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Development

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Alcohol Consumption(Ages 25-54 years old)



A LOCAL COUNCIL CAMPAIGN

PAUSE THE POUR

Make your next drink a choice.

A practical, stigma-free campaign to help adults aged 25–54 rethink drinking, understand the risks and make small, achievable changes.

PAUSE • NOTICE • CHOOSE

HEALTH PROMOTION • PREVENTION • INFORMED CHOICES



MOLLY

Why “Pause the Pour” matters

A prevention campaign for adults aged 25–54, grounded in UK guidance and public-health data.

77%

of adults aged 16+ in England reported drinking alcohol in the previous 12 months (2024).

20%

of adults reported drinking above 14 units per week in 2024; 16% increasing-risk and 4% higher-risk.

£27.44bn

estimated annual cost of alcohol harm to society in England (2024 estimate).

THE RATIONALE

- Drinking can become part of social routines, celebrations or stress management without people noticing how much they consume.
- Clear, non-judgemental information can help people recognise their patterns and make informed choices before harm escalates.

POLICY CONTEXT

The UK Chief Medical Officers’ low-risk guidance recommends that adults who drink regularly should not exceed 14 units per week. The campaign turns this national advice into practical local action.

Sources: NHS England Digital (Health Survey for England 2024); DHSC (2016; 2025); Institute of Alcohol Studies (2024).

What is the UK guideline on alcohol?

The message is “lower risk”, not “risk-free”: drinking less reduces risk.

UK CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICERS

14 UNITS PER
WEEK

**It is safest not to regularly
drink more than 14 units a
week, for both men and
women.**

DHSC, 2016 • NHS guidance

MAKE THE GUIDELINE PRACTICAL

- If drinking up to 14 units a week, spread consumption over 3 or more days rather than saving it for one or two sessions.
- Build in several alcohol-free days each week when cutting down.
- Count units, not just glasses: strength (ABV) and serving size both matter.

14 units is approximately 6 pints of average-strength beer or 10 small (125 ml) glasses of lower-strength wine.

Pregnancy: the safest approach is not to drink alcohol. No level of regular drinking is completely risk-free.

What can happen after drinking?

The immediate effects depend on how much and how quickly someone drinks, alongside other factors.

JUDGEMENT & REACTION

Slower reactions, reduced concentration and poorer decisions.

ACCIDENTS & INJURY

Falls, road injuries and other accidents become more likely.

MOOD & CONFLICT

Lowered inhibitions can contribute to arguments, aggression or risky choices.

NEXT-DAY EFFECTS

Hangover, headache, nausea, poor sleep, fatigue and reduced work or study performance.

SAFETY & CONSENT

Greater likelihood of unsafe situations, including unprotected sex or difficulty assessing consent.

ALCOHOL POISONING

Heavy drinking in a short period can cause vomiting, unconsciousness and life-threatening poisoning.

Alcohol increases the risk of several cancers, liver disease, cardiovascular problems, injuries and mental health harms. Less alcohol generally means lower risk.

Campaign message: avoid binge drinking, pace drinks, alternate with water or non-alcoholic drinks, and plan a safe way home.

Three aims of “Pause the Pour”

Each aim links a clear behaviour-change goal to a practical activity.

AIM 1

RAISE AWARENESS

Help adults understand UK alcohol guidance, units and the immediate risks of drinking too much.

HOW THE CAMPAIGN DOES IT

Unit-check cards, short social posts and QR-linked information.

AIM 2

BUILD SELF-AWARENESS

Help adults notice when, where and why they drink, and identify personal triggers.

HOW THE CAMPAIGN DOES IT

A 7-day “Drink Detective” diary to track occasions, units and triggers.

AIM 3

SUPPORT SMALL CHANGES

Encourage achievable steps that reduce consumption and make alcohol-free choices easier.

HOW THE CAMPAIGN DOES IT

Alcohol-free swaps, several drink-free days and a voluntary personal pledge.

KEY MESSAGE: “Know your units. Notice your reasons. Make the next choice yours.”

Alcohol has a personal and public cost

The campaign makes the financial impact visible without shaming people who drink.

ESTIMATED COST OF ALCOHOL HARM

£27.44bn

per year in England (2024 estimate), including costs linked to healthcare, crime and disorder, reduced productivity, unemployment and social services.

Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2024

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

- Personal spending: the money spent on drinks can add up across a week or month.
- Wider public cost: alcohol-related harm places demands on health, emergency, criminal justice and social services.
- Work and family life: hangovers, injuries and impaired judgement can affect attendance, productivity and relationships.

Local delivery: workplaces • GP practices • libraries • community centres • social media

Note: £27.44bn is an estimate for England, not the whole UK; costs vary by method and year.

Evidence base

UK public-sector and specialist sources used in the campaign.



Department of Health and Social Care. (2016). Alcohol consumption: Advice on low risk drinking. GOV.UK.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-consumption-advice-on-low-risk-drinking>



Department of Health and Social Care. (2025). Clinical guidelines for alcohol treatment: Primary care and community health services. GOV.UK.
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Institute of Alcohol Studies. (2024). The costs of alcohol to society.
<https://www.ias.org.uk/report/the-costs-of-alcohol-to-society/>



NHS England Digital. (2026). Health Survey for England 2024: Adults’ health-related behaviours.
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2024/adults-health-related-behaviours>



NHS. (n.d.). The risks of drinking too much.
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/the-risks-of-drinking-too-much/>



NHS. (n.d.). Alcohol units.
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/calculating-alcohol-units/>

Statistics should be presented with their geography, year and original source to avoid misleading comparisons.