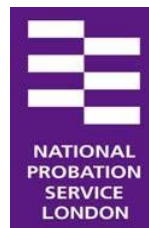




SUTTON ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY 2012-15

'Healthier, Safer, Responsible, Social'

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
MARCH 2012**



South West London

Introduction

Issues relating to alcohol are frequently in the media. These are often linked to headlines highlighting the dangers of binge drinking or the problems of rising hospital admissions but there are also regular stories about the benefits of moderate drinking.

We want your views to help us to develop proportionate local measures and responses that are consistent with healthier, safer, responsible and social drinking behaviours in Sutton.

In the following pages we provide you with information and facts about alcohol, in terms of its relative benefits and harms and then invite you to respond to some specific questions.

This consultation will be open and will run for a period of eight weeks from the beginning of April 2012.

SUTTON ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY 2011-14

Alcohol has an important role to play in our society and when used in moderation can be beneficial to the local economy. However when used to excess, alcohol can have a very damaging and detrimental effect on the lives of individuals, families and the communities in which they live.

We are intent on delivering a strategy to tackle the problem of alcohol misuse and associated harm in the borough and make our neighbourhoods safer and more social places to live in.

Sutton is adopting five specific measures to tackle alcohol related harm that are described in some detail later in this document.

THE SOCIAL HEALTH & ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ALCOHOL

National estimates indicate that 90% of adults drink alcohol and it plays an important and positive role in our society: it is a part of many people's family and social lives enhancing mealtimes, social occasions and leisure time.

Moderate consumption is not usually harmful to health. Consumption at or below moderate levels, particularly in older men and women can lower the risk of conditions such as coronary heart disease, diabetes mellitus and Ischemic stroke and this protective effective is estimated to save between 15,000 -22,00 lives a year.

Moderate alcohol consumption can be good for the community stimulating a vibrant and diverse local economy that contributes to making Sutton a popular shopping and entertainment destination.

THE HEALTH HARMS ASSOCIATED WITH ALCOHOL

Alcohol can cause a range of serious and preventable illnesses.

It has been shown to be causally related to over 60 acute medical conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and obesity. It is a significant cause of illness and premature death.

The frequency of heavy drinking by pregnant women can cause a range of physical and mental birth defects collectively known as Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Heavy alcohol use is clearly implicated in areas of mental illness particularly depression, anxiety and suicide.

Alcohol is strongly linked to unintentional injuries and trauma and death due to violence.

ALCOHOL RELATED CRIME & DISORDER

Unsurprisingly alcohol is linked to crime & anti social behaviour.

Evidence suggests that drinking may increase vulnerability to crime particularly for younger people, either as victims or perpetrators.

There is generally a strong correlation between alcohol related offences and the night time economy and particularly in the 18 -25 age group.

Alcohol related disorder and antisocial behaviour particularly when involving groups of youths has a tendency to make people feel less safe in their communities.

SOCIAL HARM & HIDDEN HARMS

Children affected by parental alcohol misuse will not necessarily be in need or suffer harm but are known to be at increased risk of vulnerability and isolation.

The 'Bottling Up' report estimates that as many as 1.3 million children are living in households affected by parental alcohol misuse.

Alcohol misuse can impact on a child's environment in many social, psychological and economic ways and can also result in substantial mental health issues for family members.

Alcohol misuse is also correlated with child abuse and Department For Education statistics for 2010/11 suggests that 51% of child protection case in the UK in the previous year, involved parental alcohol misuse.

THE SUTTON PICTURE

In Sutton the estimated prevalence of binge drinking is estimated at 14.7% compared to 14.3% in London and 20.1% nationally.

The estimated levels of drinking at "increasing risk" is higher than London or England levels.

Sutton has lower rates of alcohol related hospital admissions compared to the London and national rates. These rates have increased over the last 5 years but the rate of increase in Sutton is greater than that of the regional and national increases.

The picture of risky drinking behaviour is complex. Information on Binge Drinking suggests a link with deprivation in Sutton. Patterns of health services use suggests that higher risk drinking is more wide spread - occurring in both deprived and affluent areas.

THE SUTTON PICTURE

Alcohol related mortality and morbidity are generally low in Sutton , suggesting levels of risky drinking behaviour less than that in London or nationally.

Alcohol related hospital admission rates are lower compared with the rates in London or across England but increasing in Sutton at a faster rate than either London or nationally.

