer edibles to smoking I only do edibles
Cannabis should not be illegal but it should be treated like alcohol, no driving, no operating heavy machinery etc. It helps with anxiety and helps me to sleep when I'm going through mental health struggles. I would not have made it through the pandemic without it.
Cannabis isn't a 'bad drug', however it can be easy to become dependent on - particularly in younger people who use it regularly. I feel that it should be legalised and regulated by the uk government, making it less accessible to young people and actually helping boost our economy. It's no secret that a fair amount of the population use cannabis whether it's for recreational or medical use - it just seems logical to me that we should be using it to the country's advantage rather than criminalising it and turning a blind eye to the amount of cannabis being sold on the streets with no regulation of who can buy it and where they can buy it.
I feel cannabis is much less harmful than any other drugs including alcohol, alot of people I know dont drink but will smoke instead
It is ruining our society. This plays a huge role in anti social behaviour.
Helps me be creative and think clear, without I'm still able to engage but find it easier when I smoke to brainstorm and just relax
Its a dependency drug I believe, I've stopped and started many times and it's all due to how you view and perceive situations. It's helped a lot of young people get through the lock down without going off the rails but are the lasting effects after? Like how long we gonna use this as a coping mechanism
I would be open to alternative ways of getting high from cannabis if there wasent as much stigma around it
I inteoduced my partner to cannabis, we smoked for joints with herbal rolling mix and cannabis for a year before he started using tobacco in our joints
I smoked cannabis every day for two years and have recently taken a 9 week break, long term use can have an effect on mental health so periods of sobriety are also helpful.
I have smoked cannabis most my life now and I regularly take breaks I find It really easy to come off cannabis when I want to I also do smoke blunts with only cannabis in them and dabs/extracts aswel

Lack of actual knowledge due to both sides over advocating. For example I used it for my anxiety. but I found out later the only way it is addictive is if you have a mental disorder. Neither side ever said that simple fact. It's always either its not addictive or it's very addictive
Weed smokers arnt bad people some abuse itike alcohol but some just enjoy it Nd helps mentally
I was a paranoid wreck I suffered from a traumatic time from bullys I wouldnt leave school for lunch or to walk home when I started smoking weed I wasnt as paranoid as I once was i started becoming more confident within myself and less fearful
I think it would only be harmful if you smoked excessive amounts regularly.
You end up reliant on weed without it makes me reapply(sic) angry and mentally not well
When u smoke a joint u want to chill would be less crime if people smoked n not drank
CBD isn't harmful. It's the THC that can cause issues. People need more education on the benefits.
Interested to see what comes from your consultation. There's not enough services out there for young people that smoke a lot of dope. Nice work.
if someone has "abused" cannabis, if they come up with a hobby that keeps them active that could help with smoking less cannabis therefore not abusing
Long term cannabis use can effect mental health and can also cause or be part of other problems with your health
Yeah. Green has helped me a lot when I've been down, it honestly lifts me right up. But I do believe it does bad things to your short term memory and overall laziness but the benefits over so the negatives. It really should be legal, these idiots have no clue and 0 experience.
I don't smoke cigarettes. Only tobacco in my joints
Cannabis should be fully legalised as it only has benefits. Of course smoking anything is bad but cannabis is not comparable to proper drugs, and is much better than tobacco and alcohol (if you start at the appropriate age).
There is worse things than rolling up a joint now and then.
Don't use blunt for not using tobacco I like to try and convince using joints without it as too many people associate joints with tobacco, a joint is using a paper skin and a blunt is using a tobacco skin but I think a large amount of younger smokers (tobacco) start due to cannabis but can't get it at some point so they use a cigarette to help them with cravings
It stops my seizures. Do a questionnaire on that.
I had an addiction to cannabis for a couple years where I couldnt stand a day without it, I have only recently stopped in the past month but can see myself still having a smoke sometimes here and there. I fully support cannabis legalisation but recommend not being stoned 24/7
Even if people were to know where to go for help the trust is very limited as it's illegal, people may think it's a stitch up or may want to know the ins and outs of how they go about their business.
I think the perception on cannabis users is wrong, I use cannabis on a daily basis and still manage to live my life to the best Of my ability I'm in full time employment earning £40+k per annum and continuing my studies into engineering, cannabis has helped me achieve what I already have however I would say that it makes you more comfortable with your situation which could be a negative effect for people who aren't as involved in bettering themselves
I believe cannabis should be legalised as it has more benefits than people might think, I don't understand that alcohol can be legal and cannabis can't, also that it is class as a class A drug beside cocaine and heroin?! Makes no fkn sense
I just eat edibles, not smoke. I have GADS and HME, and it helps with the pain.
Cannabis is a progressive mild drug which can be used in place of many ineffective/dangerous prescription medications for numerous issues. Cannabis is also by far the safest recreational drug when compared with alcohol or tobacco.
I think TV shows glamorising cannabis and other drugs is a major factor in youth drug use. When I see my favourite character on Skins smoking a cig or a spliff then it makes me want to do to the same because they look so cool doing it.
cannabis on the whole, seems like a less dangerous drug than many things, it should be legalised

