

# Drinkaware Monitor 2021

## Spotlight on: Northern Ireland

November 2021

 Prepared by  
PS Research

 drinkaware

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# Introducing the research

**Monitor and online community**

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# Introducing the report

## Introducing the research

The full UK report brings together two key research sources to look at drinking in the UK:

**Monitor** - a UK representative survey to find out who's drinking, how much and why

**Online community** - an asynchronous qualitative research study with 30 UK drinkers

The [UK Drinkaware Monitor](#) report has more information on the methodology of these research sources.

## What does this 'Spotlight' report include?

This report provides a summary of Northern Ireland specific data from the Drinkaware Monitor 2021, looking specifically at what alcohol consumption and drinking frequency looks like for Northern Ireland in 2021. UK-wide insights from the online community is included to provide additional context to the data.

## What does the full UK report cover?

The [full UK report](#) looks at the state of UK drinking, drinking through the pandemic, high risk drinkers and other groups of interest, drinking and deprivation.

The [Drinkaware Monitor 2021 survey](#)<sup>1</sup> covers more topics than are covered in the full UK report. For example, the survey asks questions to understand drinking expectancies, moderation techniques, alcohol marketing and stigma. The full data tables and an interactive library of historical Monitor data will be published on the Drinkaware website in winter 2021. Drinkaware welcomes secondary analysis of its data, please contact [research@drinkaware.co.uk](mailto:research@drinkaware.co.uk).

The [technical report](#)<sup>2</sup>, produced by YouGov, includes a copy of the questionnaire.

## How to cite this report

Pearson A., & Slater, E. (2021, November). *Spotlight on Northern Ireland. Drinkaware Monitor 2021*. PS Research and Drinkaware.

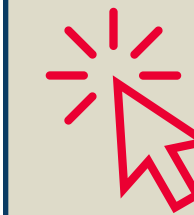
## Viewing the charts

Many of the analysis charts in this report are interactive.



### Hover

Hover over bars or maps to display data and hover over legend labels to highlight one set



### Select

Click on a legend label to select or de-select data in the chart you are viewing

# Understanding the language

Throughout the report a number of technical terms are used to analyse the results of the Monitor. A [glossary](#) is included in the Appendix.

The most commonly used are:

**AUDIT and AUDIT-C** are [methods of screening](#) for excessive drinking developed by the World Health Organization<sup>3</sup>. AUDIT is a 10-question method of screening for excessive drinking and to assist in brief assessment. AUDIT-C is a shorter method of screening, consisting of three consumption-related questions on the AUDIT questionnaire that relate to drinking frequency, units consumed on a typical occasion and frequency of drinking six units or more (for women) or eight units or more (for men) at a single session. The full 10-question AUDIT was included in the Drinkaware Monitor for the first time since 2017. Throughout this report, AUDIT-C is used for any analysis on Northern Ireland. The full AUDIT assessment is used when looking to understand more about particular drinking groups in the UK sample, with the additional risk questions bringing out more significant differences than AUDIT-C.

The **Index of Multiple Deprivation** is a [measure of relative deprivation](#) for small areas (neighbourhoods) across the UK<sup>4</sup>. Throughout the report, analysis by deprivation refers to the 'least deprived' and 'most deprived' areas. These are based on Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles, with the 'least deprived' being those living in areas in the lowest 20% of deprivation and 'most deprived' being those who live in areas in the highest 20% of deprivation.

**Social Grades** are reported using a [classification system](#) based on occupation (AB are managerial and professional occupations; DE are semi and unskilled manual workers)<sup>5</sup>

Where differences between sub-groups are highlighted, only those differences that are statistically significant are reported (unless otherwise stated). These differences are statistically significant to a confidence level of 95% for the UK and 90% for Northern Ireland. Please also note that throughout the report we use rounded percentages. Figures may not always sum to 100% due to this rounding, but will remain within a percentage point.

# Drinkaware Monitors



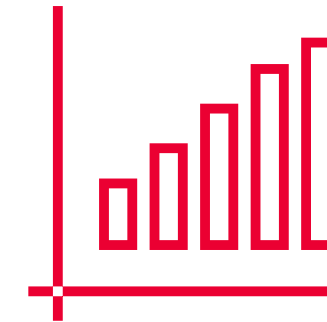
## What is the Monitor?

Drinkaware is committed to ensure our work is informed by up-to-date evidence on UK drinking attitudes and behaviours.

Every year, Drinkaware commissions a representative survey to understand the UK's drinking behaviours and motivations. A core subset of questions are included in the questionnaire every year to understand changes in key variables over time. Other questions are developed to reflect that year's theme. The theme of the 2020 and 2021 Monitors has been drinking during the coronavirus pandemic.

Since 2017, the Monitors have been conducted by YouGov on behalf of Drinkaware, and before that by Ipsos Mori (2009-14). Where appropriate, findings from the 2021 Monitor have been reported in the context of those from previous waves.

Drinkaware welcomes secondary analysis of its data, please contact the research team on [research@drinkaware.co.uk](mailto:research@drinkaware.co.uk) to find out more.



## Monitor Methodology

- UK wide sample of 9,137 adults aged 18 to 85 were interviewed, including 5,934 in England, 1,245 in Wales, 1,349 in Scotland and 609 in Northern Ireland
- The sample was drawn from the YouGov research panel, with responses collected between 11 June 2021 and 4 July 2021
- Using data from the Office for National Statistics, the results were weighted to be representative of the UK adult population according to age, gender, social grade and region
- The sampling and weighting process is exactly consistent with that used in the 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 Drinkaware Monitors

More information on the Methodology can be found in the [technical report<sup>2</sup>](#).

# UK summary

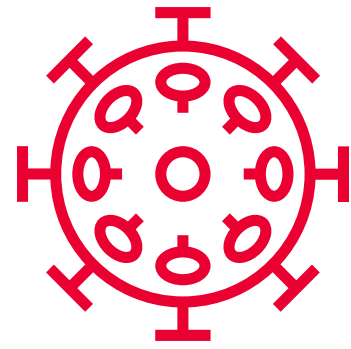
## Summary of key findings from full UK report

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**Take me to...**

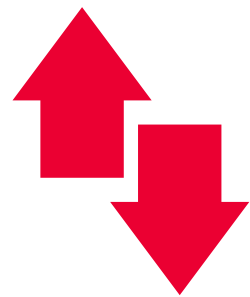
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# 2021: the UK story in a nutshell



## The increase in overall drinking levels seen in 2020 has not continued into 2021

- The increase in the proportion of adults drinking two or more times a week in July/August 2020 does not appear to be a continuing trend; drinking levels in May/June 2021 have dropped back to 2019 levels.
- Drinkers reported that the pandemic, and particularly times of increased restrictions/lockdowns, caused periods of high stress, anxiety, isolation and boredom, and that some turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism.



## However, the polarisation of high risk and low risk drinkers continues

- Whilst the proportion of low risk drinkers and adults who don't drink is increasing, the level of high risk drinkers remains largely unchanged.
- High risk drinkers are the most likely to report drinking more, more often and in different situations than usual compared to before the pandemic.



## The deprivation paradox

- Analysis by levels of deprivation shows that adults in the most deprived areas are less likely to drink alcohol, but those that do drink are more likely to be high risk drinkers (and therefore more likely to suffer alcohol-related harm).



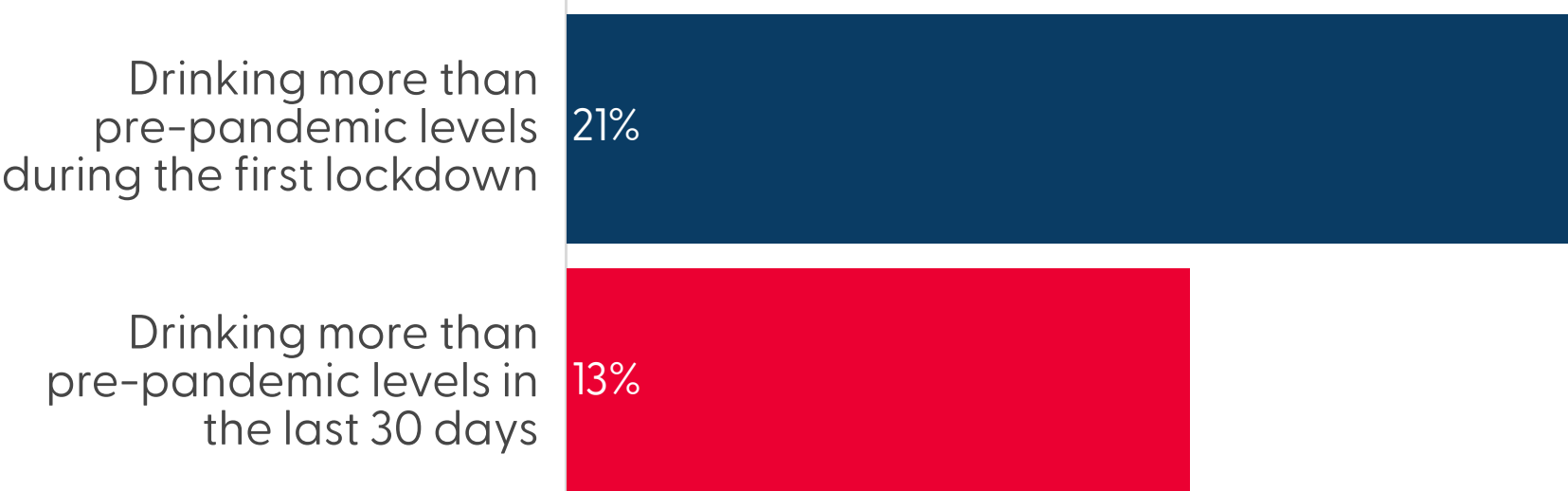
# How have drinking habits changed during the pandemic?



**A spike in drinking frequency in 2020 has dropped back to 2019 levels**

41% of UK adults were drinking 2+ times a week in 2020 compared to 38% in 2019<sup>2</sup> and 2021

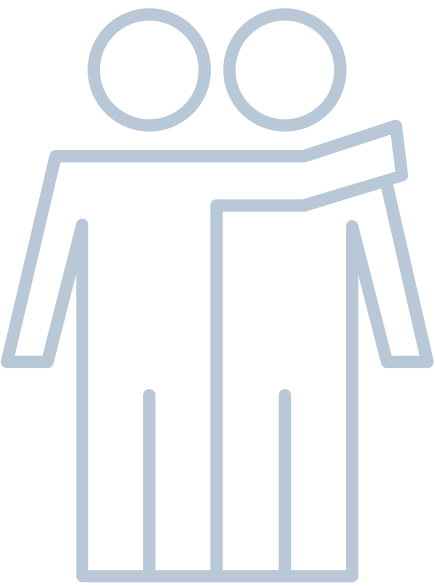
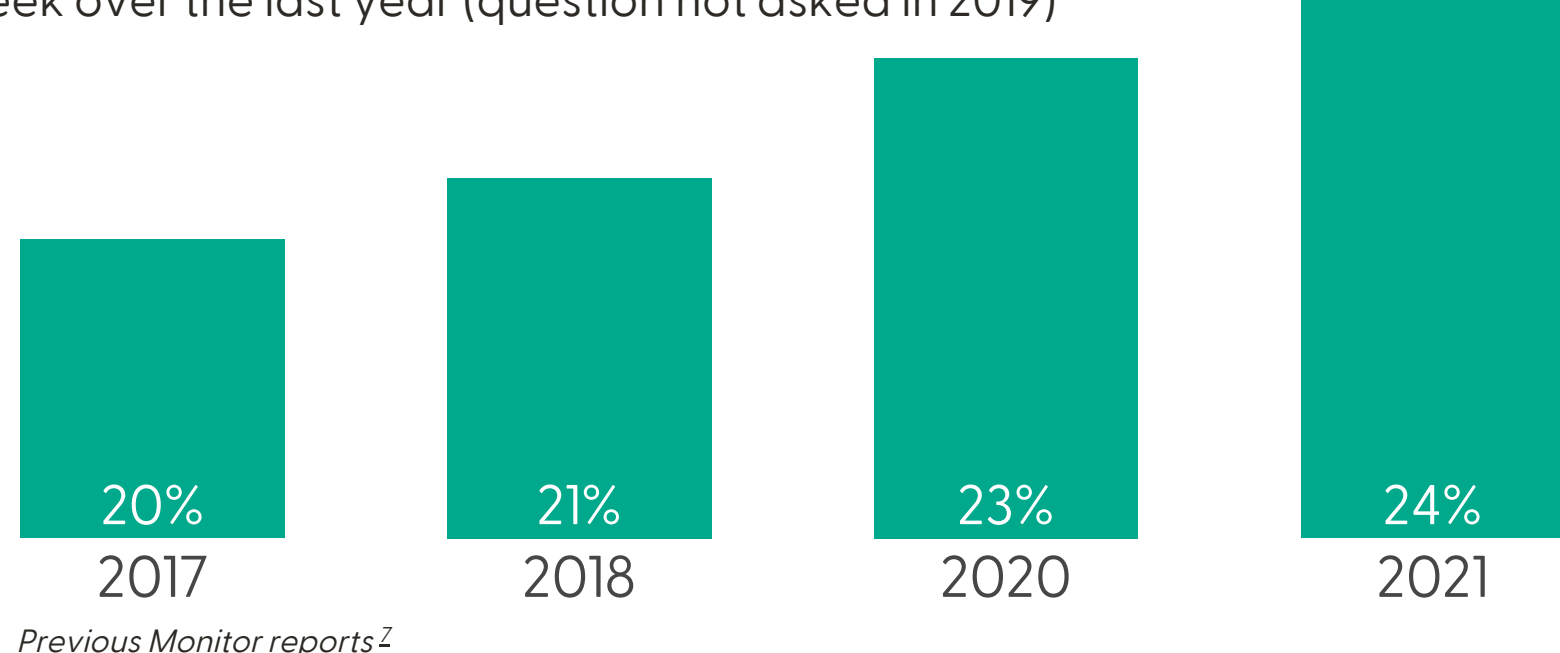
**People reported drinking more than their usual amount during the first lockdown (March to June 2020) than in the last 30 days (May/June 2021)**



