

# CHOOSE YOURSELF. NOT ALCOHOL



Alcohol awareness and  
support for young people



**BARNSELY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

# ALCOHOL IN THE UK

Every year, a lot of people die because they drink too much alcohol, and more people are getting sick from liver disease because of drinking.

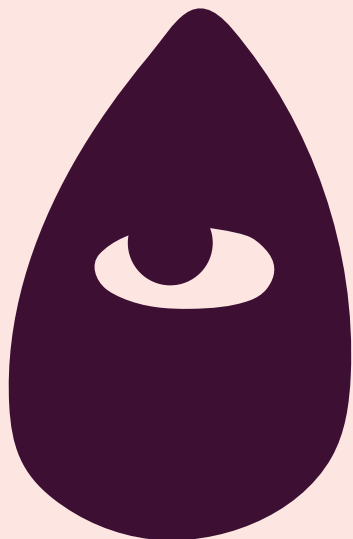
## 600,000

In England, there are about 600,000 people who have a problem with drinking too much alcohol.

## 4 OUT OF 5

Sadly, 4 out of 5 of these people are not getting the help they need.

Drinking alcohol can be bad for your brain and body, especially when you're still growing. It can also put you in dangerous situations that you might not be ready for.



## DRINKING ALCOHOL WHEN YOU'RE UNDER 18

### LAW

If you're under 18 and drinking alcohol in public, the police can stop you, fine you, or even arrest you.

It's also against the law for someone to sell you alcohol, for you to buy or try to buy alcohol, or for an adult to buy or try to buy alcohol for you. You're also not allowed to drink alcohol in places like pubs or restaurants. But, if you're 16 or 17 and with an adult, you can drink (but not buy) beer, wine, or cider with a meal. This must be bought by someone over the age of 18.

If you're 16 or younger, you might be able to go to a pub with an adult. But it depends on the rules of the pub and what's happening there.

### MEDICAL

Medical experts say that under 18s shouldn't drink alcohol.



# REASONS WHY MOST YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CHOOSING NOT TO DRINK ALCOHOL

## SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE

Drinking isn't as popular as it used to be, and it's okay not to drink. People are starting to think that drinking isn't cool, and that not drinking is a good thing. This might be because we're worried about our future and want to do well in life. We don't always do what our friends do.

## DECISION MAKING

Young people today are more careful about their decisions than they used to be.

## SAFETY

Drinking in public can be dangerous and not a good idea.

## OPPORTUNITY

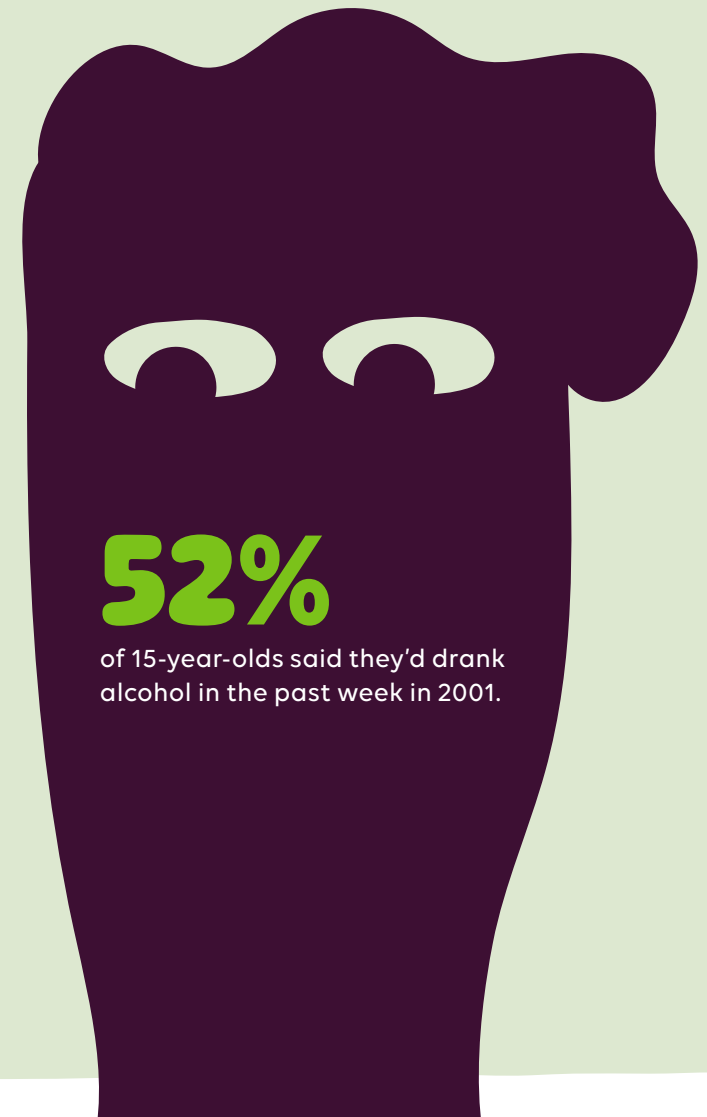
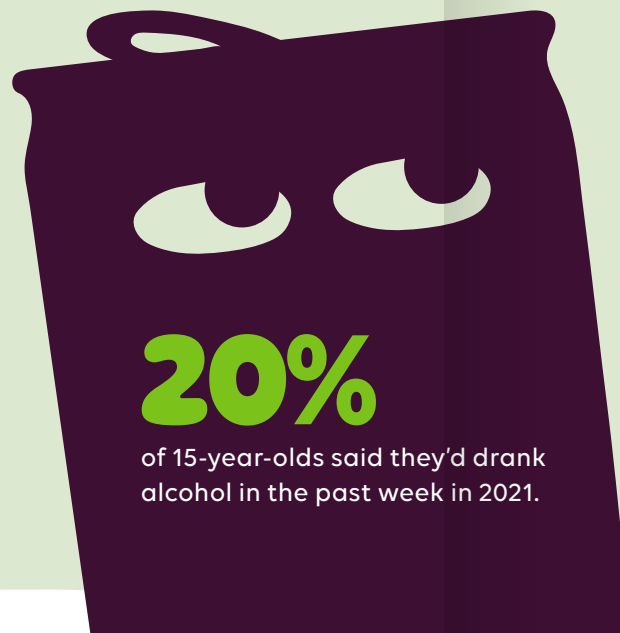
There are lots of other things to do with friends that don't involve drinking.

