Service	Alcohol Related Screening, Identification and Brief Advice in County Durham Pharmacies
Commissioner Lead	Jane Sunter Public Health Strategic Manager – Living Well, Ageing Well
Provider Lead	
Period	1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 National Picture

Tackling harmful drinking is an essential part of the Covid-19 recovery plan. Comparing March 2020 to March 2021, there was a 58% increase in people reporting that they were drinking at increasing and higher-risk levels (50 units a week for men, 35 units a week for women).¹

Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among 15-49 year olds in the UK, and the fifth biggest risk factor across all ages. 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.²

Regularly drinking any level of alcohol carries a health risk for everyone. Men and women should limit their intake to no more than 14 units a week to keep the risk of illness like cancer and liver disease at a reduced level.

1.2 Local Picture

Reducing alcohol harms, and increasing the number of people in treatment for drink dependency, is one of the four local priorities in the County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28 at https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk/health-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/:

- 2020 was the worst year on record for alcohol specific deaths nationally, with the rates being ٠ highest in the North East.
- There has also been an increase in alcohol-deaths in County Durham, driven by a significant increase in alcoholic liver disease above levels seen before the pandemic.
- Despite a decrease in the rates of alcohol-specific admissions to hospitals across the country during Covid-19, County Durham saw an increase in rates.
- An estimated 80% of those who are alcohol dependent in County Durham do not access specialist alcohol treatment services. This increases the numbers of people living with long term conditions, including heart disease, stroke and cancer.

For further local information see https://www.durhaminsight.info/living-well/alcohol-related-harm/.

1.3 National Guidance

National guidance on alcohol consumption is described in the UK Chief Medical Officers' Low **Risk Drinking Guidelines**³ (see Appendix 1 for example leaflet from the PharmOutcomes template):

Weekly drinking guideline

This applies to adults (both men and women) who drink regularly or frequently i.e. most weeks:

- To keep health risks from alcohol to a reduced risk level it is safest not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis.
- If you regularly drink as much as 14 units per week, it is best to spread your drinking evenly over 3 or more days.
- If you have one or two heavy drinking episodes a week, you increase your risk of death from long

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/alcoholic-liver-deaths-increased-by-21-during-year-of-the-pandemic. Published 15 Jul 2021

² Health matters: Harmful drinking and alcohol dependence. PHE Jan 2016. www.gov.uk/govemment/publications/healthmatters-harmful-drinking-and-alcohol-dependence/health-matters-harmful-drinking-and-alcohol-dependence (collection at https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/harmful-drinking) ³ UK Chief Medical Officers Low Risk Drinking Guidelines. DHSC. 25 Aug 2016. <u>www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-</u>

consumption-advice-on-low-risk-drinking

term illness, and from accidents and injuries.

- The risk of developing a range of health problems (including cancers of the mouth, throat and breast) increases the more you drink on a regular basis.
- If you wish to cut down the amount you drink, a good way to help achieve this is to have several drink-free days each week.

Single occasion drinking episodes

Advice for men and women who wish to keep their short-term health risks from single occasion drinking episodes to a lower level is to reduce the risks by:

- Limiting the total amount of alcohol that you drink on any single occasion.
- Drinking more slowly, drinking with food, and alternating with water.
- Planning ahead in order to avoid problems e.g. by making sure you can get home safely or that you have people you trust with you.

Pregnancy and drinking

- If you are pregnant or think you could become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all, to keep risks to your baby to a minimum.
- Drinking in pregnancy can lead to long-term harm to the baby, with the more you drink the greater the risk.

Summary

Both men and women should:

- Not regularly drink more than 14 units a week (see Appendix 1 for example leaflet that can be printed from the PharmOutcomes template).
- Evenly spread their drinking over 3 days or more.
- Have several drink-free days each week.
- Limit the amount of alcohol they drink on a single occasion.

Women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should:

• Not drink alcohol at all.

NICE Public Health Guidance Alcohol-use disorders: preventing the development of hazardous and harmful drinking⁴ identifies that professionals (who have received the necessary training) within a pharmacy setting can screen and offer structured brief advice on alcohol.