**But more people overall were drinking less than pre-pandemic levels and half were drinking about the same amount as before**

**People drinking at home alone increased during the pandemic in 2020 and that has continued in 2021**

24% of drinkers in 2021 reported drinking at home alone at least once a week over the last year (question not asked in 2019)

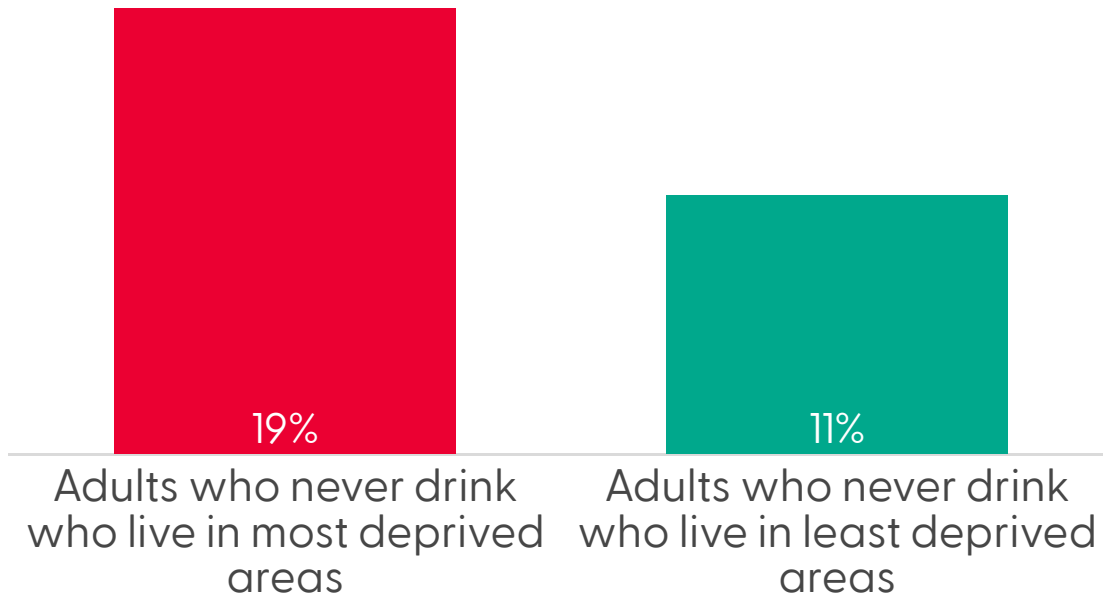


**Those drinking much more during the March 2020 lockdown struggled to resist when their partner/spouse was drinking**

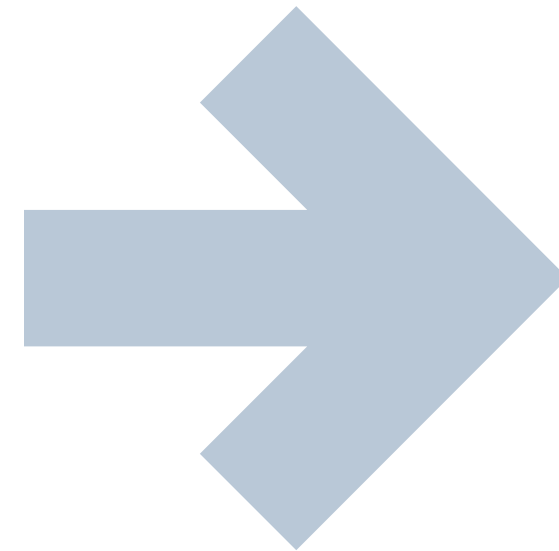
45% of drinkers who drank much more during the first lockdown were probably, most likely or very sure they could not resist drinking in this situation

# 2021 UK Monitor findings support the alcohol harm paradox

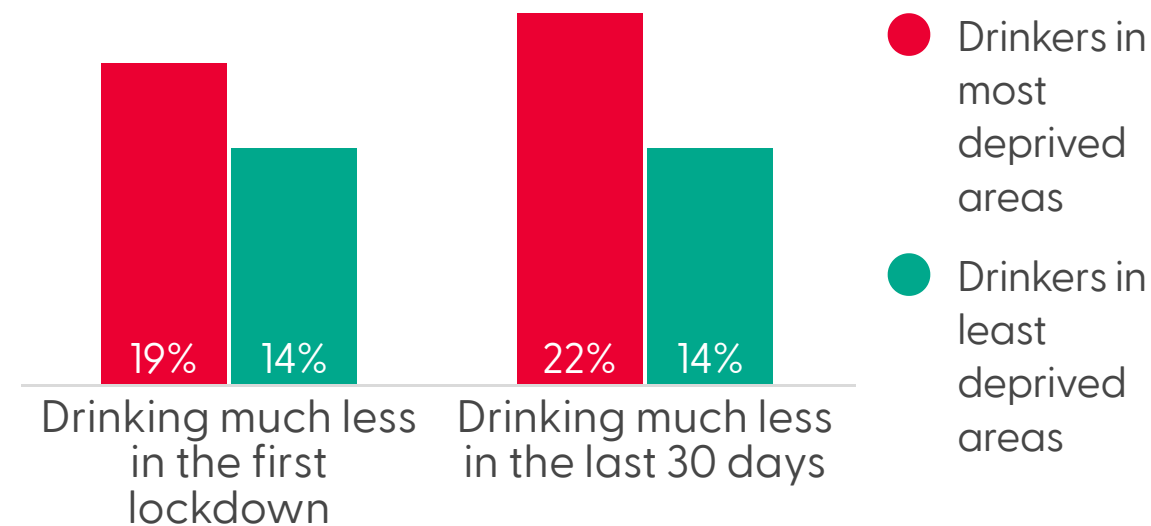
Adults in the most deprived areas are more likely to not drink alcohol



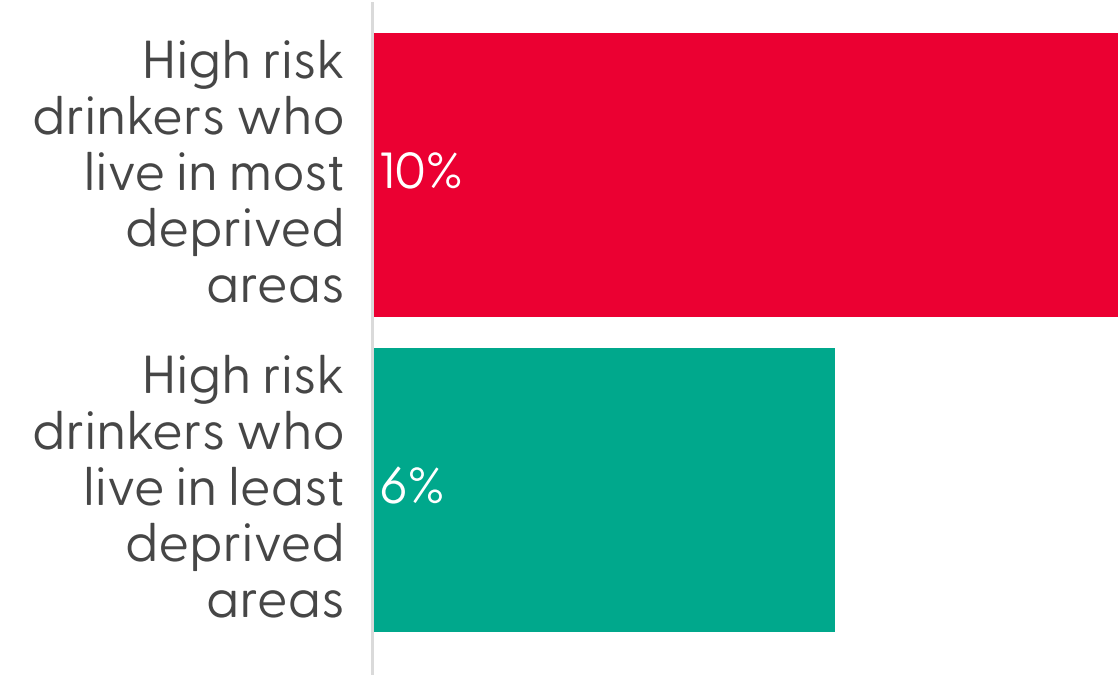
BUT...



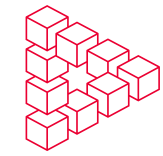
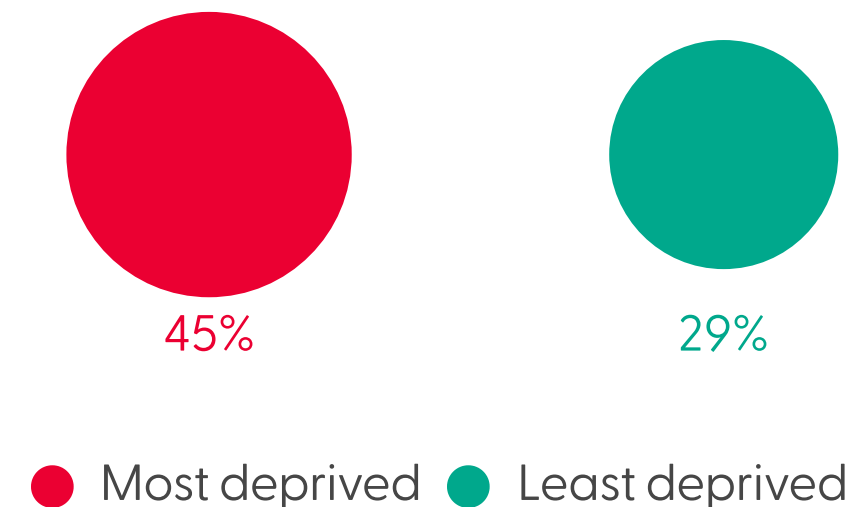
And drinkers in the most deprived areas were drinking less during lockdown than their usual amounts



Those that do drink are more likely to be high risk Based on the full AUDIT assessment



