



**DRY JANUARY®**

**ALCOHOL**

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Alcohol public health campaigns 2019-2020

# **Alcohol Awareness Week and Dry January**

# Public health campaigns: why alcohol?

- Alcohol is a causal factor in more than **60 medical conditions** including mouth, throat, stomach, liver and breast cancers; high blood pressure, cirrhosis of the liver; and depression.
- Each year, alcohol is a factor in the **deaths of 24,000 people** in the UK. It's the biggest risk factor for deaths among 15-49 year olds.
- In England there are an estimated **589,101 dependent drinkers** and less than 20% are receiving treatment.
- Around **200,000 children** in England are living with an alcohol dependent carer.
- **1 in 5 of the hospital population** drink at harmful levels, and 1 in 10 are alcohol dependent.
- **49% of stranger violence** and around 70% of violent incidents in the weekends, evenings and night are alcohol-related.
- **84% of people are unaware** of the Government's low-risk drinking guidelines, meaning that the vast majority do not have the information they need to make informed choices around their drinking.

[References can be found on the Alcohol Change UK website.](#)

**People of all ages** are affected by alcohol harm. People aged 55-64 are more likely to exceed the recommended weekly guidelines than any other age group, and **200,000 children** live with an alcohol dependent carer.

# Helping your community to drink more healthily

Alcohol Awareness Week and Dry January are public health campaigns run by the charity **Alcohol Change UK** and supported by local groups and charities across the UK. Both can be run with minimal resource in your area as part of your alcohol harm reduction strategy.

- **Alcohol Awareness Week** is a campaign to get people thinking and talking about alcohol. You can use Alcohol Change UK's free digital resources to make this a low-resource, impactful campaign.
- **Dry January** supports people across the country to change their relationship with alcohol by going dry for one month.



# Alcohol Awareness Week

**11-17 November 2019**

#AlcoholAwarenessWeek  
11-17 November 2019



## What is Alcohol Awareness Week?

Alcohol Awareness Week is a chance for Local Authorities and other groups across the UK to come together to get people thinking about their drinking. It's a week of awareness-raising, campaigning for change, and more. The theme for Alcohol Awareness Week 2019 is **'Alcohol and me'**.

Alcohol Awareness Week 2019 aims to:

- Share the Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines
- Raise awareness of the health risks associated with drinking
- Motivate people to want to cut down
- Share top tips on ways to cut down
- Signpost people to help and support

Alcohol Change UK will provide free digital resources to help you to **meet these aims in your community.**

## In your community

Last year over 1,700 local authorities, charities, GP surgeries, pharmacies, hospitals, workplaces and other community groups across the country took part in Alcohol Awareness Week using free printable digital resources provided by Alcohol Change UK.

- **Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust** put on a display by the entrance to the hospital to engage patients and visitors, and ran a teaching session for the hospital's junior doctors.
- **Fife Council Madras Community Use Team** held a community evening session at Madras Community College. Anyone could drop in, design and taste their own mocktail, find out more about alcohol and maybe even sign up for Dry January.
- **The Royal Mail** put on an alcohol-free staff event with a quiz about alcohol. They also advertised confidential help for anyone with concerns regarding their own or someone else's alcohol use; people were able to talk in private to the team's Mental Health Champion.

#AlcoholAwarenessWeek  
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## Next steps

Throughout the week local areas across the country run events and displays using **free downloadable resources** provided by Alcohol Change UK at the start of October.

Resources include:

- Posters
- Factsheets around various aspects of alcohol including parenting, mental health, cancer and more
- Social media images and template posts
- Template press release

**Sign up for your free resources**



**84% of people** are unaware of the Government's low-risk drinking guidelines, meaning that the vast majority do not have the information they need to make informed choices around their drinking.

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## A behaviour change campaign that works

Dry January can be used as a low-cost, high-impact public health campaign in your area. It is endorsed by **Public Health England:**

“Dry January is based on sound behavioural principles and our previous evaluation of the campaign shows that for some people it can help them re-set their drinking patterns for weeks or even months after completing the challenge.”



