

# NHS Health Check Bitesize sessions: Alcohol & NHS Health Checks

Delivered by Inclusion Hampshire

# Housekeeping



## Microphones off

Please ensure your microphone off when the presenter is speaking



## Questions?

Please share via the chat or during the Q&A at the end of the session



## Cameras

If you can, please turn your cameras on



## About you

If you wish to, please put your name and role into the chat

# Introduction to Alcohol and NHS Health Checks

The NHS Health Check programme aims to prevent cardiovascular disease, and associated conditions, through the **early assessment, awareness and management** of individual behavioural and physiological risk factors.

The programme aims to prevent conditions such as heart disease, stroke, Type 2 Diabetes, Kidney Disease and also aims to reduce the risk of developing dementia.

Conversations about Alcohol during the NHS Health Check are an opportunity to help individuals to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease through healthy lifestyle change. Your role is important!



## **Did you know?**

Alcohol is a known risk factor for numerous cardiovascular diseases

# Introductions:

**Kelly Pickard – Service Lead for People and  
Development for Inclusion Hampshire**

# Aims:

- Understand the impact of alcohol on health and wellbeing
- Use AUDIT-C/AUDIT screening tools effectively
- Interpret screening scores and provide appropriate brief advice
- Develop skills to discuss alcohol use in a non judgemental, stigma-free way
- Understand government guidance on alcohol consumption
- Recognise referral pathways and support options across Hampshire and IOW
- Apply learning through case studies

# Confidence Check

How confident do you feel about discussing alcohol with patients?

- 1 Not confident at all
- 2 Only a little confident
- 3 Neutral / somewhat confident
- 4 Fairly confident
- 5 Very confident

**RETHINK  
YOUR DRINK**

# Worries, Concerns and Tricky Situations

- How have conversations about alcohol gone in the past?
- What worries or concerns do you have about approaching the topic?
- Any examples of situations where talking about alcohol has felt difficult?





# Why Alcohol Matters: The statistics

## Hampshire

- It is estimated there were approximately **11,600 adults** drinking dependently in Hampshire (2019-2020), which is an increase of 1500 people over 4 years
- Inclusion Hampshire are treating only **14.8%** of people using alcohol in this way
- There are approximately **10,000** people drinking to a potentially harmful level in Hampshire who would likely benefit from support.

## Isle of Wight

- Data from 2022 indicates that 40,000 people aged 16 and over are drinking more than 14 units a week.
- There are an estimated **1,680** people drinking dependently on the Island with **20%** in treatment.



# Why Alcohol Matters: Impact on Health

## Cardiovascular health risks

- Increases Blood Pressure
- Heart Disease
- Arrhythmias
- Stroke

## Other health risks

- Cancer
- Liver Disease
- Pancreatitis
- Weakened Immune System
- Diabetes & Endocrine Disorders
- Digestive Issues
- Mental Health issues

# Stigma and impact

# STIGMAKILLS



**See the person.**

**Hear their story.**



# Stigma and Conversation Skills

## Use neutral, descriptive language:

- Say **'alcohol use'** or **'drinking pattern'** instead of labels like **'alcoholic'** or **'drunk.'**
- Focus on **behaviour**, not character. E.g. *"I'd like to talk about your drinking"* rather than "You have a problem."

## Normalise the conversation:

- Introduce the AUDIT-C and AUDIT as a standard part of the process; being clear it is not in response to anything that has been said or recommended specifically.
- Phrases like: *"We ask everyone about alcohol, just as we ask about other health habits,"* signal that this is standard practice, not criticism.

## Validate feelings and experiences:

- Acknowledge that discussing alcohol can feel uncomfortable: *"Some people find talking about drinking tricky, and that's completely ok."*
- Listen actively and show understanding rather than immediately offering advice.

## Keep your tone calm and respectful:

- Avoid sounding shocked, disappointed, or judgmental.
- Use a friendly, matter-of-fact tone. This helps patients feel safe to answer honestly.

## Avoid assumptions:

- Don't assume how much someone drinks or how it affects them. Ask open questions to explore how their drinking makes them feel or to understand the impact it may be having

# Alcohol Awareness

Nickname - booze, hooch, sauce.

Alcohol is a depressant which slows down your body's responses in various ways.

- The type of alcohol in an alcoholic drink is called ethanol
- A drink's alcohol content is affected by how long it is left to ferment

How do I know how much I'm drinking?

In the UK all labels display the %ABV of an alcoholic drink. They often also display the number of units too.

If the units are not shown on the label you can calculate these by multiplying the ABV by the volume of the drink in mls and then dividing by 1000.

1 unit is 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol.



# Alcohol Awareness: Activity

How many units do you think are in each of these drinks?