And they are more likely to have been drinking alone in the last seven days

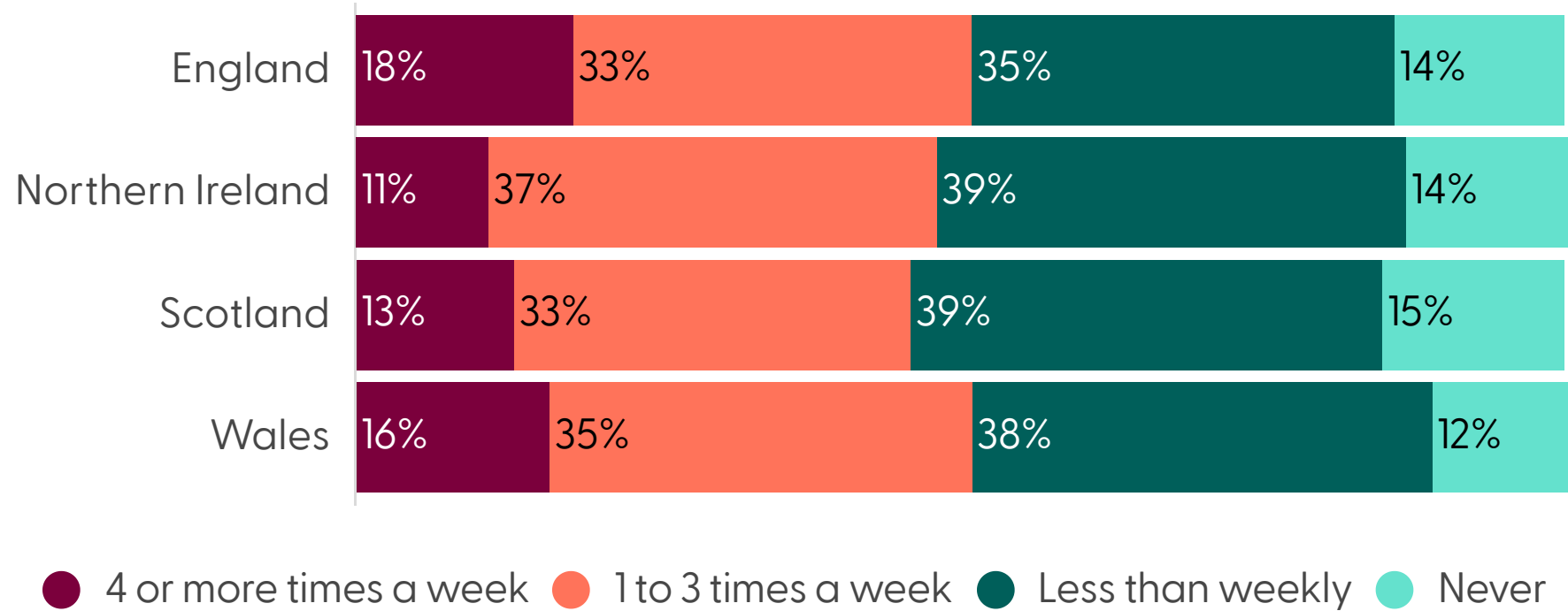


## The Alcohol Harm Paradox

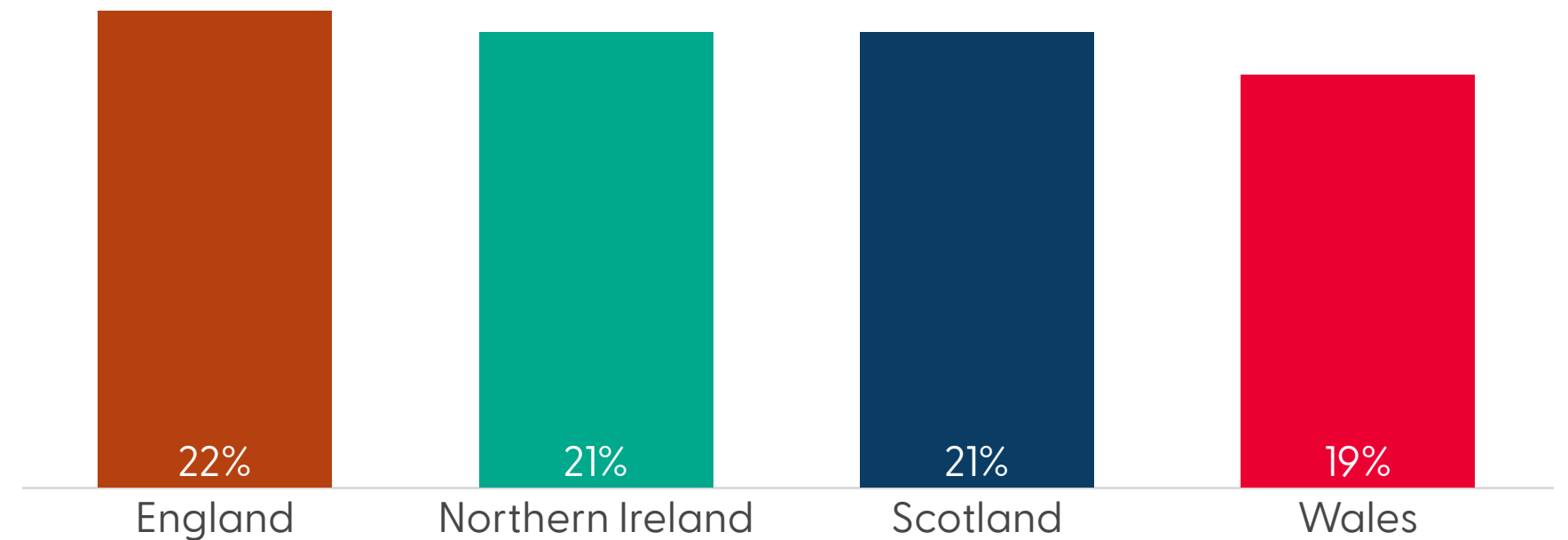
The alcohol harm paradox is the finding that people from lower socio economic groups, or more deprived neighbourhoods, suffer more harm from alcohol than those from higher socio economic groups, despite consuming the same or less alcohol. Possible reasons given for this paradox are the combination of drinking with other unhealthy behaviours (such as smoking), differences in drinking patterns, and access to health-care resources. More information on the alcohol harm paradox can be found on [Drinkaware's website](#)<sup>10</sup>.

# How do drinking behaviours look across UK countries?

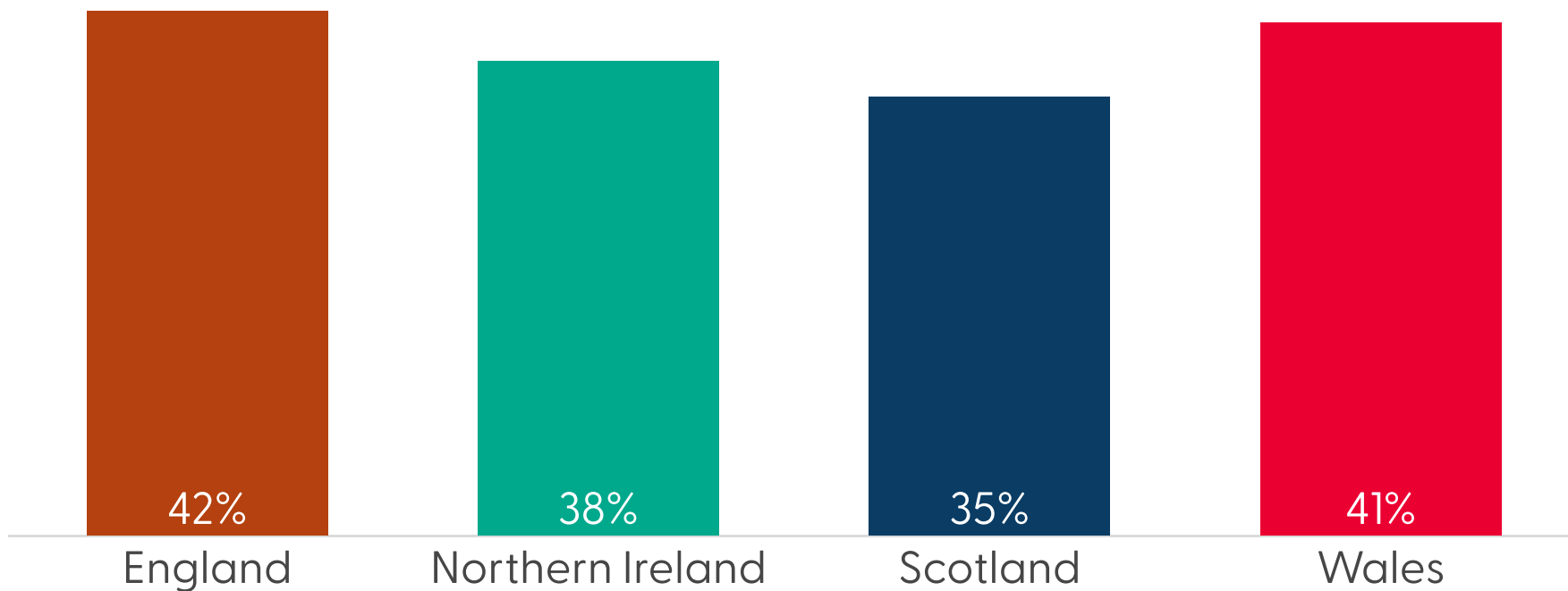
## How frequently all adults drink alcohol



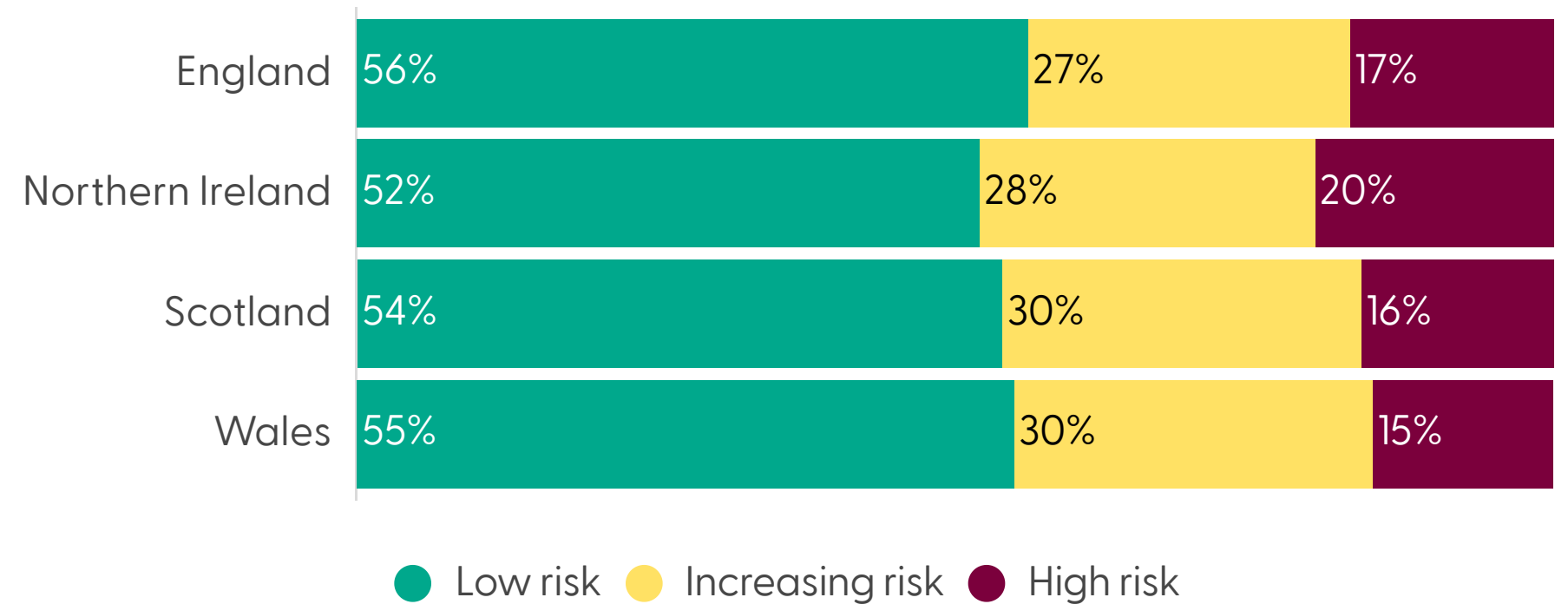
## % of drinkers who drink more than the Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week



## % drinkers who never binge drink



## AUDIT-C assessment alcohol risk classifications



# Drinking in Northern Ireland in 2021

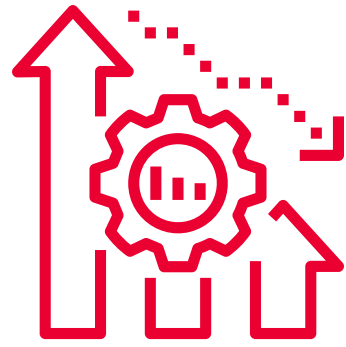
**Alcohol consumption, risk and comparisons**

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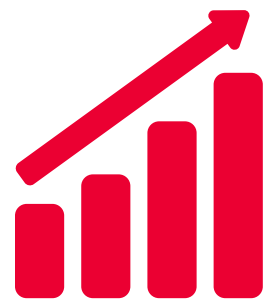
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# 2021: the Northern Ireland story in a nutshell



## **Fewer people drinking 4+ times a week and increasing number never binge drinking**

11% of adults in Northern Ireland drink alcohol 4+ times a week, compared to 17% of all UK adults, and this did not spike during the pandemic unlike in other parts of the UK; 31% of drinkers in Northern Ireland reported never binge drinking in 2018, rising to 38% in 2021



## **But when Northern Ireland drinkers do drink, they drink more**

One in five (20%) drinkers in the country report having 7+ units of alcohol on a typical drinking day, more than any other UK nation