Alcohol-use disorders identification test (AUDIT) is a 10-question test for assessing an individual's level of alcohol risk. Health and social care professionals can use AUDIT as a comprehensive screening tool to assess the service user's level of risk to alcohol harm, by completing 10 questions:⁵

- 0 to 7 indicates low risk
- 8 to 15 indicates increasing risk
- 16 to 19 indicates higher risk,
- 20 or more indicates possible dependence

Feedback should be given to a patient on their AUDIT score and the level of risk identified. If the score is:

- 7 or below, give positive feedback and encourage the service user to keep their drinking at lowrisk levels
- 8 to 19, give brief advice to encourage a reduction in alcohol use and reduce the risk of alcohol harm
- 20 or above, consider referral to specialist alcohol harm assessment

The Alcohol use disorders identification test for consumption (AUDIT C) is a test to quickly identify alcohol harm in service users. It can be used to quickly assess your user's level of risk to alcohol harm by completing 3 consumption questions.

⁴ Alcohol-use disorders: preventing the development of hazardous and harmful drinking. NICE Public Health Guidance 24, Jun 2010. <u>www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph24</u>

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-use-screening-tests. Updated 30 Oct 2020

Evidence has shown that providing simple alcohol advice results in:⁶

- Reductions in weekly drinking by between 13% and 34%, (2.9 to 8.7 fewer units per week) with a significant effect on health risk.
- One in eight adults reducing their drinking to low-risk levels.
- Adults being twice as likely to moderate their drinking 6-12 months after intervention.
- Reduction from 50 units/week to 42 units/week reduces the relative risk of alcohol-related conditions by some 14% and the absolute risk of lifetime alcohol-related death by some 20%.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the service are to:

- Prevent progression from increasing risk to possible dependent drinking.
- Reduce alcohol related hospital admissions.

The objectives of the service are to:

- Raise public awareness of reduced risk levels of drinking and consequences of unsafe drinking.
- Identify levels of drinking amongst those presenting frequently with conditions possibly related to alcohol (see Section 2.1).
- Gather accurate data regarding service provision.
- Signpost or refer appropriately to the Wellbeing for Life Service or the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service.

2. Service

2.1 Service Description

The pharmacy can offer this service to people aged 16+ years presenting with symptoms / conditions / interventions which may be associated with alcohol misuse e.g.

- Identified during an OTC sale e.g. hangover cure, excessive antacid or PPI use
- Identified due to prescribed medicines e.g. BP, diabetes, gastric medication
- Pregnant or planning pregnancy
- Ad hoc request or intervention (e.g. whilst waiting for a script)
- Linked to another pharmacy service. For example:
- 1. The national Hypertension Case Finding Service
- 2. The local Emergency Oral Hormonal Contraception Service, or the national Pharmacy Contraception Service
- 3. A smoking cessation service e.g. the national Smoking Cessation Service, the local Level 2 Stop Smoking Service or the eNRT Voucher Service
- 4. The New Medicine Service

A person should be asked the first 3 AUDIT questions, referred to as AUDIT C (see Appendix 2 for the AUDIT C slip). This will take approximately one minute to complete. If a person scores 5+, the remaining 7 questions of the full AUDIT tool should be completed (see Appendix 3).

Screening and intervention can be done by any appropriately trained member of the pharmacy team (see Section 2.2).

2.1.1 Interpretation of the Full AUDIT Score

AUDIT scores are interpreted in the following way (see the tear off advice pad in Appendix 4):

- Low risk drinking (1-7 full AUDIT score) Drinking in a way that is unlikely to cause harm.
- Increasing risk drinking (8-15 full AUDIT score) Drinking in this way raises the long-term risk of ill health.
- *Higher risk drinking (16-19 full AUDIT score)* Drinking that is likely to be affecting physical and mental health.
- Possibly alcohol dependent (20+ full AUDIT score) A cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that may develop after repeated alcohol use. Typically, these phenomena include a strong desire to consume alcohol, impaired control over its use, persistent

⁶ https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/alcohol/ (accessed 28/11/23)

drinking despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drinking than to other activities and obligations, increased alcohol tolerance, and a physical withdrawal reaction when alcohol use is discontinued.

Depending on the AUDIT score, the pharmacy will then provide a brief intervention and will:

- Provide the relevant patient information that can be printed from the PharmOutcomes template (see Appendix 1 for example).
- Provide the person with their AUDIT score using the tear off advice pad (see Appendix 4).
- Refer (see Appendix 5) or signpost to Wellbeing for Life or the relevant Recovery Centre (see Appendix 6). <u>Please note that it is far better to actively refer a person rather than expect them to self-refer following the provision of the signposting information.</u>

For young people (16-18 years)

• Who score 8+ on full AUDIT refer to a Recovery Centre.

