
DO MORE PACK

In partnership with:



CONTENTS:

PAGE

03	INTRODUCTION: WHY WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER
04	BEING A DRINK WISE CHAMPION
05	WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE
06	WHAT YOU CAN DO
08	TIPS FOR CONTACTING POLITICIANS
10	IS YOUR WORKPLACE DRINK WISE? THE 10 KEY TESTS
12	HOW MUCH ALCOHOL IS TOO MUCH?
14	KEY MESSAGES
16	CONTACTS
17	REFERENCES

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INTRODUCTION: WHY WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER

Up to one million people in the North West drink enough to put their health at risk. That's one in seven of us.

It's vital that we rebalance the North West's relationship with alcohol because of the damage it is causing to people's health – we have the highest incidence of alcohol-related deaths in England.

However, alcohol harm also damages our economy, not just because of the cost to the NHS. The bills for tackling associated crime and domestic violence, fires, road accidents, absenteeism at work – the list goes on – are huge. We simply cannot afford to keep picking up the tab.

By working together as individuals and organisations, we can reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

The "Do More" and "Know More" packs form the Drink Wise Champion's Handbook, which is intended to bring together useful ideas, resources and facts for anyone who wants to make the case for reducing the damaging effects of alcohol. It has been produced by Drink Wise North West, in partnership with Our Life, North West Employers and NWIEP.

The "Do More" pack, suggests ways in which you, or your colleagues, friends or family, might be able to take small actions which will help to rebalance our heavy drinking culture. Our accompanying "Know More" pack brings together a set of key facts which you can use when you are making the case for tackling alcohol harm.

Join us and become a Drink Wise Champion – together we can make the difference.

Kind regards,

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BEING A DRINK WISE CHAMPION

1. WHO ARE DRINK WISE CHAMPIONS?

We are passionate people who want to create a healthier, safer North West, free from alcohol harm.

2. WHAT CAN A DRINK WISE CHAMPION DO?

- Join the Drink Wise network email list, to keep up to date and share information with others.
- Share knowledge and expertise across the region and amongst different sectors.
- Plan events or activities together where we can have a bigger impact working together.

3. WHAT WILL THIS NETWORK ACHIEVE?

It will achieve greater effectiveness by sharing intelligence, and greater support and confidence for all advocating for reducing alcohol harm.

4. HOW IS THE NETWORK ORGANISED?

It is hosted by Drink Wise North West, but our strength comes from the brilliant people who are going the extra mile to save lives by raising awareness of the risks of alcohol.

5. WHAT WON'T THE NETWORK DO?

It will not duplicate the work of existing structures, or become bogged down by formal structures, papers and meetings.

6. HOW DO I BECOME A DRINK WISE CHAMPION?

If you share our aspirations and policy views and want to reduce alcohol related harm, you can join as an active participant, or only as part of the email network. Email hazel.parsons@champs.nhs.uk to find out more.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

WE WANT A HEALTHIER, SAFER NORTH WEST, FREE FROM ALCOHOL HARM.

We believe that there needs to be some vital changes made to the conditions that make up our alcohol culture. So we are part of a mass global movement calling for:

A SAFER SOCIETY

Where everyone can enjoy life free from the effects of alcohol harm, free from the pressure to drink, and able to receive support when they choose not to drink - wherever they are.

A SAFER ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Where children and adolescents can grow up protected from the promotion of alcohol, and protected from the negative consequences of alcohol consumption.

AN INFORMED SOCIETY

Where people are aware of the risks of alcohol, and are able to make an informed choice about whether, or how much, to drink.

A SUPPORTIVE SOCIETY

Where anyone who develops a problem with alcohol has, with their loved ones, easy access to free advice, treatment and care.

You will see these calls reflected in the materials of other organisations, like the Alcohol Concern charter and the World Health Organisation charter on alcohol.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It's easy to take small actions to make a difference. We've come up with a range of options below depending on how much time you have.

IN 1 MINUTE:

- Add to your email signature - "Ask me why I am a Drink Wise Champion".