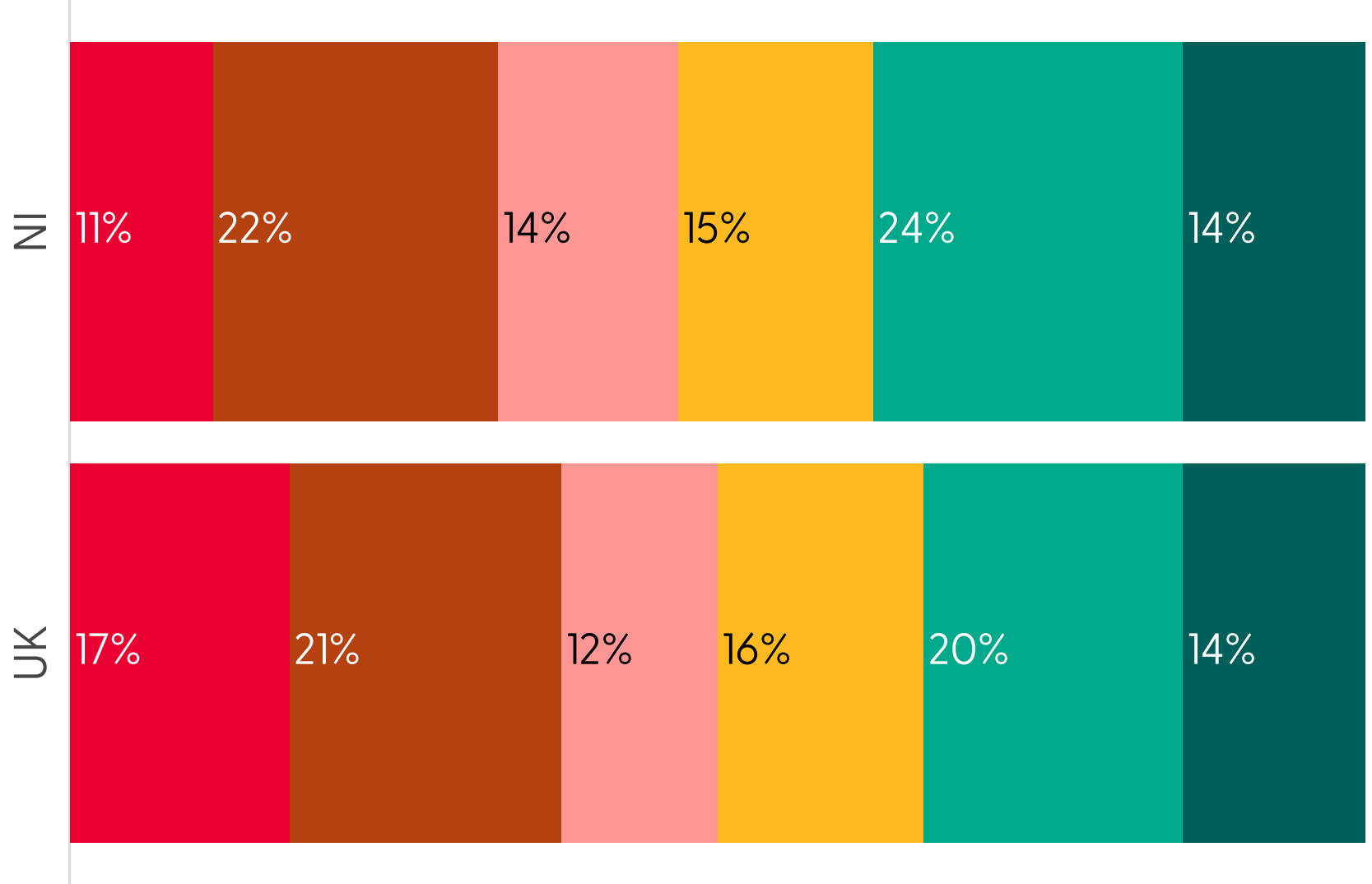
## **N. Ireland has more high risk drinkers than the UK and they are still drinking more than pre-pandemic levels**

Based on the AUDIT-C screening tool, 20% of drinkers in N. Ireland are high risk, higher than any other UK nation; 38% of high risk drinkers in the country report drinking more than pre-pandemic levels in the last 30 days (May/June 2021), compared to 31% of UK high risk drinkers

# How often do adults in Northern Ireland have a drink containing alcohol?

**Fewer adults in Northern Ireland report that they drink 4 or more times a week compared to all UK adults**

Frequency of drinking amongst adults in N.I. in 2021 compared to adults in the UK



- 4 or more times a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week
- 1 to 3 times a month
- Less often than monthly
- Never

Drinking frequency. Base: all Northern Ireland adults (n=609); all UK adults (n=9,137)

**Unlike all UK, N. Ireland does not appear to have experienced a spike in increased drinking frequency during 2020**

Change in frequency of drinking amongst adults in Northern Ireland over time



- 4 or more times a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week
- 1 to 3 times a month
- Less often than monthly
- Never

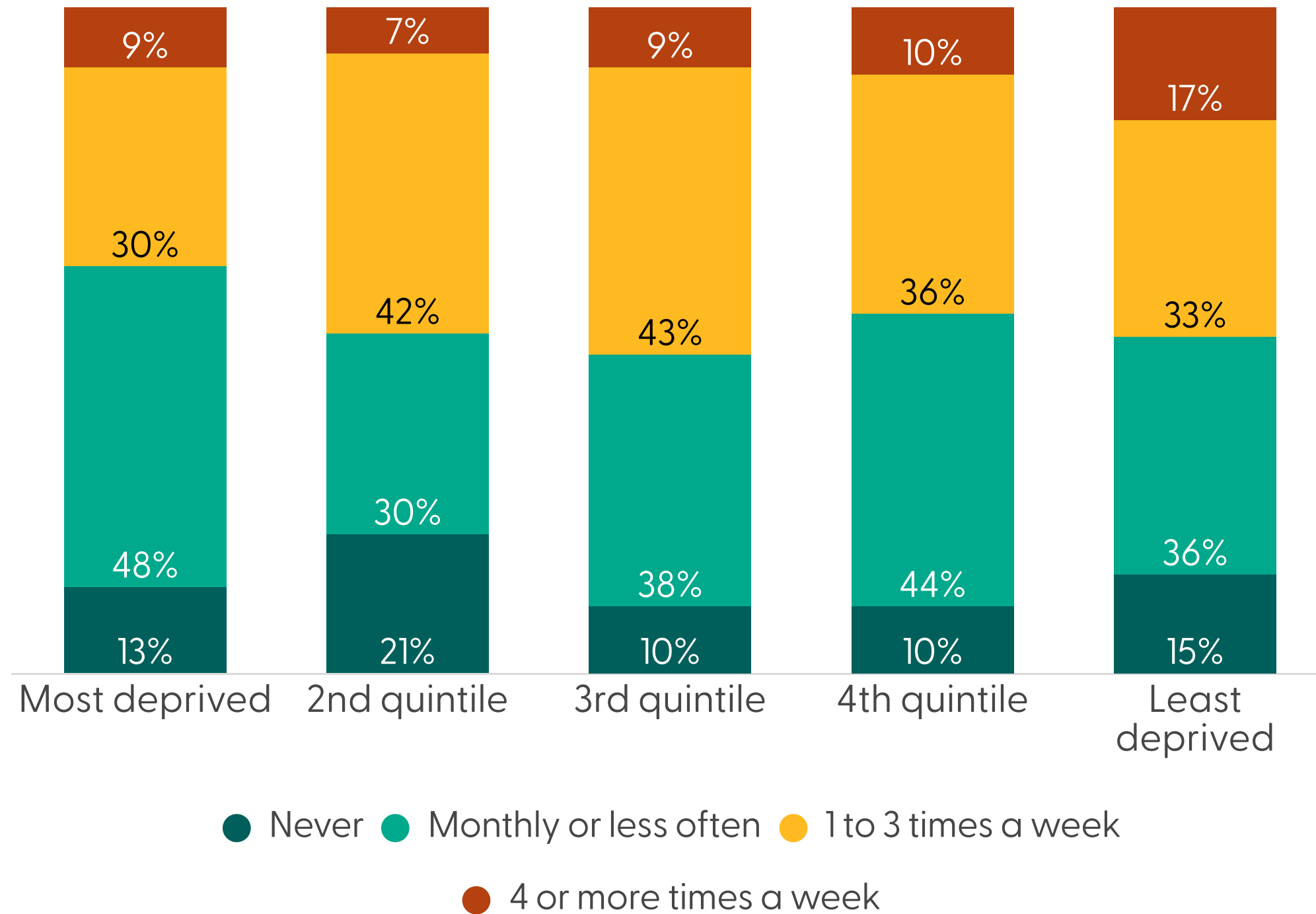
Drinking frequency. Base: all Northern Ireland, 2021 (n=609); 2020 (n=608), 2018 (n= 248)

*Previous Monitor reports<sup>7</sup>*

# How often people drink alcohol in Northern Ireland by level of deprivation?

**Findings for Northern Ireland reiterate the consumption patterns outlined in the alcohol harm paradox to some degree**

Drinking frequency by levels of deprivation in Northern Ireland:



**50% of adults in Northern Ireland in the least deprived quintile drink at least once a week (lower than the 58% in all UK), compared to 39% in the most deprived quintile (41% in all UK)**

**61 in every 100 adults in the top 20% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland never drink alcohol or drink it monthly or less often, compared to 51 in every 100 adults in the 20% least deprived areas**



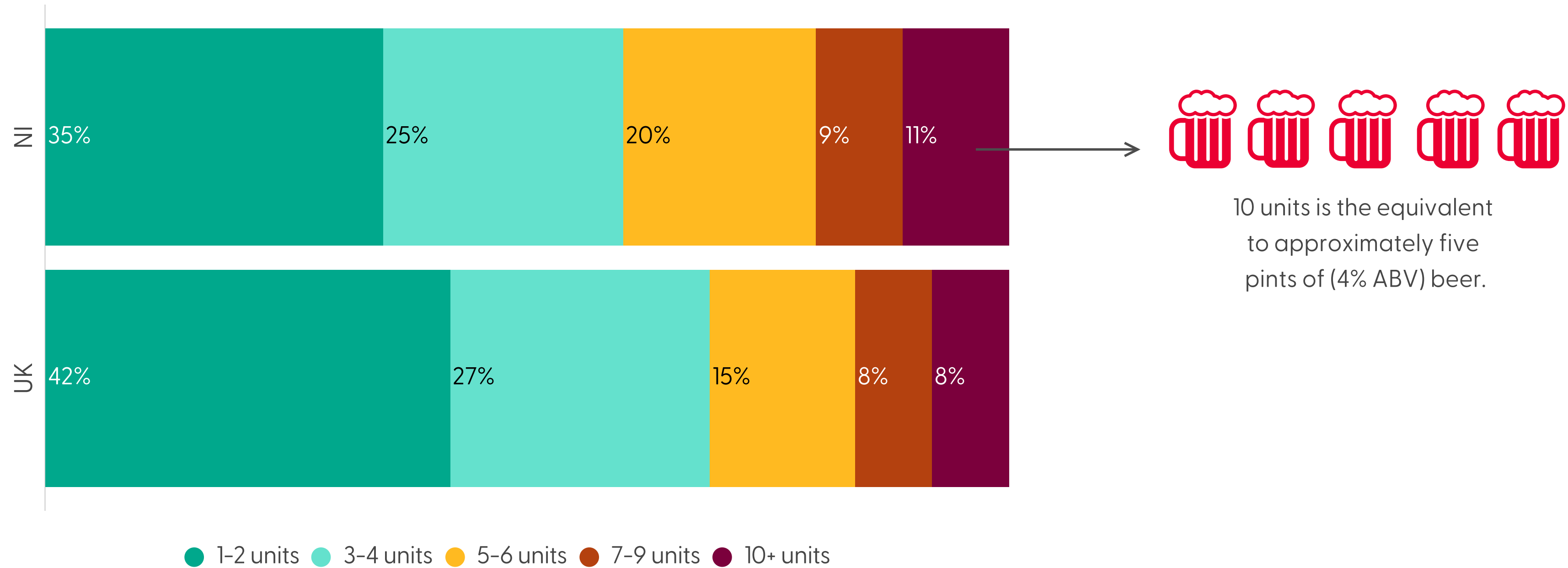
There is insufficient data to look at drinking risk by levels of deprivation in Northern Ireland

Drinking frequency by Levels of deprivation. Base: all Northern Ireland adults (n=605)

# How many units of alcohol do people drink in a typical day when drinking?

**The number of units drinkers in Northern Ireland consume in a typical day of drinking is higher than the UK picture: fewer report drinking 1-2 units when drinking and more report drinking ten or more units**

