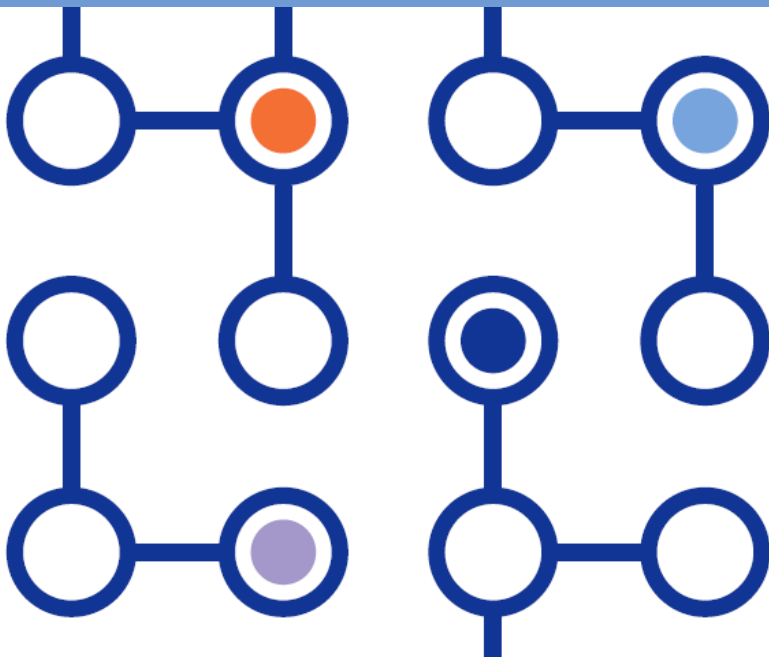


# Impact Report 2016-17



 Alcohol  
Concern  
Promoting health;  
Improving lives

## About us

Alcohol Concern is a small independent charity. We work throughout England and Wales towards our vision of a world where alcohol does no harm. We help people through information, advice and guidance; help professionals through training, projects and research; and help all of us through campaigning to challenge the drinking culture in our country.

## Our vision

Our vision is of a world where alcohol does no harm.

## Our mission is to

Help people through information, advice and guidance.  
Help professionals through training, projects and research.  
Help all of us through campaigning to challenge the drinking culture in our country.

# Our Core Values

## Bravery



We are brave and honest about a difficult issue that can affect people from all walks of life. We state evidence about alcohol and we are not afraid to challenge the alcohol industry or governments.

## Independence



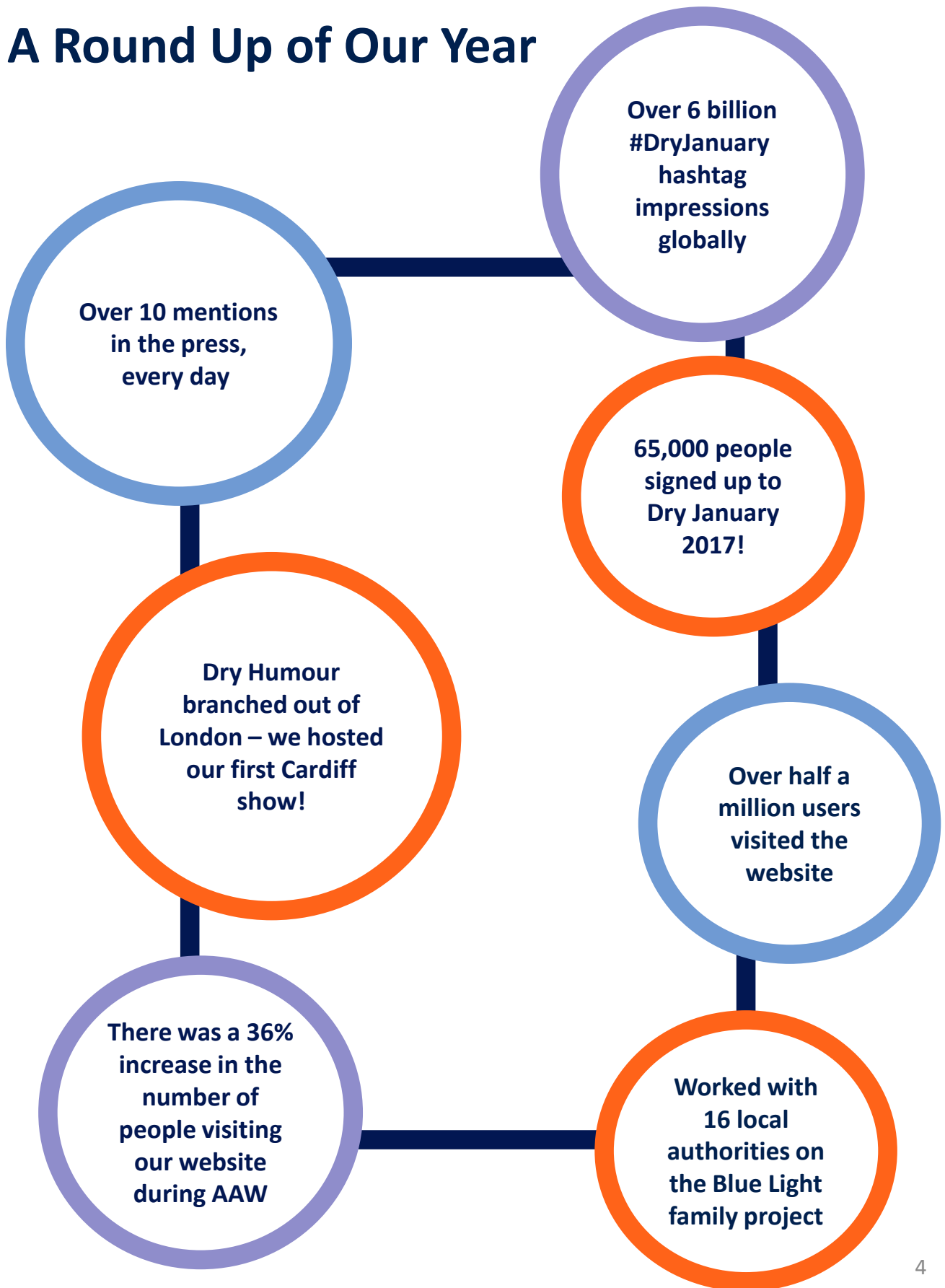
We will work with other organisations who genuinely want to reduce harm caused by alcohol. To maintain our independence, we do not accept donations from alcohol producers. We seek to work with local and central government as a vital way of achieving our vision of a world where alcohol does no harm.