IN 2 MINUTES:

- Spread the word through social media.
- Follow [@DrinkwiseUK](#) on Twitter and retweet our updates.
- Become a fan of Drink Wise on Facebook.
- If you work in the public sector, find out about the Drink Wise excellence programme of workshops and best practice by contacting alison.wheeler@champs.nhs.uk

IN 3 MINUTES:

- Tell your friends, family or colleagues in person why you're a Drink Wise Champion. Ask them to visit our website and join the debate.
- Recruit someone else to be a Drink Wise champion. Send their contact details to hazel.parsons@champs.nhs.uk and we'll add them to our Drink Wise Champions bulletin.

IN 5 MINUTES:

- Ask your partner, children or friends about how alcohol is handled around them. Is there a strong drinking culture at work or among school staff? Are prizes of alcohol usually offered in competitions? Write a letter to the organisation in question and do follow up to see what they will do about it.

IN 10 MINUTES:

- Add a poster to a noticeboard at work or in your area explaining alcohol units (contact hazel.parsons@champs.nhs.uk for details).
- Keep a daily drink diary, listing your alcohol consumption and rating out of ten how you feel (think physically and emotionally here). Ask your friends, family or colleagues to join you and keep their own drink diary.

IN 30 MINUTES:

- Write to your MP or councillor and let us know their response. Find their contact details at www.writetothem.com to ask them to support our work. Check out our top tips for contacting politicians later in this guide.
- Write to the media, using any examples of when alcohol has negatively affected you (personally or at work). Remember to send us a copy of the coverage when your letter is printed.

ON THE MOVE:

- Look out for irresponsible alcohol marketing in newspapers, the cinema, on television and on billboards near schools. Often this targets younger people who can become warm to the idea of drinking. Then report it to us on the Drink Wise website at www.drinkwisenorthwest.org
- Make a note of when you see super cheap alcohol and get in touch to tell us about it via the Drink Wise website.

AT WORK:

- Meet with your CEO and HR director about your work as a Drink Wise Champion and to ask them if they will take the following steps.
 - Test your organisation against the Drink Wise 10 Key Tests in this toolkit.
 - Hold an "alcohol awareness week" or campaign at work to help raise awareness amongst all staff of the risks of drinking too much alcohol.

We always like to hear from enthusiastic supporters of Drink Wise North West. If you want more inspiration or have any more ideas for actions, then just drop us a line at hazel.parsons@champs.nhs.uk

TIPS FOR CONTACTING POLITICIANS

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR POLITICIAN:

Your MP and Elected Members (or councillors as many people still know them) can change legislation at different levels of government.

They take the concerns of local professionals and citizens very seriously, which is why it is a good idea to get in touch with them and make your views on UK alcohol culture known.

You can find out contact details for your local MP by going to <http://www.writetothem.com>

You can also write to your MP by name at: **House of Commons London SW1A 0AA**. Addresses and contact numbers for your local council can be found in local libraries or town halls.

Remember when writing to include your full name, address and postcode so that they know you are their constituent – and remember to send a copy of their reply to us, at: **Hazel Parsons, Drink Wise c/o Our Life, 4th Floor, Dale House, 35 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 2HF**.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

Memorable and personal facts and stories can turn a good letter into something which moves a decision maker to act.

Why not start with some of the key messages in this pack, and add any facts or stories you might have from your experience in your job or personal life? You can also use any of the facts in the Know More pack.

You can tell them if you wish that you are a Drink Wise Champion and are part of a network of people in the North West who believe it is vital that we rebalance the UK's drinking culture.

You may also wish to point out that action on alcohol will save lives, cut crime and reduce taxpayer bills.

Be specific about what you want them to do. For instance, you could ask them:

- To let you know whether they feel alcohol harm is an issue for their local community.
- To let you know what they are personally doing to reduce alcohol harm.
- To let you know what their Party position is.
- To ask them to contact the Prime Minister or Leader of their Party and ask what they are doing to reduce alcohol harm.
- You could ask them to commit to visiting their local hospital, or to talk to their local Police and Fire personnel, to understand more about the impact of alcohol.
- You can ask them to meet with you so that you can discuss your concerns in detail.