Breakdown of units in a typical day in 2021



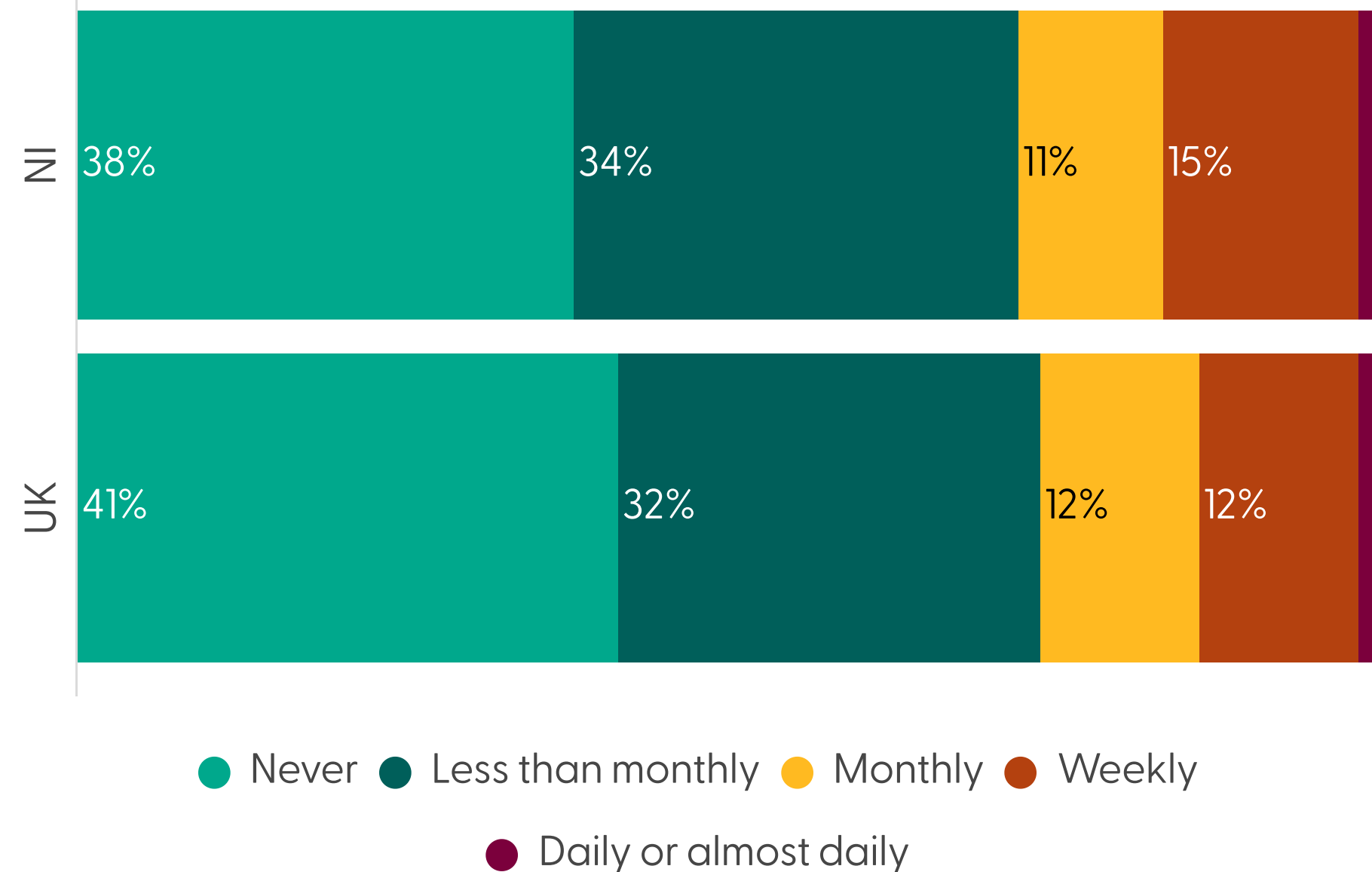
Units in a typical day. Base: all N.I.reland adults who drink alcohol (n=529); all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=7.911)



# How often do drinkers in Northern Ireland binge drink?

The proportion of drinkers in N.I. who report that they never binge drink (drinking more than 6/8 units\* in a single occasion) is similar to all UK drinkers

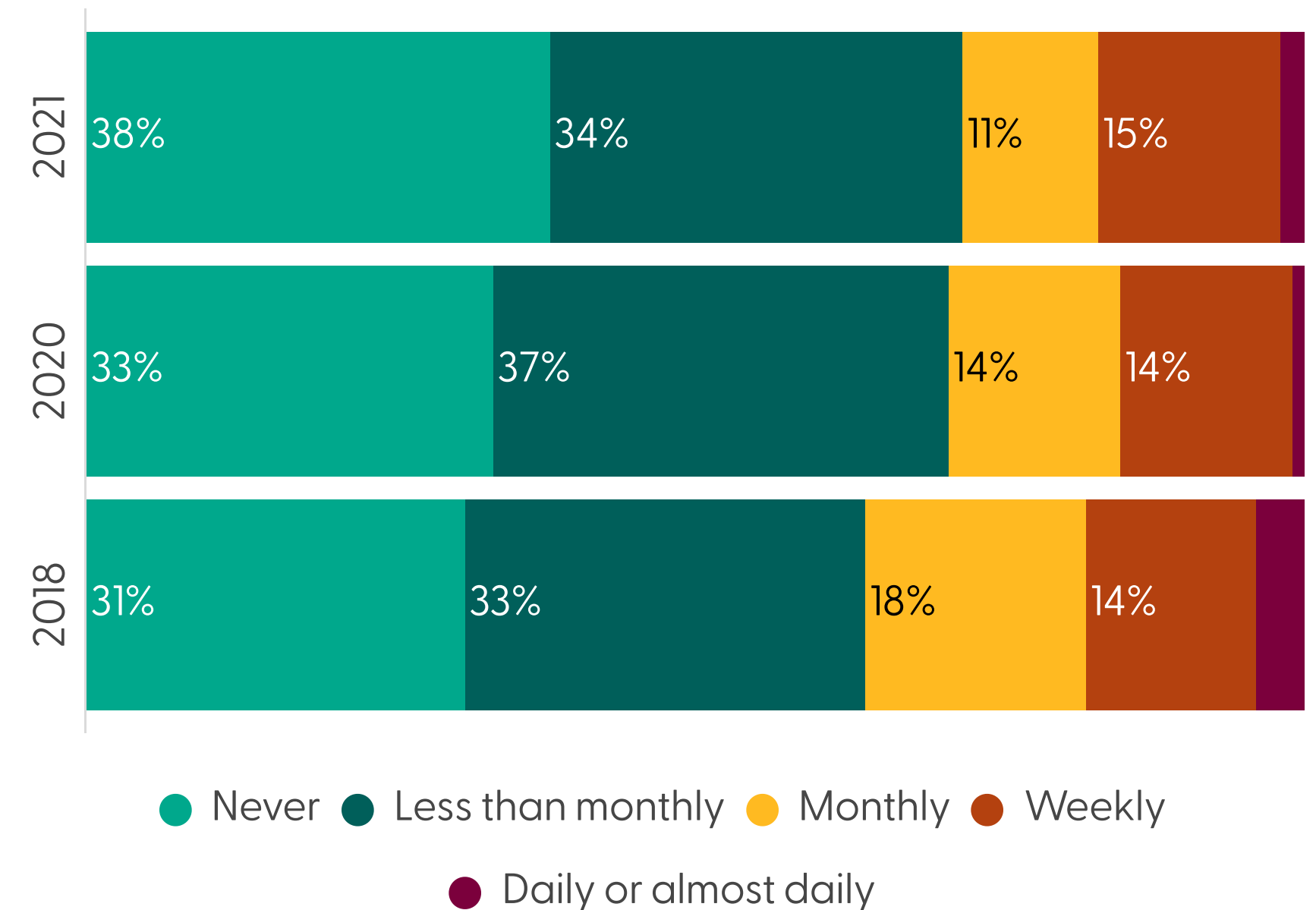
Frequency of binge drinking (6 units for females, 8 for males) in Northern Ireland compared to all UK in 2021



Frequency binge drinking. Base: all N.I. adults who drink alcohol (n=529); all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=7,911)

The proportion of drinkers in N. Ireland who never binge drink\* appears to have been increasing over the last few years

Change in binge drinking amongst adults in Northern Ireland over time:



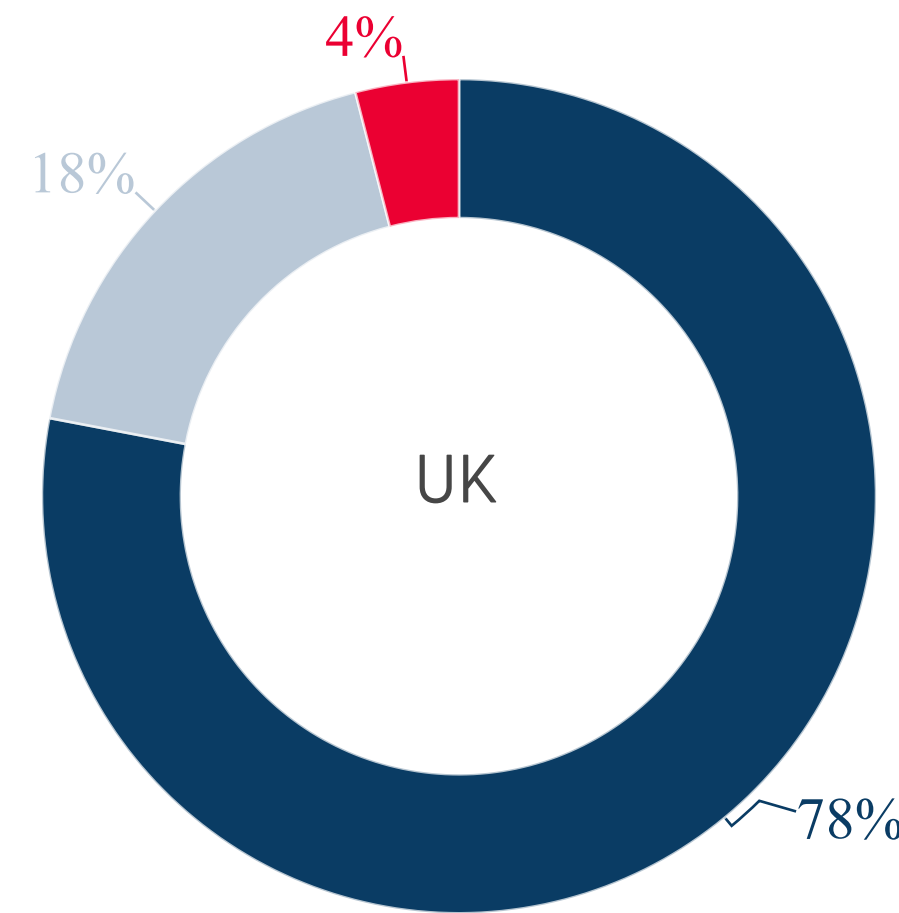
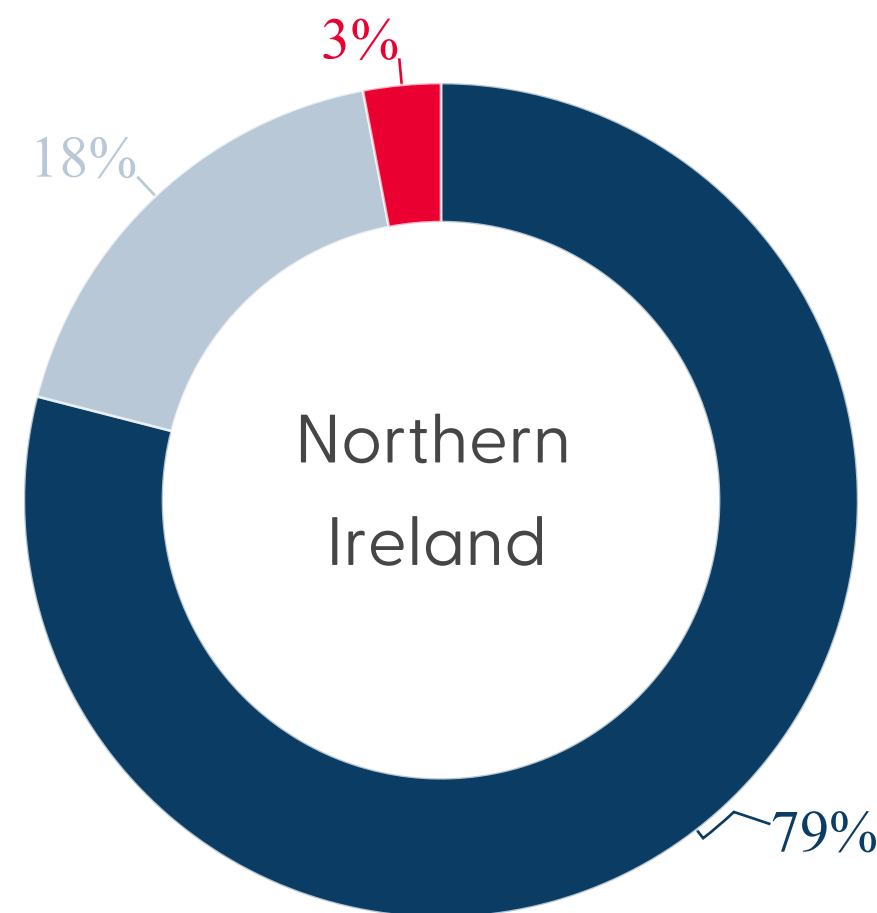
\*6 units for females; 8 units for males  
Frequency binge drinking. Base: all N.I. adults who drink alcohol, 2021 (n=529); 2020 (n=518), 2018 (n=211)

# How many units do drinkers in N. Ireland consume in a week?

In 2021, four in five drinkers in N. Ireland (79%) report that they drink within the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week<sup>8</sup>.