There are clear age and gender differences in consequences of drinking behaviour:

- For the older population - chronic conditions such as hypertension or alcohol associated cardiac conditions.
- For the younger population - acute conditions (including the impact of alcohol related violence on these) and mental health conditions.
- 61% of alcohol related hospital admissions in Sutton and Merton are for men.

Source Sutton & Merton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011

THE SUTTON PICTURE

Current performance in tackling acute alcohol related crime in Sutton, such as violence with injury, is very positive with a large reduction in reported assaults across the Borough.

However, it is clear from London Ambulance data that Sutton town centre is still a hotspot for alcohol related violence. This mostly occurs on Friday and Saturday evenings into the early hours.

Lower level alcohol related disorder, particularly linked to groups of youths, remains the key concern of residents interviewed in the borough wide INSI Survey. The bottom end of Sutton High Street is perceived as an intimidating location by some residents.

Source: Sutton & Merton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011

Attitudes and perceptions toward Alcohol consumption in London: London Borough of Sutton Report March 2012

The following information is drawn from the above report as part of the pan London survey of 75, 000 London residents in 2011:

- Results of the survey suggest that incidence of daily drinking among Sutton residents is lower than that in London as a whole.
- The incidence of 'regular drinking, ' defined in the survey as weekly [2-5 days] or bi weekly is seemingly higher in Sutton than the London average.
- Men are consuming on average more alcohol than women with the prime age for this being 45-54 years for weekly drinking and 35-44 for bi weekly drinking.
- People in Sutton are spending between £ 8.70 and £ 10.20 per week on alcohol , which as a comparison, is more than people in Croydon, equal to those in Kingston upon Thames but less than those in Merton.

Measures for reducing alcohol related harm



1. Combating Alcohol related Crime and Disorder

- 1. Reducing:
 - Drink Driving
 - Anti-social Behaviour
 - Under-age drinking
 - Under-age sales
 - Domestic Violence

5. Changing Social Behaviour

5. Supporting changing attitudes and beliefs in Sutton Safe-guarding

2. Working with the Alcohol Industry to tackling associated harm

- 2. Reducing under-age sales
Reducing inappropriate advertising and particularly that targeting under 18's.
Ensuring Socially Responsible Standards for alcohol sales
Regulating & managing the night-time economy

3. Improving Communication and Understanding

- 3. Improved understanding of risk
Community/ perceptions re: alcohol misuse
Social Marketing – knowing/understanding the message

4. Improving Treatment and Outcomes

- 4. Improving Access to;
the right treatment at the right time in the right way
Improving prevention services
Reducing ill-health caused by alcohol

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE FROM THE FIVE MEASURES FOR TACKLING ALCOHOL RELATED HARM

- Increased public awareness of the harmful aspects of drinking.
- A more preventative approach in dealing with the problems caused by alcohol misuse.
- Robust and proportionate responses to alcohol related offending and antisocial behaviour.
- Rigorous monitoring and application of licensing arrangements to ensure effective regulation and responsible selling of alcohol.
- Earlier intervention in alcohol misuse through alcohol screening and targeted intervention and support for problem drinkers.
- Better access to appropriate alcohol treatment for those in greatest need.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Are these the right measures to tackle the problem of alcohol related harm in Sutton?

Yes [] No [] Not sure []

2. What else can or should be done here:

- In Sutton as a whole?

- In your local area?

PUBLIC CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

3. Where should local agencies be putting the most time and resources in tackling alcohol related harm?

Tick 2 as your priorities

- Raising public awareness about harmful drinking []
- Tackling drink related crime []
- Tackling drink related anti social behaviour []
- Tackling under aged drinking []
- Improving alcohol treatment services []
- Other []

Say what

Public Consultation Questions

4. How important do you think the issue of tackling drink related harm, crime and antisocial behaviour is for people locally?

Very [] Quite [] Not []

Next steps

We welcome your responses either singularly or as part of collectives or interest groups locally.

Information can be sent directly to us through the online consultation portal, or if you prefer as a download and returned to the e-mail supplied.

We also plan to run a number of focus groups over the eight weeks of consultation and you may have an opportunity to participate in these also.

Following the consultation, we will collate all of the responses and publish a synopsis of the results online. Information about this will be given to all who have participated.

Public service notice

If any of the issues described in this document directly affect you or Others who are close to you, you can call Drinkline, the national alcohol helpline on 0800 917 8282 for free and confidential advice about how and where to get help and support.

Alternatively and for information about cutting down on drinking, go online, NHS Choices 'Your health, your choice' Homepage and link:

www.nhs.uk/change4life