

Dry January ethical statement

Alcohol Change UK's Dry January campaign aims to encourage people to start conversations that lead to a healthier relationship with alcohol.

As part of our duty of care, we expect all our charity partners to signpost individuals who are struggling with their alcohol use or with stopping drinking to appropriate help and advice.

When a member of the public makes contact expressing concern about someone else's drinking we expect our partners to signpost them to third party support. This may be in order to meet their needs as a carer or to help to reduce the harm that their loved one is experiencing.

Dependent drinking

Where an individual is experiencing physical symptoms when they stop drinking (which may include but are not limited to: shakes, sweating, restlessness, insomnia, nausea, stomach cramps or hallucinations) they should be advised to seek medical help urgently.

The following messages can be given to anyone asking for help with their own or someone else's dependent drinking:

If you regularly drink more than the government's recommended maximum of 14 units of alcohol a week, you may experience physical symptoms when you stop drinking. If this happens to you, we do not recommend that you take part in Dry January.

Instead, you should speak to your GP about your symptoms as a matter of urgency and they will be able to advise you of the best course of action.

If someone you know is taking part in Dry January and they experience any physical symptoms when they stop drinking such as shaking, sweating, nausea, stomach cramps or hallucinations, please advise them that they should seek medical help immediately.

If you have concerns about the drinking of someone you know there are services that can help them to gain control over their drinking. Find out about these services on the [NHS website](#).

In most areas, there are also services that can support you whilst you are caring for your loved one. You can find more information about the support available and how to best help your loved one on the [Adfam website](#).

Difficulty stopping drinking



If individuals express concerns about their **emotions** or their **difficulties with cravings** or any other negative effect that they may experience when stopping drinking, our partners should acknowledge these issues and signpost those individuals to further help.

These effects may include, but are not limited to: feelings of isolation, anxiety, low mood or depression, cravings for alcohol, short temper, disturbed sleep or vivid dreams, inability to cope with other stressors, feelings of failure or inadequacy (e.g. if they decide to have a drink or are having difficulty controlling cravings)

The following messages can be disseminated to individuals who are experiencing emotional difficulties or who are supporting someone else who is experiencing these symptoms:

Making a change, even a change for the better, can be hard. You may have some short-term symptoms as your brain gets used to daily life without drinking. These might include feeling low or isolated or irritable and short tempered. You might crave a drink but not want to give in to temptation and this too can affect your mood. You can join the Dry January closed Facebook group, where you can get positive support from other people who are part of the Dry January community.

These symptoms will pass but if they don't subside in a few days, or if you feel hopeless or depressed, please see your GP. If you feel suicidal please contact the Samaritans on 116 123.

We know that taking part in Dry January brings lots of mental and physical health benefits but if someone you know seems to be anxious, depressed or irritable, this is normal for some people during the first few days, as their brain gets used to daily life without alcohol. These symptoms should pass in a few days and in the meantime you can help by letting them talk through their feelings. You can also suggest that they join the Dry January closed Facebook page, a positive vibrant online community that will give them lots of encouragement and support.

If these symptoms don't improve or worsen after a few days, it's advisable that they visit their GP. Please also pass on to them the Samaritans number: 116 123.