

# Self-help with **ALCOHOL**



There are lots of ways that you can look at your relationship with alcohol to decide whether you want to make changes. This may include reducing your drinking levels or stopping completely.

This booklet will show you how you can do this.

# GWENT DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICE

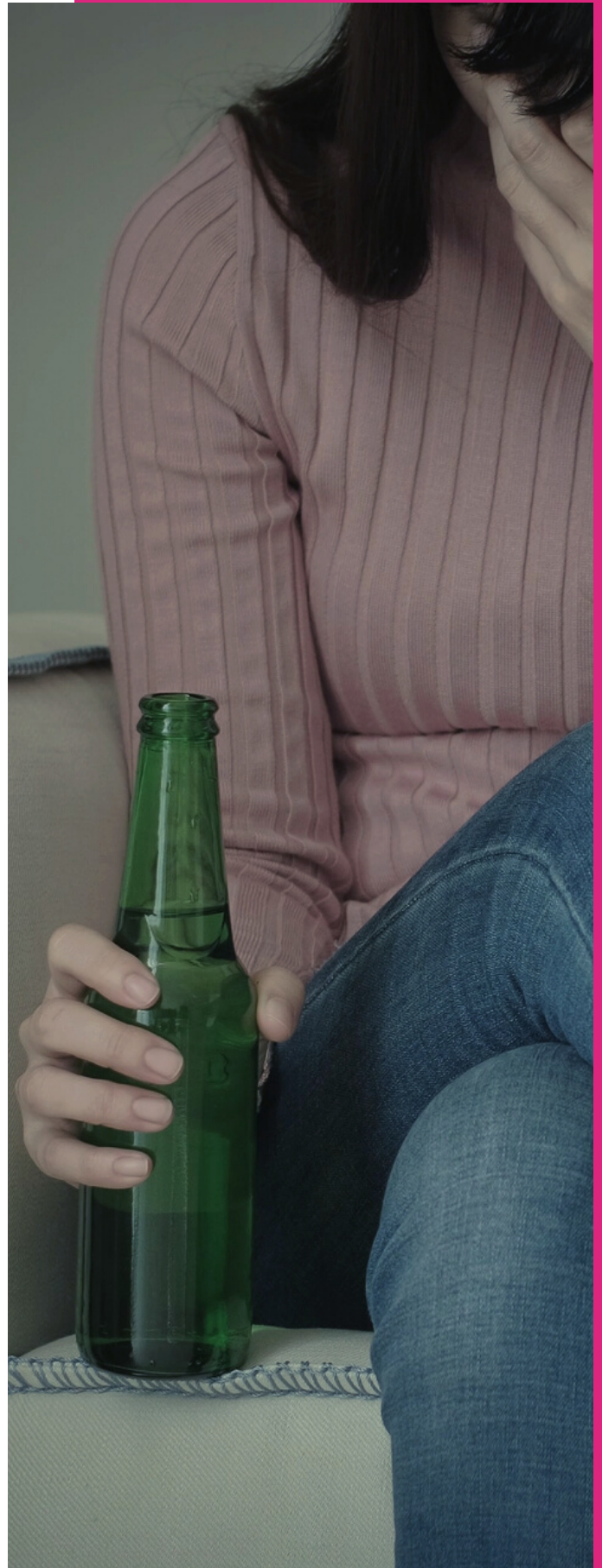
Discover a path towards healthier living and take control of your alcohol consumption with Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service. Our website offers a range of invaluable self-help tools. Our alcohol assessment tool, is a user-friendly resource that allows you to consider your alcohol use and its impact on your well-being.

Curious about the calorific intake? Try our units and calories calculator, helping you make informed choices. These include tips on improving nutrition, mental & physical health.

Dive into the resource hub, filled with self-help worksheets and resources to guide you through your progress.

In GDAS, we support over 2,500 people every year to take control of their drinking. If you feel that you need 1-1 support there are a number of ways to make a referral, and our service is completely **free**.

