

Alcohol Misuse Safeguarding Fact Sheet

Alcohol Misuse

Alcohol is something that many people are capable of enjoying occasionally and within moderation. However, alcohol consumption can often go beyond this, and can have negative consequences for those who drink. Alcohol consumption can have detrimental effects on an individual's health and their relationships (with friends, family and romantic partners). The recommended daily limit for alcohol is 2–3 units for women, and 3–4 units for men. It is important to remember that this is a limit, not a target.

Alcohol misuse in the UK:

- In England, there are an estimated 589,101 dependent drinkers (2016/17) – it is stated that 81.7% are not accessing treatment
- 24% of adults in England and Scotland regularly drink over the suggested guidelines – 27% of drinkers in Great Britain binge drink on their heaviest drinking days
- Alcohol is a causal factor of more than 60 medical conditions, including: mouth, throat, stomach, liver and breast cancers; high blood pressure; cirrhosis of the liver; and depression.

What are the risk factors?

Risk factors include:

- More than 15 drinks per week (males)
- More than 12 drinks per week (females)
- More than 5 drinks per day at least once a week (binge drinking)
- A parent with alcohol use disorder
- A mental health illness, such as depression, anxiety, or schizophrenia.

People are at a greater risk for alcohol use disorder if they:

- Are a young adult experiencing peer pressure
- Have low self-esteem
- Experience a high level of stress
- Live in a family or culture where alcohol use is common and accepted
- Have a close relative with alcohol use disorder.

Behaviours and symptoms of alcohol misuse

Symptoms of alcohol use disorder are based on key behaviours, including:

- Drinking alone
- Drinking more to feel the effects of alcohol (having a high tolerance)
- Becoming violent or angry when asked about their drinking habits
- Not eating or eating poorly
- Neglecting personal hygiene
- Missing work or school because of drinking
- Being unable to control alcohol intake
- Making excuses to drink
- Continuing to drink even when legal, social, or economic problems develop
- Giving up important social, occupational, or recreational activities because of alcohol use.

The Skills Network always suggests that your first point of call over concerns of alcoholism should be to your GP, allowing you to get advice and help.

You can also find a detailed list of support for alcohol misuse at the NHS support page for alcohol misuse.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/>

If you have a safeguarding concern regarding alcohol, please contact The Skills Network's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Paul Wakeling (Director of Curriculum and Quality), via email at: safeguarding@theskillsnetwork.com or on **01757 600706**.

Source: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-statistics>