IS YOUR WORKPLACE DRINK WISE? THE 10 KEY TESTS

1. **ARE THERE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYEES ABOUT THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL?**
 - Do these expectations address alcohol consumption during employee breaks and away from work premises?
 - Is there guidance for employees whose role involves entertaining or representing the organisation at events at which alcohol is served?
 - Does this guidance include occasions occurring outside normal working hours?

2. **ARE ALL EMPLOYEES OFFERED EDUCATION ABOUT RESPONSIBLE DRINKING?**
 - Does this cover how alcohol mis-use can impact on the workplace?

3. **DO YOU TRY TO IDENTIFY EMPLOYEES WHO MAY NEED HELP AND SUPPORT TO CUT BACK ON THEIR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION?**
 - Do managers receive specific training/guidance in early recognition of alcohol issues?
 - Does occupational health routinely carry out "Identification and Brief Advice" to encourage people to cut back on alcohol consumption?
 - Are employees interviewed about their alcohol consumption in back to work interviews?
 - Are absences monitored to see if there is any link with excessive use of alcohol?

4. **DO ALL MANAGERS RECEIVE TRAINING TO HELP THEM RAISE A SUSPECTED ALCOHOL ISSUE WITH AN EMPLOYEE?**
 - Is after training support offered?

5. **ARE EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE ALCOHOL ISSUES ENCOURAGED TO COME FORWARD AND SEEK HELP?**
 - Can staff self refer to an occupational alcohol service?

6. **IS THERE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING ALCOHOL PROBLEMS?**
 - Is this easily available?

7. **HAS THE RISK OF ALCOHOL RELATED VIOLENT INCIDENTS AND ASSAULTS ON STAFF BEEN ASSESSED AND IS THERE AN ADEQUATE SUPPORT PROCESS IN PLACE?**

8. **ARE THERE ALCOHOL RELATED DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES? HAVE ALL MANAGERS RECEIVED APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE IN APPLYING THESE FAIRLY AND CONSISTENTLY?**

9. **IS THERE AN ORGANISATIONAL POSITION ON SPENDING MONEY ON ALCOHOL AT EVENTS (E.G. SPONSORSHIP/PURCHASE OF ALCOHOL)?**

10. **DO WORKFORCE POLICIES EXTEND TO CONTRACTORS, VISITORS, AGENCY WORKERS, CONSULTANTS AND OTHER THIRD PARTIES WORKING FOR, OR ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANISATION?**

THE CASE FOR COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESSING ALCOHOL THROUGH WORKPLACE POLICIES

- Reduction in accidents.
- Improvement in general health and wellbeing of workforce.
- Enhanced performance and productivity.
- Enhanced corporate reputation.
- Avoidance of legal action.

HOW MUCH ALCOHOL IS TOO MUCH?

Here's a guide to common terminology and the alcohol units associated with different levels of consumption. Illustrations below give typical units per drink.

BINGE DRINKING

Drinking six or more units in one session if female and eight or more if male.

LOWER RISK DRINKING

Drinking up to 14 units per week for a female, and up to 21 units for a male.

INCREASED RISK DRINKING (FORMERLY HAZARDOUS CONSUMPTION)

Drinking between 15 and 35 units per week for females and between 22 and 50 units for males.

HIGHER RISK DRINKING (FORMERLY HARMFUL CONSUMPTION)

Drinking over 35 units for females per week and over 50 units for males.



PINT OF LAGER
4% ABV

2.3 UNITS



PINT OF BITTER
5% ABV

2.8 UNITS



PINT OF STRONG BEER/LAGER/CIDER
5.2% ABV

3 UNITS



500ml CAN OF LAGER
3.8% ABV

1.9 UNITS



750ml BOTTLE OF WINE
13.5% ABV

10 UNITS



175ml GLASS OF RED OR WHITE WINE
13% ABV

2.3 UNITS



250ml GLASS OF RED OR WHITE WINE
13% ABV

3.3 UNITS



50ml GLASS OF FORTIFIED WINE (E.G. SHERRY)
20% ABV

1 UNIT



25ml SINGLE SPIRIT AND MIXER
40% ABV

1 UNIT



50ml DOUBLE SPIRIT AND MIXER
40% ABV

2 UNITS



275ml BOTTLE OF ALCO-POP
5% ABV

1.4 UNITS



50ml DOUBLE IRISH CREAM LIQUEUR
20% ABV

1 UNIT

KEY MESSAGES

HEALTH

The health problems caused by alcohol are dreadful now, but are a ticking time bomb for the future. Consumption of alcohol has risen by 19% over the last three decades and over a quarter of England's adult population (10.5 million) are drinking at hazardous levels.¹ The North West has the highest number of alcohol-related deaths in England. Between 2007 and 2009, there were 3,109 deaths specifically attributable to alcohol (2,021 males and 1,088 females).² Someone is admitted to hospital in the North West every four minutes with an illness or injury caused by alcohol.

