

# CREATING A UNIT AWARE LOCAL AUTHORITY

## RAISING AWARENESS - LOWERING HARM

The recommended safe alcohol limit for both men and women to drink is 14 units per week. This is the same as 6 pints of average strength beer a week and regularly drinking more than this can increase the risk to health.



Figures from the Alcohol Health Alliance UK (AHA) 2017, show that only 16% people are aware of the weekly alcohol guidelines, 2 years after the guidelines were announced.

Nationally 9 million adults drink at levels that increase the risk of harm to their health and 1.6 million adults show signs of alcohol dependence.

There has been a small decline in alcohol consumption in the last 10 years but we have not seen the same reduction in alcohol related harm.

## THE LOCAL PICTURE

Calderdale performs badly against a number of alcohol related measures of mortality and morbidity. Alcohol-specific mortality rates in Calderdale are higher than both the national and regional averages.

The percentage of Calderdale adults who drink over 14 units of alcohol a week is the worst in the region at 35% and well above the national average. Binge drinking levels in Calderdale are also the worst in the region with nearly 31% of adults binge drinking on their heaviest drinking day compared to 16.5% nationally.

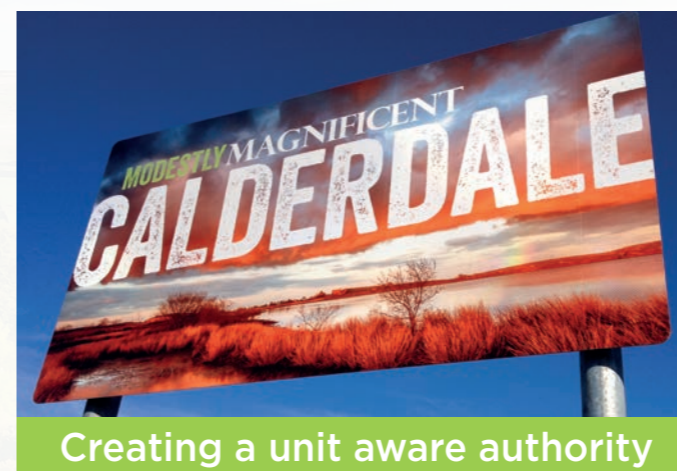
### Children and Young People

The Electronic Health Needs Assessment (eHNA) is an anonymous on-line survey completed by pupils in year 5, 7, 10 and 12 focusing on young people's health & wellbeing. Data from the eHNA (2016) shows alcohol is the most prevalent substance used by young people in Calderdale and 18% of secondary schools students drink alcohol regularly; of these students, 47% had drunk so much they did not know what they were doing.

Evidence suggests the younger someone starts drinking, the more likely they are to develop a problem with alcohol when they are older. (AHA, 2017).



## WHAT ARE WE DOING?



In Calderdale Public Health initiated a project to deliver Alcohol Brief Intervention (ABI) accredited train the trainer courses for the wider community based health/public health workforce. This included representatives from across all council directorates and third sector organisations, with an aspiration to eventually include local businesses. The potential of this work's lasting impact through system change has started, an example being that training Foster Team Social Workers has led to ABI being incorporated into the fostering assessment process.

A WTE post has been secured to facilitate and implement alcohol harm-reduction/prevention work, in particular alcohol brief intervention training and the development of a local trainer network. We are initially targeting the Calderdale MBC workforce, (78.2% live in Calderdale) complimenting a current focus on workplace health.

## WHAT IS AN ALCOHOL BRIEF INTERVENTION?

**“A short, evidence-based, structured conversation about alcohol consumption with a client to motivate and support the individual to think about and/or plan a change in their drinking behaviour in order to reduce their consumption”**  
NHS Scotland (2009).

They work best when delivered with empathy and without judgemental and it is often a teachable moment that moves the person from contemplating change through to a point of commitment to change. The teachable moment can be a negative event that illuminates the consequences of a person's drinking, for example a drunken fight or fall. It could also be a positive life transition, for example getting pregnant or getting married.

Evidence suggests for every eight people who receive simple alcohol advice, one will reduce their drinking to within lower-risk levels (Moyer et al., 2002). Therefore, increasing the number of trained ABI facilitators and creating a unit aware authority has the potential for significant harm reduction in Calderdale.



### References

<http://ahauk.org/awareness-drinking-guidelines-remains-low-2-years-release/>  
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<http://healthscotland.scot/health-topics/alcohol/alcohol>  
<https://learning.calderdale.gov.uk/cmbc/services/health-services/ehna/eHNA%20survey%20key%20findings/secondary%202016.pdf>

Moyer, A., Finney, J. W., Swearingen, C. E. and Vergun, P. (2002), Brief interventions for alcohol problems: a meta-analytic review of controlled investigations in treatment-seeking and non-treatment-seeking populations. *Addiction*, 97: 279-292. doi: 10.1046/j.1360-0443.2002.00018

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