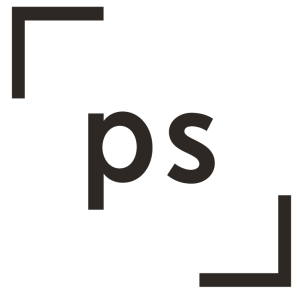


# What do we know about drinking?

**2024 Drinkaware Monitor**

**Research Report: September 2024**



**drinkaware**

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# Introducing the research

## Monitor and qualitative research

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# Introducing the report

## Introducing the research

This 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

**Qualitative research** - in previous years (2021-2023), qualitative research was conducted to complement the Monitor survey findings. When creating this report, these qualitative studies have been revisited and where findings are considered appropriate and relevant, quotes and findings have been included. More information on the qualitative studies can be found in the [previous Monitor reports](#)<sup>1</sup>.

## What does the report cover?

This report looks at the state of UK drinking and topics such as moderation techniques, concerns, health and public attitudes towards drinking.

## What doesn't the report cover?

The Drinkaware Monitor 2024 survey covers more topics than are covered in this report. The full data tables and an interactive library of historical Monitor data will be published on the Drinkaware website in Winter 2024. 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.

## Acknowledgements

Drinkaware would like to thank YouGov for conducting the survey; PS Research for analysing the survey data and for writing this report; and Phoenix Futures for their input on the findings related to stigma.

## How to cite this report

Pearson A., & Slater, E. (2024) What do we know about our drinking?. Drinkaware Monitor 2024. 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:

We have used [the Cabinet Office's advice for writing about ethnicity](#)<sup>3</sup>. When analysing findings by ethnicity, we use the term 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except any white categories, including white British.

[AUDIT and AUDIT-C](#)<sup>4</sup> are methods of screening to assess alcohol use and identify individuals at risk of alcohol-related problems, developed by the World Health Organization.

The **Index of Multiple Deprivation** is a [measure of relative deprivation](#) for small areas (neighbourhoods) across the UK<sup>5</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 30% of deprivation and 'most deprived' being those who live in areas in the highest 30% 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>6</sup>

Where differences between sub-groups and changes over time are discussed in this report, only those differences that are statistically significant are reported (unless otherwise stated). These differences are statistically significant to a confidence level of 95%. 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



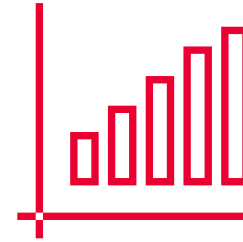
## What is the Monitor?

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.

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 2024 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 5,143 adults aged 18 to 85 were interviewed, including 2,540 in England, 1,035 in Wales, 1,049 in Scotland and 519 in Northern Ireland
- The sample was drawn from the YouGov research panel, with responses collected during June 2024
- 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 previous Drinkaware Monitors
- When compared to population-level sales data, self-reported surveys typically underestimate population alcohol consumption by between 30% and 60%<sup>1</sup>.

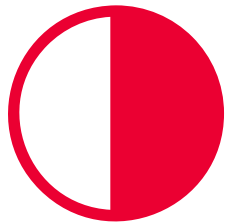
More information on the Methodology can be found in the [technical report](#)<sup>2</sup>.

# What did we find in 2023?



**Overall drinking levels have remained unchanged for the last two years, and the proportion of UK adults who do not drink has not changed**

- But UK drinkers appear to be drinking less frequently: 39% say they drink alcohol less often than weekly compared to 33% in 2019 and more UK drinkers are drinking within the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week
- Occasional binge drinking (less than monthly) has been on the rise for the last two years, with younger drinkers more likely to binge drink



**Over half of UK drinkers feel their nation has an unhealthy relationship with alcohol**

- But only one in ten feel themselves and their friends/family have an unhealthy relationship with alcohol
- And 9 in 10 UK drinkers feel they drink 'responsibly'



**One in four UK adults are concerned about someone else's drinking, lower than in 2022**

- One in five people who are concerned have not said anything or taken any action
- Conversations are more likely to lead to change than comments, although qualitative research revealed that comments may be a pre-cursor to more in-depth conversations, and that the impact of a conversations often depends on the willingness of the person to accept that they may be drinking in a harmful way

# Highlights

## Summary of key findings

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# Positive drinking trends continue and moderation is on the rise



## People are drinking less often in 2024 and when they do drink they...

- Are drinking less in a day
- Are less likely to binge drink
- Are increasingly likely to never drink at home alone



## At the same time, the use of moderation techniques is on the rise

- 9 in 10 (90%) UK drinkers report that they use at least one technique to moderate their drinking, up from 87% in 2023 and 84% in 2018
- Drink-free days are still the most popular form of moderation but lower strength drinks, smaller glasses and bottles and non-alcoholic substitutes are also ways that people are moderating
- Half of drinkers say they use 'drinking within the guidelines' as a moderation technique



## Although understanding of drinking guidelines is mixed at best

- People are split on whether the guidelines are daily or weekly
- Less than one in five know the exact recommended limit
- Those who drink more than recommended are more likely to know what the limit is

# But there are mixed signals around drinking concern



**The majority of drinkers have no concerns over their own drinking**

And are unlikely to feel it will lead to future health problems



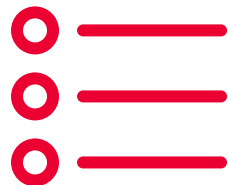
**But concern for other people's drinking has increased**

Concern for other people's drinking is higher than concern for one's own drinking and also higher than the proportion of drinkers who say they have had concerns raised about their drinking



**And rates of 'high risk' drinking remain unchanged**

Despite an increase in 'low risk' drinkers

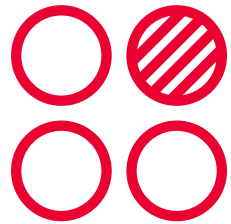


**Most, but not all, recognise the signs of problem drinking**

Although high risk drinkers are less likely to see the signs

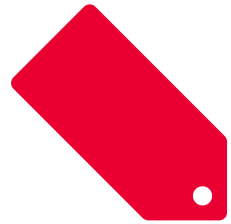
# Drinkers may be worried about being labelled

(And with some justification)



**UK adults are more likely than not to feel someone with a drinking problem is different and not respected**

But the population is more divided on whether they are responsible for their struggles with alcohol



**And concerns about being labelled may deter drinkers from seeking help if they were worried about their own drinking**

Particularly for women and those living with housemates



**Having to admit they have a problem is the most common potential barrier to seeking help if someone was worried about their own drinking**

Those who drink the most are most likely to feel barriers to seeking help are being able to 'handle it themselves' and a reluctance to change their lifestyle



Based on results from the survey question: "If you were worried about your drinking, which, if any, of the following might put you off seeking help?"

# Are enough drinkers assessing their drinking or getting help?



**Just one in four UK adults say they have been asked to complete an alcohol assessment**

This rises to one in two though if someone else has expressed concern about their drinking



**Very few drinkers have ever sought help or advice for their drinking**

Although the likelihood of this does increase if others raise a concern or they recognise the concern themselves



**And two in five drinkers would not consider reaching out for support or advice**

- Although this drops to 15% if they are a high risk drinker
- If they would reach out to a service or organisation, it's more likely to be a GP, an alcohol charity/organisation or an in-person support group

# Drinking in the UK in 2024

## Alcohol consumption and comparisons

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### Take me to...

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# Drinking in the UK in 2024: **what to look out for**



The proportion of UK adults who drink alcohol the most frequently (4+ times a week) continues to fall (from 17% in 2021 to 13% in 2024) and more UK adults say they rarely or never drink alcohol



When people are drinking, they are drinking less units in a day, and the proportion of UK drinkers who binge drink at least once a month is the lowest it has been looking back to 2018



Younger drinkers appear to be reducing their binge drinking, with a significant rise amongst 18-34 year olds who never binge drink

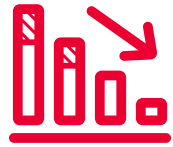


Younger people are also less likely to not drink alcohol at all; one in five (19%) of 18-34 year olds don't drink alcohol compared to 13% of 35-54 year olds and 14% of those aged 55 and over



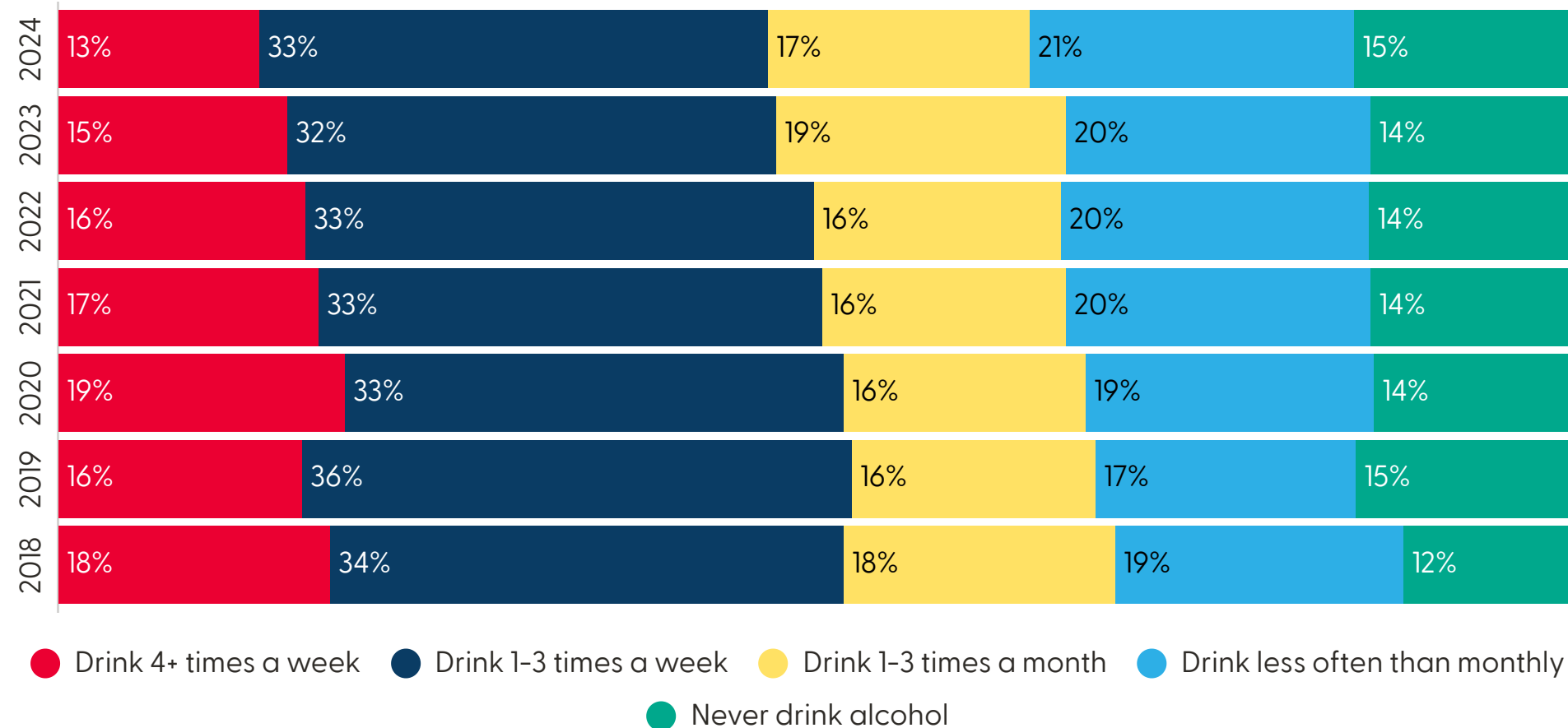
UK drinkers are most likely to drink most frequently at home, and almost a quarter (23%) of UK drinkers drink at home alone at least once a week (although close to half never drink at home alone)

# UK adults drinking alcohol most frequently is down



13% of UK adults were drinking 4+ times a week in 2024, down year-on-year since 2020

How often UK adults drink alcohol



**And more UK adults are rarely or never drinking alcohol**

36% of UK adults drink alcohol less often than monthly or not at all, compared to 30% in 2018

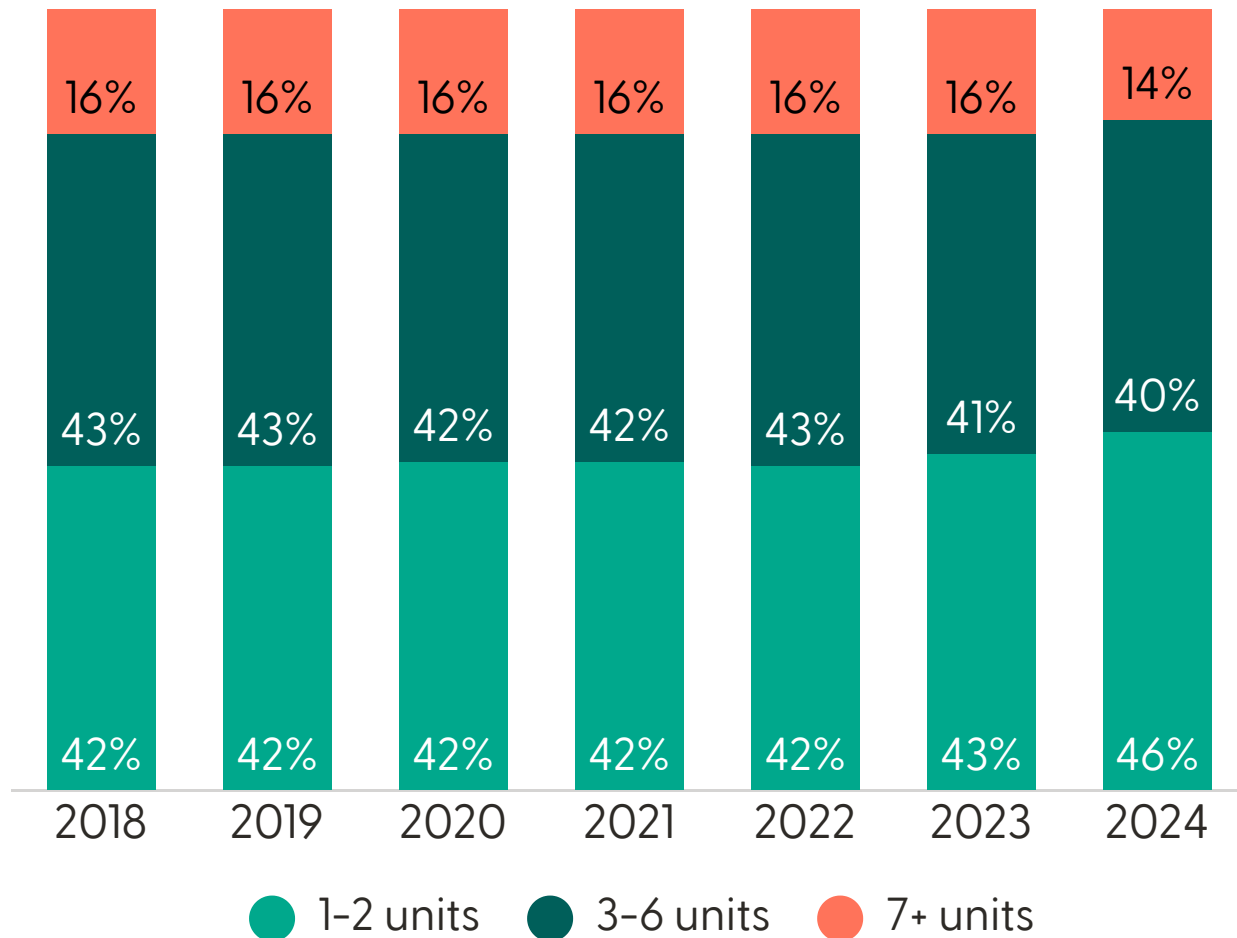
[Previous Monitor reports](#)

