

BLOG - 1 The Impact of the Drinkaware App in Reducing Alcohol Misuse in the UK

Introduction: Alcohol Misuse as a UK Public Health Concern



(Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, 2019).

Alcohol misuse remains a major public health issue in the UK, with rising mortality and a growing disease burden (ONS, 2022). In 2021, there were 9,641 alcohol-specific deaths-the highest since records began (ONS, 2022). Excessive drinking is linked to liver disease, hypertension, mental health problems, digestive cancers and cardiovascular conditions, making it a major contributor to preventable illness and early death (WHO, 2023). Although the NHS recommends limiting alcohol intake to 14 units per week, nearly one-quarter of adults exceed this guideline (NHS, 2023). Harmful drinking also drives workplace absenteeism, domestic violence, injuries and hospital admissions, increasing financial pressures on the NHS and society (UKHSA, 2023). These issues highlight the need for accessible, evidence-based tools to support healthier drinking behaviours and reduce long-term harm (PHE, 2021).

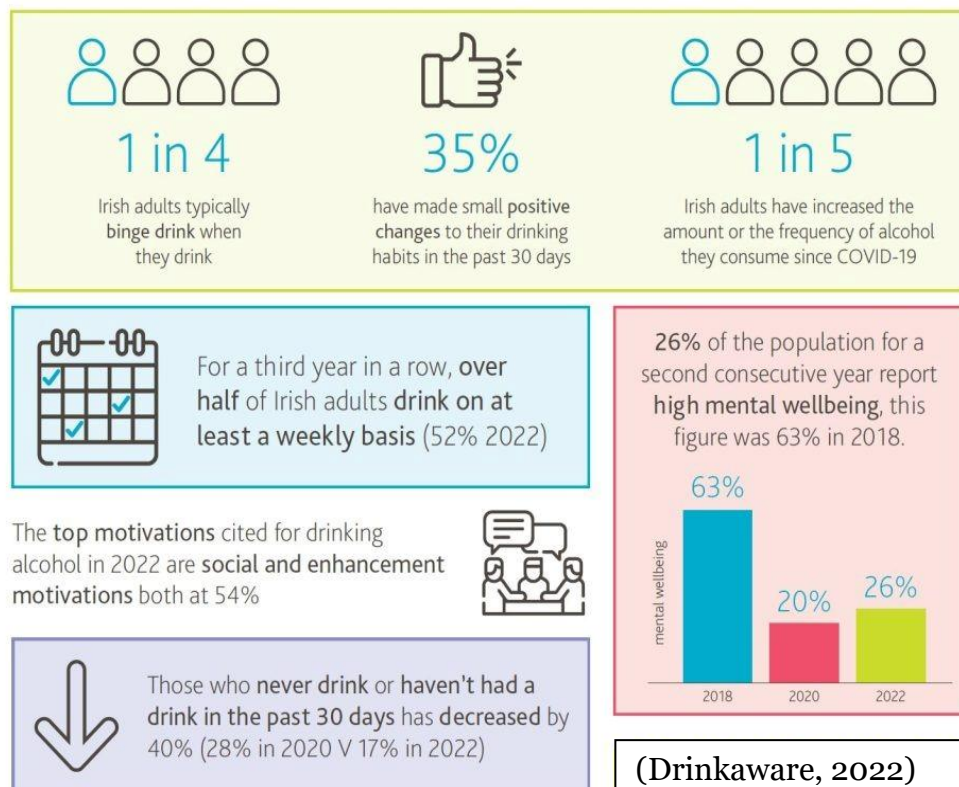
Digital Health Promotion: How Drinkaware Works

The Drinkaware app is a key UK digital health tool that helps individuals reduce harmful drinking behaviours (Drinkaware, 2023). It allows users to track alcohol units, monitor calories, plan drink-free days and set personalised goals (Drinkaware, 2023). The

app uses behaviour-change techniques such as self-monitoring, personalised feedback and action planning that align with evidence-based models for reducing

addictive behaviours (Michie et al., 2019). Widely used across the UK, Drinkaware is promoted in public health initiatives to increase awareness of drinking habits and support safer consumption (PHE, 2021). Its digital, confidential format also improves accessibility for those who prefer privacy or feel stigma around traditional alcohol services (UKHSA, 2023).

Drinkaware Barometer Survey 2022 – Key findings



Evidence Supporting the Effectiveness of Drinkaware

Research shows that digital alcohol-reduction tools can lead to measurable behaviour change, with users reporting lower alcohol intake and more drink-free days over time (Boniface et al., 2021).

