

Starting the conversation

Cards for residents
about alcohol use in care homes



For staff: How to use these cards

These cards help residents share their preferences and feelings about alcohol, either one-to-one or as a group.

How they work:

- For each topic there are TWO slides:
 1. The QUESTION slide – show / read this to the resident(s)
 2. The PROMPTS slide – for the facilitators' reference
- You don't need to use all the cards – choose what's relevant
- Give residents time to respond
- Record and, where appropriate, respond to their answers
- If specific concerns are raised, please follow your home's procedures

Important: These cards are about understanding preferences, not making judgments

Important: Before having these conversations with residents, please make sure that they fully understand why the conversation is happening and are happy to talk about alcohol use.

1

**What does having
a drink, or not
drinking, mean to
you?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 1

What does having a drink, or not drinking, mean to you?

Prompts if needed:

- Is alcohol something you enjoy?
- Is drinking about relaxing? Or do you prefer to relax in other ways
- Is drinking about being sociable? Or do you prefer to socialize without alcohol?
- Is it part of how you mark special occasions? Or do you like to mark them in other ways?

Why this matters: Understanding what alcohol means to someone helps us support them better. For many people, it may have various positive or negative associations.

2

**If you drink alcohol,
what do you like
to drink, and when?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 2

If you drink alcohol, what do you like to drink, and when?

Prompts if needed:

- Do you have a favourite drink?
- Is there a particular time of day you like to have it?
- Do you prefer drinking alone or with company?
- Are there occasions when you especially enjoy a drink – like your birthday, or when watching sport?

Why this matters: Small details make a big difference. Knowing someone likes sherry before dinner, or a beer while watching the rugby, helps us make them feel at home.

3

Tell me about your relationship with alcohol before you came to this home.

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 3

Tell me about your relationship with alcohol before you came to this home.

Prompts if needed:

- Did you drink alcohol where you lived before?
- How often did you drink at home?
- Has that changed over time?
- Was there a time when you drank more than you do now?
- Was there a time when you decided to drink less, or stop?

Why this matters: Understanding someone's history helps us understand their present. Some people have complicated relationships with alcohol. Knowing this helps us support them appropriately.

4

**Would you like us to
arrange for you to have
a drink sometimes?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 4

Would you like us to arrange for you to have a drink sometimes?

Prompts if needed:

- Is it important to you to have a drink available when you want one?
- Would you like us to get your favourite drinks in for you?
- Is there a particular way you like your drink served – say, in a special glass?
- Would you like to join social occasions where alcoholic drinks are served?

Why this matters: We want to support people's choices. Knowing what matters to people helps us get it right.

5

**Is there anything
about drinking
alcohol that
worries you?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 5

Is there anything about drinking alcohol that worries you?

Prompts if needed:

- Are you concerned about how alcohol might affect your health?
- Are you worried about how alcohol interacts with your medication?
- Do you ever worry that you're drinking too much?
- Has anyone ever told you that you should drink less?

Why this matters: Some people may have concerns they have not shared. Creating space for this conversation can help us provide better support.

6

**Has anyone ever
told you that you
shouldn't drink
alcohol?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 6

Has anyone ever told you that you shouldn't drink alcohol?

Prompts if needed:

- What do your family think about your drinking?
- Has a doctor ever talked to you about alcohol?
- Do you feel anyone here judges you for drinking?
- Is there anyone whose opinion about your drinking particularly matters to you?

Why this matters: Other people's opinions about someone's drinking can matter in different ways: someone might be pleased that people are concerned for them; or they may feel judged and pushed around.

7

**Has anything
changed over time
about how you feel
about alcohol?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 7

Has anything changed over time about how you feel about alcohol?

Prompts if needed:

- Do you drink more or less than you used to?
- Do you enjoy it as much as you used to?
- Have you thought about stopping or cutting down?
- Is there anything that would help you drink less, if you wanted to?

Why this matters: People's preferences change. Regular conversations help us keep care plans up to date.

8

**Do you feel able to
make your own
choices about
alcohol here?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 8

Do you feel able to make your own choices about alcohol here?

Prompts if needed:

- Do you feel anyone is stopping you from drinking alcohol when you want to?
- Do you feel pressured to drink when you would rather not?
- Is there anything about how we do things here that makes it difficult for you to choose freely about drinking?
- What would help you feel more in control?

Why this matters: People's choices matter. We want to make sure people feel respected and in control of decisions about their own life.

9

**Is there anything
about drinking that
you'd like us to
help you with?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 9

Is there anything about drinking that you'd like us to help you with?

Prompts if needed:

- Would you like help getting your favourite drinks?
- Would you like to join any social activities involving alcoholic drinks?
- Would you like support to drink less, if that is what you want?
- Is there anything else we should know?

Why this matters: This is about people's wishes and choices. We are here to support what residents want and need.

10

**How do you feel
about other people's
drinking in this
home?**

STAFF REFERENCE – Question 10

How do you feel about other people's drinking in this home?

Prompts if needed:

- Are there times when being around alcohol makes you uncomfortable?
- Does it ever bother you when other residents have been drinking alcohol?
- Is there anything we could do to help if this is a concern for you?

Why this matters: Some residents may be in recovery, have difficult memories associated with alcohol, or simply feel uncomfortable around people who have been drinking. Understanding this helps us protect everyone and manage shared spaces sensitively.

Understanding alcohol use in care homes

These conversation cards are based on research conducted across Wales in 2025, commissioned by Alcohol Change UK and carried out by Practice Solutions and Age Cymru.

The full research report is available at: www.alcoholchange.org.uk

For advice and information, email: contact@alcoholchange.org.uk