For adults (18+ years) who score:

- Low risk drinking (1-7 full AUDIT score): Give positive feedback and encourage person to keep their drinking at low-risk levels. Can be given information on reduced risk levels of drinking to raise public awareness/education (e.g. example information in Appendix 1 which can be printed from the PharmOutcomes template).
- Increasing risk drinking (8-15 full AUDIT score) or Higher risk drinking (16-19 full AUDIT score without additional risk factors (see Section 2.1.2): Give brief advice to encourage a reduction in alcohol use and reduce the risk of alcohol harm. This can include verbal and written information about units and reduced risk drinking levels (e.g. see example information in Appendix 1 which can be printed from the PharmOutcomes template); health impacts of alcohol on physically/mental health; and practical tips on how to reduce drinking and alcohol related harm (by providing their AUDIT score on the tear off advice pad in Appendix 4 or signposting to online resources and Apps (see Annual Update Briefing), or to Wellbeing for Life (Appendix 6).
- Possibly alcohol dependent (20+ full AUDIT score) or Higher risk drinking (16-19 full AUDIT score with additional risk factors (see Section 2.1.2)): Should be offered a referral to the relevant Recovery Centre using the referral form in Appendix 5. If the person is over 18 years and does not wish to be referred, they can self-refer to the Centres identified in Appendix 6. However, note that it is far better to actively refer that person rather than expect them to self-refer.

2.1.2 Additional Risk Factors which will increase harm include:

- Over 65s and veterans.
- Pregnancy.
- Complex or life-threatening physical health problems / polypharmacy.
- Enduring mental health problems e.g. bipolar, schizophrenia.
- Risk of suicide / self-harm.
- Homeless / no fixed abode / traveller.
- Criminal justice involvement.
- History of violence / threats to others / domestic abuse / child welfare concerns.

2.2 Training Requirements

It is the duty of the contractor to ensure that the service is delivered by staff who have the necessary competence and training in this intervention.

The contractor should ensure that a pharmacy service lead has completed the required mandated training which is to:

- Read this service specification and the 2024-26 Annual Update Briefing (available on the CPNEC website at <u>https://www.cpnec.org.uk/</u>).
- Complete the online brief advice training at https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/alcohol/. The course for community pharmacy is split into four e-learning sessions:
- 1. Alcohol facts
- 2. Introducing IBA and identifying risky behaviour

- 3. Practising IBA and delivering brief advice
- 4. Assessment

The pharmacy service lead should be assured that all staff are competent to deliver the service and will complete the required mandated training which is to:

Read this service specification and the 2024-26 Annual Update Briefing (available on the CPNEC website at <u>https://www.cpnec.org.uk/</u>).

For 2024 – 25, a PharmOutcomes Declaration needs to be completed for each staff member accessing the claims template (see Appendix 7 for the template PharmOutcomes Declaration).

All staff are also expected to keep up to date with guidance / service changes and to assess their competence on an ongoing basis.

For new pharmacies and pharmacies requiring training of new staff members:

- To organise an onsite visit to train staff on running the service and the service materials: contact Sandra Waters (email: <u>sandra.waters@nhs.net</u>).
- Staff are required to complete the above training requirements in advance of this visit.

2.3 Geographic Coverage/Boundaries

Pharmacies within County Durham.

2.4 Location(s) of Service Delivery

2.4.1 Within the Pharmacy Setting

The service should be provided in an appropriate confidential room / area. The provider will comply with the General Pharmaceutical Council standards for pharmacy premises at www.pharmacyregulation.org/standards/standards-registered-pharmacies.

2.4.2 Offsite Provision

Prior permission must be obtained from the service commissioner for any offsite provision by contacting Sandra Waters (Tel: 0191 3728702. Email: <u>sandra.waters@nhs.net</u>) in the first instance.

2.5 Days/Hours of Operation

Alcohol screening will take place during normal business hours.

2.6 Exclusion Criteria

- Patients aged over the age of 16 who have had an alcohol brief intervention in the previous 3 months.
- Patients under the age of 16 will be excluded from this service and the safeguarding children policy and procedures should be followed.

2.7 Data Collection

Payment claims are made via PharmOutcomes. All fields must be complete and accurate.

Any duplicate claims may be investigated on a quarterly basis. In the event of over claims being made, the Local Authority has the right to reclaim all monies.

Information on the AUDIT C slips should be entered onto PharmOutcomes no later than 2 months after the date of the intervention.

All AUDIT C slips entered onto PharmOutcomes must be marked with:

- An indication (e.g. a tick, or slip crossed through) that they have been entered onto the system.
- The initial of the staff member who has entered the data onto the system.

The AUDIT C slips must then be retained for at least 6 months for audit purposes.