1 pint of 5% beer



Large glass of wine  
(250ml)



Single measure  
of spirits (25ml)



1 pint of 5% beer

**2.8 units**



Large glass of wine  
(250ml)

**3 units**



Single measure  
of spirits (25ml)

**1 unit**

# Alcohol Awareness

## What is the law?

Alcohol is legal to purchase and consume for those over the age of 18

### ⚠️ Harm reduction advice:

- **Limit alcohol:** Government guidance is to drink no more than 14 units per week, spread over 3+ days.
- **Have drink-free days** each week.
- **Track your drinks** to help reduce intake.
- **Eat before drinking** and alternate with soft drinks to slow consumption.
- **Remember:** Alcohol can stay in your system the next day—be mindful & avoid driving.



### Physical Risks

- Falls and accidents
- High blood pressure
- Liver cirrhosis and hepatitis
- Risk of heart attack, seizure and stroke
- Alcohol poisoning
- Stomach ulcers
- Cancer
- Withdrawal symptoms including seizure

### Psychological Risks

- Exaggerated mood swings
- Shortened attention span and memory problems
- Reduced inhibitions
- Problems with coordination
- Disruption of sleep pattern
- Anxiety and depression
- Psychosis and deliriums
- Dependency and addiction

# AUDIT

## What is the Alcohol AUDIT?

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) is a screening tool developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to assess alcohol consumption, drinking behaviours, and alcohol-related problems.

The full AUDIT consists of 10 questions designed to help identify individuals who may have risky or harmful drinking patterns.

The AUDIT is widely used by healthcare professionals to guide interventions and support early detection of alcohol-related issues. It is the same tool we use within specialist alcohol service to consider appropriate treatment pathways.



# Tips for using AUDIT

- Introduce the tool gently and ask permission

*“As part of your NHS Health Check, we ask everyone a few questions about alcohol using a tool called AUDIT. It helps us understand how best to support your health and wellbeing, is that ok?”*

- Before starting the AUDIT, set the scene regarding the questions

*“Some of these questions might not feel like they apply to you, and that’s completely fine. Others might feel a bit personal or tricky to think about, and that’s okay too. The important thing is to answer honestly so we can understand your health and provide the right support”*

- Ask questions **exactly as written** to maintain consistency
- Avoid judgemental or leading phrases
- Use open body language and a calm tone
- Remember, the AUDIT is a screening tool, not a diagnostic test. Its purpose is to guide the conversation and help identify appropriate advice or referral.
- Offer support and explanation regarding units – have tools to hand if required e.g **Unit and Calorie Calculator | Drinkaware** or a drinks wheel



# AUDIT-C

NHS Health Check (v19.4) (Ardens)

Pages << Family history

\*Phlebotomy - HIOW

» Quick Entry - NHS HC

Administration

History

Full AUDIT (10 Qs)

Mental Health Screening

Examination & Results

National Screening

QRISK3

Signposting & Intervention

Complete NHS Health Check

Template Info/Learning Points

**You may wish to record age of onset for family history of below conditions:**

Family history of diabetes?  No previous entry

Family history of CVD?  No previous entry

Text

**Smoking status**

Smoking status  28-Aug-2025 Never smoke... »

Declined to give smoking status No previous entry

Smoking cessation advice  14-Aug-2025 Smoking cess... »

**AUDIT-C (Scoring 5+ indicates increasing or higher risk drinking - complete full AUDIT)**

Teetotaler Text  12-Dec-2024 »

**Important: in order to get an accurate score you MUST complete all questions in this section before pressing the calculate button, otherwise EMIS may pick up previously entered scores.**

Q1. How often did you have a drink containing alcohol in the past year?  No previous entry

Q2. How many units containing alcohol did you have on a typical day when you were drinking in the past year?  No previous entry

Q3. How often did you have 6+ units (female) or 8+ units (male) on one occasion in the past year?  No previous entry

AUDIT-C Score  Calculate 14-Aug-2025 7 / 12 »

Alcohol consumption screening test declined Text  No previous entry

[3 question-alcohol use disorders identification test consumption \(AUDIT C\)](#)

Full AUDIT

Home | Assessment | Activity & Diet | Smoking | Alcohol | Memory | Tests | Advice | Risk & Summary | Resources

Alcohol

ardens help & feedback

**Assessment** Screening

Alcohol units per day  Units/Day

Alcohol units per week  Units/Week

Recommended limits  14 units/week

AUDIT-C ★ How often do you have a drink containing Alcohol? N/A (mandatory to complete)

How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day drinking? N/A

How often have you had 6 or more standard drinks if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in the last year. N/A

\*Alcohol use disorder identificatn test consumptn questionre

Score if 5 or more, proceed to full AUDIT:  AUDIT Score

**Impression** ★ Teetotal  AUDIT-C Score 0

Lower risk drinking  AUDIT-C or AUDIT Score 1-7

Increasing risk drinking  AUDIT Score 8-15

Higher risk drinking  AUDIT Score 16-19

Possible alcohol dependence  AUDIT Score 20 or more

**Outcome** Alcohol leaflet given  Resources

\*Referral to GP  New Task...

