

LIMITS



NHS South of Tyne and Wear
serving Gateshead Primary Care Trust,
South Tyneside Primary Care Trust and
Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust

News Updates

UK's First Regional Alcohol Office Launched

The UK's first regional alcohol office, Balance, was launched in our region in February to tackle the issues associated with drinking culture.

The North East's NHS primary care trusts (PCTs), local authorities and three police forces are taking a coordinated approach to alcohol and the problems associated with its misuse.

'Balance' aims to inspire changes in the way people drink, so that they can still have a good time while reducing consumption.

According to the latest figures, 12 of England's top 20 biggest binge-drinking communities are in the North East, while alcohol-related hospital admissions are 35 per cent above the national average.

The drinking culture in the North East is increasingly associated with binge drinking, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.

Colin Shevills, Director of Balance, said "The office is not here to

preach to people about what they drink. It's about making people aware of the consequences of failing to treat alcohol with respect.

"What people drink is down to the individual, but people need to be aware of the effect it can have on their health, and the impact it can have on people around them."

We're here to inspire people to reduce their consumption so that we have happier, healthy individuals living in safer communities.



"The remit of the office is to:

- raise the profile of alcohol-related issues across the region through hard-hitting media campaigns
- work with colleagues to share best practice in prevention and treatment services
- push for responsible practice in the pricing, sale and promotion of alcohol.

One of the first actions of the office will be to run a region-wide Big Drink Debate to let people have a say about alcohol, the role it plays in their lives and how some of the issues associated with it might be addressed.

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Cheap Alcohol is Killing us as Never Before



England’s Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, has blasted cheap alcohol and its effect on society, family members, the NHS and the economy in his Annual Report.

Sir Liam wants a shift in public opinion regarding alcohol similar to the move to smoke-free public places, so that being drunk is no longer an aim of drinking nor socially acceptable.

Sir Liam reported: “Cheap alcohol is killing us as never before. The quality of life of families and in cities and towns up and down the country is being eroded by the effects of excessive drinking.”

The report calls for:

- A national consensus, prompted by government, that as a country we should substantially reduce alcohol consumption
- Passive drinking to be acknowledged as a key issue. It should present a consolidated rationale for action and be the

basis of national campaigns

- Licensing laws should reflect the full impact of heavy drinking, making public health considerations central to licensing
- A minimum pricing of 50p per unit to be introduced to reduce the consumption of alcohol and its associated harms

The report suggests if a 50p minimum price per unit policy was introduced this year, substantial effects would be seen immediately, with the full effect seen by 2019. Every year there would be 3,393 fewer deaths, 97,900 fewer hospital admissions, 45,800 fewer crimes, 296,900 fewer sick days, and a total benefit of over £1 billion.

Learning Disabilities Carers’ Research Begins

NHS SoT&W has commissioned Turning Point to undertake research across the south of Tyne and Wear to identify the prevalence and needs of people with learning disabilities who misuse substances. The work will include the needs of those with caring responsibilities for people who may misuse substances.

The project will recommend service models to provide appropriate support to users and families; it has been designed in conjunction with PCT Learning Disability Commissioners and accords with “Valuing People” principles.

Dual Diagnosis Commissioning Manager, Mike Brown and Alan Cormack, Learning Disability Commissioner, are overseeing the project.

Mike explained: “The project aims to identify the ‘hidden harm’ impacting on families and carers and provide detailed information which will inform future commissioning projects across NHS SoT&W.”

The project will be completed within twelve months and includes questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.

Alan added: “We are keen to ensure that there is meaningful involvement of people with learning disabilities and their families throughout each stage of the research.”

The completed report will be shared with all stakeholders and will enable improved information for service models and care pathways.

Support for Victims of Crime

Victim Support has been provided with funding to increase capacity and involvement with people that are, or at risk of, being victims of alcohol related problems across South of Tyne and Wear.

Staff recently underwent an induction programme with the intention of beginning their work this month.

Quarterly reports will be circulated to appropriate stakeholders to measure the impact and effectiveness of the project.

Young People

Young People's Funding Underway



The Matrix Young People's Service is managing the Safe, Sensible Social Small Grants Scheme for Young People in South Tyneside - with awards ranging from £250 - £2500. So far more than £20,000 worth of grants have been awarded to 20 individual projects.

A range of projects and organisations, including youth groups, football teams and primary schools, have successfully applied.