Public Health will generate the monthly claim report from PharmOutcomes for all pharmacies on the 15th of every month and send the report to DCC Finance for payment. There will be no requirement for pharmacists to send invoices. Any queries relating to payment must be made to <u>publichealth@durham.gov.uk</u>.

3. Review / Audit

The contractor may be requested to participate in an end of year service review as defined by Public Health.

AUDIT C slips must be retained for at least 6 months for audit purposes. Public Health reserves the right to audit these slips against monthly claims made by the pharmacy.

In the event of over claims being made, the Local Authority has the right to reclaim all monies on a quarterly basis.

4.	Payment	

Screening using the AUDIT-C tool

For patients scoring 5 or more on AUDIT C: Completion of full AUDIT tool / brief intervention / signposting and referral as appropriate

£5.00 ex VAT

£2.50 ex VAT

Total

£7.50 ex VAT

5. Notice Period

A minimum of 3-month notice will be provided by either the contractor or the Local Authority in the event of any decision to withdraw from this service before the stated expiry date.

DCC Supporting Officer

Jane Sunter Public Health Strategic Manager – Living Well, Ageing Well Public Health Team Durham County Council Green Lane Council Offices Spennymoor DL16 6JQ Email: jane.sunter@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Example of general customer information



Appendix 2: AUDIT C slip (National version at <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-use-screening-tests</u>. Updated 30 Oct 2020)

	Questions	0	1	2	3	4	Yo Sco
1	How often do you have a drink that contains alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2 - 4 times per month	2 - 3 times per week	4+ times per week	
2	How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 9	10+	
3	How often have you had 6 or more units if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in the last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	

Date	Client details	Reason for intervention (tick all that apply)	Intervention (tick one option)	Total Score
	Full name	Identified during an OTC sale e.g. hangover cure, excessive antacid or PPI use	Brief intervention and information provided	
	Date of birth	Identified due to prescribed medicines e.g. BP, diabetes, gastric medication	Brief intervention and signposted to e.g. DARS or W4L	
	M/F	Ad hoc request or intervention (e.g. whilst waiting for a script)	Brief intervention and faxed referral form to DARS	
		Linked to another pharmacy service e.g. NMS, BP screening, a sexual health		
	Full postcode e.g. NMS, BP screening, a sexual nearin service, a stop smoking service		If pregnant, advice given that NO ALCOHOL is safest option	
		Pregnant or planning pregnancy		

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This brief intervention package is based on the Drink-Less programme originally developed

Appendix 3: Full AUDIT tool (National version at <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-use-screening-tests</u>. Updated 30 Oct 2020)

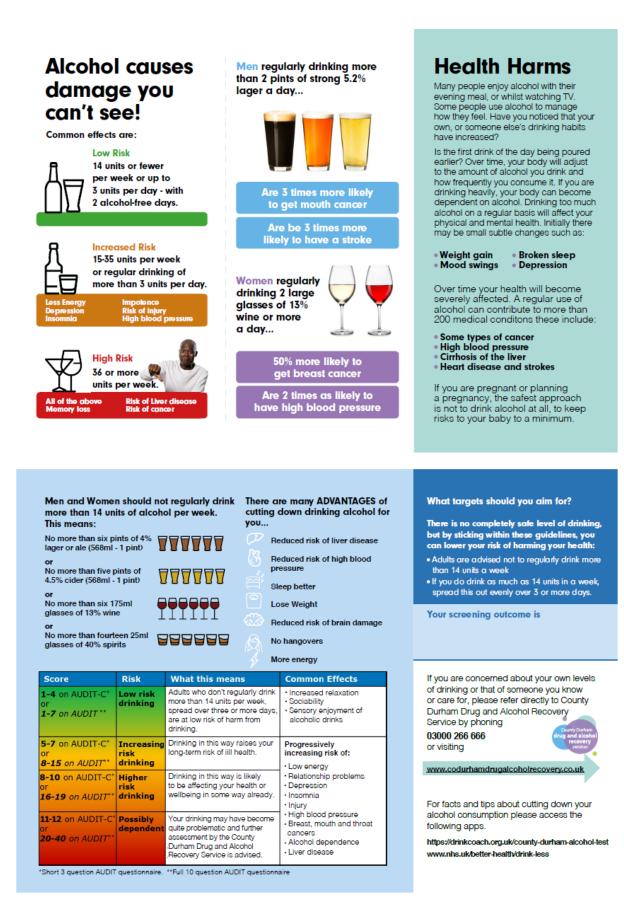


	Questions	0	1	2	ω
1	How often do you have a drink that contains alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2 - 4 times per month	2 - 3 times per week
2	How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1-2	3-4	5 - 6	7 - 9
ω	How often have you had 6 or more units if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in the last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly
	Scoring: A total of 5+ indicates increasing or higher risk drinking - please continue with AUDIT.	asing or hi	gher risk dri	nking - plea:	se continue
4	How often in the last year have you found you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly
и	How often in the last year have you failed to do what was expected of you because of drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly
0	How often in the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get you going?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly
7	How often in the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or regret after drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly
œ	How often in the last year have you not been able to remember what happened when drinking the night before?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly
9	Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?	No		Yes but not in the last year	
	Has a relative/friend/doctor/health worker been concerned				