Drinking frequency. Base: all UK adults, 2024 (n=5,143); 2023 (n=10,473); 2022 (n=6,318); 2021 (n=9,137); 2020 (n=9,046), 2019 (n=2,145), 2018 (n=8,906)

# When people are drinking, they're drinking less units in a day

**46% of UK drinkers consume 1-2 units in a typical day when drinking, up from 43% in 2023**

Breakdown of units in a typical day in 2024



**There has been a drop in UK drinkers consuming 7+ units of alcohol in a day for the first time**

With the biggest drops amongst:

- Lower social grades (C2DE) - 14% drink 7+ units in a typical drinking day, down from 17% in 2023
- Parents of under 18s - 14% drink 7+ units in a typical drinking day, down from 17% in 2023
- Those living with a spouse or partner - 12% drink 7+ units in a typical drinking day, down from 15% in 2023



## What's a unit?

- A small glass of wine is around 1.5 units
- A large glass of wine is around 3 units
- A pint of lower strength beer is around 2 units
- A pint of higher strength beer is around 3 units
- A single 25ml spirit measure (40% ABV)

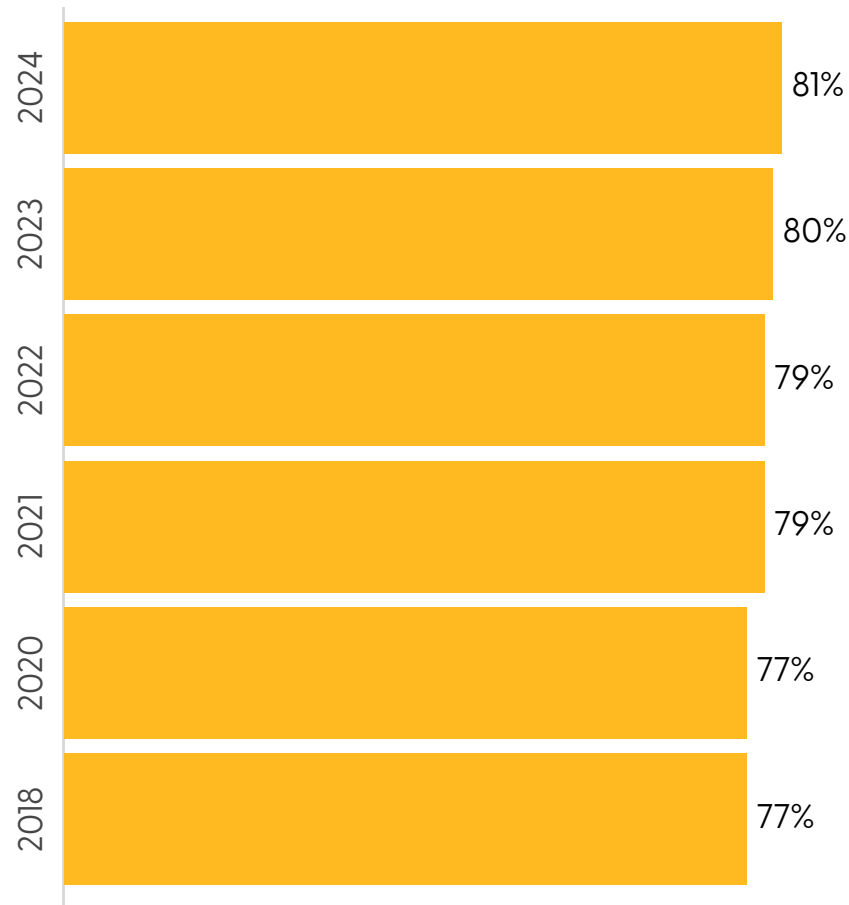
Units in a typical day. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n= 9,035); 2022 (n= 5,428); 2021 (n= 7,911); 2020 (n= 7,834); 2019 (n= 1,860); 2018 (n= 7,902)



# UK drinkers are increasingly drinking within the weekly guidelines

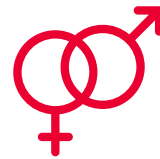
**81% of UK drinkers drink within the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week<sup>8</sup>**

This is similar to 80% in 2023, but has been on the rise since 2018



## Who is increasingly drinking within the weekly guidelines?

Change between 2023 and 2024 (UK drinkers)



### Men

75% drink within the weekly guidelines, up from 72% in 2023



### Higher social grades

81% drink within the weekly guidelines, up from 78% in 2023



### Positive depression screen\*

83% drink within the weekly guidelines, up from 79% in 2023



### Has a disability or health condition

85% drink within the weekly guidelines, up from 82% in 2023

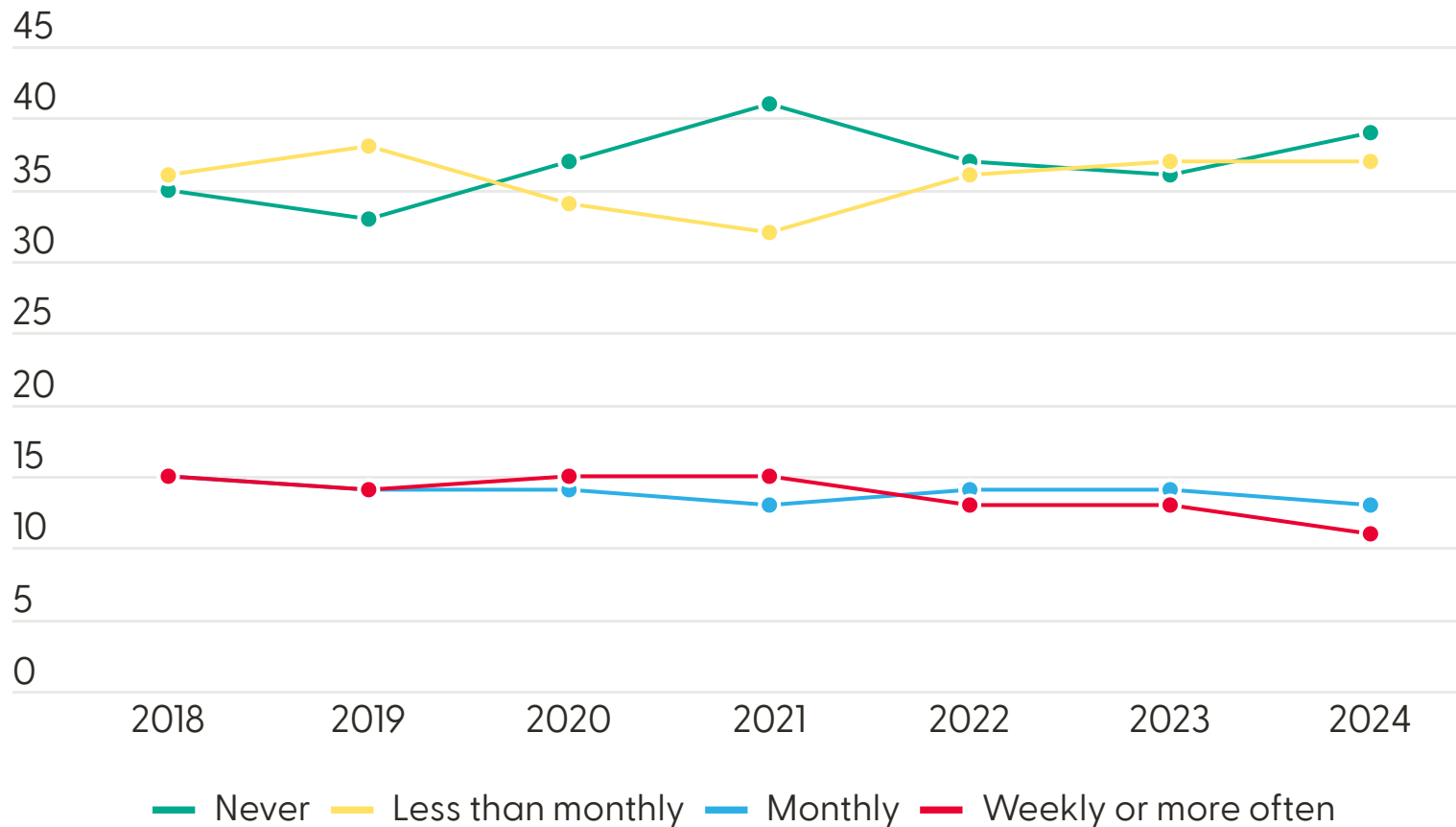
<sup>8</sup>A3\_SUM. Weekly units score. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (2017 = 5,427; 2018 = 7,902; 2020 = 7,834; 2021 = 7,911; 2022 = 5,428; 2023 = 9,035; 2024 (n=4,376)

\*Based on the [Patient Health Questionnaire \(PHQ\)](#), a self-administered version of a diagnostic instrument for screening and measuring the severity of common mental disorders and depression. <sup>2</sup>

# Binge drinking is down

11% of UK drinkers binge drink at least once a week, down from 13% in 2023 and the lowest it has been looking back to 2018

39% of UK drinkers never binge drink, with this only higher in 2021

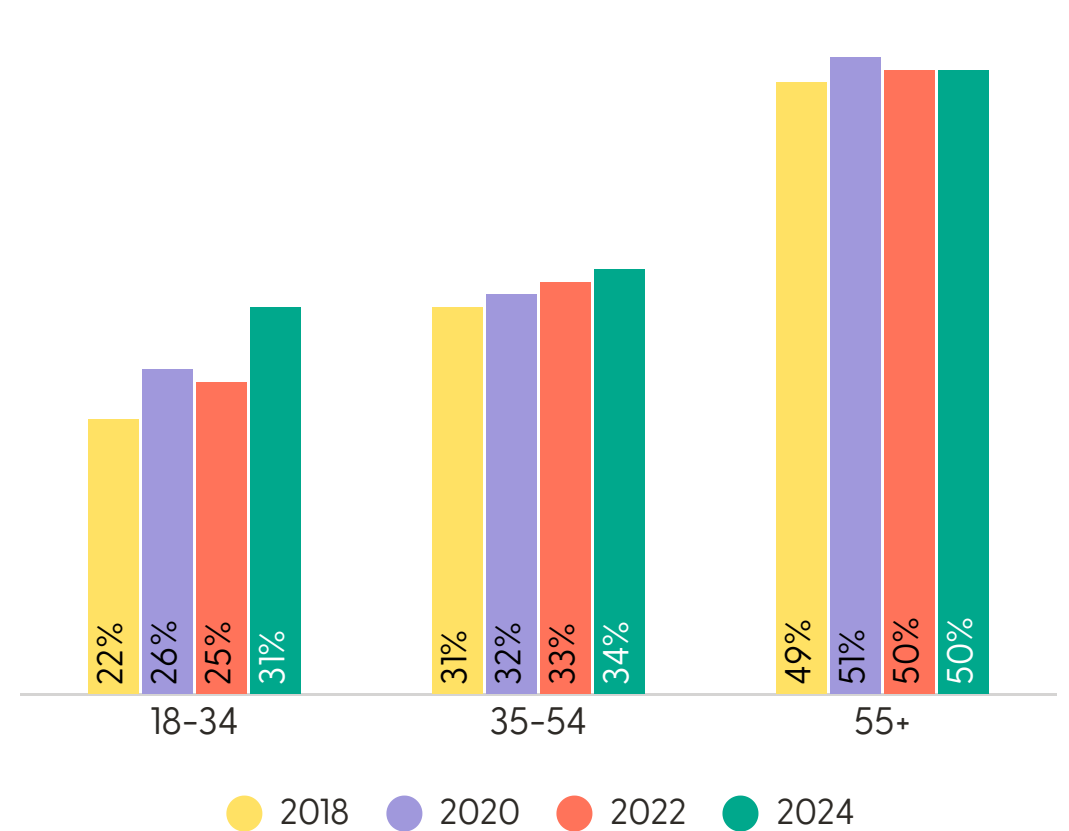


\*6 units for females; 8 units for males

Frequency binge drinking. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol, 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2022 (n=5,428); 2021 (n=7,911); 2020 (n=7,834), 2019 (n=1,860), 2018 (n=7,902)

