

Alcohol use - Harm Reduction Checklist for Front Line Workers

This checklist has been designed by a multi-agency group set up in Cambridgeshire to look at how to reduce health and other impacts for people drinking at potentially harmful levels. Offering a referral to get professional help around alcohol is always a desired outcome but if people not ready to become abstinent or reduce their drinking to safer levels, there is still a lot of help that front line workers can offer/explore. This help may prevent people developing long-term alcohol related problems or help to reduce their severity.

The aim of this document is to aid support and prompt action to reduce the harm associated with high levels of alcohol use. Whilst the document is a checklist it covers a comprehensive range of areas and should be used as appropriate to the needs of each person. It may be appropriate for example to look at different areas over time or consider all areas and pick up some priorities for follow-up. The document can be used alongside different organisations own assessment/support documents and should not replace them.

Input into this manual has been received from local authorities, housing providers and local GPs working at Cambridge Access Surgery. It has been adapted from the Blue Light Handbook written by Alcohol Concern.

	Yes	No	Potential Suggested Action	Action taken	Name and date
HEALTH					
Alcohol	*		Complete IBA. Signpost to Inclusion Treatment Service at intervals. 0300 555 0101 Seek advice on harm reduction		
Barriers to Change such as any suggestion of learning difficulties, cognitive impairment, psychiatric conditions, entrenched patterns of behaviour, ambivalence, fear.	*		Attend GP appointment with customer to provide third party account of observed signs and broker additional support if available.		
Does the customer smoke	*		Provide stop smoking advice from the NHS Refer to CAMQUIT or GP		
Has the customer had a recent physical and dental health check in the last 3/6/12 months?		*	Refer to GP for advice Support to attend dentist		
Is the customer receiving Vitamin Therapy (thiamine)		*	Discuss with customer and GP Provide leaflet on thiamine Thiamine		
Has the customer had a Flu Jab (from October onwards)		*	Discuss with customer and GP services		
Has the customer had testing for blood born viruses +/- TB Vaccination, Hep A & B vaccination		*	Discuss with customer and GP services and Inclusion		
Can the person store, manage and take their medication safely		*	Assess the specific risk and seek advice from prescribing services Contact Inclusion regarding supply of locked boxes for opioid substitutes		
Are there dangerous drug combinations? Alcohol + prescribed drugs, illicit substances, over-the-counter = risk accidental overdose		*	Discuss with GP Discuss with Inclusion Consider Naloxone		
Has there been observed weight loss/weight gain	*		Discuss with customer and GP Refer to support with diet (see leaflet for general diet advice)		
Do they carry identification, ICE details and details of any medical condition in case of collapse?		*	Develop "pocket information sheet" with customer		

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Has the customer ever had fits?	*		Log full details and develop a risk management plan with customer. Discourage use of baths		
WELLBEING					
Is their diet adequate?		*	Seek support with improving cooking skills Offer advice on healthy/nutritious eating Work through budgeting skills and food shopping See Diet sheet from Liver Trust Liver Trust		
Has exercise been considered as a way of reducing depression		*	Discuss with customer Refer to services if suitable		
Do they have access to benefits?		*	Contact benefits for advice		
Are they on the correct benefits? (ESA, PIP, JSA)		*	Meet with customer to explore options Support or signpost to make correct claim		
REDUCED DRINKING					
Has the customer considered drinking water alongside alcohol		*	Discuss risks/benefits		
Has the customer considered eating (preferably nutritiously) before or while drinking		*	Discuss risks/benefits Seek support with improving cooking skills		
CONTROLLED DRINKING					
Can the type of alcohol consumed be changed?		*	Discuss reasons why Seek guidance from alcohol services Offer information on risks Encourage drinks diary or putting empty bottles into a plastic bag at the end of each day so the number can be monitored		

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Has the customer considered using lower strength alcohol/diluting with water/mixers		*	Discuss reasons why Seek guidance from alcohol services Offer information on risks Encourage drinks diary or putting empty bottles into a plastic bag at the end of each day so the number can be monitored NHS One You Drinks Tracker Leaflet		
Have you considered sexual health/contraception needs?		*	Discuss with customer If required, refer to services www.icash.nhs.uk for sexual health testing, contraceptive advice and free condoms		
SAFETY					
Are they drinking in isolation? Will anyone know if they come to harm?	*		Discuss risks with customer and partner agencies Develop a “just in case” plan		
Is there risk of sunburn/dehydration from street drinking?	*		Discuss risks and offer solutions Liaise with partnership agencies who may come into contact with the customer		
Is there risk of hypothermia?	*		Discuss risks and offer solutions Liaise with partnership agencies who may come into contact with the customer		
Have they attempted suicide or have histories of self-harm	*		Discuss history, methods, risk factors etc. Consider third party interventions Discuss and concerns with GP		

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Are they at risk of exploitation or abuse e.g. for their benefits? Sexual exploitation?	*		Consider referral to Safeguarding		
Is their property being used by others for drug dealing etc.	*		Consider referral to Safeguarding Seek support/advice from the Council ASB teams team		
Can they store cash safely?		*	Discuss options – do they have a bank card?		
Are they driving to access alcohol	*		Inform DVLA		
Are they using taxi drivers to access alcohol?	*		Consider cost/risk implications.		
Have they considered taking less money when they go out?		*	Discuss options and budgeting skills		
Are there health and safety concerns in the home exacerbated by alcohol use?	*		Assess these risks (fire, trips, clutter etc.) and put plans in place to reduce.		
Are regular fire safety check been done in their accommodation?		*	Make sure someone has a smoke detector appropriately in place in their accommodation. Please phone 0800 917 9994 for further advice from the Fire and Rescue if required.		
Do they have any responsibility for children?	*		Discuss Safeguarding referral		
Do they have a responsibility for animals?	*		Consider support from Dogs Trust/RSPCA		
Do they work with machinery (e.g. construction)	*		Advise of risk		
Do they have a place of safety to return to? Do they know how to access this?		*	Support to make homeless declaration if required Contact accommodation providers Consider relocation to another area		
Are they at risk of losing their tenancy?	*		Liaise with housing provider Signpost to services Centra , Riverside MH support service)		

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Does their behaviour make it not possible to live in a community setting	*		Discuss with ASB team and Street life		
ASB/Crime					
Is the person committing criminal offences regularly	*		Contact probation worker, IOM, Streetlife officers Explore impact of these offences		
Are they playing televisions or stereos loudly and annoying neighbours			Consider noise limiting devices on equipment or timers which shut the equipment off when they fall asleep		
End of Life					
Would you be surprised if the person died within the next year?		*	Complete Preferred Priorities for Care document one copy to medical professionals and one copy to be kept on file in case of emergencies. Liaise with GP regarding referrals and needs to social services, care packages and referrals on to Arthur Rank etc. Consider online resources such as St Mungos		

Quick tips for workers:

- Consider the timing of the sessions for the customer
- Use home visits instead of requiring an office visit
- Don't set unrealistic goals
- Be consistent and persistent
- Keep in regular contact – evidence exists that simply keeping in regular text contact can help maintain reductions in their drinking.

Contingency plans:

- Encourage the customer to write a postcard/letter to be posted at a time of lapse or crisis
- Develop a contingency plan for when things go wrong