Drinkaware's Long-term Key Performance Indicators

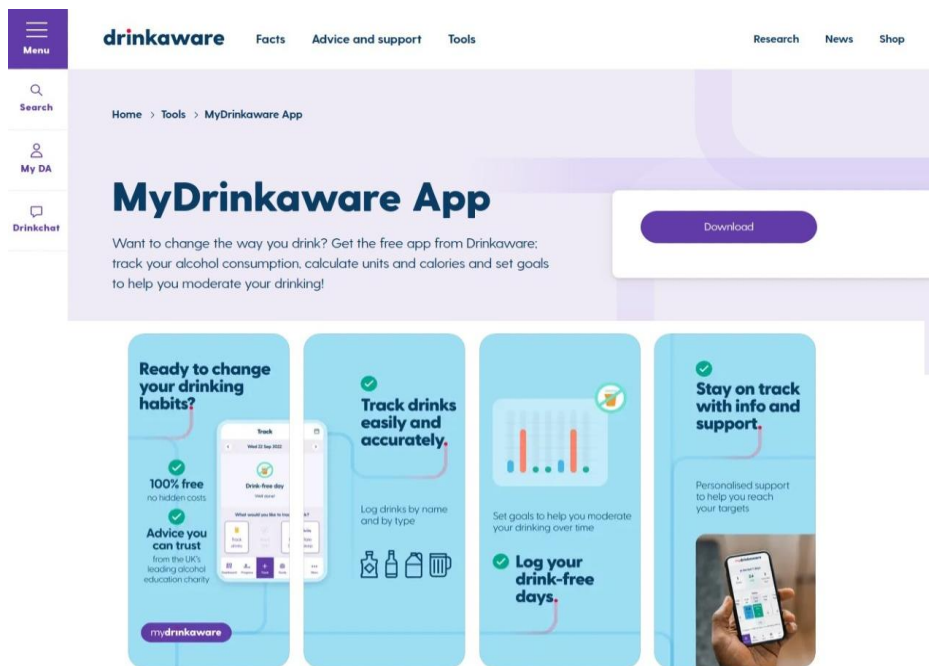
Young people aged 10-17 and their parents	Young adults aged 18-24	Adults aged 25-44
• Increase the age of supervised and unsupervised first alcoholic drink to 15 years • Decrease the percentage of parents giving alcohol to children under the age of 16	• Decrease the incidence of young adult drunkenness • Positively change cultural/ social norms away from drunkenness to more responsible/ moderate drinking behaviour	• Decrease the number of 25-44 year olds drinking over the daily recommended guidelines

(Ipsos MORI, 2016)

Drinkaware data indicate that 63% of regular app users reduced their drinking within six weeks, highlighting the effectiveness of self-monitoring and personalised feedback in supporting harm reduction (Drinkaware, 2023). These results reflect wider behavioural science evidence that consistent use of digital tools improves awareness of habits and encourages healthier choices (Michie et al., 2019). Such interventions are especially valuable for people who avoid traditional alcohol services due to stigma or limited access (PHE, 2021).

Advantages, Limitations, and Addressing Shortfalls

The Drinkaware app's advantages include accessibility, privacy, ease of use and alignment with behaviour-change theory (Drinkaware, 2023). However, limitations include digital inequalities that may exclude older adults or individuals with limited technological access (UKHSA, 2023). Self-reported data may lead to inaccurate tracking, reducing the effectiveness of personalised recommendations (PHE, 2021). Engagement also tends to decline over time, limiting sustained impact (Michie et al.,



2019).

Furthermore, the app is not suitable for individuals with severe alcohol dependence who require specialist clinical support (NHS, 2023). These shortfalls can be addressed through NHS

(Sober Eastbourne, 2024)