## STRICTER CHECKS

If you look under 25 you should be asked for ID before being able to be served alcohol.

## FEWER YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DRINKING ALCOHOL NOW THAN IN THE PAST

In 2002, 67% of 16- to 24-year-olds said they drank alcohol in the last week, but in 2021, only 37% did. The number of 15-year-olds in England who drank alcohol in the last week also fell from 52% in 2001 to 20% in 2021.



# HOW DRINKING ALCOHOL CAN AFFECT YOU

Drinking alcohol when you're young can impact you. Here are some of the things that can happen:

## ALCOHOL POISONING

Alcohol poisoning is usually caused by binge drinking, which is where you have a lot of alcohol in one go. It can happen when you drink alcohol faster than your body can filter it out of your blood. Having too much alcohol in your blood stops your body from working properly and can be life-threatening.

## ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

Drinking alcohol can make it hard to think and move. This can result in unwanted accidents and injuries.

## SIDE EFFECTS

Drinking alcohol can lead to trouble sleeping.

## BRAIN DEVELOPMENT & MENTAL HEALTH

Alcohol can mess with your memory, make it harder to react quickly, and make it harder to learn and pay attention. It can also make you feel sad, worried, and stressed. This can lead to worse grades, skipping school, and even getting kicked out of school.

## OTHER SUBSTANCES & VULNERABILITY

If you drink alcohol when you're underage, you're more likely to smoke tobacco, use cannabis, or use other hard drugs. All of which are very bad for your health.

## SEXUAL HEALTH

Drinking lots of alcohol can be linked with poor sexual health like unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and sexual assault.

# IF YOU FEEL PRESSURED TO DRINK ALCOHOL, HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE

If you ever feel like you're being pushed to drink alcohol, you're not alone. Lots of young people feel the same way. But remember, most young people don't drink alcohol. So, don't be afraid to say no and be yourself.

## BE TRUE TO YOURSELF

It's important to know what you want and what you believe in. This will help you be true to yourself and make good choices.

## BE PREPARED

Get ready for when someone offers you alcohol. Think about what you want to say so you're not caught off guard.

## BE CAUTIOUS

Try to understand who's offering you the alcohol and why. Friends should understand if you say no, people you don't know very well may want something from you.

## IT'S OKAY TO SAY NO

If someone is trying to make you drink alcohol, it's okay to say no. Say it strongly and clearly. If they keep trying to make you change your mind, you don't have to.

## BE HONEST & CLEAR

Even if they don't say it, your friends will respect you more if you're honest and clear about what you want and don't want to do.