## Healthier drinking year-round

Dry January helps people to drink more healthily year-round, according to [independent research conducted by the University of Sussex](#) with over 800 Dry January participants.

This research adds to previous findings that over **70% of Dry January participants are still drinking less riskily even six months later.** The research shows that compared to before Dry January, after six months:

- Drinking days per week dropped on average from 4.3 to 3.3;
- Units consumed per drinking day dropped on average from 8.6 to 7.1;
- Frequency of drunkenness fell on average from 3.4 per month to 2.1 per month.

For all of these measures, people who drank more riskily before Dry January saw bigger decreases in the amount and regularity of their drinking – suggesting that Dry January is **particularly effective for heavier drinkers.**



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## What do participants say?

"I am 59 years old and I have (almost) completed my first alcohol-free month in over 25 years. It's quite shocking to actually see that in print! For me Dry January has been all about taking the control back... It hasn't been easy but I feel so much better in myself, both physically and mentally."

"I was drinking nearly a bottle of whiskey a week, three or four drinks a night, every night. I used the Dry January app to track results. After a month, I remained alcohol free and the benefits are amazing - better sleep at night and not waking up during the night, blood pressure is down to more normal levels."

"Making the decision to give up alcohol in January has literally been life changing. Drinking three or four large glasses of wine a day with more at the weekend on top of several stiff gin and tonics had become a habit as well as a crutch for depression. I feel so much brighter and happier. I've also lost half a stone which has encouraged me to exercise. Giving up alcohol has made a change that I want to last."



The background of the entire image is a photograph of a group of women in a dance or fitness studio. They are all smiling and appear to be in motion, possibly dancing or exercising. The woman in the center foreground is wearing a bright pink tank top and has long, wavy brown hair. She is laughing heartily. To her right, another woman with dark curly hair, glasses, and a grey t-shirt is also smiling. Other women are visible in the background, some out of focus. The setting appears to be a bright, modern studio with large windows.

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## Why encourage people to sign up to official campaign?

Over four million people take part in Dry January each year. When people sign up via **Alcohol Change UK** they receive support to help them stay alcohol-free for the whole month, and to reduce their drinking going forward, increasing their likelihood of long-term behaviour change.

People who sign up receive:

- **Daily motivational emails.** These have high open and engagement rates throughout the month.
- **Try Dry: the Dry January app.** The app helps people to measure and manage their drinking during January and throughout the year.
- **Access to an online community of others taking part in Dry January.** This remains available and active year-round.



## In your community

Communities across the country promote Dry January in their communities and workplaces using free digital resources provided by Alcohol Change UK at the start of October.

Local Authorities who have run Dry January in the past include:

- Cardiff
- Fife
- Hounslow
- Haringey
- Knowsley
- Middlesbrough
- Newcastle
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Richmond
- Sefton





## Next steps

Alcohol Change UK provides free digital resources to help you run Dry January in your community, making it a low-cost, quick to run, high-impact public health campaign. Resources include:

- Posters
- Social media images and template posts
- Pack of ideas for running Dry January in your workplace
- Template press release

**Sign up for your free resources.**

## Reporting and evaluation

We are able to provide information on signup numbers in your area. If you would like to take advantage of this service, please **get in touch** by 1 December 2019.

A man with dreadlocks and glasses, wearing a white t-shirt, is laughing and raising his arms in celebration. A woman with blonde hair, also in a white t-shirt, is standing next to him, also with her arms raised. They are in front of a large, colorful climbing wall with various colored holds. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the climbing wall and some greenery.

# Thank you

**Alcohol Change UK** is an independent charity working to end the serious harm caused by alcohol.

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[Visit the Alcohol Change UK website](#)

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[More about Alcohol Awareness Week](#)

[More about Dry January](#)