## Evidence based



We promote understanding about the problems that alcohol can cause and the policy solutions. We base our lobbying, campaigns and policy on evidence based research. We source our facts from rigorous peer reviewed academic research, national governments and their agencies, and respected international institutions such as the World Health Organisation.

# A Round Up of Our Year





## Dry January

The flagship Alcohol Concern campaign, Dry January, took place again in 2017 for the 5th consecutive year. The campaign has continued to grow and Dry January 2017 was the biggest one yet. Signups have been the highest level yet with **65,000** people joining the campaign this year. Additionally, there were **2959** press mentions globally; this is up **41%** from last year. Social media engagement was also at an all time high this year as social media mentions on Alcohol Concern's channels reached over **113,000**, with global hashtag impressions for #DryJanuary reaching over 6 billion. A YouGov commissioned survey indicated that **5 million people in Great Britain attempted a Dry January in 2017** and our reach has now become global. The Dry January website home page had nearly 50,000 unique page views between 16th December and 31st January, with 40,000 going through to the sign up page.

We launched a new initiative for Dry January 2017 in partnership with Virgin Money Giving. Participants of Dry January could fundraise for Alcohol Concern and a charity of their choice, splitting the funds 50/50. This is a unique partnership and allows charities to work together on a campaign and see through shared goals. The partnership has been positively received and charities are promoting the Dry January campaign through their own networks, this paves the way for an even bigger impact next year and illustrates how charities are able to work together.

After our pilot app last year, we launched the new and improved Dry January & Beyond app, there have been **36,181** global downloads of the app this year. It allows users to input their weekly average drink intake and measure how much money and how many calories they were saving each day they continued to be dry. A premium version was created to purchase for a one off fee for those who wanted some extra features, such as, customising the drinks and pricing more specifically and receiving more app articles. The app has been designed to be useful and effective all year round.

We established a new partnership with Groupon for Dry January 2017 whereby a new code was released every week throughout January offering participants an additional 10% discount on Groupon. Participants were encouraged to use this discount to try something new at the weekends.

2017 was the first year that Alcohol Concern has an official charity partner. The aim was to promote the health messaging of the campaign to our participants. The aim of the partnership was to educate Breast Cancer Now supporters about the direct link between breast cancer and drinking alcohol.

### **Healthy inside and out...**

Research in 2015 from Public Health England supported previous findings that Alcohol Concern's Dry January is an effective behaviour change campaign. The most comprehensive study yet found **67%** of participants had sustained reduced levels of drinking six months after completing Dry January 2015, **8%** of whom had continued to stay dry.

Research from the Royal Free Hospital in London published in November 2015 has also found benefits from a month off alcohol, which we had not initially anticipated, around the positive physiological effects of doing a Dry January. The study of moderate drinkers who had not had alcohol for 31 days, found improvements in concentration and sleep patterns, as well as positive impact on blood sugar levels, blood pressure and the liver.