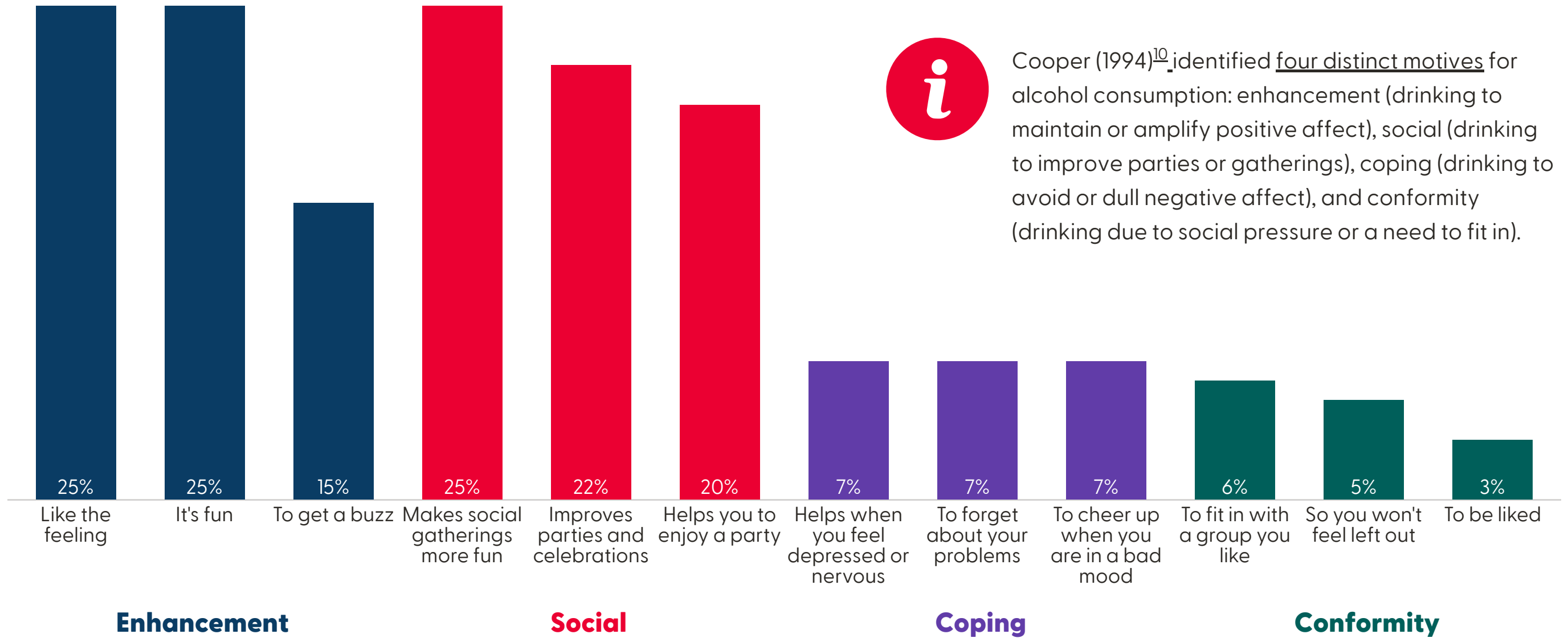
It is younger drinkers who appear to be reducing their binge drinking, with a significant rise in those never binge drinking

% never binge drinking by age group



# People are most likely to drink for enhancement and social reasons

Reasons people give for drinking alcohol (% who most of the time / always drink for the following reasons) - DMQ-R

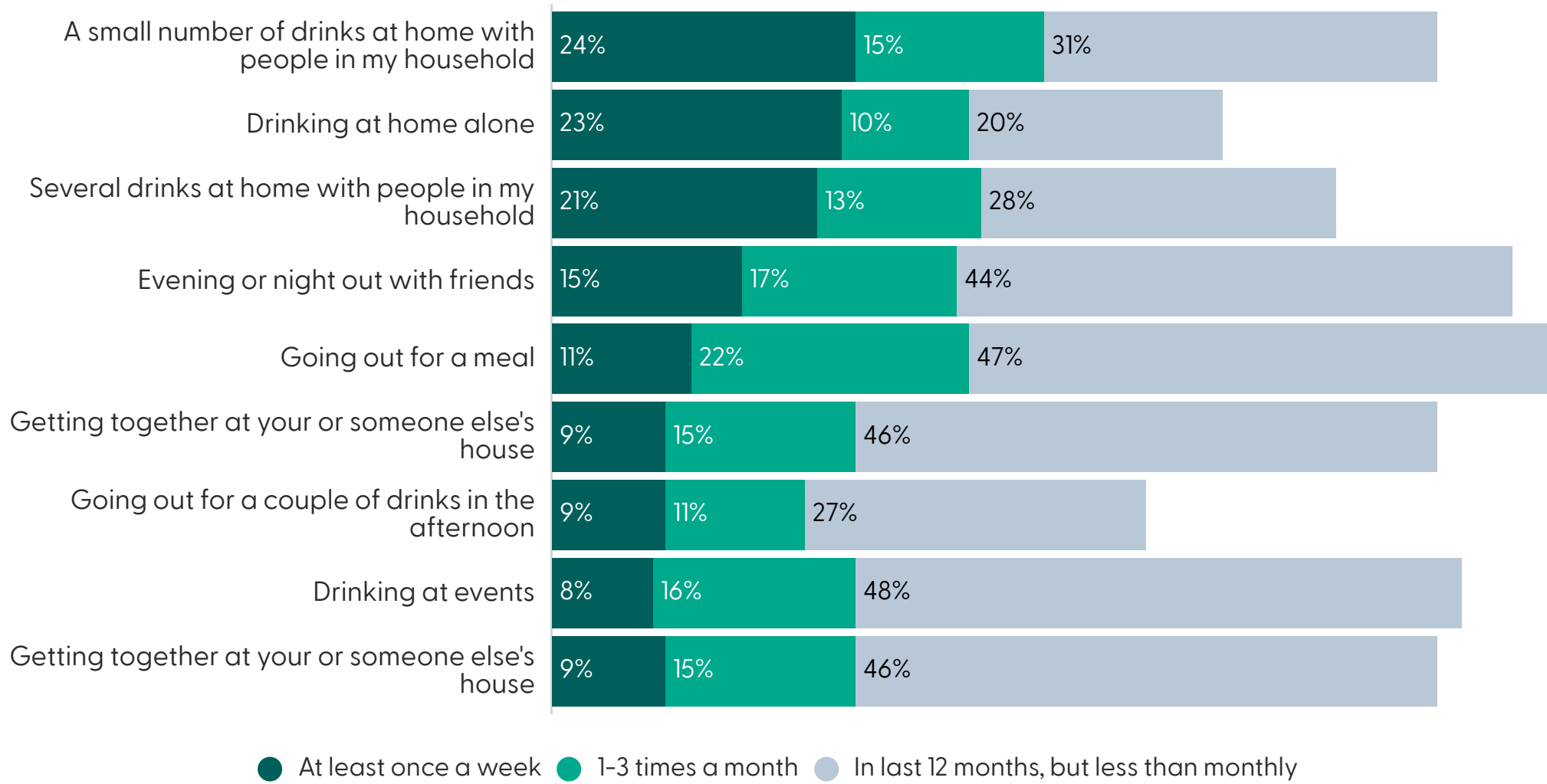


Drinking motivations (DMQ-R). Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=4,376)

# But they drink most often when they are at home

Whilst meals out and evenings out with friends are most common overall, home drinking is where people are more likely to do it more often

Chart displays % who have had alcohol on different occasions at some point in last 12 months: less often than monthly, monthly and weekly



**Drinking at home alone has not changed since 2020**

23% of UK drinkers drink at home alone at least once a week, the same level as 2020 and 2022



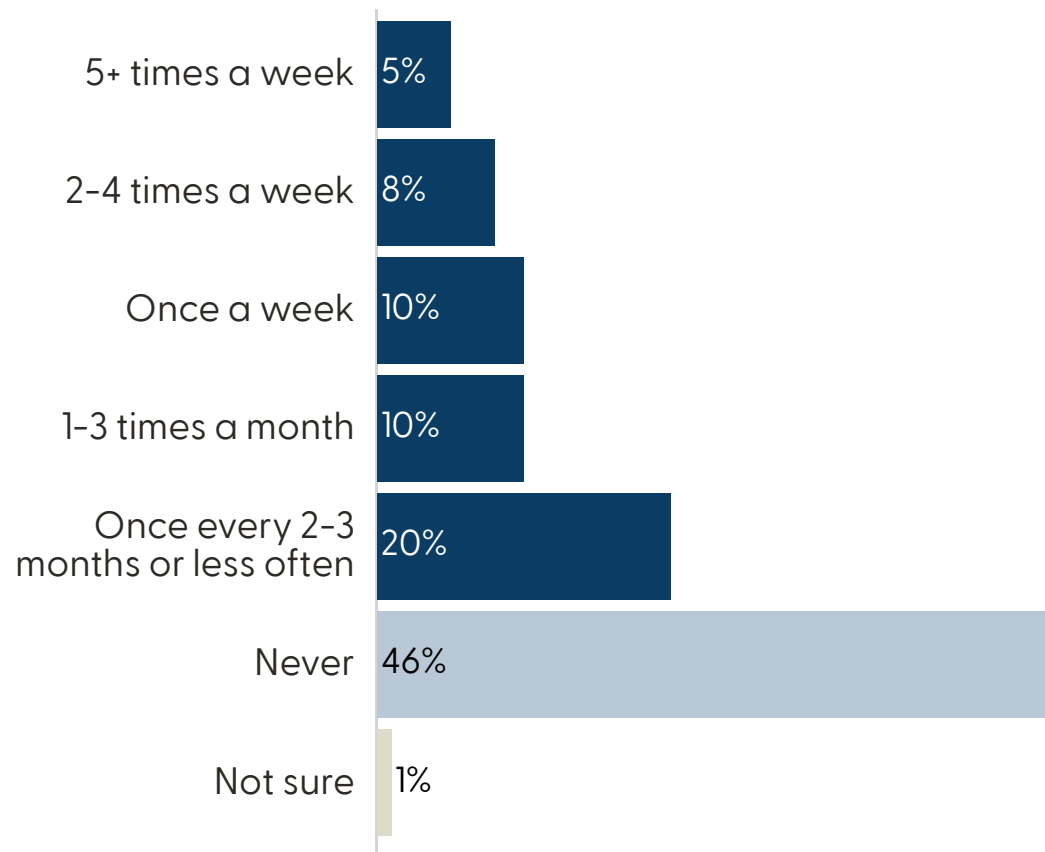
Drinking at home alone is associated with greater alcohol consumption<sup>11</sup> and experiencing alcohol problems<sup>12</sup>

 Drinking occasions. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=4,376)

# Close to one in four drink at home on their own every week

But nearly half (46%) of drinkers never drink alcohol at home alone, up from 41% in 2022

How frequently drinkers drink at home alone



**Those drinking above the Chief Medical Officer's weekly guidelines are much more likely to regularly drink at home alone**

A third (35%) of those drinking more than the weekly guidelines drink at home alone 2+ times a week, nearly four times higher than those who drink within the guidelines (8%)



**Men, older adults, those who live alone and people who screen positive for depression tend to drink at home alone more often**

% who drink at home alone 2+ times a week:

- 16% of male drinkers, higher than 10% of female drinkers
- 16% of drinkers aged 55+, higher than 9% of drinkers aged 18-34
- 22% of drinkers who live alone, double the 11% who live with someone
- 17% of drinkers who screen for depression, higher than 12% of drinkers with a 'normal' mental health score (based on PHQ-4 rating\*)

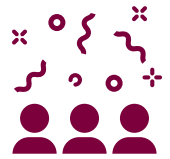
\*The [Patient Health Questionnaire \(PHQ\)](#) is a self-administered version of a diagnostic instrument for screening and measuring the severity of common mental disorders and depression<sup>2</sup>



Drinking occasions: drinking at home alone. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=4,376)

# Younger people are more likely than others to go out drinking

## As are drinkers from an ethnic minority group



### Evening or night out with friends

22% of 18-34 year old drinkers go on a night out with friends to drink at least once a week, double the 11% of 35-54 year olds and 12% of those aged 55+.

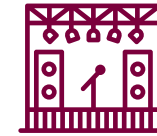
A quarter (24%) of drinkers from an ethnic minority group do this at least once a week too, compared to 14% of white drinkers. Those drinkers in higher social grades are also more likely to go on a night out with friends: 18% of drinkers in AB social grades, compared to 11% of drinkers in DE social grades.



### Getting together at theirs or someone else's house

15% of 18-34 year old drinkers get together at someone else's house and drink at least once a week, more than double the 6% of those aged 35+.

22% of drinkers from an ethnic minority group do this at least once a week, 3x higher than the 7% of white drinkers.



### Drinking at events

15% of 18-34 year old drinkers go to events and drink at least once a week, double the 7% of 35-54 year olds and 3x higher than the 5% of those aged 55+.

17% of drinkers from an ethnic minority group do this at least once a week, more than double the 7% of white drinkers.

# But younger people are also more likely to not drink at all

1 in 7 (15%) of UK adults do not drink alcohol, up from 14% in recent years and 12% in 2018

## Who is more likely to not drink alcohol?



### Age

One in five (19%) of 18-34 year olds don't drink alcohol, compared to 13% of 35-54 year olds and 14% of those aged 55+



### Ethnicity

33% of UK adults in a non-white ethnic group do not drink alcohol, significantly higher than the proportion when of adults from a white background (13%)



### Health

- 22% of UK adults with a disability or health condition do not drink alcohol, compared to 13% with no health condition
- 19% of UK adults who screen positive for depression or anxiety (PHQ-4) do not drink alcohol, compared to 14% of people who screen negative



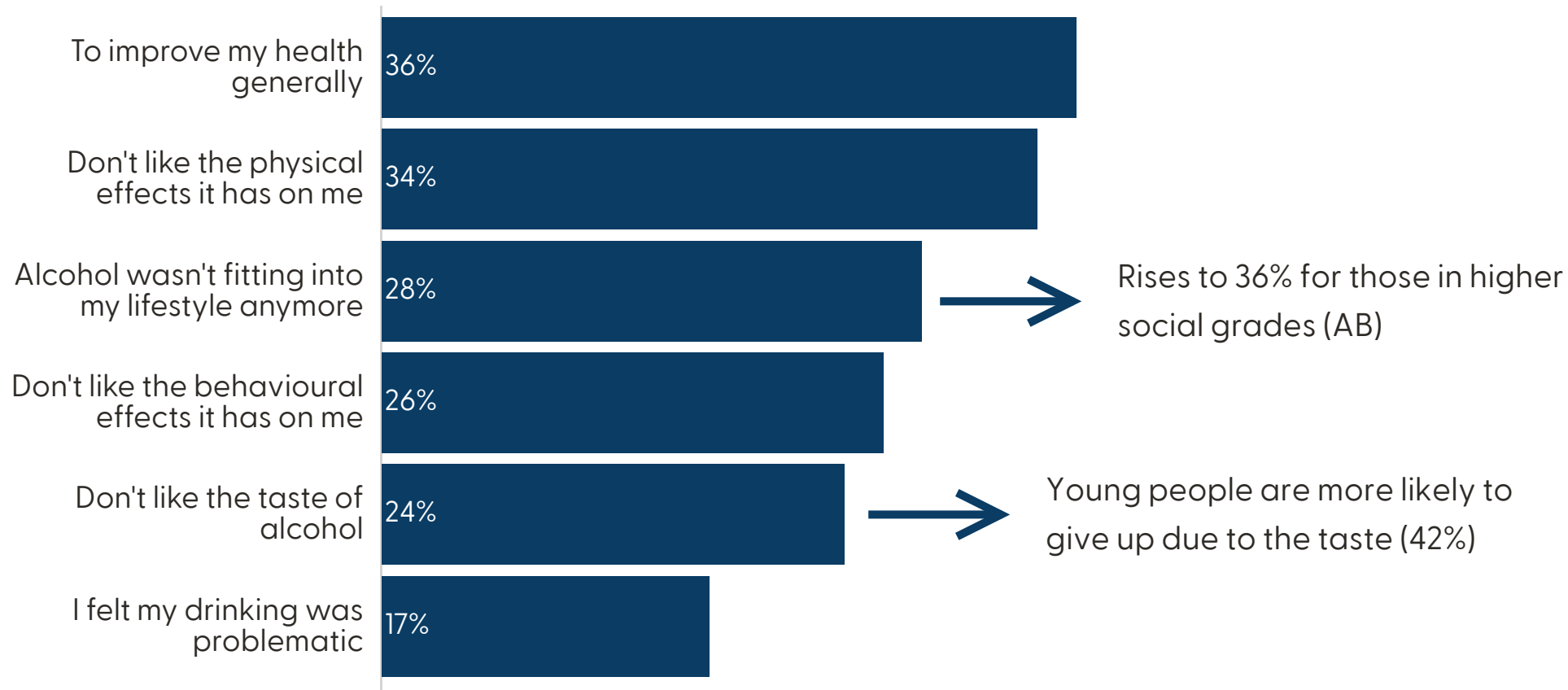
## Deprivation and social grade appear to be significant factors in whether people drink alcohol too