Alcohol Users Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)

Appendix 4 - Tear off advice pad

(National version at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-use-screening-tests. Updated 30 Oct 2020)



		MACY REFERRAL FO JDIT scores of 20+, or 1				-		
PATIENT DE	TAILS							
Name					Date of birth			
NHS					Gender			
number								
(if known) Address								
Audicoo					Postcode			
Telephone / m number	nobile				Preferred mod contact	e of		
Number of de	ependent	children under 18			Do the children with patient?	n live	Yes	No
GP details								
ORIGIN OF R	EFERRAL	-						
Referrers nan	ne							
Pharmacy add	dress							
Patient has be Recovery Cer		in the pharmacy and	has b	een ad	lvised to contac	ct a		
Audit Score								
Is the patient willing to engage or motivated to change? Y					Yes	No		
HAVE ANY R	ISKS BEE	N IDENTIFIED? Yes	/ No					
Please specif	•							
Complex physic polypharmac		th problems /		Homeless / no fixed abode / traveller				
Pregnancy				Criminal justice involvement				
Risk of suicid				others welfa	ry of violence / t s / domestic abu re concerns	use / ch		
Enduring mer bipolar, schiz		h problems e.g.		Over	65 years or a ve	teran		
Any other key	/ risk fact	ors?						-

Email completed form to: cddars.adult@humankindcharity.org.uk



The Wellbeing for Life Service at <u>www.wellbeingforlife.net</u> helps individuals and communities to improve their health around diet and nutrition, physical activity, obesity, smoking, alcohol consumption, mental wellbeing, and cancer awareness.

Any healthcare professional can signpost or refer people to the Wellbeing for Life Service, for example, to help them to improve their weight, physical activity, or mental wellbeing. A general online enquiry form and the healthcare referral form is available at https://www.wellbeingforlife.net/#/Referral%20&%20Contact.

Key contacts for pharmacies in the Service are the local Wellbeing Practitioners who can help individuals aged 16+ and/or their families to set up personal health plans to improve their health. This involves 8-12 x hourly sessions over a period of weeks or months, either individually or as part of a group.



Recovery Centre Contact Information

April 2022

The Recovery Centres are open from 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday at the following locations:

Recovery Centre	Address	Areas covered
Horden	Horden Recovery Centre, Sunderland Road, Horden, Peterlee, SR8 4NL	Peterlee, Seaham, Murton, Horden and surrounding areas
Durham	The Centre for Change, 81-88 Whinney Hill, Durham, DH1 3BQ	Durham City, Consett, Stanley, Chester-le-Street and surrounding areas
Dales	Saddler House, Saddler Street, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7BH	Bishop Auckland, the Dales, Newton Aycliffe and surrounding areas

Please ring 03000 266666

or email <u>DurhamContact@humankindcharity.org.uk</u> in order to receive help and support

See website at https://codurhamdrugalcoholrecovery.co.uk/

Appendix 7: PharmOutcomes Declaration

Alcohol Brief Intervention Service Declaration 2024-25

The pharmacy service lead has confirmed that:

Training

- They have completed the mandated training specified in the service specification.
- They will ensure that all other staff complete the mandated training specified in the service specification.
- They will keep up to date with guidance / service changes and cascade this to other members of staff providing the service.

Patient materials

- The pharmacy has supplies of the customer materials and resources.
- All pharmacy staff providing the service are aware of these materials and their use with customers.

Intervention

All staff involved in running this service understand:

- The UK Chief Medical Officers' Low Risk Drinking Guidelines.
- The use of the 10 question AUDIT tool, and that if a customer scores 5+ on the 3 question AUDIT C slip that the remaining 7 questions of the full AUDIT tool should be completed.
- What level of risk is attached to each AUDIT score, how to communicate this to the customer, and what information to provide.
- That all AUDIT C slips should be entered onto PharmOutcomes within 2 months of the intervention taking place. All processed slips must be marked that they have been entered onto PharmOutcomes and who by, and then be retained for at least 6 months.