## Dry Humour

Following on from the success of our Dry Humour nights in the past we decided to spread our wings and try a new location... Cardiff!

Comedy and alcohol frequently go hand in hand. After all, things can seem funnier when we've had a drink or two, and live comedy and comedy shows on the box are increasingly sponsored by alcohol companies. Dry Humour events offer an alternative night of comedy without the booze – all of the laughter and none of the hangover!

We held our first Wales-based Dry Humour comedy event in January. The evening, held at the Gate Arts Theatre in Cardiff, showcased some big names from the world of comedy, including Suzy Bennett and headliner Tony Law, admirably compered by Rob Thomas.

The event was a roaring success, so much so that we are planning another Dry Humour gig next year, so watch this space!

## Alcohol Awareness Week 2016

Every November, Alcohol Concern organises Alcohol Awareness Week (AAW). The theme for the 2016 week was 'Know the Risks', chosen specifically in light of the Chief Medical Officers' revised alcohol guidelines in 2016.

The week is themed by Alcohol Concern every year. The week is used by a whole variety of local alcohol charities, local authorities, schools, universities and NHS organisations to promote healthy drinking messages.



For the 2016 week, we created e-resources for those wanting to get involved with the week to download and print themselves. The resources included an overview of the week, printable resources and factsheets and a social media pack and infographics for people to use. We sent this out to 273 organisations, and it was accessed 4,000 times via the website.

The number of people coming to our website during the week was up by 36%. A total of 16,300 people visited the site over the course of the week, with Monday and Thursday being the most popular days. These were the days where we focused on cancer and breast cancer.

## Working with young people

We have continued to develop our work with young people in 2015/16. We have some very exciting projects at the moment and continue to look for opportunities for young people's voices to be heard, by decision-makers and in the media and wider society, on alcohol issues.

The Youth Advertising Council (YAAC) was a shortlisted finalist for the Children and Young People Now Awards in November 2015. The group continue to meet quarterly to scrutinise alcohol adverts and have made a number of complaints – most recently one against Strongbow Cider in September 2015 which was successfully upheld by the Advertising Standards Authority and gained media attention.

### Alcohol in the System

With funding from Trust for London we completed our project working with young offenders in Greater London to better understand the complex relationship between alcohol and offending behaviours – with the aim of improving outcomes for young people in the youth justice system. Policy and practice recommendations were made and published in the report on 8 November 2016 where key decision-makers attended, as well as young people themselves who had co-driven the project.

*“Being a part of YAAC has helped me to develop analytical skills and made me more aware of problematic advertising and not only in the alcohol industry.*

*“Winning so many awards and seeing adverts that we have complained about being upheld by the ASA is such a fulfilling feeling.*

*“Many people do not believe that advertising affects them but that is exactly how you're supposed to feel as it is a psychological process.”*

**Chante, YAAC member**



# Communities Together

Communities Together is a project (funded by the Big Lottery Fund) which encourages local people to have honest conversations about the good and bad sides of alcohol use in their neighbourhoods, and to develop their own solutions to any problems. It does not aim to discourage drinking altogether; rather to promote a healthy relationship with alcohol, for individuals and for the community as a whole. Communities Together is not based on any idea that Fishguard and Goodwick are places with extra-ordinary alcohol issues. They're typical Welsh communities with a range of issues, and also a lot to give in terms of community spirit and the will to make things better.

The priorities from local citizens included:

1. Raising awareness
2. Bringing people together
3. Parents acting responsibly about alcohol and their children.

During 2016/17 there has been a diverse range of activities and projects in which we have become involved. One of the projects included an alcohol-free beer festival which proved very popular and was covered by national and local press.

## Getting our message across in the media

Getting our messages out to different and new audiences is vital, which is why we regularly speak to national newspapers, broadcasters and magazines about alcohol issues. As well as approaching media outlets proactively, our press team are always prepared to respond reactively to new reports or figures around alcohol.

Year-on-year the coverage around Dry January has grown and 2016/17 was no exception with over 2959 pieces of global media coverage. Throughout the year Alcohol Concern has had 3513 global media mentions. Our social media channels have also continued to grow, our Twitter page has seen a 20% increase in followers in the last year, and since the re-launch of our Facebook page in April 2015 we've seen an 150% increase in page likes.

In October 2016 we were also shortlisted for PR Team of the Year at the annual Charity Times Awards.



# All Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Harm

Alcohol Concern continues to provide the Secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Harm. We supported the APPG to undertake an Inquiry into the impact of alcohol on the emergency services, including coordinating two expert inquiry sessions and the collation of written submissions. The final report *'The Frontline Battle'* made front page of national newspapers and got 609 pieces of media coverage.

The report showed clearly the impact on the welfare and wellbeing of the frontline staff and found:

- 80% of police officers had been assaulted by people who had been drinking.
- Over 70% of all attendances at A&E departments are alcohol-related at weekends.
- On average alcohol-related fires cost almost five times as much as other fires, and are more likely to involve fatalities.