- 22% of UK adults in the lowest social grades (DE) do not drink alcohol, compared to 10% of those in the highest social grades (AB)
- 22% of UK adults living in the most deprived areas do not drink alcohol, compared to 12% of those living in the least deprived areas

# Health is the biggest reason that people give up drinking alcohol

Closely followed by not liking the physical effects it has on them

Top 6 reasons given for giving up alcohol



**Non-drinkers are unlikely to experience pressure to drink from others**

- One in ten (12%) indicate that they always/often get asked to explain or justify why they aren't drinking alcohol (63% rarely or never)
- Just 7% always/often feel pressure to drink alcoholic drinks even if others know that they don't drink (80% rarely or never)



# How are people reducing their drinking?

## Moderation and guidelines

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**Take me to...**

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# Moderation and guidelines: **what to look out for**



Nine in ten (90%) UK drinkers are trying to moderate their drinking in some way, up from 87% in 2023



The use of a range of moderation techniques has increased since last year; taking drink-free days during the week is still the most popular technique, up from 67% in 2023 to 71% in 2024



3 in 10 (31%) of UK drinkers are drinking non-alcoholic beer, wine or spirit substitutes, up from 25% in 2023 and 18% in 2018, and over three-quarters (77%) of those who do so feel it is effective as a moderation technique



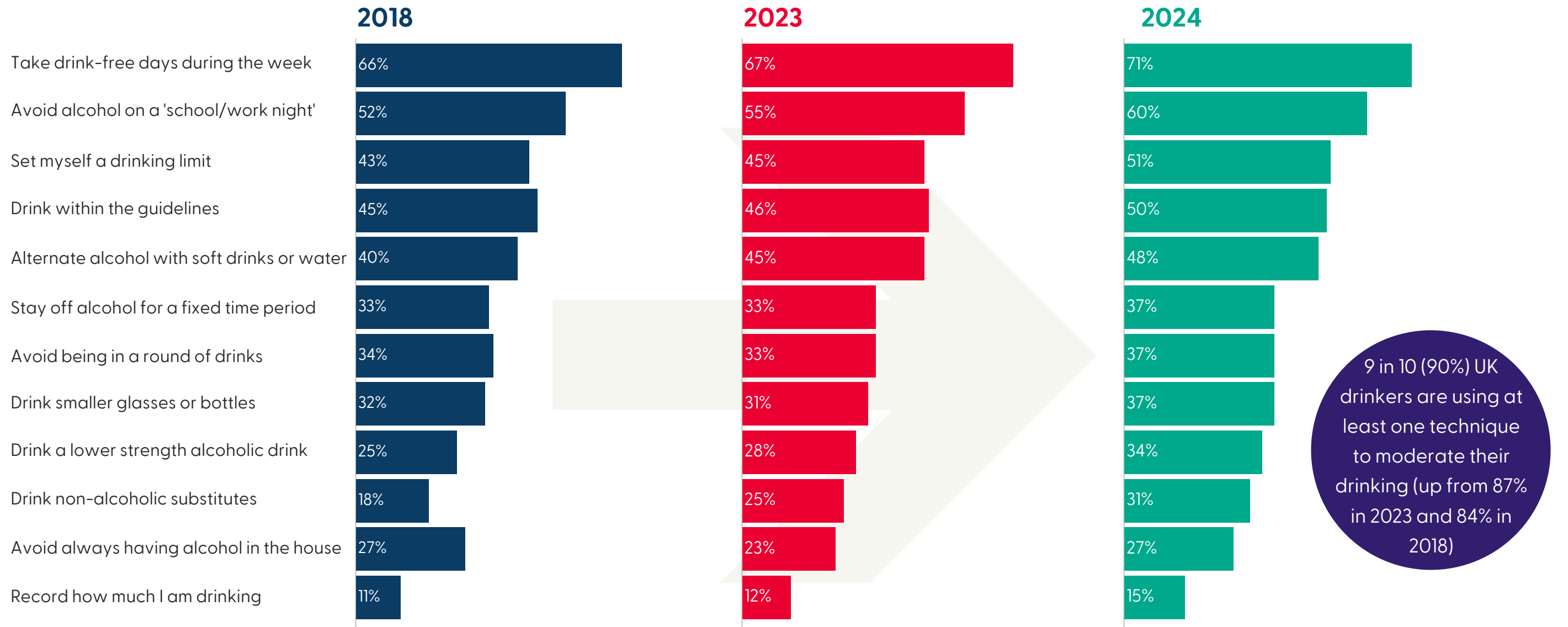
Drinking either lower strength alcohol drinks or non-alcohol substitutes is higher amongst younger drinkers; a third (36%) of 18-34 year olds who drink alcohol drink non-alcohol substitutes compared to 28% of drinkers aged 55+



There is still confusion over the government's recommended guidelines around low risk drinking: 3 in 5 feel there are different limits for men and women and only 1 in 10 correctly identified that it is 'the same limit for everyone'

# Use of a range of moderation techniques is up on previous years

% of UK drinkers currently doing the following to moderate their drinking



All differences between 2024 and 2023 are statistically significant. All differences between 2024 and 2018 are statistically significant, with the exception of 'Avoid always having alcohol in the house'.

Moderation. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2018 (n=7,902)

# Using 'no or low' alcohol drinks as a moderation technique is increasing

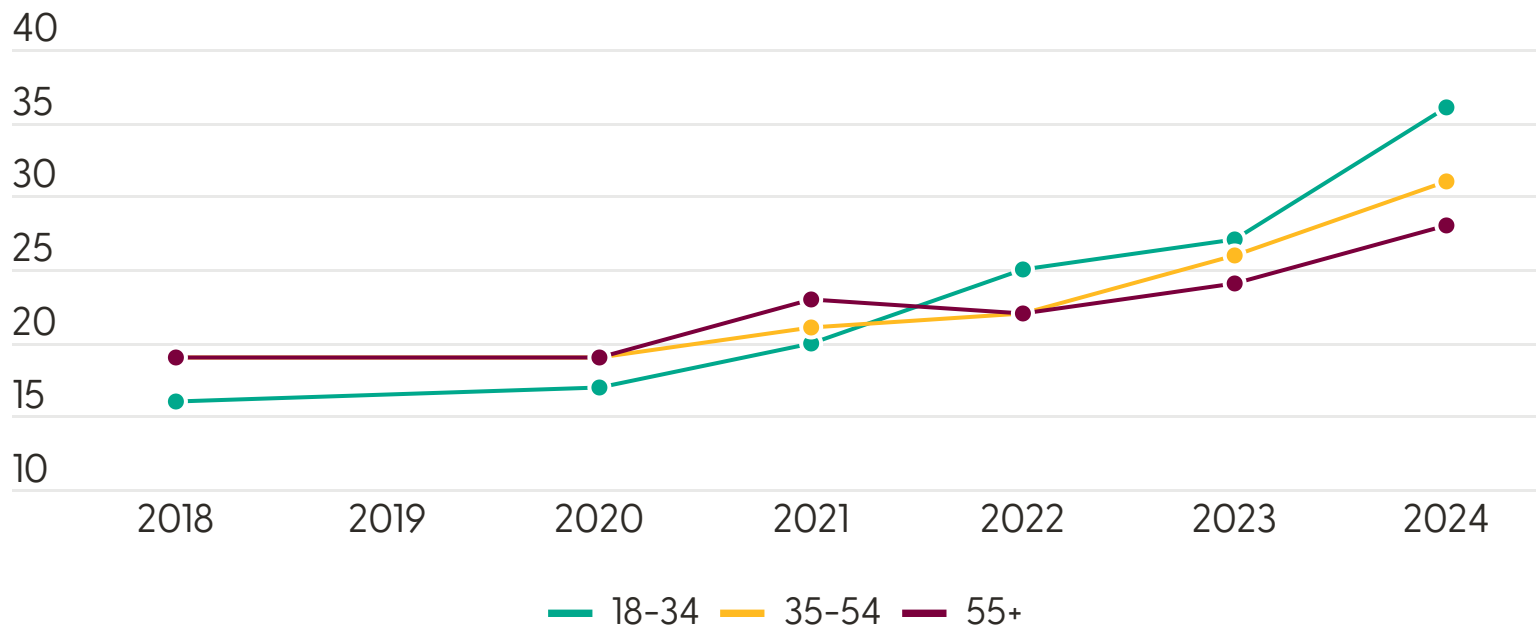


**A third of drinkers (34%) are drinking lower strength alcohol drinks and 3 in 10 (31%) are now using non-alcohol substitutes to moderate their drinking**

Compared to 28% and 25% respectively in 2023, with the latter up from 18% in 2018

## Use of non-alcoholic substitutes as a moderation technique has more than doubled amongst 18-34 year olds since 2018

% currently drinking non-alcoholic beer, wine or spirit substitutes by age



**Drinkers in higher social grades are increasingly likely to use non-alcoholic substitutes to moderate their drinking**

In 2018, 18% of drinkers in AB social grades used non-alcoholic substitutes, similar to the 20% of drinkers in DE social grades. However, a gap has developed over time, with 38% of AB drinkers now using non-alcoholic substitutes to moderate their drinking, significantly higher than 25% of DE drinkers.



**Whilst men have closed the gap on women**

In 2018, 15% of male drinkers used non-alcoholic substitutes, lower than the 21% of female drinkers. This gap has closed over time, with 31% of male drinkers now using non-alcoholic substitutes and 32% of female drinkers.

# What does previous research tell us about use of 'no or low'?



## Qualitative research conducted in 2022 about alcohol-free and low alcohol drinks found that...

Frequent alcohol drinkers who drink alcohol-free/low alcohol drinks tend to do so when they are in a situation in which they would usually drink alcohol but cannot or do not want to drink.

The choice of an alcohol free/low alcohol drink instead of other non-alcoholic drinks (e.g. soft drinks, tea or coffee) is often because they look, taste and feel like alcohol, and therefore:

- Other people are less likely to notice or question why they are not drinking alcohol
- It feels more sociable
- It still feels 'like a treat'
- It 'feeds the habit'
- It is seen as more interesting alternative to a soft drink / prefer the taste

“ If I don't want to be hungover and lose the next day, I will make a decision to limit myself, which might be a mix of full alcohol drinks with no alcohol ones or just sticking to low alcohol ones throughout the night.  
(Male; 18-34)

“ I might drink an alcohol-free beer if I am sitting in the sun with my husband and he is having a proper beer. I am trying to stop drinking as much, but I would drink one of these to be sociable.  
(Female; 55+)

“ I drink alcohol-free if I have friends round with the kids and I need to be the responsible adult. If my kids had an accident I would need to look after them. But it's nice to still enjoy a drink with your friends.  
(Female; 35-54)

# Those more likely to moderate their drinking are...

With the biggest differences are around setting limits, drinking different sizes and strengths and using non-alcoholic substitutes



## Female

- 63% avoid drinking on a work/school night (vs 57% of male drinkers)
- 55% set themselves a drinking limit (vs 47% of male drinkers)
- 42% drink smaller glasses and bottles (vs 31% of male drinkers)



## Younger (18 to 34 years old)

- 67% avoid drinking on a work/school night (vs 52% of drinkers aged 55+)
- 40% drink lower strength alcoholic drinks (vs 31% of drinkers aged 55+)
- 36% use non-alcohol substitutes (vs 28% of drinkers aged 55+)



## In an ethnic minority group

- 62% set themselves a drinking limit (vs 50% of drinkers who are White)
- 50% drink smaller glasses and bottles (vs 36% of drinkers who are White)
- 45% drink lower strength alcoholic drinks (vs 33% of drinkers who are White)
- 41% use non-alcohol substitutes (vs 30% of drinkers who are White)