You can complete an online referral on **[www.gdas.wales](http://www.gdas.wales)**, Call us on **0333 999 35 77** or Email us **[info@gdas.wales](mailto:info@gdas.wales)**



# TIPS ON YOUR ALCOHOL USE

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant which means it slows your heart rate and breathing. People using alcohol often feel more relaxed, outgoing, talkative and experience improved mood and confidence. Negative effects include blackouts, feeling drowsy, confused and nauseous. It can also reduce your inhibitions and affect judgement. Long term use of alcohol can negatively impact on your physical and mental health.

**Alcohol Dependence:** People who are dependent on alcohol experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop drinking. These can include tremors, sweating, irritation, nausea and depression. In some cases they can have a seizure and require medical attention.

**If you think you are alcohol dependent, it is advisable not to stop drinking suddenly and to seek professional support.**



- ▶▶ Have a meal and stay hydrated before drinking, try to drink water between alcoholic drinks to avoid dehydration, this can also reduce the negative effects the next day.
- ▶▶ Use a measuring cup to accurately dose alcohol.
- ▶▶ Avoid mixing alcohol with medications and drugs as this can have dangerous effects, take time to research your medications or health conditions.
- ▶▶ Alcohol can affect levels of dopamine and serotonin (brain chemicals involved in mood, appetite and sleep) and can leave you feeling anxious as the effects wear off, this can last hours or days after drinking.
- ▶▶ If you go out for a drink, make sure you have enough money and options to get home safely.
- ▶▶ Call 999 and ask for an ambulance if you experience signs on an overdose: confusion, unconsciousness, severe nausea and vomiting, fitting, difficulty breathing, blue/grey tinge of knees, hands and lips, slow or erratic pulse, pale, cold and clammy skin.
- ▶▶ If you decide to reduce your alcohol use try a gradual reduction in drinking or try to have some alcohol-free days. You could try this over a longer period such as Dry January.
- ▶▶ Do not drink before driving.
- ▶▶ Think about safe sex and consent.

# Alcohol screening tool (Audit)

This alcohol assessment is a 10 question alcohol harm screening tool designed to help you see your alcohol consumption patterns and potential risks.

Answer each question honestly and then add up the points to determine your overall score. At the end of the assessment you'll be given suggestions on what to do next. For help with calculating your units, head to page 6.

Questions	0	1	2	3	4	Your score
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2-4 times per month	2-3 times per week	4+ times per week	
How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	0 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 6	7 to 9	10+	
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	
How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of your drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often during the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	

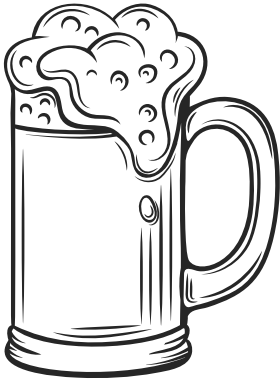
Questions	0	1	2	3	4	Your score
How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	
How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?	Never	Monthly or less	2-4 times per month	2-3 times per week	4+ times per week	
Have you or somebody else been injured as a result of your drinking?	No		Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, during the last year	
Has a relative or friend, doctor or other health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested that you cut down?	No		Yes, but not in the last year		Yes, during the last year	
Total Audit Score						

- ▶▶ **0 to 7 indicates low risk** - drinking at this level means that you are at a lower risk of harm from drinking alcohol.
- ▶▶ **8 to 15 indicates increasing risk** - Drinking at this level raises your long-term risk of damaging your health and could lead to serious medical conditions.
- ▶▶ **16 to 19 indicates higher risk** - Drinking at this level is likely to be affecting your health or wellbeing in some way already. We recommend that you make a referral into GDAS.
- ▶▶ **20 or more indicates possible dependence** - Your drinking is impacting on your health and you are at risk of alcohol dependence. We recommend that you make a referral into GDAS.



