

Our vision is
of a world
free from serious
alcohol harm.



Welcome to our July newsletter

“Four years ago I was alcohol dependent. When the ONS data was released in May 2021 and revealed a 20% increase in alcohol-specific deaths – the highest number of deaths on record – I didn’t expect to have the reaction I did. “What struck me most about the many articles was the consistent statistical referencing; reducing people’s pain and suffering to numbers. But we must remember that 7,423 people lost their lives. 7,423 families and friends all suffered and are now grieving. We must ask ourselves how many years of suffering did those 7,423 and their loved ones go through? And how many of those 7,423 would still be here today if our drug and alcohol services had the funding they need and a proper mandate to tackle alcohol harm? I could have been a statistic.”

Read more from Melissa Rice later in this newsletter.

Also in this month's newsletter, read our 2020-21 Wales annual report; find out about the latest meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Harm; find out more about our upcoming project on the 'framing' of alcohol harm; and discover our newest Try Dry app feature.



Find out more about our work in Wales

This month, we published our 2020-21 annual report for Wales. The report summarises our work in Wales to reduce the serious harm caused by alcohol in a year like no other.

Andrew Misell, Director for Wales, said:

"We have stepped up to offer more online support, forged links between treatment services to promote shared learning, and rolled out research to better understand the 'new normal'.

“Looking ahead, the challenge for us all now is to learn the lessons of the pandemic and its associated lockdowns and other restrictions: to understand how drinking patterns have shifted, to what extent that change is permanent, and how those of us working to reduce alcohol harm must adapt the advice and support we offer.”

[Read the full report](#)



Update from Parliament

On 20 July, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Alcohol Harm hosted a joint meeting with the Cross-Party Parliamentary Group on Drugs, Alcohol and Justice on the topic of women's access to alcohol treatment and support. We heard from two Alcohol Change UK Community Champions, Susan Laurie and Louise Jamieson, about their personal experiences of accessing support, as well as from Melissa Rice, author and co-host of the BBC podcast 'Hooked'. Speakers from Changing Lives and Trevi spoke about the needs of women, giving examples of good practice in providing gender-specific and trauma-

informed services. However, these types of services are not widespread, and women face many barriers in accessing treatment.

You can now [view recordings of the presentations of our APPG events on our website](#), as well as download presentation slides and meeting notes.

Also last month, Dan Carden MP gave an incredibly moving speech in a Commons debate for Pride Month about the mental health problems he faced growing up as a gay man and how this led him to turn to alcohol.

The MP, who is Vice Chair of the APPG on Alcohol Harm, said: "Only looking back now have I been able to accept that, in my 20s, I twice nearly lost my life to alcohol. I was saved only by the actions of others. Drinking was destroying my body and damaging me, my relationships, in so many other ways."

"Alcohol addiction isn't about drinking every day, or drunkenness. For me it was about losing who I was, over a long period of time. It meant desperate isolation, shutting down my personal life. Using a drug – alcohol – to feel better but ultimately to escape. And giving up on living."

This is the first time that an MP has shared their addiction and recovery in Parliament, in the hope that it will help to challenge the stigma that stops so many people from asking for help.

[Watch Dan's speech in Parliament](#)

Introducing our newest app feature: 'favourites'

The Try Dry app is a free tool which can help you track your drinking or time alcohol-free, set goals, and monitor your progress. We are always looking for ways to improve it and have listened to user feedback that entering drinks could be even easier. For that reason, we've now launched our newest feature: 'favourites'.

If you enter the same drink into the app often, you can now set it as a 'favourite'. Next time you log it in the app, you can simply select it from your 'favourites' list without entering all the data again. This will help make the app even more helpful for those using it to track or cut down their drinking. Thank you to our app users for sharing this marvellous idea!

[Find out more and download Try Dry](#)

Invitation to tender: Framing alcohol harm project

The way that alcohol harm is talked about affects how people understand it. We want to permanently shift the public discourse about alcohol harm, to make it easier for people to ask for and access help when they need it and to achieve better, evidence-based policymaking to reduce harm. To help us do this, we are commissioning an exciting project on 'framing' alcohol harm and are inviting people to submit a tender.

The deadline is 9am Wednesday 1 September.

[Find out more and submit a tender](#)

Rebuild and recover: Alcohol Change UK's 2021 online conference

The theme for our annual conference in Wales this year is 'Rebuild and recover', taking place on 22 and 23 September. This two-day online event will offer an opportunity to reflect on the reasons people drink, and the many routes to harm reduction and recovery for a diverse population. We'll be seeking to learn lessons from the lockdowns and understand how best to respond to the challenges of the post-pandemic world and reduce alcohol harm.

[Find out more and book your place](#)

The real meaning of the ONS alcohol death data

Recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed the highest rate of alcohol deaths in England and Wales since records began – 7,423 people lost their lives, an increase of 20%. In this blog, Melissa Rice reflects on this number



and its real-world implications:
thousands of grieving loved ones,
overstretched and underfunded
treatment services, lives lost
needlessly and an urgent need for
change.

[Read the blog](#)

Alcohol news

Alcohol deaths up by a fifth during pandemic

An increase in alcohol consumption during the pandemic has led to a 20% rise in alcohol-specific deaths, according to a new report from Public Health England. This rise was driven largely by an unprecedented annual increase in alcoholic liver disease deaths above pre-pandemic levels. Deprived areas in the UK saw the highest increase in alcohol related deaths, with the North-East seeing the biggest increase in death rates out of all the regions.

[Read more](#)

Alcohol responsible for 4% of all cancer cases

A study published this month in the Lancet estimates alcohol was attributable for over 740,000 cancer cases last year globally, or 4% of all cancer cases. Men accounted for 77% of total alcohol-attributable cases, or 567,000 compared to 173,000 for women. Whilst most alcohol-caused cancer cases were linked to heavy or 'risky' drinking, even moderate or low levels of alcohol consumption were estimated to have been a factor in some cases. The researchers called for increased public awareness of the link between alcohol and cancer.

[Read the study](#)

Alcohol-related callouts a “significant burden” on ambulance service

Ambulances in Scotland attended 86,780 alcohol-related incidents in 2019, according to new research published this month, representing an average of over 230 callouts per day. Researchers from the Universities of Glasgow, Stirling and Sheffield, and representatives from the Scottish Ambulance Service, said this is over three times higher than the figure previously estimated.

[Read the study](#)

Demands on 999 are like "New Year's Eve every day"

The head of a Welsh police force says the demands on 999 are like "New Year's Eve every day for us", as COVID-19 restrictions are eased. Chief Constable Pam Kelly said Gwent Police had seen an extra 5,000 calls – a rise of 22% – between April 2021 and June 2021. Most of those were accidents or violence linked to alcohol, she said. Ms Kelly added that call demand had been significant across the UK.

[Read more](#)

Latest blogs



Claire's fundraising story: "My brother was a lovely, kind, and funny person"

Claire decided to raise money for Alcohol Change UK in memory of her brother, Carl, who recently passed away after struggling with his drinking for 40 years. In this blog, she shares her story.

[Read the blog](#)



Bukky's story: "My mental health has been a lot better without alcohol"

At the age of 18, Bukky decided drinking alcohol wasn't for him, and stopped drinking. In this blog, he shares his experience of being alcohol-free and gives some tips for having a great night without alcohol.

[Read the blog](#)



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