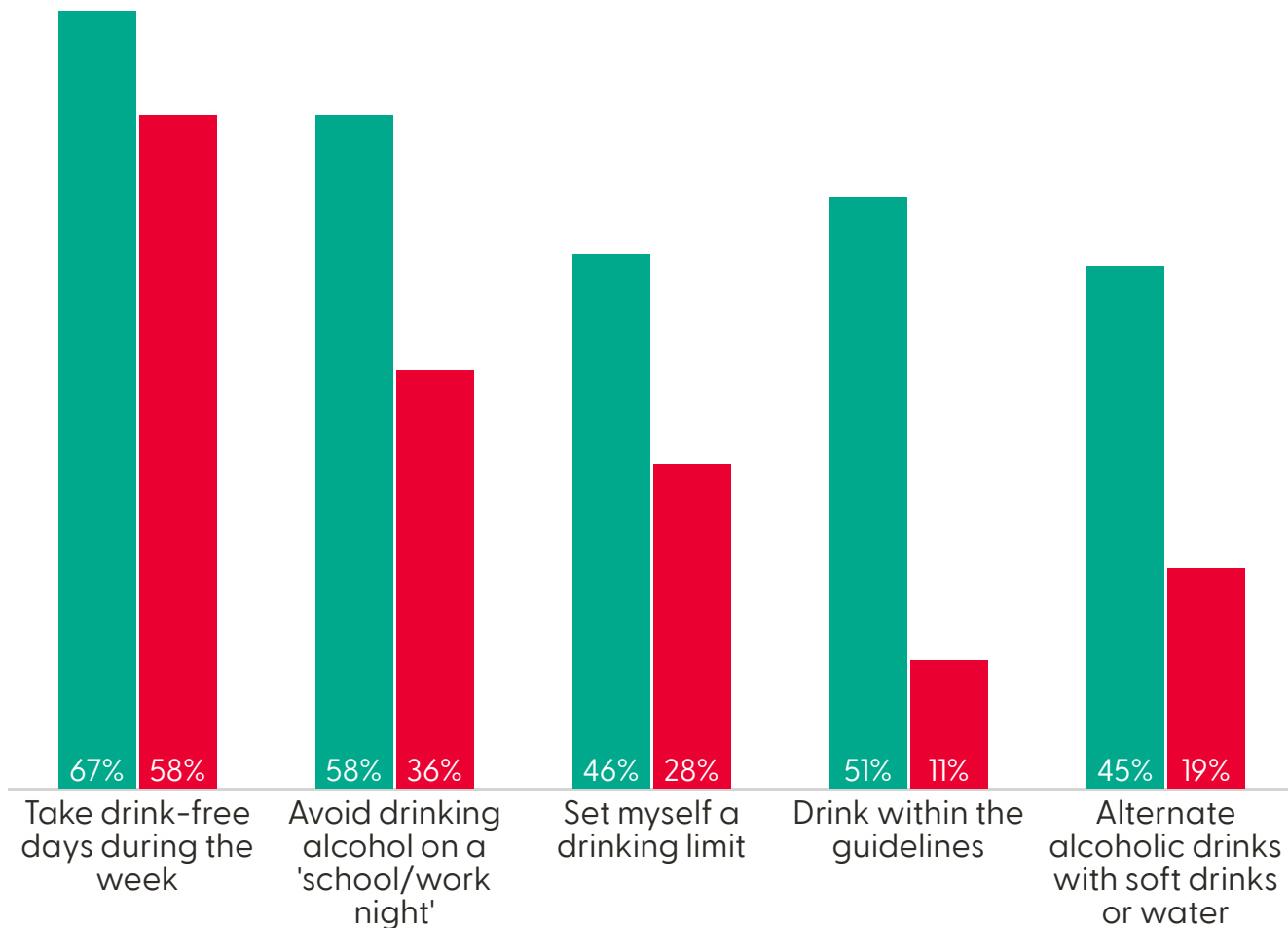


## In a higher social grade (AB)

- 41% drink smaller glasses and bottles (vs 32% of drinkers in DE social grades)
- 38% drink lower strength alcoholic drinks (vs 30% of drinkers in DE social grades)
- 38% use non-alcoholic substitutes (vs 25% of drinkers in DE social grades)

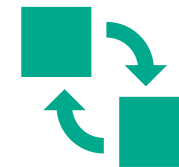
# Those drinking within the weekly guidelines are much more likely to use techniques to moderate their drinking

Top 5 moderation techniques (% who have been doing it for a while)



● Up to 14 units a week ● More than 14 units a week

Moderation. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. Up to 14 units a week (n=3,527); Over 14 units a week (n=849)



Those drinking within the weekly guidelines are more than twice as likely to alternate with soft drinks or water to moderate their drinking



A quarter (23%) of people who drink 6+ times a week still indicate that they take drink-free days during the week to moderate their drinking

This rises to 63% of those who drink alcohol 4-5 times a week and 76% of people who drink 2-3 times a week

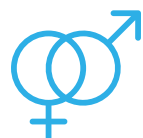
# Do people know what the weekly guidelines are?

The UK Chief Medical Officers (CMO) updated guidelines on low risk drinking in 2016 to reflect updated evidence on the health risks associated with alcohol. The weekly alcohol guideline for men was reduced to 14 units, bringing it in line with the existing recommendation for women, making the guideline the same for both men and women. People who drink as much as 14 units per week should spread their consumption evenly over three or more days to reduce health risks. The safest option for pregnant women or those trying to conceive is to avoid alcohol entirely to minimise any risks to baby.



**UK adults appear split on whether they think drinking guidelines are daily or weekly**

51% selected each option



**3 in 5 think that there are different limits for men and women**

60% selected this option, compared to just 10% selecting 'the same limit for everyone', although this is up from 7% in 2022



**Four in five recognise that it is safest for women who are pregnant to not drink alcohol at all**

However, one in ten (10%) feel it is ok to drink some alcohol after the first 3 months of pregnancy



**Just 17% of UK adults correctly estimated that the Chief Medical Officer recommends drinking no more than 14 units of alcohol in a week**

34% estimated below 14 units; 9% estimated above 14 units and 40% did not know



**Those who drink above the weekly guidelines are much more likely to know that it is 14 units**

32% of people who drink above 14 units per week correctly identified the guidelines, compared to 16% of those drinking less than 14 units per week



**One in ten (11%) of those who drink more than the weekly guidelines of 14 units a week say that they drink within the guidelines to moderate their drinking**



# Previous qualitative research also found evidence that people may not completely understand the guidelines



Qualitative research conducted in 2023 found evidence that...

**Even if people do know the recommended weekly units, they may not be sure what a unit is, and would find it difficult to accurately say how many units of alcohol they are drinking**



Whenever I go to the doctors and they do a health test and they ask how many units I consume, I have no idea. I always think three sounds like an ok number.

(Qualitative research participant, 2023)




I don't think people actually know what excessive drinking is. Even when you get asked on a questionnaire like at the doctors about how many units of alcohol you drink? I don't know what a unit is then sometimes when you work it out it's a bit of a surprise that it is so high. I don't think we keep track of it. I have read what a unit it is loads of times but I don't think I could tell you now. I couldn't tell you what the recommended maximum units is a week.

(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

# Those using moderation techniques generally feel they are effective

**% indicating each moderation technique has been effective, ordered by which techniques are most common**



 Effectiveness of moderation. Base: all UK adults who use each moderation technique (n = 3,350 - 889)



**Relative to other moderation techniques, simply aiming to drink within the guidelines appears slightly less effective**

77% of drinkers who use this technique feel it is effective, compared to 86% of people who take drink-free days or avoid drinking on a school/work night



**Recording how much you drink is both the least used and least effective moderation technique**

Just 15% of drinkers use this technique, and of these 69% feel it is effective



**Family and friends are generally supportive of their moderation techniques too**

For the majority of moderation techniques, no more than 5% felt that friends, family or work colleagues have been unsupportive of them

# Why might people reduce their drinking?

**Health, concern and high risk drinking**

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**Take me to...**

[Introducing the research](#) | [Highlights](#) | [Drinking in the UK in 2024](#) | [Moderation and guidelines](#) | [Health, concern and high risk drinking](#) | [Attitudes towards drinking](#) | [About Drinkaware](#); [About PS Research](#) | [Appendix](#)

# Health, concern and high risk drinking: **what to look out for**



The proportion of drinkers who feel their drinking will lead to future health problems remains largely unchanged over the last few years (17% in 2024) and 85% of drinkers have no concerns over their own drinking



People are twice as likely to be concerned about someone else's drinking: 14% think their own drinking is a cause for concern and 28% are concerned about someone else's drinking



Half (52%) of those who have been concerned about someone else's drinking have spoken to the person about it, a similar level to reported in previous years

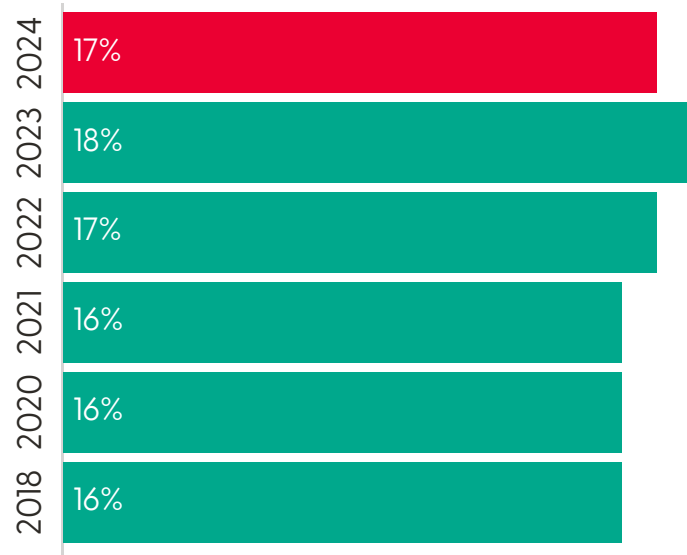


Looking at the full AUDIT, low risk drinking has increased back to the high seen in 2021 (72%) but the proportion of drinkers classified as high risk has remained unchanged (7% in 2024; 6% in 2021)

# Those who drink more are much more likely to feel that it will lead to future health problems

**There has been no real change in the level of concern about future health problems**

% of UK drinkers who feel it is very or fairly likely that their drinking will lead to future health problems



Future health. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2022 (n=5,428); 2021 (n=7,911); 2020 (n=7,834); 2018 (n=7,902)

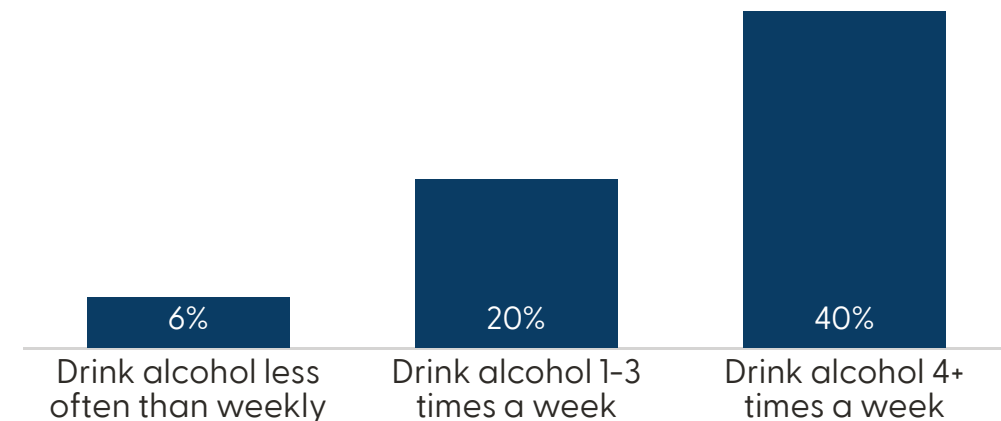


**But it rises significantly if they drink more than the weekly guidelines**

Nearly half (45%) of people who drink more than the weekly guidelines feel their drinking will lead to future health problems, more than 4x higher than those drinking within the guidelines (10%)



**And the more days they drink on, the more likely they feel their drinking will lead to future health problems**



**Younger drinkers and those from an ethnic minority group are also more likely to feel their drinking will lead to future health problems**

- 21% of drinkers aged 18-34 feel their drinking is likely to lead to future health problems, compared to 12% of drinkers aged 55+
- Drinkers in an ethnic minority group are twice as likely as white drinkers to feel their drinking will lead to future health problems (30% vs 15%)

# Most people are not concerned about their own drinking

85% of drinkers have no concerns over their own drinking



- Don't know
- Some or large cause for concern
- No cause for concern

“ I am not showing any of those kind of symptoms that would be a worry. I look good, I don't have a bad appearance [...] And there are a million ways to die, it is not only about drinking alcohol.

(Qualitative research participant, 2023; High Risk Drinker, AUDIT-C)



**Close to two in five of those worried about their future health due to drinking are not concerned about their drinking**

37% of drinkers who think their drinking is likely to lead to future health problems are not at all concerned about their drinking



**But concern for their own drinking rises if they...**



**Live with housemates**

24% feel their drinking is some or a large cause for concern, compared to 13% of those who live with a partner



**Binge drink**

21% feel their drinking is some or a large cause for concern, compared to 2% of those who never binge drink



**Are in higher social grades (AB)**

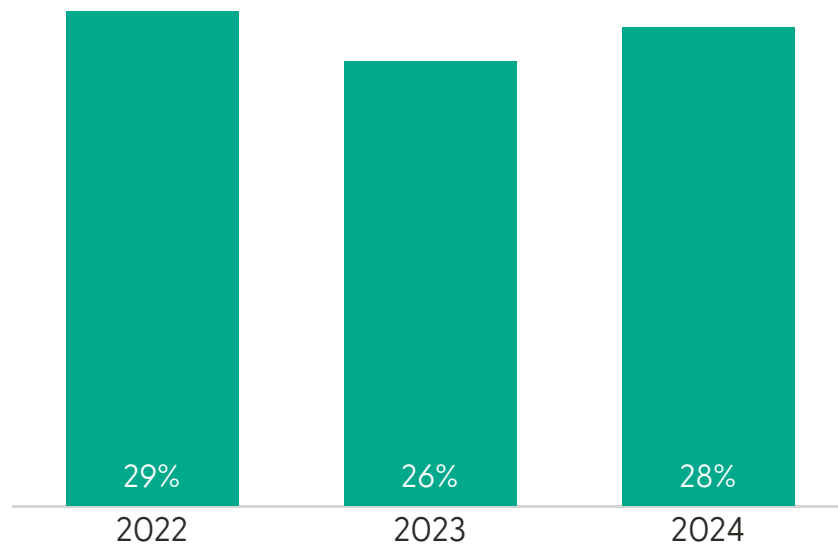
17% feel their drinking is some or a large cause for concern, compared to 11% of those in lower social grades (DE)

Concern over own drinking. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376)

# Close to 3 in 10 are concerned about someone else's drinking

The proportion of UK adults concerned about someone else's drinking is back up after falling in 2023

% of UK adults concerned about someone else's drinking over time



Who is most likely to express concern about someone else's drinking?



Those living with housemates (40%)



Lesbian, gay or bisexual (38%)



Carers (37%)



Females (34%)



Half (52%) of those concerned have spoken to the person about it

- This is a similar level to reported in previous years
- 42% also made a comment and a quarter (26%) encouraged them to seek help



Concern for someone else's drinking. Base: all UK adults. 2024 (n=5,143); 2023 (n=10,473); 2022 (n=6,318)

# Drinking behaviours can be used to assess risk of harm from alcohol

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)<sup>4</sup> is a series of questions used to understand someone's alcohol use.

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.

## What does it assess?

The AUDIT assesses three domains: alcohol intake, symptoms of dependence, and adverse consequences of drinking. Each item receives a score of 0–4, with a total possible score of 40. A score of 0–7 indicates low risk, 8–15 indicates increasing risk, 16–19 indicates higher risk and a score of 20 or more indicates possible dependence.