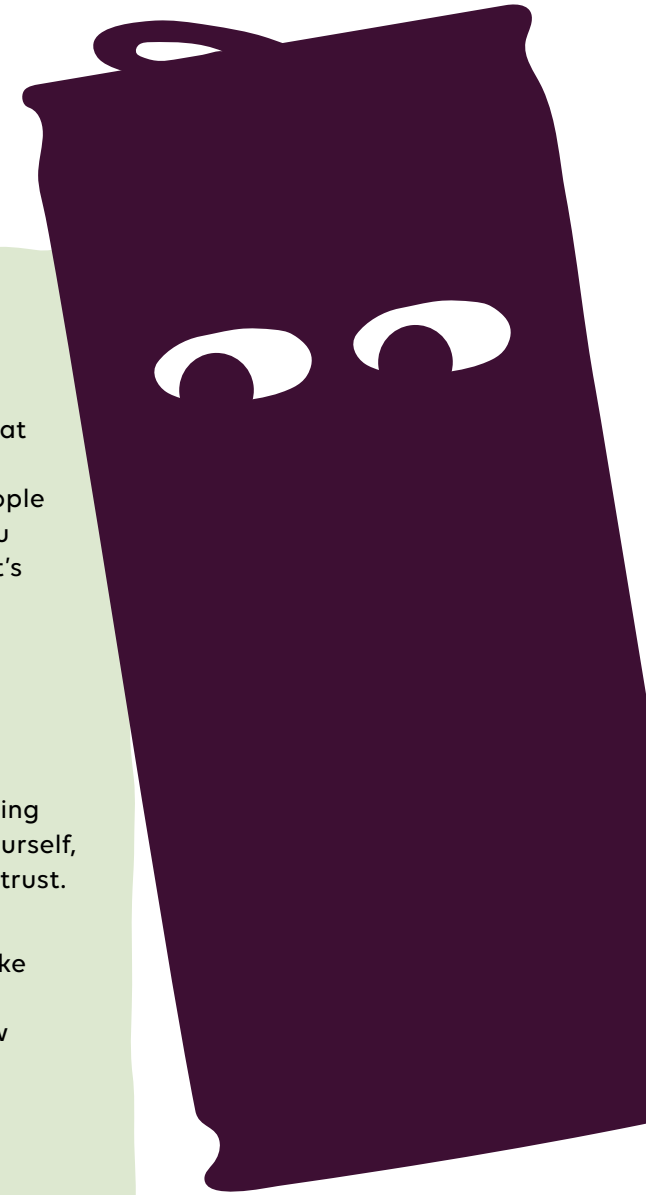
## THINK OF YOURSELF

Look around you. You'll see that you're not the only one who worries about what other people think. Try to focus on what you think of yourself because that's what really matters.

## DON'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

Worried about your mates being pressured? Don't keep it to yourself, talk to them, or someone you trust.

If you're finding it hard to be yourself within your group, take a step back, and think about whether it's time to find a new crowd to hang out with.



# GETTING HELP WITH ALCOHOL

## FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN BARNSELEY AND BEYOND:

### Space

Free and confidential service for young people under the age of 18 in Barnsley. Space can provide help, advice and support to children and young people who are using alcohol or who are affected by someone else's alcohol use. You'll have a safe and friendly space to talk and get one-on-one support to help you stay safe and make the changes that feel right for you.

Space is provided by Barnsley Recovery Steps.

Call 01226 779066 or email [brs.referrals@waythrough.org.uk](mailto:brs.referrals@waythrough.org.uk)

### Barnsley Recovery Steps (adults)

Providing free and confidential support if you would like to make changes to your drug or alcohol use in Barnsley. You can find out more information or complete the online referral form by accessing the Barnsley Recovery Steps website: [www.barnsleyrecoverysteps.org.uk](http://www.barnsleyrecoverysteps.org.uk)

### Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

A free self-help group; its '12-step' programme involves getting sober with the help of regular support groups.

### Further support and information:

Find out what every parent needs to know about alcohol before 18 at [www.whatstheharm.co.uk](http://www.whatstheharm.co.uk)

## FAMILY LIFE AND ALCOHOL:

### Al-Anon Family Groups

provide support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking, regardless of whether that person is still drinking or not.

[www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

### Adfam

improve life for families affected by drugs and alcohol. They provide information about family support services.

[www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

## ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL HEALTH:

### Spectrum Community Health

[www.spectrumhealth.org.uk/services/sexual-health/findclinic-3](http://www.spectrumhealth.org.uk/services/sexual-health/findclinic-3)

Call 0800 055 6442

[barnsley.sharp@spectrum-cic.nhs.uk](mailto:barnsley.sharp@spectrum-cic.nhs.uk)

## INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

### Rise Above

is where you will find interesting and useful stuff from the web and beyond to get us all talking about the things that matter to us. You'll find inspiring and useful stories, videos, games and advice.

[www.riseabove.org.uk](http://www.riseabove.org.uk)

### Talk to Frank

Find out everything you need to know about drugs, their effects and the law. Talk to Frank for facts, support and advice on drugs and alcohol today.

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

## EMERGENCIES:

If you or someone else needs urgent help after taking drugs or drinking, call 999 for an ambulance. Tell the crew everything you know. It could save their life.

# CONCERNED ABOUT ALCOHOL?

**111**

You can talk to your GP or contact  
NHS 111

## Drinkline

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence. Call **0300 123 1110** (weekdays 9am to 8pm, weekends 11am to 4pm).