## Alcohol Health Alliance

Alcohol Concern is a leading member of the Alcohol Health Alliance (AHA) which has continued to grow, and now has 50 members. The AHA Policy and Advocacy Manager is based at Alcohol Concern. The AHA commissioned, for the third year running, a national public opinion poll to inform its advocacy and campaigns work. The results show that the British public have low levels of awareness of the guidelines and risks. However, the public are firmly in support of some of the most effective policy interventions:

- 82% of people are unaware of the new UK Chief Medical Officers' guidelines
- 66% of people support increasing tax on white cider
- 67% agree the government has a responsibility to reduce alcohol-related harm.



The AHA has supported parliamentarians in debates around alcohol and health inequalities and alcohol cost to the NHS. We coordinated a general debate on Alcohol Harm as well as tabling Early Day Motions (EDMs) and a number of parliamentary questions throughout the year. We also ran an 'AHA month of action' which saw MPs visit their local hospitals to see the impact of cheap alcohol. 60 MPs took part in the initiative. Additionally we campaigned to increase the tax on cheap, high strength white cider and saw the Chancellor announce a consultation on this in his March Budget. This work translates into our continued efforts to promote evidence-based policies to reduce the damage caused by alcohol-related harm.



## Our conferences

At our 2016 conference in Swansea we explored the complex relationship between alcohol consumption and suicide. Each year in Wales, between 300 and 350 people die from suicide, about three times the number killed in road accidents. Alcohol use is often implicated in suicides and non-fatal self-harm. A fifth of all suicides are thought to be from people dependent on alcohol, and heavier drinkers are significantly more likely to suffer depression and anxiety.

Our one-day conference encouraged discussion of key questions including what exactly is the association between alcohol and suicide, who are the groups most at-risk, and how do we best offer support to family and friends after a suicide.

More than 80 conference delegates heard from leading experts in the field, including Dr Eve Griffin from the National Suicide Research Foundation Ireland, Dr Ann John from Swansea University and Dr Roger T Webb from the Centre for Mental Health and Safety, Manchester. Conference presentations are available on the Alcohol Concern website.

## Training and advice

Alcohol Concern's consultancy and training unit has continued to provide courses and research and development support across the country. The main focus of this work has continued to be the Blue Light project. This year we've worked with 16 local authorities and services on the Blue Light family project.

We have worked more intensively with a number of local authorities including Merton, Staffordshire, North Tyneside and Devon, to develop their local response to high-impact, change resistant drinkers. Other areas are in discussion about future Blue Light work.





The most important development in the Blue Light project has been the growing body of evidence that this approach works. In the near future, we will be publishing reports that show the impact of this approach in Sandwell and Lincolnshire. We have also worked with the Nottinghamshire Alcohol Long-Term Conditions Team to explore the service user view on effective outreach. The report on this latter initiative is available on the Alcohol Concern website.

A key element of the Blue Light project is the 12 questions tool. This allows non-clinicians to ask questions about alcohol related health problems which might otherwise remain undiagnosed. This is now subject to a national review funded by Public Health England and led by the University of Southampton. Alcohol Concern is leading workshops to support this review.

This year also saw the completion of a Police and Crime Commissioner funded project, looking at reducing the incidence of, and burden from, street drinking and to improve the interventions provided to street drinkers themselves. Eight Police and Crime Commissioners funded the initiative and the guidance was developed with input from various national bodies. The final guidance report can be found on the website of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

A grant from the Garfield Weston enabled Alcohol Concern to deliver work around Alcohol-Related Brain Damage. The work included training 200 professionals including, police, substance misuse workers, social workers, nurses, psychiatrists, hepatologists and adult care workers from Edinburgh to Devon and Swansea to Norfolk. We also created an online resource centre on our website.

Alcohol Concern is also working on a project supporting people beyond Dry January – via offering free and confidential one to one Skype sessions with participants. These sessions are an opportunity to get advice and information about alcohol, how to cut down or cut out.

We have also continued to increase our engagement with the private sector by providing workplace training and workshops. In 2016/17, we've worked with Jaguar Land Rover, Eversheds, Lloyds bank and Allianz Global, among others.



# A big thank you!

**We could not have achieved so much without**

our wonderful staff and consultants, our donors and funders, ambassadors,  
Friends of Alcohol Concern and volunteers.

# Make a donation

Making a donation to Alcohol Concern is simple. Whether you'd like to make a regular or one-off donation, to give in memory of a loved one, or support us through a legacy gift, we appreciate every single penny.

Donate online at [www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/donate](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/donate)

Or post a cheque to:

Alcohol Concern  
27 Swinton Street  
London  
WC1X 9NW