## There are two versions of the AUDIT

The AUDIT-C is a shortened version of the 10-item AUDIT and asks the three consumption-related questions only 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.



## AUDIT Risk Classifications

### Low risk

Low risk of causing future harm to themselves

### Increasing risk

Drinking at a level that increases the risk of damaging their health and could lead to serious medical conditions

### High risk (or possible dependence)

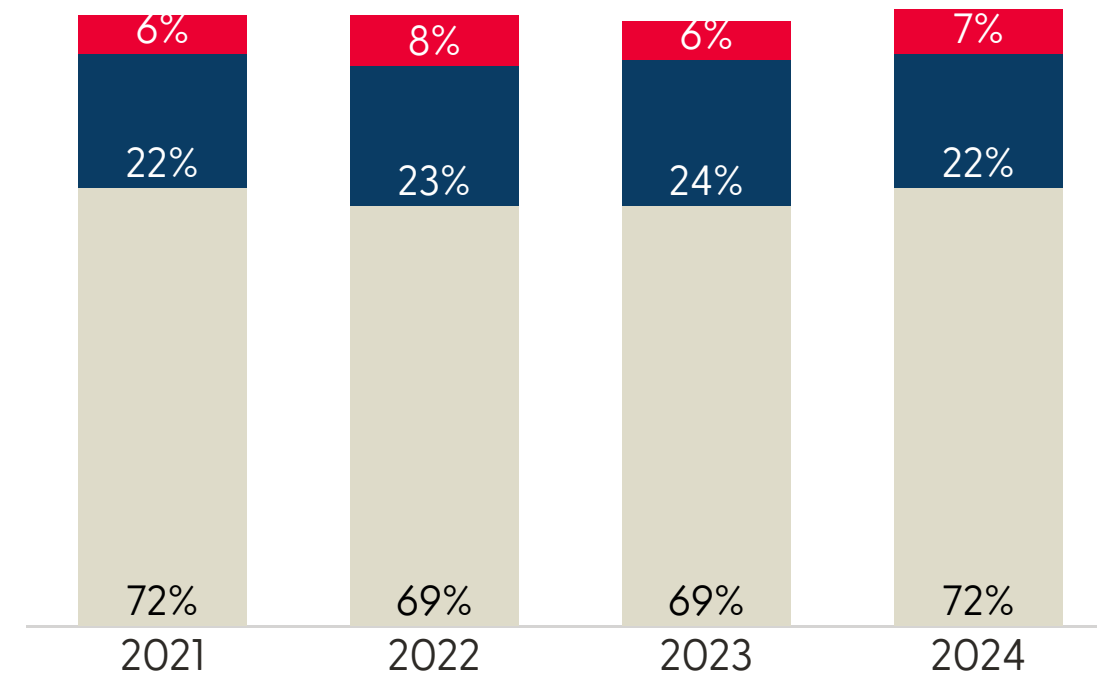
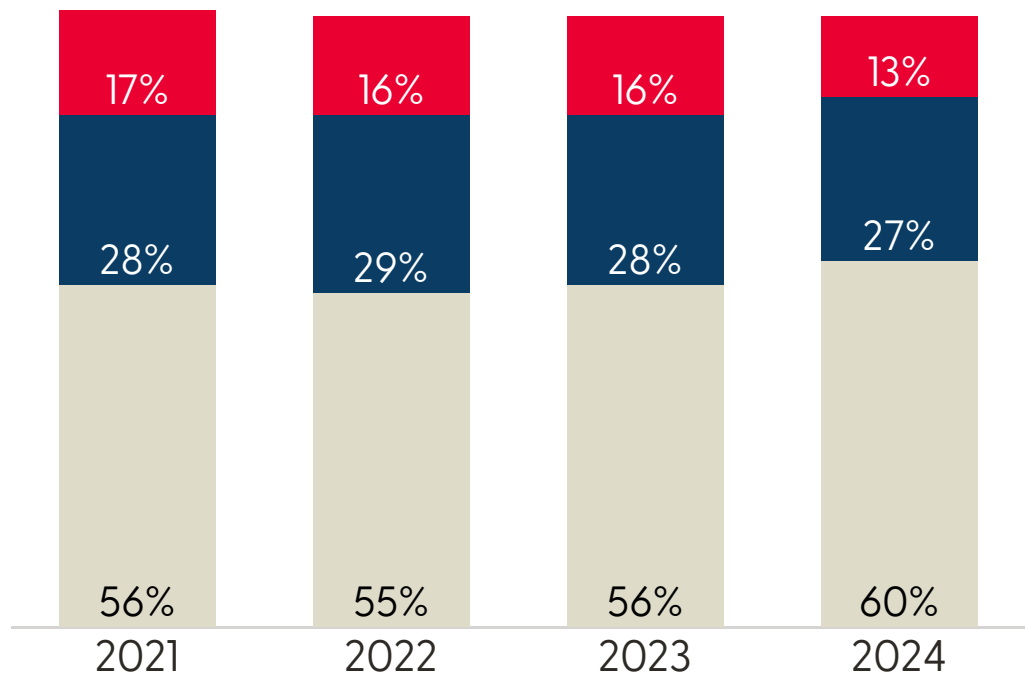
This level of drinking has the greatest risk of health problems



# There has been a rise in 'low risk' drinkers but no change in 'high risk' drinking once a range of risky behaviours are included

There has been a fall in high risk drinkers on the simpler AUDIT-C classification (based on three consumption-related questions)...

...And low risk drinking is back up at 2021 levels using the full AUDIT where a range of additional risk factors are accounted for



● Low risk ● Increasing risk  
● High risk or possible dependence

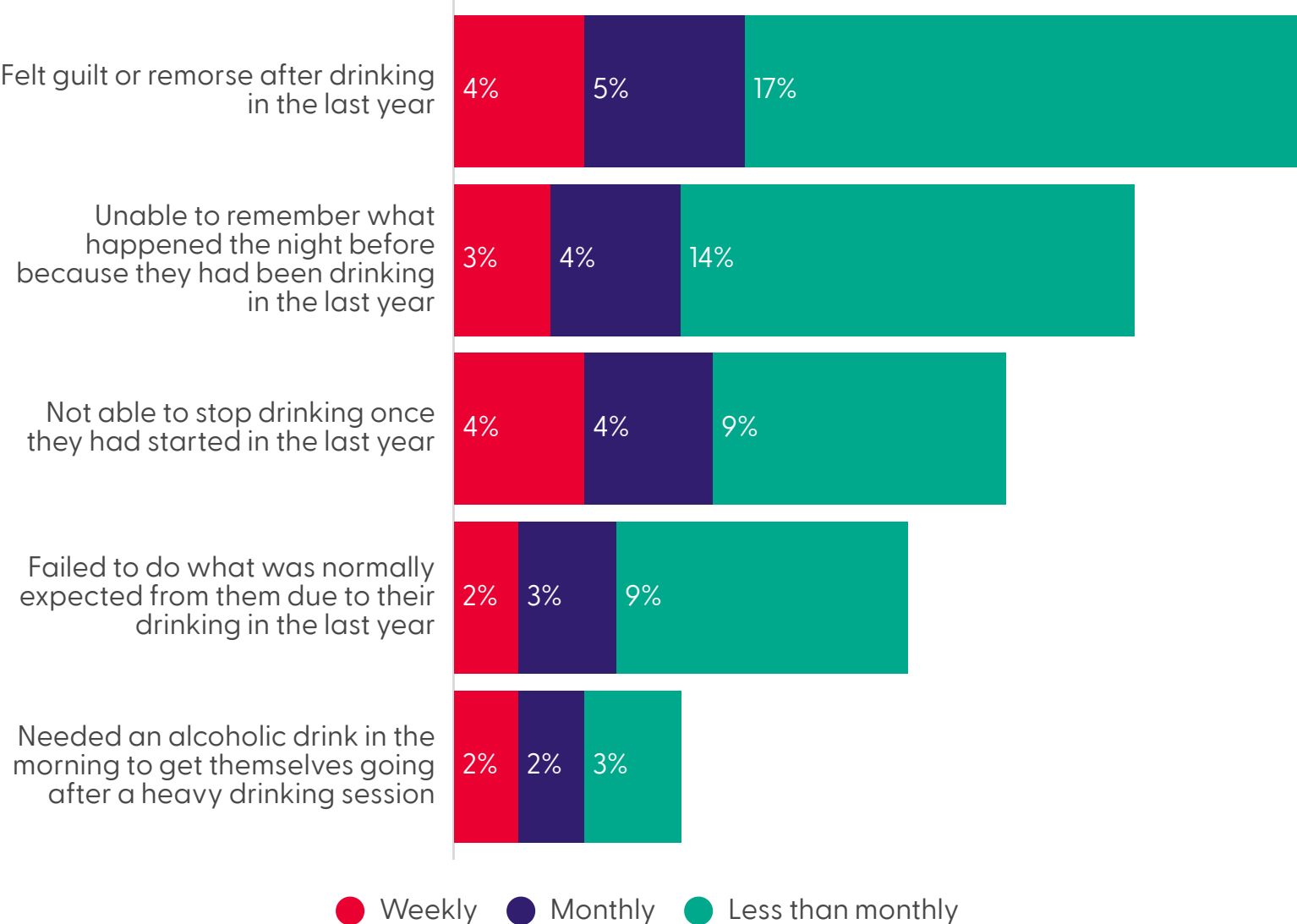
● Low risk ● Increasing risk  
● High risk or possible dependence

 AUDIT-C and AUDIT. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2022 (n=5,428); 2021 (n=7,911)

# One in four drinkers have felt guilt after drinking in the last year

This level (25%) has not changed over the last three years

% of UK drinkers who report doing any of the following risky behaviours



## One in ten (10%) drinkers have had a concern raised about their drinking

- There are signs of this falling from 12% in 2022
- Male drinkers are more likely to have had a concern raised to them (14% vs 6% of female drinkers)
- 27% have had a concern raised about their drinking if they drink above the weekly guidelines, more than 4x higher than those drinking within the guidelines (6%)
- 32% have had a concern raised if they drink 6+ times a week, 3x higher than those who drink 1-3 times a week (11%)



## 12% of drinkers have injured themselves or someone else as a result of their drinking

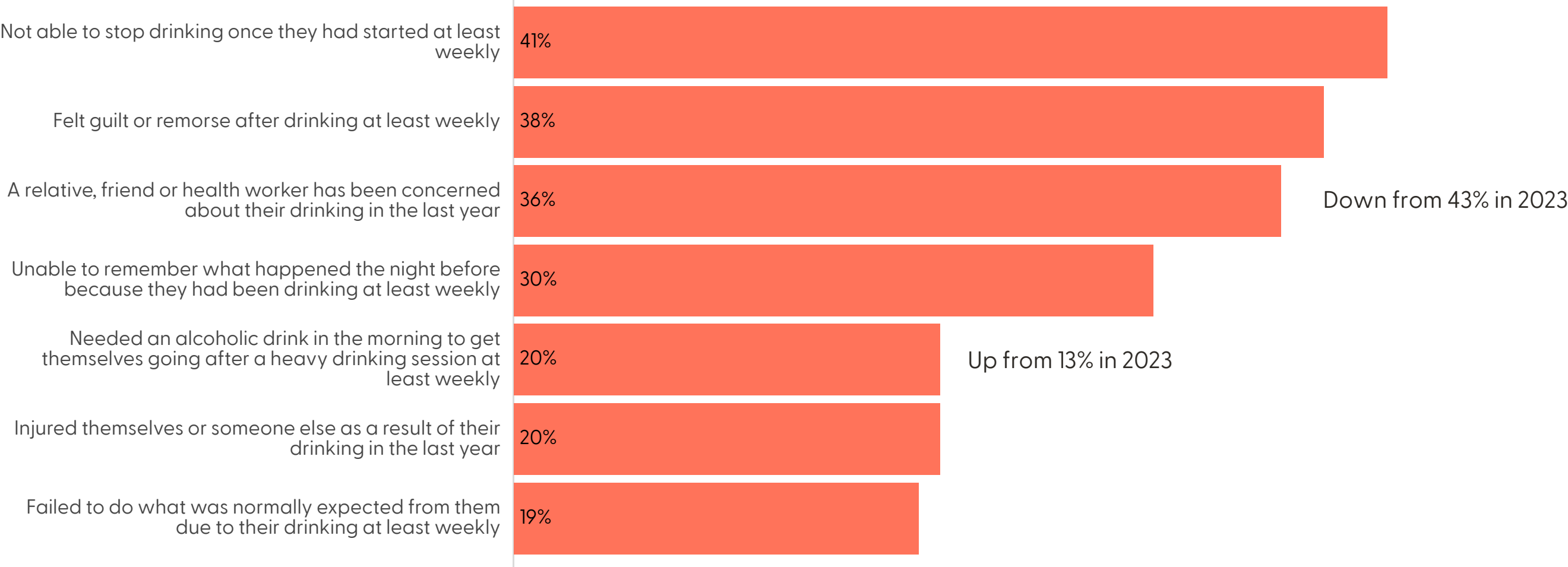
2% in the last year

AUDIT questions. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376)

# High risk drinkers regularly exhibit these risky behaviours

Two in five high risk drinkers find they are not able to stop drinking once they start at least weekly, 10x higher than all drinkers

% of high risk or possibly dependent drinkers (AUDIT) reporting...