★ Advice  Lifestyle Welbeing I..

Referral

Alcohol target notes

Next

Information Print Suspend **Ok** Cancel Show Incomplete Fields

# Full AUDIT



## NHS Health Check (v19.4) (Ardens)

Pages



\*Phlebotomy - HIOW

» Quick Entry - NHS HC

Administration

History

Full AUDIT (10 Qs)

Mental Health Screening

Examination & Results

National Screening

QRISK3

Signposting & Intervention

Complete NHS Health Check

Template Info/Learning Points

AUDIT (score interpretation 0-7=low risk, 8-15=increasing risk, 16-19=higher risk, 20+= possible depen...)

**Important: in order to get an accurate score you MUST complete all questions in this section before pressing the calculate button. Otherwise EMIS may pick up previous scores.**

Q1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol in the past year?  No previous entry

Q2. How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you were drinking?  No previous entry

Q3. How often did you have 6+ units (female) or 8+ units (male) on a single occasion in the past year?  No previous entry

Q4. How often in the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once started?  No previous entry

Q5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of your drinking?  No previous entry

Q6. How often during the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?  No previous entry

Q7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?  No previous entry

Q8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?  No previous entry

Q9. Have you or somebody else been injured as a result of your drinking?  No previous entry

Q10. Has a relative or friend, doctor or other health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested that you cut down?  No previous entry

AUDIT Score (full)   No previous entry

[Alcohol use disorders identification test \(AUDIT\)](#)

# Interpreting AUDIT Scores

Each question is scored from 0 to 4, resulting in a total score ranging from 0 to 40 when the full AUDIT is completed.



|           |   |                             |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| Score 0-7 | { | Teetotal                    |
|           |   | Lower risk                  |
| 8-15      |   | Increasing risk drinking    |
| 16-19     |   | Higher risk drinking        |
| 20+       |   | Possible alcohol dependence |

# Interpreting AUDIT Scores



**0-7: Lower Risk** – Indicates responsible drinking or abstinence.  
No intervention is required.

**8-15: Increasing Risk Drinking**– Suggests a pattern that increases the risk of harm.

Brief advice on reducing alcohol consumption is recommended. Initial advice by HCA and can be offered referral (or signposted for self referral) to Inclusion Hampshire for Brief Interventions (these can be done either face to face, by phone or online based on preference).

### **What advice can you give?**

Ensure the patient understands how much they are drinking, inform them of their AUDIT score and what risk level this puts them in

Explain the benefits that could come from cutting down

Provide some tips for cutting down such as: tracking and measuring drinks, eating before drinking, and consuming soft drinks between alcoholic drinks, delaying the first drink until later, allocating 'non drinking days' in advance.

# Interpreting AUDIT Scores cont.



**16-19: Higher Risk Drinking** – Indicates that alcohol use is causing harm to health.

Interventions and monitoring would be beneficial to manage health risks and support change.

Flag score with patient's GP for assessment. Referral (or signposted for self referral) to Inclusion Hampshire or Inclusion IOW for support is recommended.

**20+: Possible Dependence** – Suggests high alcohol dependence.

Flag score with patient's GP for assessment. Advice should be given regarding the risks of suddenly stopping drinking, and a referral (or signposted for self referral) for specialist support from the community alcohol service Inclusion Hampshire or Inclusion IOW is recommended.

Advice for someone who may be physically dependent outlined on next slide.

# Alcohol Dependence

## Physical dependence

- Someone who drinks alcohol daily/most days, is likely to develop a tolerance for alcohol, leading to dependence. A sign can be drinking in the morning to manage shakes/sweats.
- If someone is dependent and wants to stop drinking we would recommend a slow reduction with support, or a detox
- It can be incredibly dangerous for someone who is physically dependent on alcohol to suddenly stop drinking. Some of the withdrawal symptoms can be fatal.