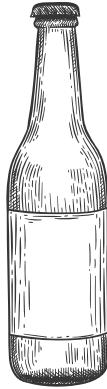
# ALCOHOL UNIT REFERENCE

Pint of beer,  
lager or cider



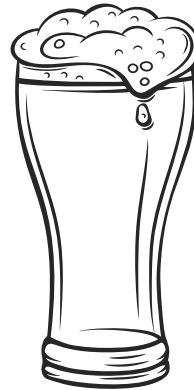
**2 Units**

Alcopop or a bottle of  
regular lager



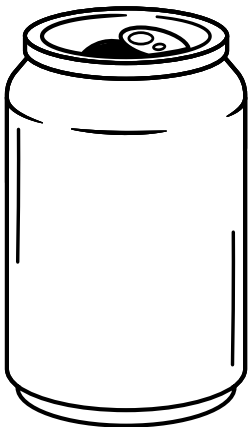
**1.5 Units**

Pint of "strong" beer,  
lager or cider



**3 Units**

440ml can of "super  
strength" lager



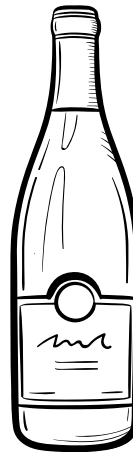
**4 Units**

Large glass  
of wine



**3.3 Units**

Bottle  
of wine



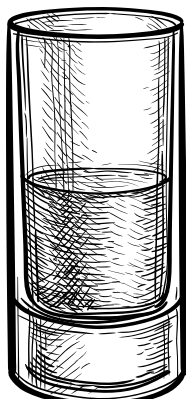
**9 Units**

25ml of  
Vodka



**1 Unit**

Shot of  
whiskey



**1 Unit**

Small glass  
of wine



**1.3 Units**

# APPS

Using apps when trying to stop or cut down on drinking can be really useful. These apps offer support that is available at your fingertips. They provide regular reminders of your progress, helping you stay motivated to reach your goals.

## Try Dry



Designed to support individuals looking to reduce or quit alcohol consumption, this app offers a range of features to aid your journey. With progress tracking, motivational messages, and milestone celebrations, it keeps you engaged and focused on your goals.

## I am Sober



Track your sober days, hours, and minutes, and celebrate your progress with virtual milestones. Connect with a supportive community that understands your challenges and triumphs. The app provides daily pledges, motivations, and customisable reminders to help you stay on track.

## Reframe



A neuroscience-based program with 100+ tools, a private support community, and personal coaching to help you thrive! the app includes a drink tracker and in depth courses. You can take a 2 minute quiz on their website to determine if you're drinking too much.

## Moving On



A free app to support your recovery journey from addiction. The Moving On app draws on the lived experience of people in recovery from addiction and it is also underpinned by psychological theory in the form of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

# WEBSITES

The following websites are available to help you take charge of your alcohol use and develop healthier habits.

## GDAS

The GDAS website offers a wealth of resources that provide tips on harm reduction, maintaining positive changes, and preventing relapses. It also includes a convenient alcohol self-assessment tool and a calculator to measure alcohol units and calories.

[www.gdas.wales](http://www.gdas.wales)

## Drink Aware

Provide independent alcohol advice, information and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking. their website offers a self-assessment tool & unit calculator.

[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

## Breaking free online

An online treatment and recovery programme for anybody with an addiction to drugs or alcohol, free to anyone in GWENT. use the access code **gwent11**

[breakingfreeonline.com](http://breakingfreeonline.com)

## Alcohol Change UK

Focus on reducing alcohol harm, from mental and physical to societal and economic. Visit alcohol change to take part in Sober Spring or Dry January.

[alcoholchange.org.uk](http://alcoholchange.org.uk)

## Melo

Melo contains information, advice and self-help resources to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

[www.melo.cymru](http://www.melo.cymru)