AUDIT questions. Base: all UK adults who have an AUDIT score of 16+; 2024 (n=303); 2023 (n=538)

# Who is most likely to be a high risk drinker?

All data based on the full AUDIT assessment - high risk includes possible dependence



## Males

9% of male drinkers are high risk or possibly dependent, compared to 5% of female drinkers



## 18 to 24 year olds

15% of 18 to 24 year olds who drink alcohol are high risk or possibly dependent, compared to 3% of drinkers aged 55+



## Ethnic minority groups

12% of drinkers from an ethnic minority group are high risk or possibly dependent, compared to 6% of white drinkers



## Live with friends or housemates

15% of drinkers who live with friends / housemates are high risk or possibly dependent, compared to 5% who live with a spouse or partner



## Mental health issues

16% of drinkers with a positive depression screen (PHQ-4assessment) are high risk or possibly dependent, compared to 4% of drinkers who screen negative



**However, this is not the case for age and ethnicity when we look at AUDIT-C screening which just accounts for basic consumption levels**

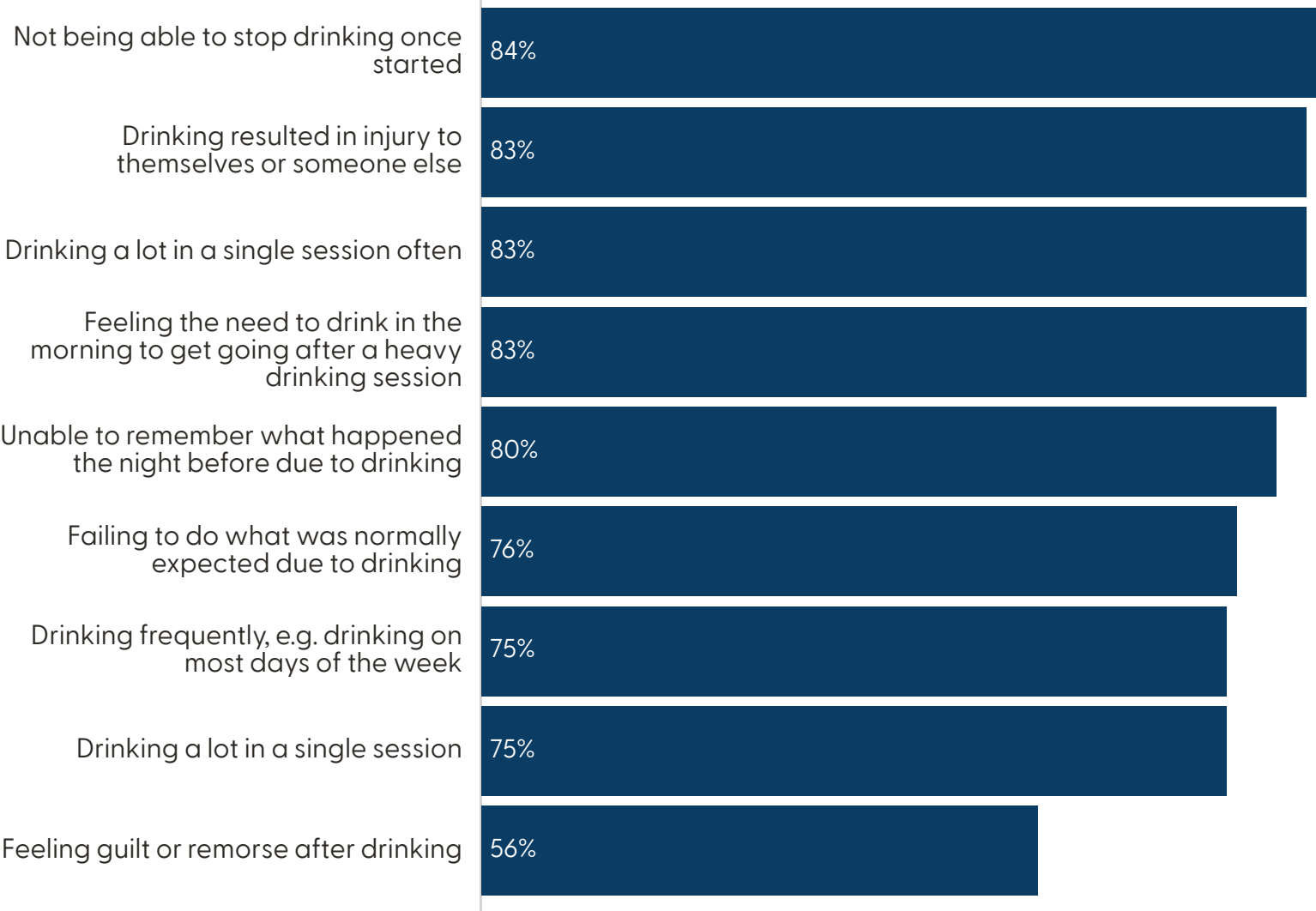
- 16% of 35 to 54 year olds who drink alcohol are high risk or possibly dependent on the AUDIT-C, compared to 12% of 18-34 year olds and those aged 55+
- 14% of drinkers who are white are high risk or possibly dependent on the AUDIT-C, compared to 9% of those from an ethnic minority group

**This suggests that although these groups are not drinking as much or as often as others overall (measured by AUDIT-C), when they do drink, they are more likely to experience dependency symptoms and adverse consequences of drinking (measured by the full AUDIT).**

# Most but not all drinkers recognise risky drinking behaviour

They are least likely to recognise a feeling of guilt/remorse as a sign of alcohol harm

% of UK drinkers who feel the following drinking behaviours are risky (selecting 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5)



**Context: Options based on AUDIT questions that assess consumption, symptoms of alcohol dependence and adverse consequences of drinking alcohol**



## Binge drinkers are less likely to feel that drinking a lot in a single session is risky

- 83% who never binge drink consider drinking a lot in a single session to be risky, compared to 69% of those who binge drink at least weekly
- The gap closes somewhat if this happens often, with 77% of those who binge drink weekly considering it to be risky; 86% if they never binge drink



AUDIT questions. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376)

# High risk drinkers are less likely to feel these behaviours are risky

High risk drinkers are significantly less likely to consider the following behaviours as risky...

% who feel the following are risky (selecting 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5)



## Not being able to stop drinking once started

76% of high risk drinkers feel this is risky, lower than 87% of low risk drinkers



## Needing a drink in the morning to 'get going' after a heavy session

72% of high risk drinkers feel this is risky, lower than 78% of increasing risk drinkers and 85% of low risk drinkers



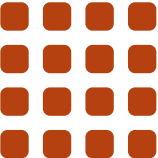
## Drinking resulted in injury to themselves or someone else

74% of high risk drinkers feel this is risky, lower than 80% of increasing risk drinkers and 85% of low risk drinkers



## Increasing risk drinkers are less likely than others to consider binge drinking as risky

Even though they are less likely to binge drink than high risk drinkers: 29% of increasing risk drinkers binge drink at least weekly, less than half of high risk drinkers (66%)



## Drinking a lot in a single session

66% of increasing risk drinkers feel this is risky, lower than 74% of high risk drinkers and 78% of low risk drinkers



## Drinking a lot in a single session often

77% of increasing risk drinkers feel this is risky, lower than 84% of low risk drinkers

All data based on drinkers who score 16+ on the full AUDIT assessment

# Attitudes towards problem drinking

Attitudes, stigma, getting help and  
recognising signs of problem drinking

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**Take me to...**

[Introducing the research](#) | [Highlights](#) | [Drinking in the UK in 2024](#) | [Moderation and guidelines](#) | [Health, concern and high risk drinking](#) | [Attitudes towards drinking](#) | [About Drinkaware](#); [About PS Research](#) | [Appendix](#)

# Attitudes, stigma and getting help: **what to look out for**



People appear to feel it most likely that someone has a problem with alcohol if it gets them into some kind of trouble, e.g. being late for work, being in trouble with the police, causing financial difficulties



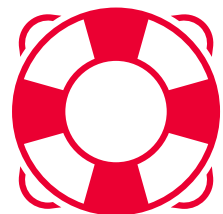
High risk drinkers are less likely to spot the potential signs of an alcohol problem



Half of UK adults (53%) feel someone with an alcohol problem is in some way different to everyone else and nearly two-thirds (64%) feel they are not respected in the same way but only 38% feel someone with an alcohol problem is responsible for their struggles



If someone was worried about their own drinking, the biggest potential barriers to seeking help appear to be having to admit to others that they have a problem and the belief that they can handle the problem themselves



Two in five drinkers would not reach out to any health/support organisation if they needed support or advice about alcohol



# Putting stigma and attitudes into context



**It is important to consider the following when reviewing the findings from the latest Monitor**

While the data in this section reflects the views of all UK drinkers on what might prevent them from seeking help for alcohol-related issues, it is crucial to acknowledge the complexity behind these responses to avoid oversimplification. Although they might be similar in one respect (e.g. their drinking behaviour), they can be very different in other aspects of their lives. It's important to recognise that people have broader life experiences that affect their behaviour and/or attitudes.

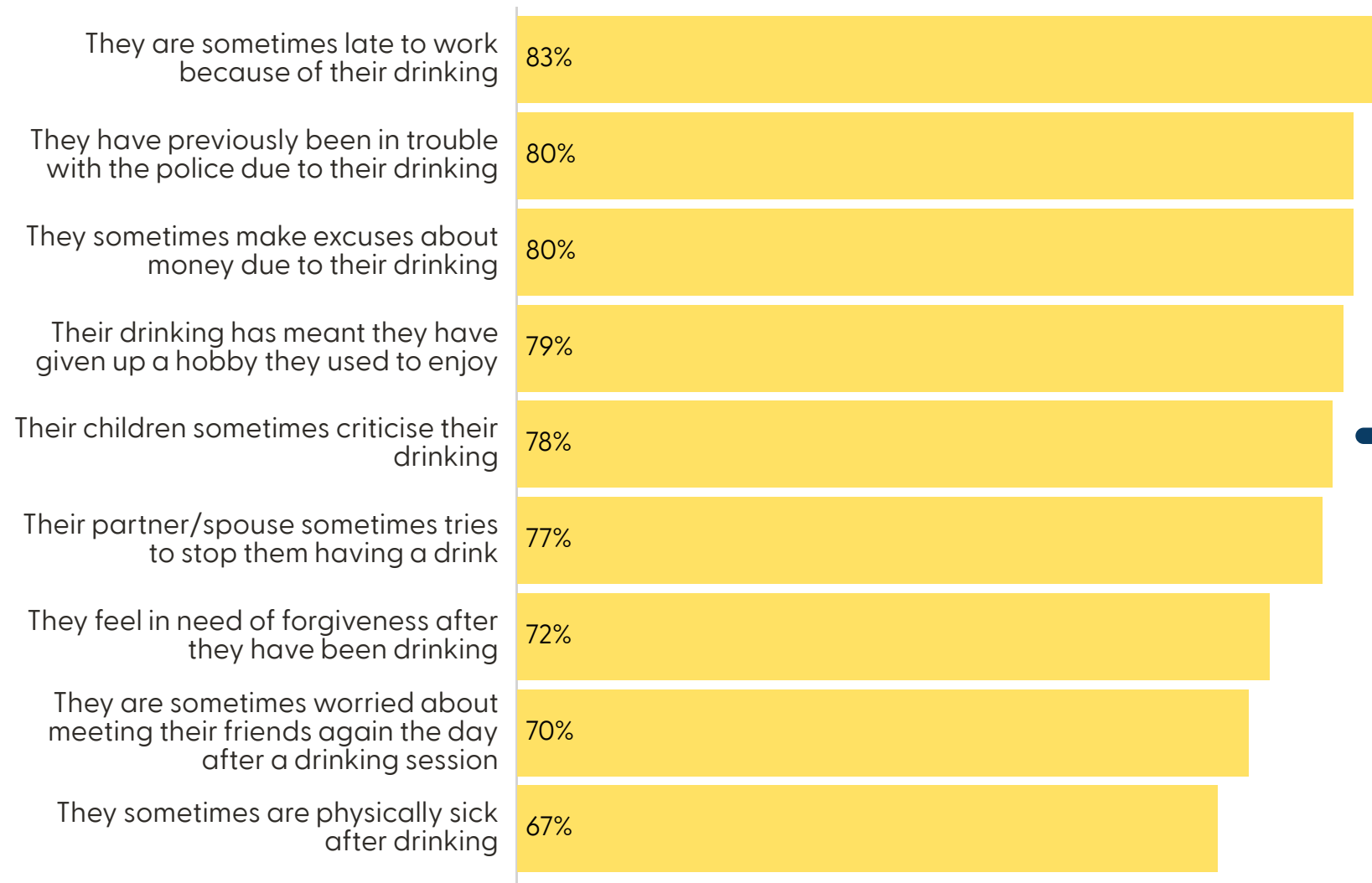
So although our focus is on drinking behaviour and attitudes, broader social and cultural factors, along with personal life experiences and past encounters with help-seeking, also play a significant role in shaping these responses.

Moreover, within this group, there is likely a subset of individuals who are alcohol-dependent or have other health conditions that influence in their responses. Belief in self-management, reluctance to change, and difficulty in admitting having a problem may not simply stem from choice, but can be compounded by the nature of other health conditions, making it much more difficult for them to seek the help they need.

# Are we able to recognise the signs of an alcohol problem?

Being late for work because of drinking appears to be the biggest sign of an alcohol problem to people

% who feel it is likely someone has a problem with alcohol if... (selecting 'very/somewhat likely')



**Context: all these options are drinking behaviours associated with someone who may have a problem with alcohol**

Based on the Alcohol Problems Questionnaire (APQ)<sup>13</sup>



**Rises to 82% if they have children aged 18 or over**



**Relative to other behaviours, being physically sick due to drinking is less likely to be considered a sign of an alcohol problem**

This is lower amongst people aged 18-34, with 54% feeling it signals an alcohol problem compared to 78% of those aged 55+



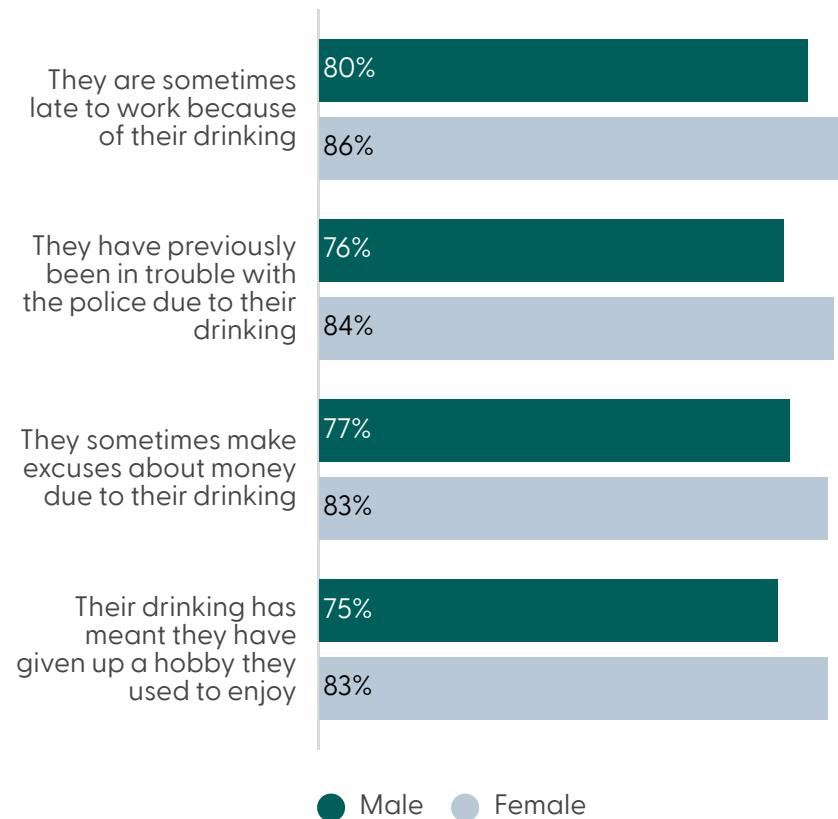
Likelihood that someone has a problem with alcohol. Base: all UK adults. 2024 (n=5,143)