The proportion of drinkers in Northern Ireland drinking within the UK Chief Medical Officer's low risk guidelines of 14 units of alcohol a week is 79% in 2021 compared to 73% in 2017 (amongst all UK drinkers this changed from 70% in 2017 to 78% in 2021)



● Low risk (0-14) ● Increasing risk (15-34 / 15-49)  
● High risk (35+ / 50+)

● Low risk (0-14) ● Increasing risk (15-34 / 15-49)  
● High risk (35+ / 50+)



## Useful to know

Weekly units of alcohol are grouped into three risk categories: low, increasing and high. Low risk is 0 to 14 units while increasing and high risk differs by gender:

- **Females** who drink between 15 and 34 units are increasing risk, 35+ are high risk
- **Males** who drink between 15 and 49 units are increasing risk, 50+ are high risk

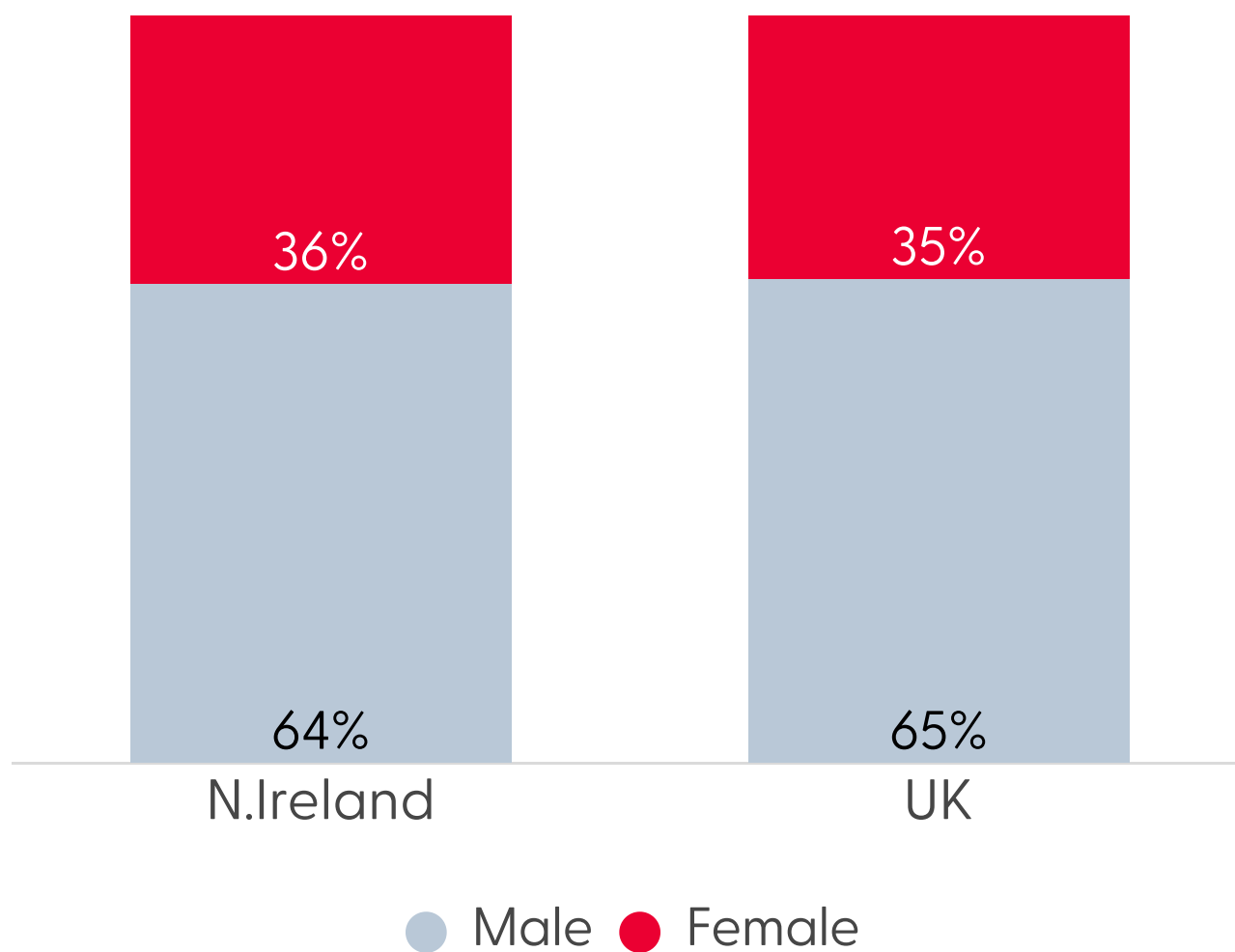
'Risk' refers to risk of harm from alcohol

Units in a typical week. Base: all Northern Ireland adults who drink alcohol (n=529); all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=7,911)

# Who is most likely to be a high risk drinker in N. Ireland?

The **AUDIT-C** screening tool consists of three questions on drinking frequency, units consumed on a typical occasion and frequency of drinking six units or more (for women) or eight units or more (for men) at a single session.

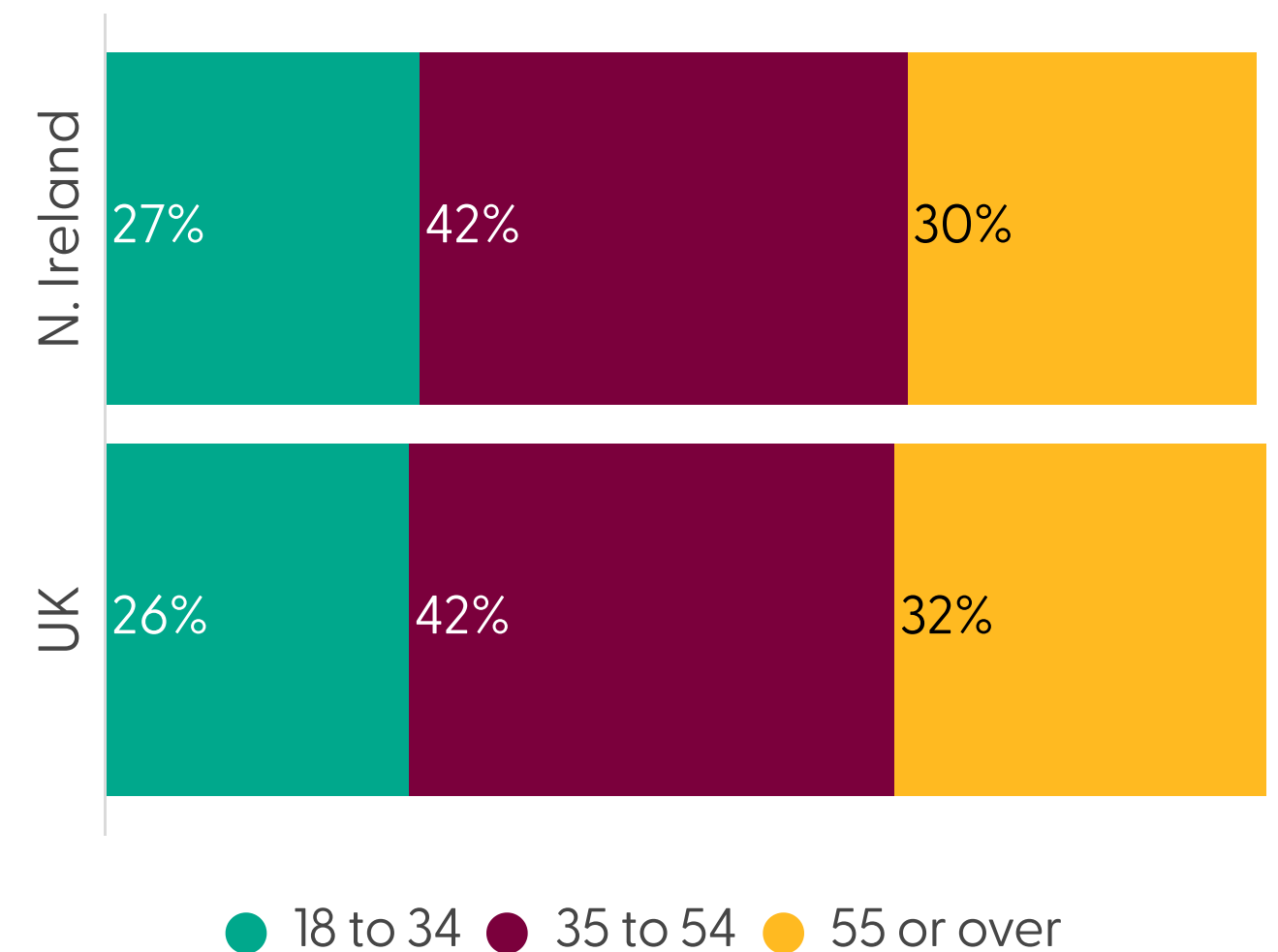
**64% of high risk (AUDIT-C) drinkers in N. Ireland are male; 65% across the UK**



# 20%

of Northern Ireland drinkers are classified as high risk based on AUDIT-C, compared to 17% across all UK drinkers

**27% of high risk drinkers in N. Ireland are aged 18 to 34, similar to 26% across the UK**



AUDIT-C high risk drinkers by gender and age. Base: all N. Ireland adults who are high risk drinkers (n=108); all UK adults who are high risk drinkers (n=1,314)

# How has the pandemic impacted drinking in Northern Ireland?

**Monitor data and online community insights**

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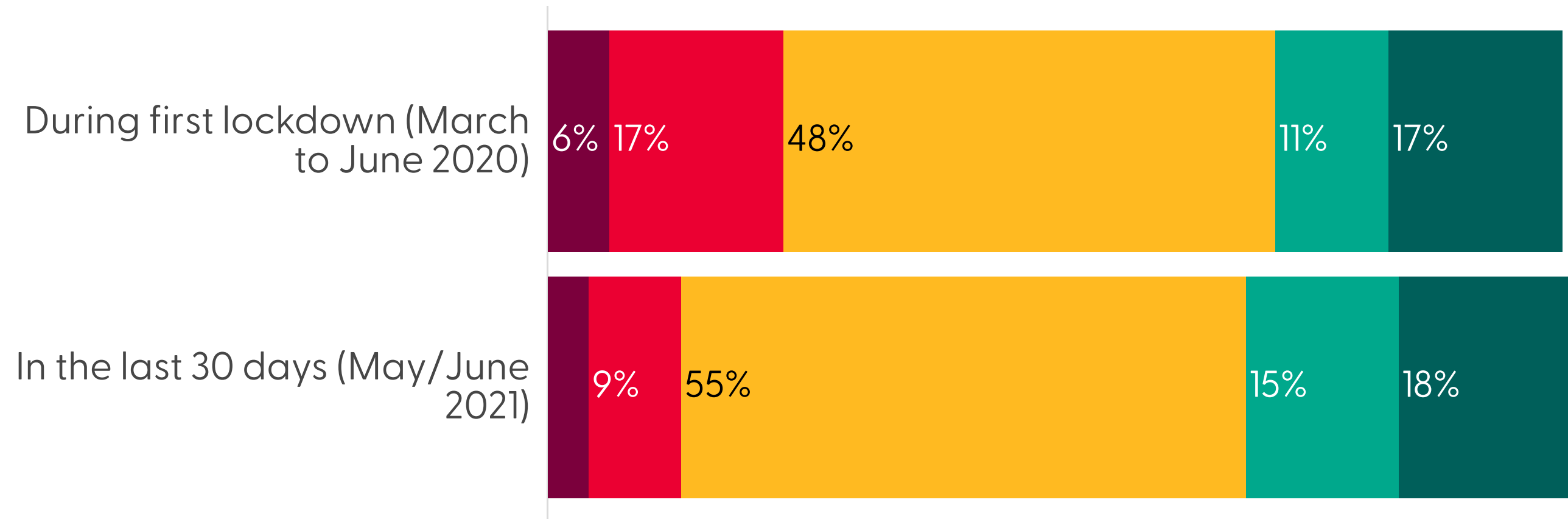
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# How does pandemic drinking compare to pre-pandemic drinking?

**The change in drinking behaviours in Northern Ireland during the first national lockdown has become less prominent, with many drinkers reporting either a return to pre-pandemic drinking levels or drinking less than they usually would have in the last 30 days (May/June 2021)**

Drinking amongst drinkers in Northern Ireland compared to before the pandemic



## Observation

Drinking in the pandemic and over the last 30 days compared to before the pandemic in N. Ireland is similar to picture across all UK drinkers.

- Much more than before the pandemic
- Slightly more than before the pandemic
- About the same amount
- Slightly less than before the pandemic
- Much less than before the pandemic

Drinking compared to before the pandemic. Base: all N. Ireland adults who drink alcohol excluding don't know and prefer not to say (during first lockdown n=512; in the last 30 days n=511)

# The online community: the impact of the pandemic

For many, the pandemic created periods of extreme emotion whilst stripping people of their usual coping mechanisms

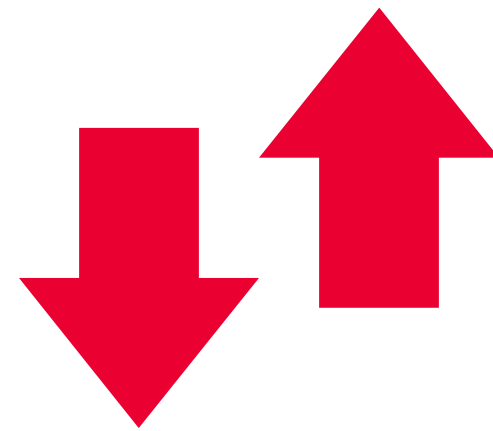
## Dealing with extremes of emotion

Through the pandemic, people had to deal with periods of extreme emotions, including loneliness, high levels of stress and anxiety and boredom.

## Loss of alternative coping mechanisms

The pandemic stripped many people of existing coping mechanisms, such as spending time with others and taking part in different activities.