## End of responses.



# Key Points

In summary:

- 561 young people from Lanarkshire between the ages of 12-25 responded.
- More young people responded from North Lanarkshire than South Lanarkshire.
- Social Media was the best way to engage with young people for this survey. The branding helped capture the attention of young people, and the use of paid Facebook Ads helped the post reach more people.
- More smokers than non-smokers responded to the survey. The branding of the campaign was aimed at cannabis users and may have put non-smokers off responding.
- Out of the 438 smokers that responded, 263 smoked cannabis and tobacco.
- Of the 438 smokers mentioned above, 337 identify as smokers and would admit to smoking if asked. 70 would not. 11 did not answer.
- The majority of cannabis smokers used it for the first time between the ages of 13 -15.
- Most respondents prefer to smoke a joint (cannabis and tobacco together) compared to other consumption methods.
- 41% of people in respondents' households and 40% of respondents' close friends smoke tobacco. 22% of people in respondents' households and 57% of respondents' close friends smoke cannabis. This gives us an idea of who could be influencing the use of each substance.
- The opinion is split evenly when it comes to knowledge on the long term risks of cannabis use. 42% think that it does carry long-term risks, and 42% responded that it does not.
- When asked to place cannabis on a harm scale between 1 & 5 (1 = not harmful; 5 = very harmful), respondents answered on average 1.76. This suggests that the majority do not consider cannabis to be as harmful as other illegal drugs.

- When compared with alcohol, 77% believe that alcohol is more harmful than cannabis.
- 67% do not know where to go for help if they or someone they know is having a problem with cannabis use.

# Successes & Challenges

The consultation was not without its challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic completely changed how we facilitated this project, but this allowed us to explore new ways of engaging with young people, which has been an invaluable experience and deepened our understanding of the consultation process for future pieces of work.

## Successes

### **Engagement**

With 561 responses to extract data from, the uptake exceeded our expectations.

### **Facebook Ads**

Initially, there was a slow uptake and minimal engagement. However, using Facebook Ads significantly increased the visibility of the survey. This combined with the eye-catching branding resulted in a high number of respondents discovering the survey via our paid for advertisement.

## Challenges

### **North Lanarkshire VS. South Lanarkshire**

In an effort to ensure equal representation in both North and South Lanarkshire, we contacted senior staff members to request support in disseminating the consultation. Whilst the consultation was widely promoted in the North; there was limited support from statutory youth work and the voluntary sector in South Lanarkshire. We contacted several individual Youth, Family & Community Learning Service (YFCLS) staff members, from managers to on-the-ground workers and received a minimal number of replies.

The majority of South Lanarkshire responses came from clicks on the Facebook Ad, and without this, South Lanarkshire would have been under-represented.

### **In-person facilitation**

Initially, we thought that our number one source of completed surveys would result from face-to-face interaction with young people. However, this proved to be more challenging than anticipated as there was a lack of response from partner agencies. I organised 21 consultation sessions, and due to COVID-19 social distancing measures, these groups were much smaller than they would normally

have been. Group sizes averaged around 5 young people. This method of engagement was time-consuming and did not yield sufficient results.

## Conclusion

The information provided by respondents throughout this consultation has provided a valuable insight into the relationship between tobacco and cannabis use amongst young people in Lanarkshire.

It is particularly concerning that many young people first try cannabis between the ages of 13 and 15. The preferred way of using cannabis for these young people is to mix it with tobacco, which will almost certainly lead to nicotine addiction. Information about the dangers of tobacco use and harm reduction information on cannabis use should extend to this age group. We would have liked to have included questions about cannabis edibles, as we have noticed that this form of cannabis has increased significantly in popularity during the lockdown. However, questions about edibles did not contribute to the aim of this consultation as they are smokeless and not used with tobacco.

Survey responses suggest that young people's attitudes to cannabis are relaxed – a lot of respondents in the final question call for legalisation, stating what they perceive to be positives of use and potential physical and mental health benefits. It's clear from this that perhaps a zero-tolerance approach would not work. Drug education should be well researched, fact-based, unbiased, and harm-reduction focused for maximum efficacy.

Young people do not know who to approach for help if they develop a problem with cannabis. More information about addiction services for young people needs to be made available and well-publicised in an engaging way to make sure they have the appropriate signposts if they are required.

**For further information on this consultation, please contact [LANDED](#).**



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