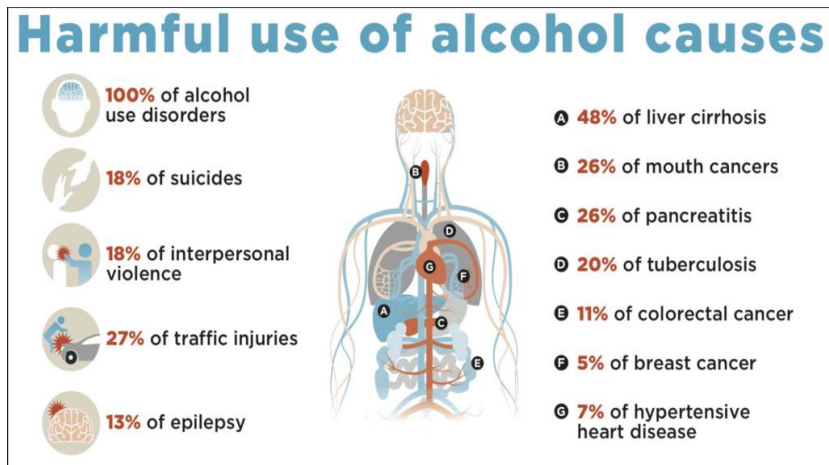
integration, simplified user interfaces, optional human coaching, and stronger referral pathways connecting users to local alcohol support services (PHE, 2021).

Conclusion

Drinkaware supports healthier drinking through awareness and self-monitoring, and stronger NHS integration could further improve its impact on reducing alcohol harm in the UK.

BLOG - 2 The Impact of the AlcoWatch Digital Technology for Reducing Alcohol Misuse in the UK

Introduction

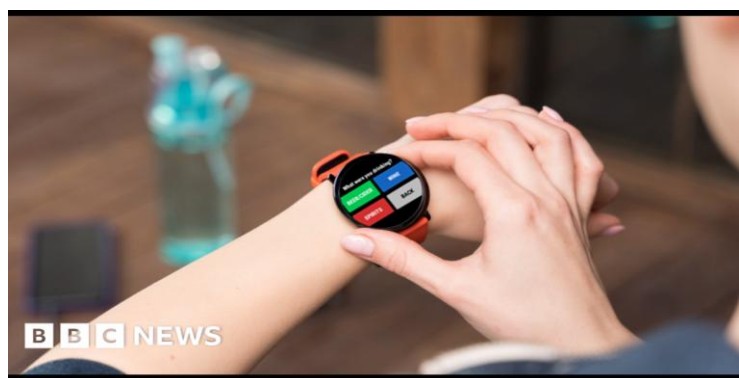


The UK still faces major public-health impacts from alcohol misuse, rising hospital admissions and long-term health complications (UKHSA, 2023). It accounts for over 980,000 hospital admissions each year, placing sustained pressure

(Devon County Council 2025) on health services (NHS, 2023). Heavy drinking is linked to liver disease, stroke, cancers and mental health decline, making it a leading cause of preventable morbidity (WHO, 2023). Young adults (18–35) face higher risk from binge drinking and socially normalised harmful consumption (PHE, 2021). Alcohol harm also costs the UK more than £27 billion annually through NHS demand, policing and productivity losses (Home Office, 2023). These impacts show the need for accessible digital tools to engage people early and reduce long-term alcohol harm (Health Foundation, 2022).

The Designed Digital Technology: AlcoWatch

AlcoWatch is a newly developed digital tool providing continuous monitoring and personalised feedback to support behaviour change (Author, 2025). The system combines a wearable biosensor patch with a mobile app, allowing users to track



physiological indicators of alcohol use in real time (Author, 2025). (BBC News, 2023)

The biosensor tracks ethanol levels in sweat, providing objective

data that avoids self-reporting bias (MedTech Europe, 2023). These data sync with the app, where algorithms identify patterns, flag high-risk times and deliver personalised harm-reduction prompts (Michie et al., 2019). AlcoWatch applies self-monitoring, goal-setting and feedback, supporting UK alcohol-harm reduction priorities (PHE, 2021). It also uses the COM-B model to strengthen users' capability, opportunity and motivation for healthier drinking behaviours (Michie et al., 2019). Overall, the tool aims to raise awareness, support informed choices and promote lasting behaviour change (NHS, 2023).

How AlcoWatch Supports Health Promotion and Addresses Alcohol Harm

AlcoWatch promotes digital health by offering continuous, objective monitoring that improves users' understanding of their drinking behaviour (MedTech Europe, 2023).