For some, and particularly high risk drinkers, alcohol often became a key method of coping with their emotions through the pandemic.



## Fewer barriers to drinking

The loss of usual routine and structure appeared to erode self-imposed barriers to drinking, e.g. driving, going into work or spending time on other activities.

## New drinking situations/occasions

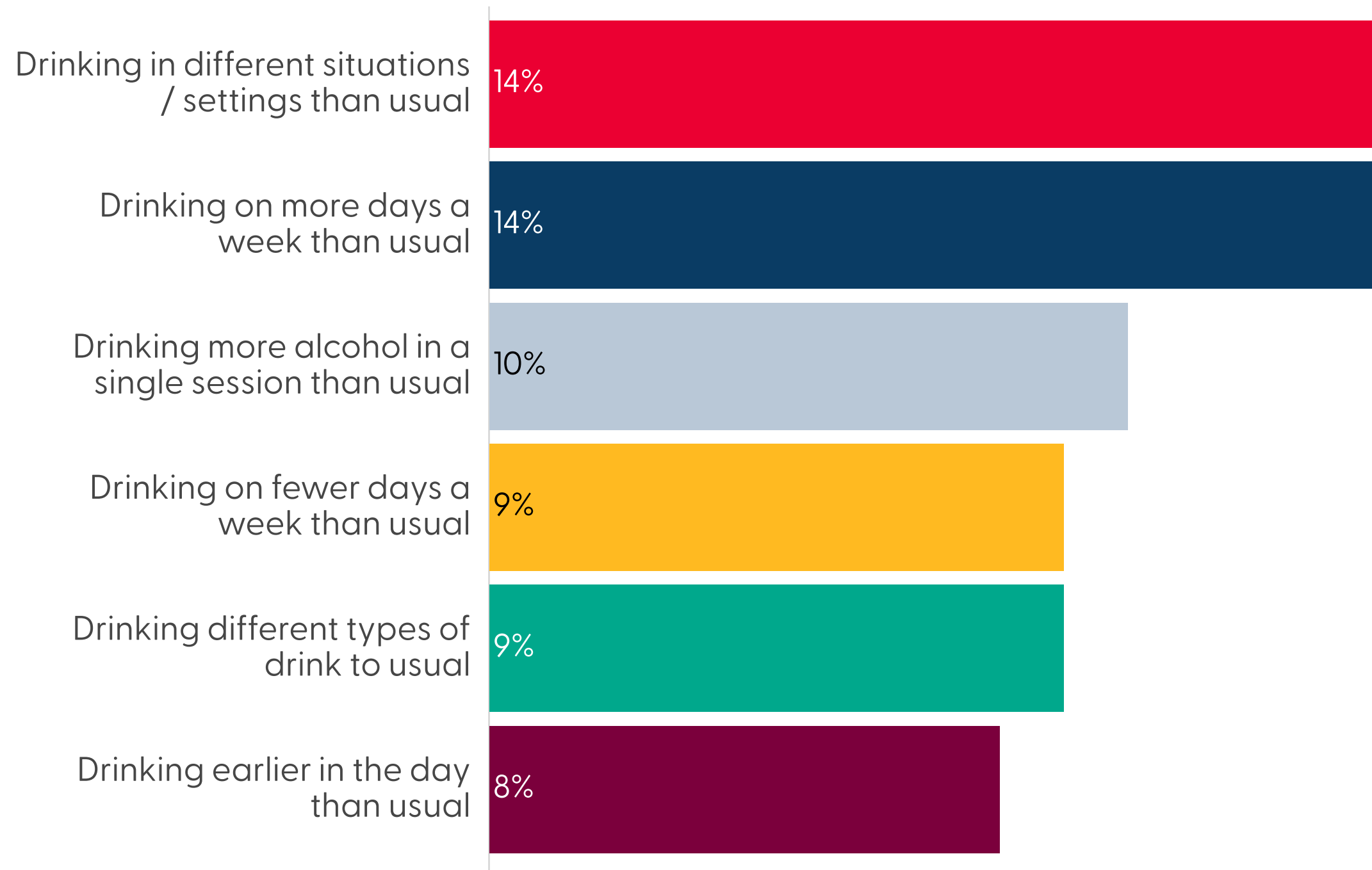
The pandemic also created new situations or increased the frequency of occasions in which people were drinking:


- Virtual socialising
- Drinking at home (for those who did not do so previously)
- Drinking in public places (e.g. in public parks)
- Drinking with housemates/neighbours (e.g. in the garden/street)

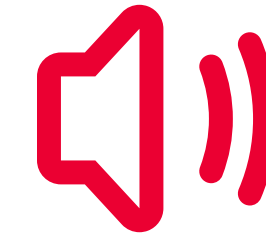
“ At the start of the pandemic, I did drink alcohol more and more often. I think it was just the shock of what was happening? And my work went to home working, so I think that was a factor too, not having to actually go into the office and see colleagues and worry that you don't look the most alert. And my partner was a key worker so it was just myself at home and that probably added to it as well, the loneliness and isolation and not being able to do my usual sort of activities like go to the gym and see family and friends. *Female, 25-34, High Risk drinker, Parent U18, Northern Ireland* ”

# How have drinking behaviours changed?

**A higher proportion of drinkers in Northern Ireland reported drinking on more days than usual during the pandemic than reported drinking on fewer days**



 Drinking behaviour since pandemic began. Base: all N. Ireland adults who drink alcohol (n=529)



## Observations

The proportion of drinkers in Northern Ireland reporting drinking earlier in the day than usual during the pandemic (8%) is similar to the proportion of drinkers in the UK (7%).

30% of high risk drinkers (AUDIT-C) reported drinking on more days a week than usual during the pandemic compared to 4% of low risk drinkers.

21% of drinkers aged 18 to 34 reported drinking in different situations and settings during the pandemic compared to 6% of drinkers aged 55+.

# Drinking alone

There appears to have been an increased acceptability for drinking alone as a result of the pandemic



**32% of people in Northern Ireland who had a drink in the last seven days did so alone (similar to all UK; 34%)**



**22% of all drinkers in Northern Ireland drank alone at home at least once a week last year (similar to all UK; 24%)**



**Drinking alone was seen as more socially acceptable during the pandemic given that many people had 'no other option'**

Community participants generally feel that **drinking alone has become more socially acceptable** during the pandemic. The stigma or negative connotations of drinking alone appear to have lessened as socialising became more difficult.

Pre-pandemic, some participants who live alone tended to only drink or drink most often when with other people, whereas during the pandemic, they drank when alone at home.



We have been forced to stay home, One of the reasons I have been drinking more is because I am bored. I used to go and see friends, go swimming, go to the cinema...I have noticed other people at work commenting about drinking alone when they never did before so I wonder if the same is true for them.

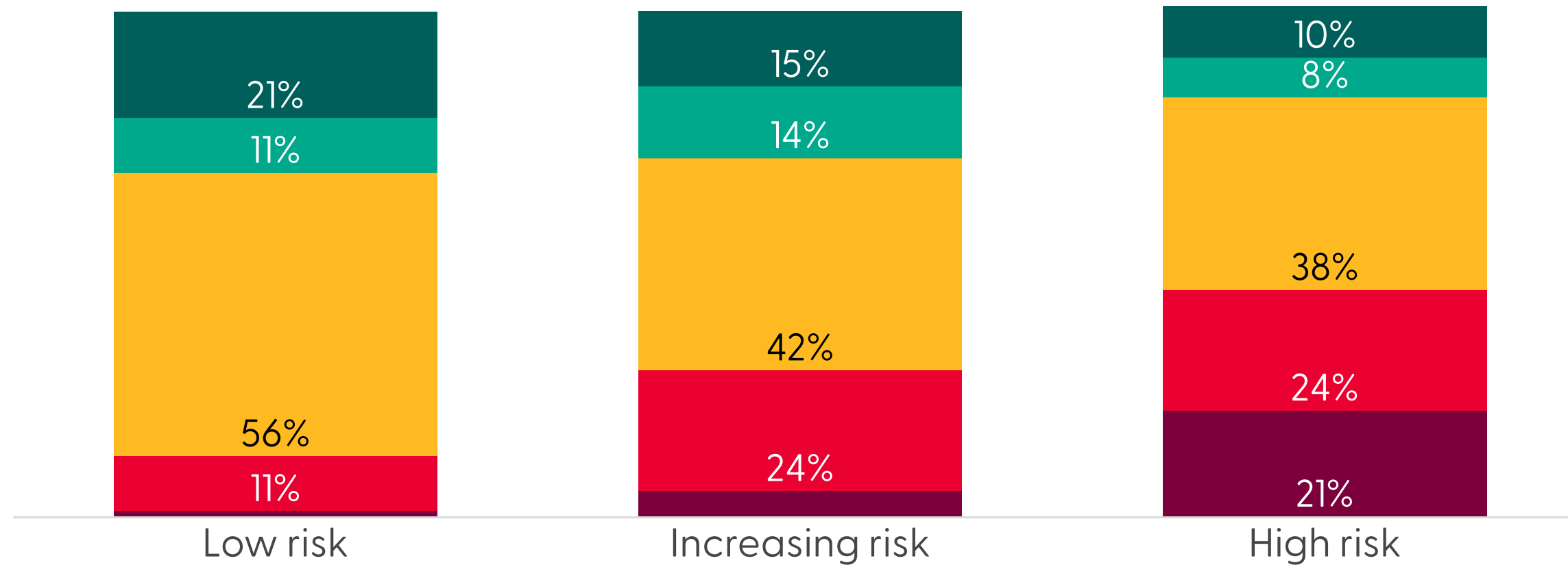
*Female, 35-44, High Risk drinker, Mental Health impact, Northern Ireland*



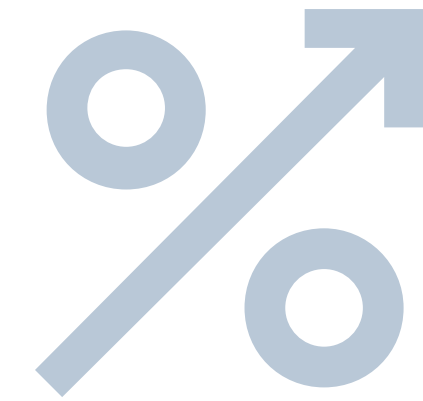


# High risk drinkers: impact of the first lockdown

High risk drinkers in Northern Ireland are more likely to report drinking more than their usual amount during the first lockdown compared to other drinkers



- Much more than before the pandemic
- Slightly more than before the pandemic
- About the same amount
- Slightly less than before the pandemic
- Much less than before the pandemic

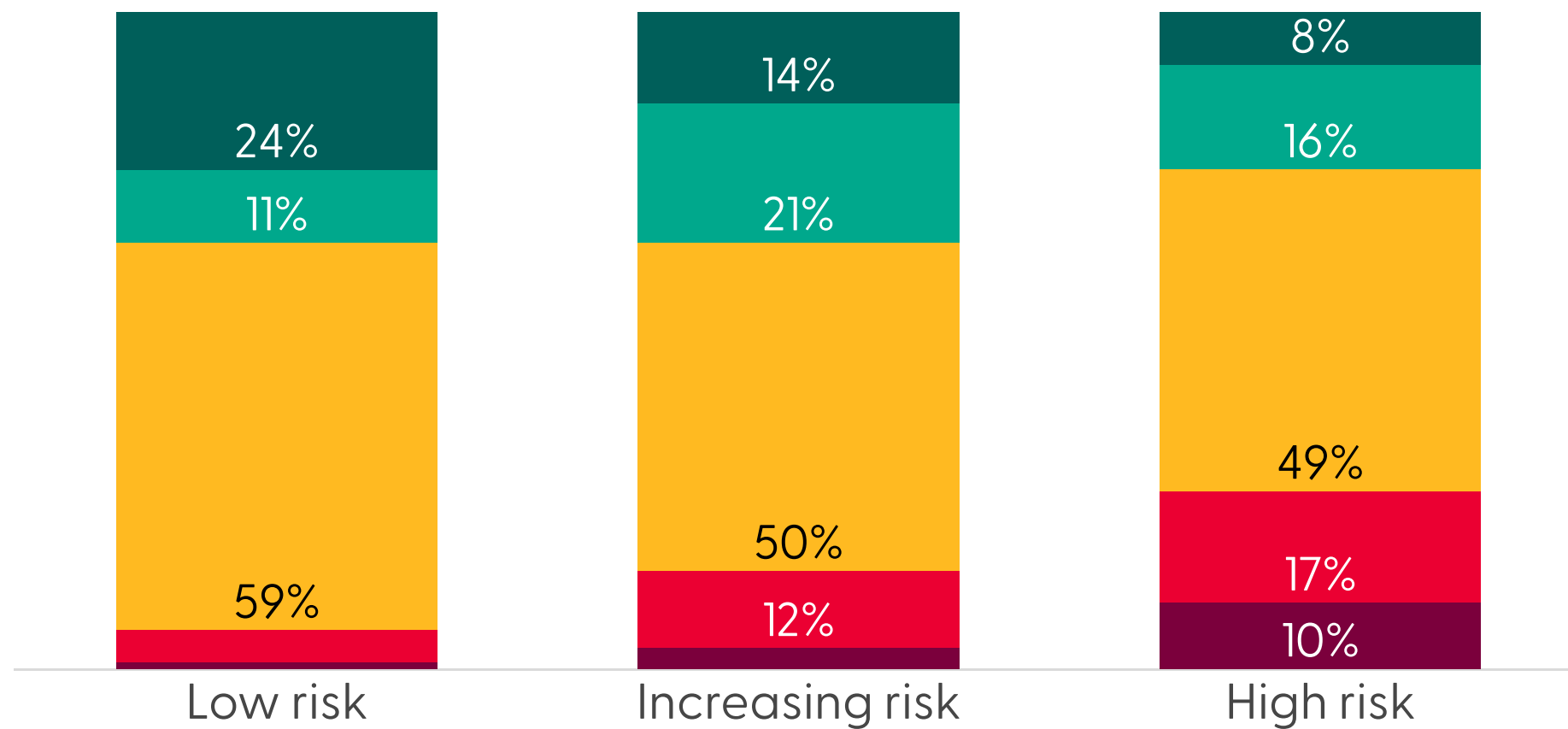


21% of high risk drinkers in Northern Ireland drank much more than their usual amount during the first lockdown than they did pre-pandemic, similar to 17% of all high risk UK drinkers