### Signs of Withdrawal

- Sweating
- Shaking or trembling
- Nausea or retching
- Upset stomach
- High levels of anxiety
- Hallucinations
- Racing pulse/heart rate
- Fits or seizures
- Delirium (confusion)

### What to do

- Advise them not to suddenly stop drinking
- If someone is already experiencing withdrawal symptoms, they can be encouraged to drink alcohol to manage symptoms while they seek support.
- If experiencing significant withdrawal symptoms, and/or the person has no access to alcohol to manage withdrawals call an ambulance



# Alcohol – Support & Treatment

Conversations can feel scary for patients – reassure and give support

Flexible, person-centred support from Inclusion:

- Staff and volunteers with lived experience of alcohol dependence
- Clinical support for health checks and treatment
- Information, advice and brief interventions
- Psychosocial support and interventions (one to one and groups)
- Digital support (phone or online)
- Holistic therapies such as acupuncture
- Support to access other services if needed such as housing, mental health, employment and volunteering

If someone is dependent there are detox options:

- Home detox with support, guidance, and medication
- Unit-based detox for those who prefer or need it
- Typically 7–10 days detoxing, but with preparatory work beforehand to ensure patients feel informed and supported



# Referral Pathways

- Inclusion have no 'threshold' or fixed criteria for referral
- Self Referral (online, telephone or walk in)
- Professional Referral (online or telephone)



[Alcohol Support - Inclusion Hants](#)

[For Professionals - Inclusion Hants](#)

[Online Referral - Inclusion Hants](#)

0300 124 0103



[Alcohol Support – Inclusion Isle of Wight](#)

[Online Referral – Inclusion Isle of Wight](#)

01983 526654

# Tips for conversations



- **Start with curiosity, not judgement:**

“Can we talk a bit about your drinking and how it might be affecting your health?”

- **Use neutral language:**

Avoid words like ‘problem’ or ‘addict.’ Focus on health and wellbeing.

- **Normalise and reassure:**

“Many people underestimate how much they drink, and that’s very common. Talking about it openly helps us support your health safely.”

- **Invite reflection:**

Ask open-ended questions: “How do you feel about your drinking?” or “Have you noticed any changes in your health recently?”

- **Link to patient goals:**

“Let’s think about what changes might improve your health or energy levels.”

- **Document carefully:**

Record observations, AUDIT results, and any agreed next steps.

# Case Study

**Name:** Mr. J.

**Gender:** Male

**AUDIT Score:** 14 (increasing risk)

## You have already asked:

- “Can you tell me what your drinking typically looks like across a week?”
- “Can you tell me a bit more about what alcohol does for you?”
- “How do you feel about your drinking?”
- “If things stayed the same with your drinking, would you be happy with that, or would you prefer something to be different?”

**Presentation:** Drinking every evening to help with sleep, would like to cut down but states he’s ‘not an alcoholic’ so he’s unsure what would help.



# Confidence Check

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**RETHINK  
YOUR DRINK**

# Further learning and information

Inclusion Hampshire runs a quarterly Online Information Session aimed at professionals working with people who may benefit from drug and alcohol treatment/support, or staff members from our partner agencies who would like to expand their knowledge around drugs and alcohol.

Our upcoming session:

- 10am-12pm Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026 [Register Here](#)
- 10am-12pm Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026 [Register Here](#)
- 10am-12pm Wednesday 13th January 2027 [Register Here](#)



# Further learning and information

NHS e-learning for Health: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/>

Rethink your drink: [Rethink your drink | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council](#)

All Our Health Alcohol: [applying All Our Health](#)

[Useful resources – Inclusion](#)

[Self-help - Inclusion Hants](#)

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/>



# Contact Details



[Alcohol Support - Inclusion Hants](#)  
[For Professionals - Inclusion Hants](#)  
[Online Referral - Inclusion Hants](#)  
0300 124 0103



[Alcohol Support – Inclusion Isle of Wight](#)  
[Online Referral – Inclusion Isle of Wight](#)  
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# Any Questions?

# Thank you for attending!

We would be grateful for your feedback.

Please complete this short survey:

**Contact us in Public Health:**

Hampshire - [Aloisia.Katsande@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Aloisia.Katsande@hants.gov.uk)

Isle of Wight - [maddy.bune@iow.gov.uk](mailto:maddy.bune@iow.gov.uk)



<https://forms.office.com/e/WPGAFiVR8d>

# Upcoming Hampshire bitesize sessions



**Go to NHS Health Checks Resources for Professionals Webpage: [Health Check resources for professionals | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council Number 10: NHS-health-checks-training.pdf](#)**

- Physical activity & NHS Health Checks Delivered by Energise Me  
Wednesday 10 June 2026 13:00-14:00
- Smoking cessation & NHS Health Checks Delivered by SmokeFree Hampshire  
Wednesday 16 September 2026 13:00-14:00
- Weight management & NHS Health Checks Coming soon –  
Summer/Autumn 2026 13:00-14:00 Registration not yet open