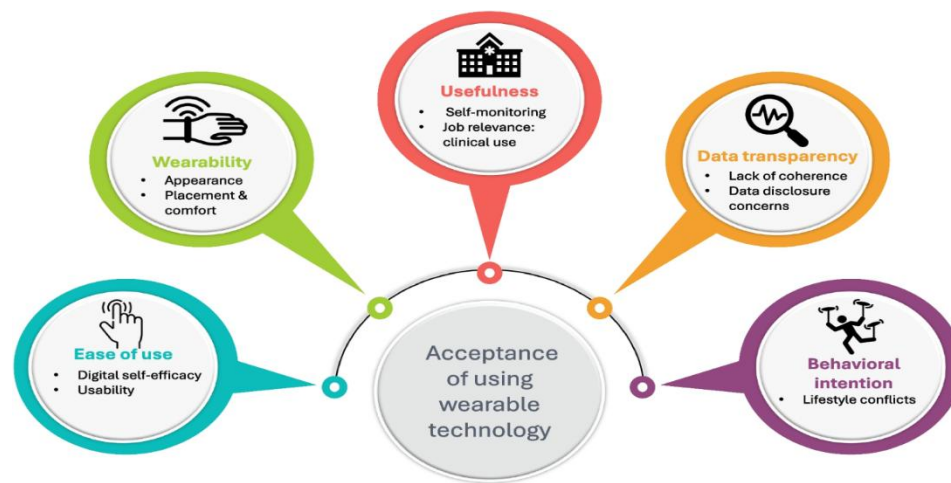


(The Brighter Side News, 2024)

AlcoWatch identifies personal triggers and delivers evidence-based guidance to promote drink-free days and safer alcohol use (Michie et al., 2019; WHO, 2023). Its real-time biosensor data improves accuracy by reducing self-report bias (PHE, 2021), enabling timely behavioural adjustments that address patterns driving alcohol misuse in the UK (UKHSA, 2023).

Advantages, Limitations and Solutions to Shortfalls

AlcoWatch provides objective detection, personalised support and high engagement via real-time data (MedTech Europe, 2023). Its discreet wearable format also reduces stigma and fits easily into daily routines. However, limitations include affordability issues, as biosensor



(Wilson et al., 2025)

literacy (NHS, 2023). Additionally, those with severe alcohol dependence may require specialist clinical support beyond digital tools (WHO, 2023). These shortfalls can be addressed by offering NHS-subsidised devices, strengthening data protection, simplifying the app interface and integrating referral pathways to clinical and community alcohol services (PHE, 2021).

Conclusion

AlcoWatch shows how wearable technology can provide real-time, objective insights to support behaviour change. Addressing affordability, privacy and accessibility will be essential to maximise its impact on alcohol-harm reduction in the UK.

devices may be costly (UKHSA, 2023), along with privacy concerns over sensitive biometric data (PHE, 2021) and reduced access for older adults or those with lower digital

References (Blog 1):

Boniface, S. et al. (2021). *Digital interventions for reducing alcohol consumption: a review of evidence.* **Addiction.** Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/13600443>

Drinkaware (2023). *Drinkaware App – Track and reduce your drinking.* Available at: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/tools/app>

Michie, S., Atkins, L. and West, R. (2019). *The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions.* Available at: <https://www.behaviourchangewheel.com>

NHS (2023). *Alcohol units – Know your limits.*
Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/calculating-alcohol-units/>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2022). *Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK: 2021 registrations.* Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/alcohol-specific-deaths-in-the-uk/2021>

Public Health England (PHE) (2021). *Alcohol and Drug Prevention, Treatment and Recovery: Why Invest?* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/606db5bee90e072f2ceaa792/Why_invest_2018_update.pdf

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) (2023). *Alcohol consumption and harm: annual monitoring.* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/alcohol-consumption-and-harm-monitoring>

World Health Organization (WHO) (2023). *Alcohol.*
Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/alcohol>

References (Blog- 2)

Health Foundation (2022). *Alcohol harm and its impact on the UK health system.* Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/>

Home Office (2023). *Alcohol-related harm statistics and economic impact.* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office>

MedTech Europe (2023). *Wearable biosensors: innovation in alcohol and substance monitoring.* Available at: <https://www.medtecheurope.org/>

Michie, S., Atkins, L. and West, R. (2019). *The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions.* Available at: <https://www.behaviourchangewheel.com>

NHS (2023). *Alcohol misuse – health risks and NHS impact.* Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/>

Public Health England (PHE) (2021). *Alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and recovery: why invest?* Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/606db5bee90e072f2ceaa792/Why_invest_2018_update.pdf

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) (2023). *Alcohol consumption and harm: annual monitoring*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/alcohol-consumption-and-harm-monitoring>

World Health Organization (WHO) (2023). *Alcohol*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/alcohol>