Projects funded so far include:

- Drama productions
- Litter picking which will identify/

map hotspots for drinking - the litter collected (cans) will be used to build a statue/model to be put on display within the community setting

- Millennium Physical Handicapped and Able Bodied (PHAB) Club - sleepover to raise awareness of alcohol and prescription drugs
- Alcohol week in one of the primary schools, awareness raising, peer education and poster competitions, alcohol signs around the school yard

"Key aims include raising awareness of alcohol related issues among young people, their peers and the wider community." Matrix Manager, Melanie Soutar

Melanie added:

"Successful applicants have proposed projects for young people which address alcohol issues by promoting health and well being, increase activities for disadvantaged groups and enhance education and decision making skills."

The investment intends to positively impact upon personal and community safety by reducing alcohol related crime.

In addition to the grants programme approximately £88,000 has been allocated in South Tyneside for young people's projects for activities aimed at everything from treatment through to education and prevention.

Hospital Links Established for Young People

Recent alcohol investment from NHS SoT&W has provided funding towards a one year pilot project in Gateshead to ensure young people attending hospital with alcohol related issues are provided with appropriate support.

The pilot project is led by the young people's substance misuse service in Gateshead 'SMART' (Substance Misuse Awareness Raising and Treatment team) in partnership with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

A hospital link worker is now in post and is responsible for researching levels of need and developing care pathways between the hospital and the SMART Team.

Gateshead's Substance Misuse Young People's Commissioning Manager, Caroline Saxon, said: "This pilot is an exciting development for Gateshead. It will ensure young people who attend the Accident and Emergency Department, or are admitted to the Queen Elizabeth due to alcohol misuse, can access the appropriate support they need from our specialist substance misuse service.

"The pilot will help to strengthen the links between SMART and the QE, whilst providing young people with targeted interventions, which may range from basic advice and information to brief intervention or referral into the SMART team."



An additional £35,000 has also been invested in Gateshead to help establish a mobile youth facility led by Youth and Community Learning.

Caroline explained: "This is a partnership response and, amongst other things, the facility will target alcohol hotspot areas frequented by young people within the borough."

Media & Communication

Know Your Limits Annual Review



Binge drinking campaign



Units Campaign Posters

Units and binge drinking campaigns increased public's awareness:

As a new financial year begins the Know Your Limits campaign has been looking over the achievements of the past twelve months.

In May 2008 the Units campaign was launched with the binge drinking campaign following several weeks later. Below is a brief insight outlining the successes of the two campaigns:

Units Review

- 73% spontaneous awareness of the campaign
- Increased knowledge of units for wine (at pre-wave only 6% of drinkers correctly said there were 3 units in a large glass of wine but this significantly rose to 21% at mid-wave)
- Increased agreement that we tend to drink more than is good for us up from 77% to 82%

- Units website statistics
- unique visitors (312,990), pages viewed (1,122,895) and averagetime spent on site (2.41mins)

Binge Drinking Review

- 90% recognition of TV advert
- 80% say the TV adverts make you realise how easily a good night can turn bad
- 67% say the TV adverts make them think more carefully about their drinking behavior
- 59% of females and 41% of males more likely to consider drinking differently having seen the campaign

Plans

Know Your Limits is about to launch a new national campaign for the next twelve months.

Check future editions of 'Limits' for details or see www.units.nhs.uk

Events Update:

Outcomes Based Commissioning and Contracting Training Event 7th and 8th May 2009

Breaking New Ground Conference, International Network on Brief Intervention for Alcohol Problems 8th and 9th October 2009 Baltic Gateshead

Catwalk Strut with a Difference

A viral video promoted at Clothes Show Live at Birmingham's NEC to highlight the pitfalls of a night of binge drinking has become one of the most successful government viral campaigns to date.

The disturbing video shows models waltzing down the catwalk stopping briefly to unload themselves of their boozy excesses.

A quartet of models are displayed on the fashion walkway vomiting, urinating, falling to the ground and committing assault. The video aims to break the link with binge drinking and glamour culminating with the campaign's tagline 'You wouldn't start a night like this, so why end it that way?'

There have been 1,388,585 views (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8vCUSD6nuc>) and it continues to get approximately 3k views a day.

Comments & Contributions

If you have any comments on the 'Limits' newsletter or would like to include your news in future editions please contact Lee Hogan on tel: 0191 496 7963 or email: lee.hogan@stdrugactionteam.org