

## 2013 Annual Public Health Report

# Is Haringey over the limit?



## The rise in alcohol-related harm

● Haringey      ● London      ○ England



## Drinking: too much of a good thing?

Since 1970 the amount of alcohol consumed per person has risen by 50% in the UK. During this time alcohol has become relatively cheaper and more readily available. Alcohol is aggressively and expertly marketed and drinking has become a normal feature of everyday life.

Alcohol can play a positive social and economic role - and the large majority of people enjoy alcohol without harm. However, excessive alcohol use can have a harmful effect on individuals, their families and our community.

There are huge costs to the UK economy, the cost of inpatient admissions in Haringey is estimated to be at least £7.5 million.

Alcohol was named as the most dangerous drug in the UK in 2009. It has become ever-present in our lives and those of our children: recognising when we go over the limit is not always obvious.

There are currently 884 licensed premises in Haringey, a rise of 41% or 255 new premises since 2005-6. These premises, along with larger supermarkets and on-line shopping facilities, often encourage bulk buying through considerable discounts.

Alcohol consumption is higher in men, in white English and Irish populations and lower in many Black and minority ethnic communities, though this may be changing in second generation communities.

Around 1 in 10 people in Haringey are binge drinking and over 10,000 people across the borough are higher risk drinkers, regularly going well above their daily recommended limits. More hidden are the 57,000 residents (around a quarter of people in the borough) putting their health at increased risk with less dramatic consumption - i.e. between 15 and 35 units a week for women and 22 and 50 for men.

# Why is drinking over the limit bad for you?

## Health harm

Alcohol-related harms are broad ranging and associated with even moderate levels of drinking. Health-related problems include: hypertension, cardiovascular disease, cancer, liver disease, mental illness, accidents in the home and on the road, violence and premature death. In most cases the relationship between alcohol and illness is simple: the more you drink the greater the risk of harm.

Men in Haringey have the highest death rate specifically due to alcohol in London. Around 6% of all hospital admissions in the borough are related to alcohol consumption – an increase of 224% between 2002 and 2012. Compared to England, men in Haringey are much more likely to be admitted to hospital and people living in the most deprived areas of Haringey have a quarter more admissions than the Haringey average. Reduced consumption would improve health inequalities as lower income groups suffer greater health harms.

## Social harm

Alcohol misuse and dependency can affect work productivity, which can result in additional financial pressure on families.

Children and young people can often do little to protect themselves from the effects of parental drinking and can suffer emotional distress, neglect or violence. In Haringey, over one in ten (13%) people who seek alcohol treatment are parents living with their own children and nearly one in five (18%) have parental responsibility.

Nationally in around half of all violent crimes, victims believed their attackers had been drinking. Alcohol is also a common feature of domestic and sexual violence.

High levels of alcohol consumption are associated with increased risk taking particularly among young people, including unsafe sex and drink driving.

## What are we doing to reduce alcohol-related harm?

Tackling alcohol-related harm is a complex issue. In Haringey, the council, the NHS, police, fire, probation services and the voluntary sector are:

- **Raising awareness of sensible drinking** as well as the impact of alcohol misuse through campaigns, both national and local such as alcohol awareness week (November every year) and Haringey's online alcohol screening and advice tool *Don't Bottle It Up* ([www.dontbottleitup.org.uk](http://www.dontbottleitup.org.uk))
- **Preventing alcohol-related harm to children and young people** by working with schools and other frontline services
- **Strengthening enforcement** to control access and reduce alcohol-related crime and anti-social behavior
- **Increasing early help by training** frontline staff to ask the right questions and provide basic advice and signposting to services
- **Encouraging self help** by promoting self help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous ([www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)) and Al-Anon (family and friends, [www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk))
- **Providing effective treatment** by continuously improving our services for people with alcohol issues and the families and children affected by alcohol misuse. Haringey's local alcohol advice and treatment services is Haringey Advisory Group on Alcohol (HAGA) ([www.haga.co.uk](http://www.haga.co.uk))



*Dear all,*

## **Public health is now at the heart of your local authority.**

After a successful transition from the NHS to the local authority, I am delighted to present my second annual Public Health report focusing on alcohol. These reports are important ways for me to bring to your attention key health concerns in Haringey. They highlight the way in which public health is everyone's business.

Last year we focused on the dramatic rise in childhood obesity, a crisis in our community requiring collective and individual action. The publicity and interest generated by the report helped us focus on tackling the proliferation of fast-food outlets in the borough. We're working with academics and young people to do on-the-ground research on the role fast food plays in their diets and ways we could tackle excess. We have strengthened our approach through good connections between public health, planning and environmental health to take this work forward, in particular linking to schools and local businesses.



## **Tackling alcohol-related harm**

In this year's report, we focus on the rapid increase in alcohol-related harm in our borough, an issue that similarly needs our urgent individual and collective attention. Tackling alcohol misuse is key to achieving the outcomes in Haringey's Health and Wellbeing Strategy: giving every child the best start in life, reducing the gap in life expectancy between the east and west of the borough and improving mental health and well being.

Alcohol can affect people negatively, this impact is generally greater in people experiencing a whole range of challenges linked to poverty. Alcohol-related harm drives health inequalities.

Everyone should have the right to enjoy the best possible health outcomes and tackling alcohol-related harm is one of the ways we can achieve this. We need to create community spaces that are alcohol free or where alcohol can be enjoyed but in moderation. We need to give people the tools to understand when they are drinking too much and what they can do to cut down. Ideally we want to create a culture that prevents problem drinking from starting and provides help for people early on should they be struggling.

Some of the ways we might do this are: ensuring health considerations are taken into account in any licensing decisions, through community safety efforts to tackle alcohol crime and anti-social behaviour and just as importantly by making sure that the right services are in place for people who need help.

I am proud too of the emphasis Haringey places on recovery – helping people who have misused drugs or alcohol gain control over their lives and the services they receive. We have a network of Recovery Champions across the borough; we actively challenge stigma through initiatives such as Recovery Pride week, peer advocacy programmes and ensure our services facilitate access to education, training and employment skills for people recovering from alcohol or drug problems.

Of course while local action is important, we also need to advocate for tough action at a national level to limit the sale and promotion of alcohol, including setting a 50p per unit minimum price of alcohol.

## **What can you do?**

The issue of alcohol use should be a concern to us all. I would like to hear your stories, thoughts or ideas about how as a community we can build a healthy approach to alcohol and tackle alcohol-related harm. Please contact me at [jeanelle.degruchy@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:jeanelle.degruchy@haringey.gov.uk). I look forward to hearing from you.

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