

Alcohol Harm and Misuse JSNA-on-a-page



- Alcohol misuse is now the leading risk factor for ill-health, early mortality, and disability among those aged 15 to 49 in England, placing significant strain on public services.
- Reducing health inequalities around alcohol use is one of the priorities contained within the NHS Long Term Plan, including reducing alcohol-related morbidity and mortality.

Key causes & risk factors for alcohol-related harm



Sex

Hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions are twice as high in men compared to women. Men are also more likely to report drinking at harmful levels.



Age

Adults aged 30-49 represent the largest proportion of adults in alcohol treatment, but the 16-24 group are more likely to report binge drinking.



ACEs

People with 4+ Adverse Childhood Experiences are 1.6 times more likely to drink at high-risk levels.



Mental health

Around half (51%) of individuals with a mental illness are reported as having a co-morbid substance misuse disorder.



Deprivation

Affluent populations tend to report higher alcohol consumption than deprived groups, but alcohol health harms are higher in deprived areas.



COVID-19

Almost 1 in 3 drinkers have been drinking at increasing or high-risk levels during the pandemic, with mental health being the most common reason for drinking.

What the stats show



- Estimates show that in 2021/22, 0.97% of Hertfordshire adults were dependent on alcohol.
- PHE estimates that 81.9% of dependent drinkers are not in contact with alcohol treatment services.
- Hospital admissions for most alcohol-related conditions have been increasing over the last 5 years, with a significant decrease in 2020/21 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Treatment statistics show that in 2020/21 there was a 13% increase in adults in alcohol-only treatment in Hertfordshire and a 14% increase in adults in treatment for alcohol and non-opiates.
- Alcohol-specific hospital admissions in under 18s has been increasing in Herts, but not significantly.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in the proportion of referrals to CGL Tier 3 substance misuse treatment with a mental health need in Hertfordshire.
- There was a significant decrease in the proportion of offenders with treatment needs engaging with treatment following release from prison, from 36.4% to 9.4%, significantly lower than England.

Recommendations



- Organisations to take a whole system approach to tackling alcohol misuse across all life stages.
- Review information and skills across the relevant workforce to enable signposting to local services.
- Ensure AUDIT-C tool is consistently used by community and primary healthcare providers.
- Undertake a communications campaign to raise awareness of safe levels of drinking.
- Promote the use of digital and self-help tools for adults at earlier stages of problematic use.
- Review the capacity of specialist alcohol and preventative services considering current unmet need.
- Develop a blended digital and/or face-to-face offer for alcohol-related care and support.
- Monitor impact of the Joint Working Protocol for Dual Diagnosis on access to mental health services.



Hertfordshire Public Health
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