HEALTH COSTS

Treatment for alcohol-related harm is estimated to be costing the NHS in the North West around £500m a year. At a time when the public sector is being squeezed harder and harder that's a big bill we simply cannot afford to keep paying when we need to be protecting other front line services.

CRIME AND DISORDER

The crime and social disorder caused by excessive drinking is costing us over £1bn a year in the North West alone – and that's on top of the huge costs to the NHS. Alcohol is fuelling violence on the streets in our homes, criminal damage, theft, sexual assaults – we must deal with this.

WIDER ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Apart from the huge costs to the NHS and our criminal justice system associated with alcohol there are also massive wider economic impacts. Millions of days are lost through sickness at work and this costs us billions of pounds in lost productivity; alcohol is a major reason for people claiming incapacity benefit. But there's good evidence that investment in specialist treatment pays for itself many times over – every £1 invested saves £5 on health, welfare and crime costs.

IMPACTS ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Too many of our children and young people are at risk from alcohol. The odds of a teenager getting drunk repeatedly is twice as great if they have seen their parents under the influence.³ A quarter of 14 to 16 year olds say they regularly binge drink, and the same number say that after drinking they have been in a fight. Our teenagers are drinking twice as much alcohol as they did 20 years ago and we need to do a lot more to protect them from this harm.

HOW MUCH ALCOHOL DO PEOPLE CONSUME?

We are drinking far more than we used to – 40% more than 40 years ago. A major factor is that alcohol is now relatively far cheaper than it used to be – 75% cheaper than back in 1980. And in the North West over 1.3 million men and women regularly drink enough alcohol to put their health at risk.

WHO'S DRINKING?

With more than 1.5 million people addicted to alcohol,⁴ excessive drinking is an issue across a wide range of socio-economic groups and affects men and women. There is evidence that middle-aged, middle class drinkers in more affluent communities are consuming harmful amounts of alcohol – it's not just an issue in our poorer communities.

HABITS ASSOCIATED WITH AND ATTITUDES TO ALCOHOL

Drinking too much alcohol often has a double-whammy effect. A lot of people who drink too much also admit that it encourages them to eat more and eat unhealthy food – and that these habits are costing them too much. The good news is that many heavy drinkers are concerned about the impact on their waistline and their wallets and want to do something about it.

BUYING HABITS AND FACTS ABOUT THE RETAIL SECTOR

The drinks industry is very big business, but the market has changed significantly. Most people buy their alcohol in supermarkets, not in a bar or pub, and levels of drinking at home have increased significantly. Very cheap prices in off-licenses and supermarkets and more home drinking are two of the reasons that alcohol harm in the North West is on the increase.

IMPACTS OF INTRODUCING A UNIT MINIMUM PRICE

There is a lot of evidence that the cheapness of alcohol compared to in the past is driving a culture of excessive drinking, and that we need to do something about that. Having a minimum unit price of, say, 50p would save thousands of lives a year, save huge costs to the NHS and in lost days at work and would be an effective way of turning the tide of alcohol-related harm.

CONTACTS

For further information, you can contact:

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¹ Royal college of physicians (2010). Too much of the hard stuff: what alcohol costs the NHS.
The NHS Confederation briefing. Issue 193.

² LAPE (alcohol profiles) data

³ Young people, alcohol and influences; A study of young people and their relationship with alcohol, Bremner et al , Joseph Rowntree
Foundation, June 2011

⁴ Evidence from Sir Ian Gilmore, February 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-12506127>

DRINK WISE

NORTH WEST

REDUCING THE RISKS TOGETHER

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