AUDIT-C risk by Drinking in lockdown compared to before the pandemic. Base: all Northern Ireland adults who drink alcohol, Low risk (n=258); Increasing risk (n=148); High risk (n=106)

# Many high risk drinkers still report drinking more than usual

Nearly two in five high risk drinkers in N. Ireland (38%) were drinking more than they usually would in the last 30 days (May 2021) than they were before the pandemic; higher than 31% of all UK drinkers



- Much more than before the pandemic
- Slightly more than before the pandemic
- About the same amount
- Slightly less than before the pandemic
- Much less than before the pandemic

AUDIT-C risk by Drinking in last 30 days compared to before the pandemic. Base: all N. Ireland adults who drink alcohol; Low risk (n=258); Increasing risk (n=148); High risk (n=105)



43% of high risk drinkers (AUDIT-C) in Northern Ireland report that they intend to cut down on drinking when pandemic restrictions ease, although 55% also indicated this in 2020<sup>2</sup>



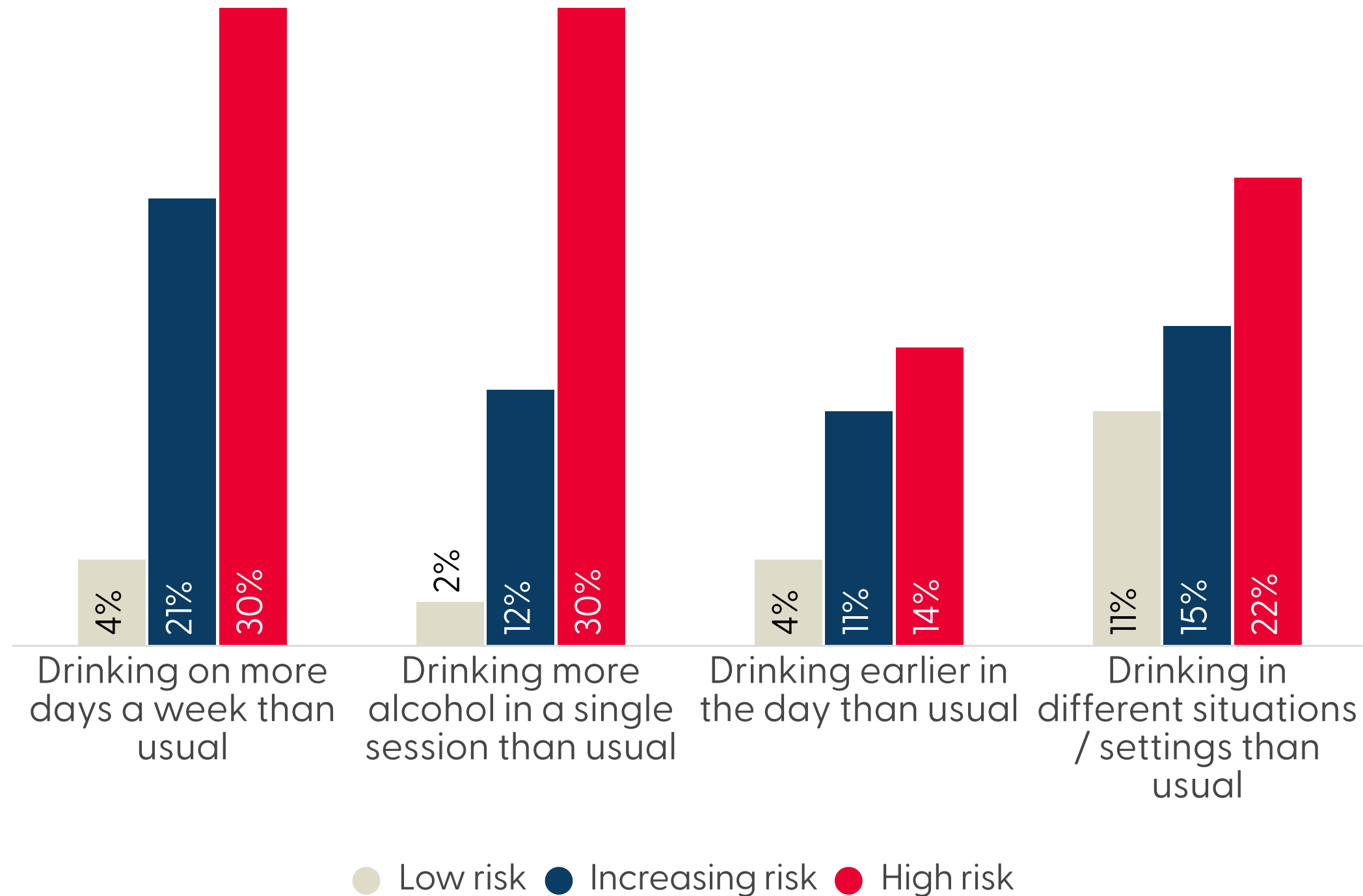
“ In the short term, while the weather is good and places continue to open, I wouldn't think my drinking will change too much. After the summer, I will probably cut back a bit and maybe try to get fit etc.

*Male, 35-44, High Risk drinker, Parent U18, Northern Ireland*

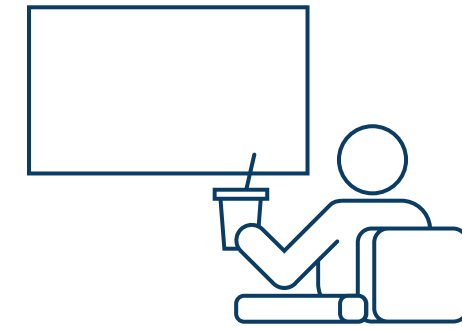


# High risk drinkers: different drinking habits

High risk drinkers were drinking on more days a week and were drinking more alcohol in a single session than usual



AUDIT-C risk by Drinking behaviour since lockdown. Base: all N.Ireland adults who drink alcohol, Low risk (n=270); Increasing risk (n=151); High risk (n=108)



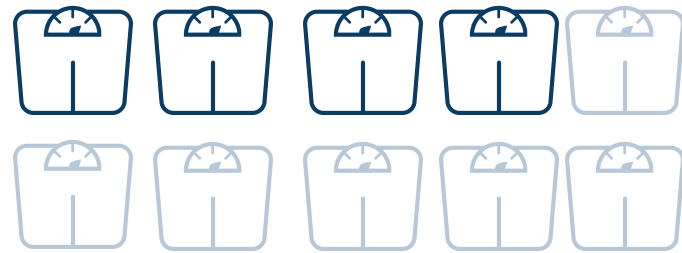
**38% of high risk drinkers drank in N. Ireland alone in the last seven days (similar to 42% across the UK), compared to 29% of low risk drinkers (29% across the UK)**



“ When I was working from home, it was very easy to just grab an alcoholic drink from the fridge, mid-late afternoon while I finished off my work, Then carry on drinking into the evening, and that carried on until I was back working in the office.  
*Male, 45-54, High Risk drinker, Wales* ”

# High risk drinkers: other unhealthy behaviours

High risk drinkers often have other unhealthy behaviours; for many the pandemic exacerbated this situation



**41% of high risk drinkers in Northern Ireland (AUDIT-C) feel they have put on weight during the pandemic (similar to all UK, 43% )**

compared to 37% of low risk drinkers (similar to all UK, 36%)



**For many drinkers, the pandemic made it even harder to adopt healthy lifestyles**



I put on over two stone last year. I wasn't exercising, I've no gym, I don't live in a mansion, I only have a horrible park near me, I don't drive and I was a bit apprehensive about going on public transport. Pre-COVID, I would always walk home from work. But I think the main thing was my drinking that just escalated.

*Female, 35-44, High Risk drinker, Mental Health impact, England*



# Interested to find out more?



**More on Drinkaware**



## About Drinkaware

Drinkaware is an independent charity which aims to reduce alcohol-related harm.

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/about-us>



**More on the 2021  
Drinkaware Monitor**



## Drinkaware Monitor 2021 | Drinkaware

Exploring the nation's drinking more than one year into the coronavirus pandemic

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/drinkaware-monitors/drinkaware-monitor-2021>



**More Drinkaware research**



## Research and Impact | Drinkaware

Drinkaware ensures our work is founded in research and evidence to further promote how to reduce alcohol misuse and harm in the UK.

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research>



**Advice and support**



## Advice and support

We can help you learn about the impact of alcohol on you, your family or friends. Here we'll support you with advice, information and strategies to help reduce alcohol consumption and improve your health.

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice>

# About PS Research

## Introducing PS Research

We're Adam and Emma: two experienced research specialists based in the North of England.

**Adam** specialises in quantitative research. He spent almost a decade working in local authorities and delivering research projects across the public sector. Adam is a Certified Member of the MRS (Market Research Society) and was named the UK's New Freelancer of the Year in 2019 by IPSE (the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed).

**Emma** specialises in qualitative research. She spent several years working agency-side for a couple of large, international market research agencies. Emma is a member of the AQR (Association of Qualitative Research).



PS Research is an accredited Market Research Society Company Partner, demonstrating our commitment to quality research and compliance, working to the MRS Code of Conduct.

# Appendix

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**Take me to...**

[Introducing the research](#) | [UK report: Summary](#) | [Drinking in Northern Ireland in 2021](#) | [How has the pandemic impacted drinking?](#) | [Appendix](#)

# References

1: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/drinkaware-monitors/drinkaware-monitor-2021>

2: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/drinkaware-monitors/drinkaware-monitor-2021>

3: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/audit-the-alcohol-use-disorders-identification-test-guidelines-for-use-in-primary-health-care>

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5: <http://www.nrs.co.uk/nrs-print/lifestyle-and-classification-data/social-grade/>

6: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/media/tl2np2c5/impact-report-2020.pdf>

7: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/drinkaware-monitors>

8: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/alcoholic-drinks-and-units/low-risk-drinking-guidelines#thecmoguidelines>

9: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/drinkaware-monitors/drinkaware-monitor-2020-drinking-and-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

10: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/research-and-evaluation-reports/understanding-the-alcohol-harm-paradox>



# Glossary

**Alcohol dependence:** This is a medical definition. Alcohol dependence is defined as behavioural, cognitive and physiological factors that typically include a strong desire to drink alcohol and difficulties in controlling its use. Someone who is alcohol-dependent may persist in drinking, despite harmful physical and mental health consequences.

**AUDIT:** The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a simple, 10-question method of screening for excessive drinking and to assist in brief assessment. It provides a framework for intervention to help hazardous and harmful drinkers to reduce their drinking, or to stop drinking. AUDIT is designed to help health practitioners in particular identify hazardous drinking, harmful drinking and possible dependence. Drinkaware's Alcohol Self-Assessment is based on the AUDIT screening questionnaire.

**AUDIT-C:** This refers to the three consumption-related questions on the AUDIT questionnaire that relate to drinking frequency, units consumed on a typical occasion and frequency of drinking six units or more (for women) or eight units or more (for men) at a single session. A score of 0 to 4 indicates low risk; 5 to 7 indicates increasing risk; 8 to 10 indicates higher risk; and 11 to 12 indicates possible dependence.

**Binge drinking:** This term has a medical definition. Binge drinking is defined by the NHS for men as drinking more than eight units of alcohol in a single session, and more than six units for women.

**Harmful drinking:** 'Harmful drinking' means drinking in a way that is likely to cause or has already caused harm, i.e. a strong likelihood that damage to health – physical or mental – has already been caused.

**Hazardous drinking:** 'Hazardous drinking' means drinking in a way that may put your mental and/or physical health at serious risk; depending on patterns of drinking and other factors, this can include social consequences.

**Increasing and high risk:** These terms have specific meanings in relation to an AUDIT-C score. A score of 0 to 4 indicates low risk; 5 to 7 indicates increasing risk; 8 to 10 indicates higher risk; and 11 to 12 indicates possible dependence. Note these scores are indicative as a screening tool and not diagnostic.