# Some groups are less likely to recognise signs of an alcohol problem

When focusing on the top four things people feel is likely to be a sign of an alcohol problem, the following groups are less likely to consider them as problematic



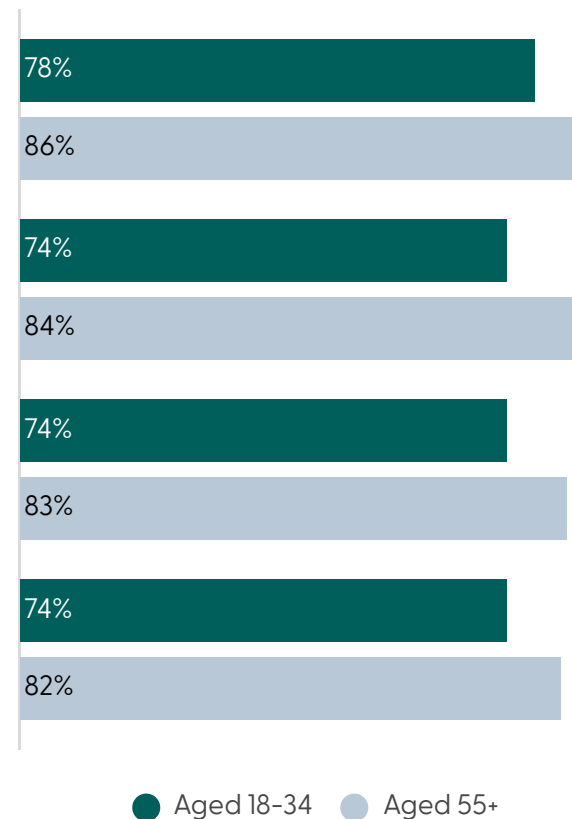
Men



● Male ● Female



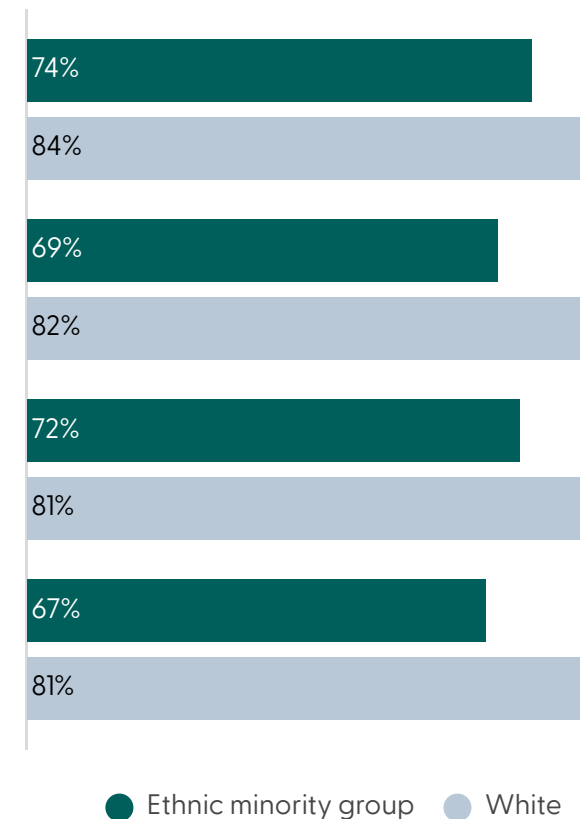
Young people  
(aged 18-34)



● Aged 18-34 ● Aged 55+



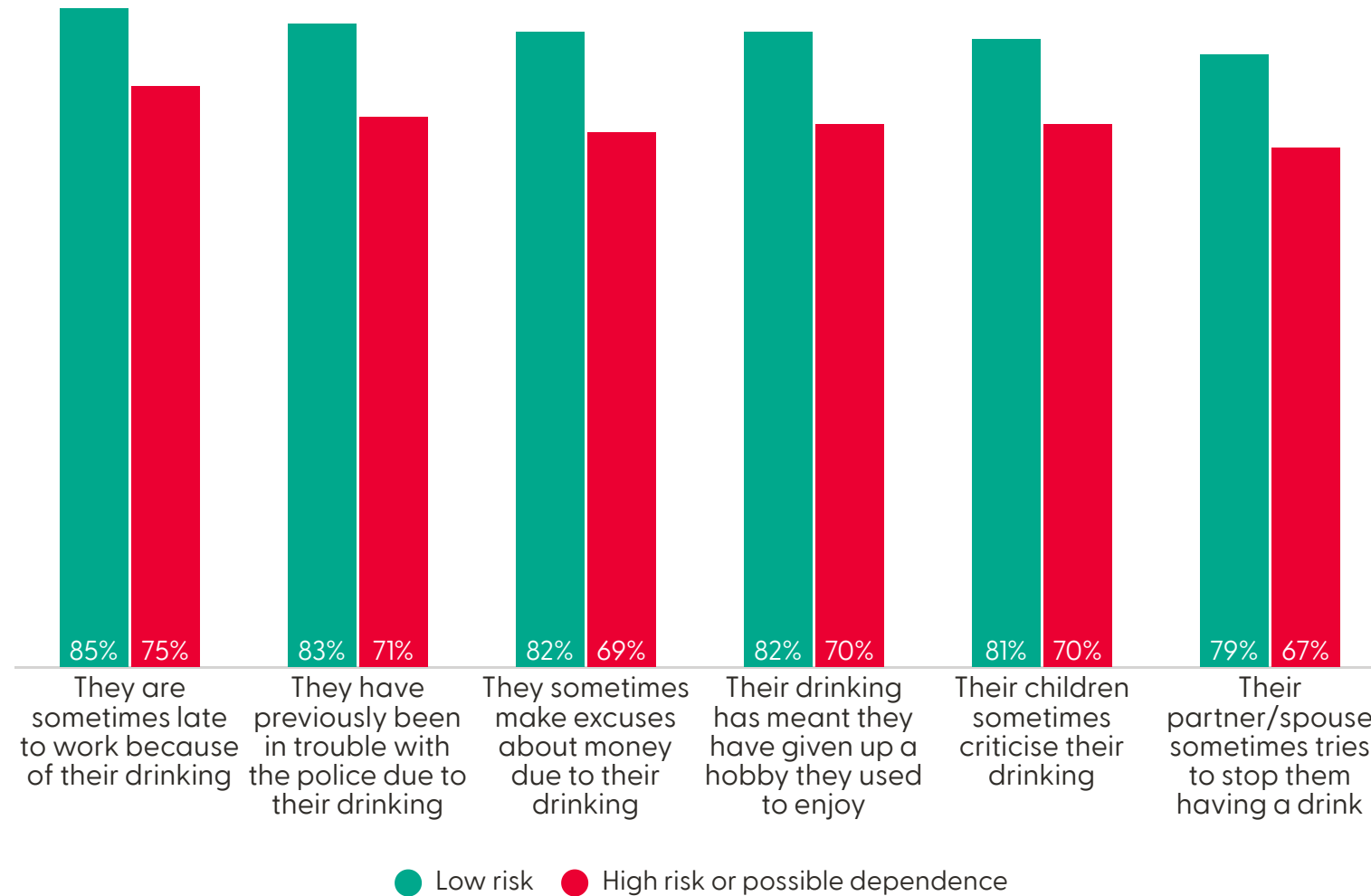
Ethnic minority  
groups



● Ethnic minority group ● White

# High risk drinkers are also less likely to feel different behaviours are a sign of a problem with alcohol

% who feel it is likely someone has a problem with alcohol if... (top 6)



Likelihood that someone has a problem with alcohol. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol to low risk levels (n=3,112); all UK adults who drink alcohol to high risk or possibly dependent levels (n=303)

“ My girlfriends will joke about how I can walk into places and leave my memory there. I can have a few glasses of wine and just forget what happened. They will say ‘we organised this or we were talking about this’ and I haven’t got a clue. [...] I don’t count myself as a drinker.

(Qualitative research participant, 2023; High risk drinker, AUDIT-C)

“ The only time we feel like we are getting through to my brother a bit is when he has done something wrong. Like he has stole from my mum and dad or got into a really bad fight. Then he seems to think, maybe I do have a problem [with alcohol].

(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

# People are more likely to think that those with a drinking problem are different and not respected, but less likely to feel they are responsible for their struggles

Of UK adults...

**64%** Feel someone with an alcohol problem is not respected in the same way as everyone else is



AND...

**53%** Feel someone with an alcohol problem is different to everyone else



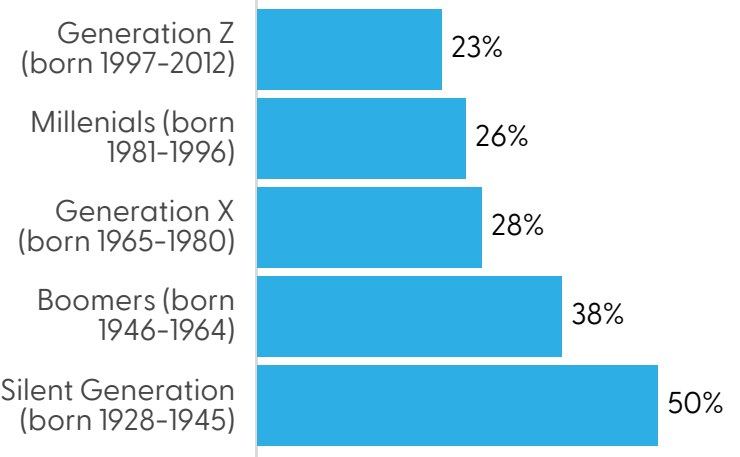
BUT ONLY...

**38%** Feel someone with an alcohol problem is responsible for their struggles



## Stigma around alcohol appears to be generational

A combined stigma score\* across these three questions shows that 'high stigma' increases by generation



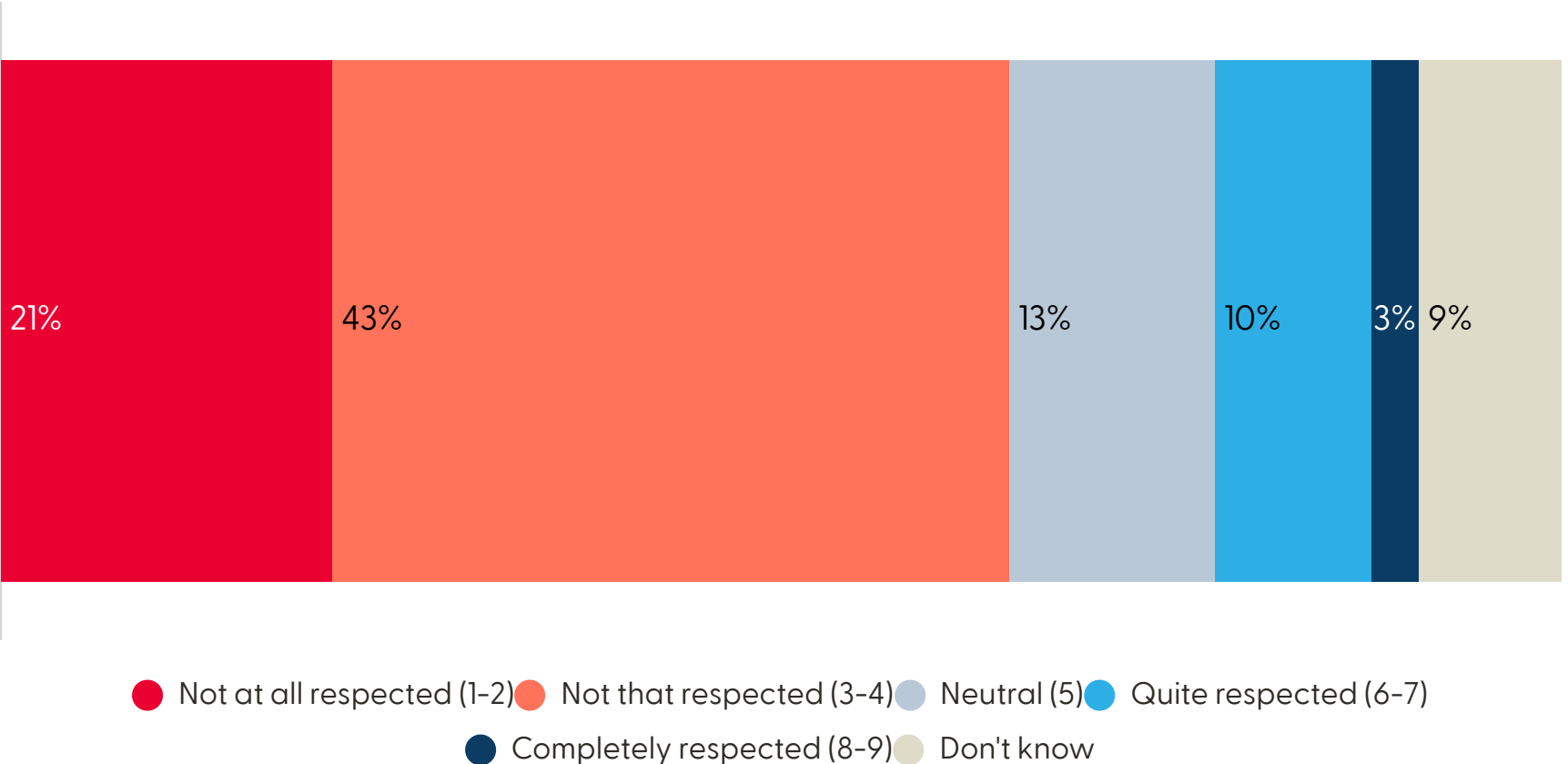
\*Stigma scoring calculated by combining the score of each of the three stigma questions which were rated 1-9: where an overall score of 3-9 is low stigma, 10-18 medium and 19-27 high

# Nearly two-thirds feel people with an alcohol problem are not respected



**64% of UK adults feel someone with an alcohol problem is not respected compared to everyone else; just 14% feel they are respected**

How respected or not people think someone with an alcohol problem is compared to the general population, on a scale of 1-9 where 1 = not at all respected and 9 = completely respected



**Older people and those who never binge drink are less likely to respect those with an alcohol problem**

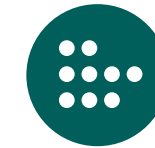
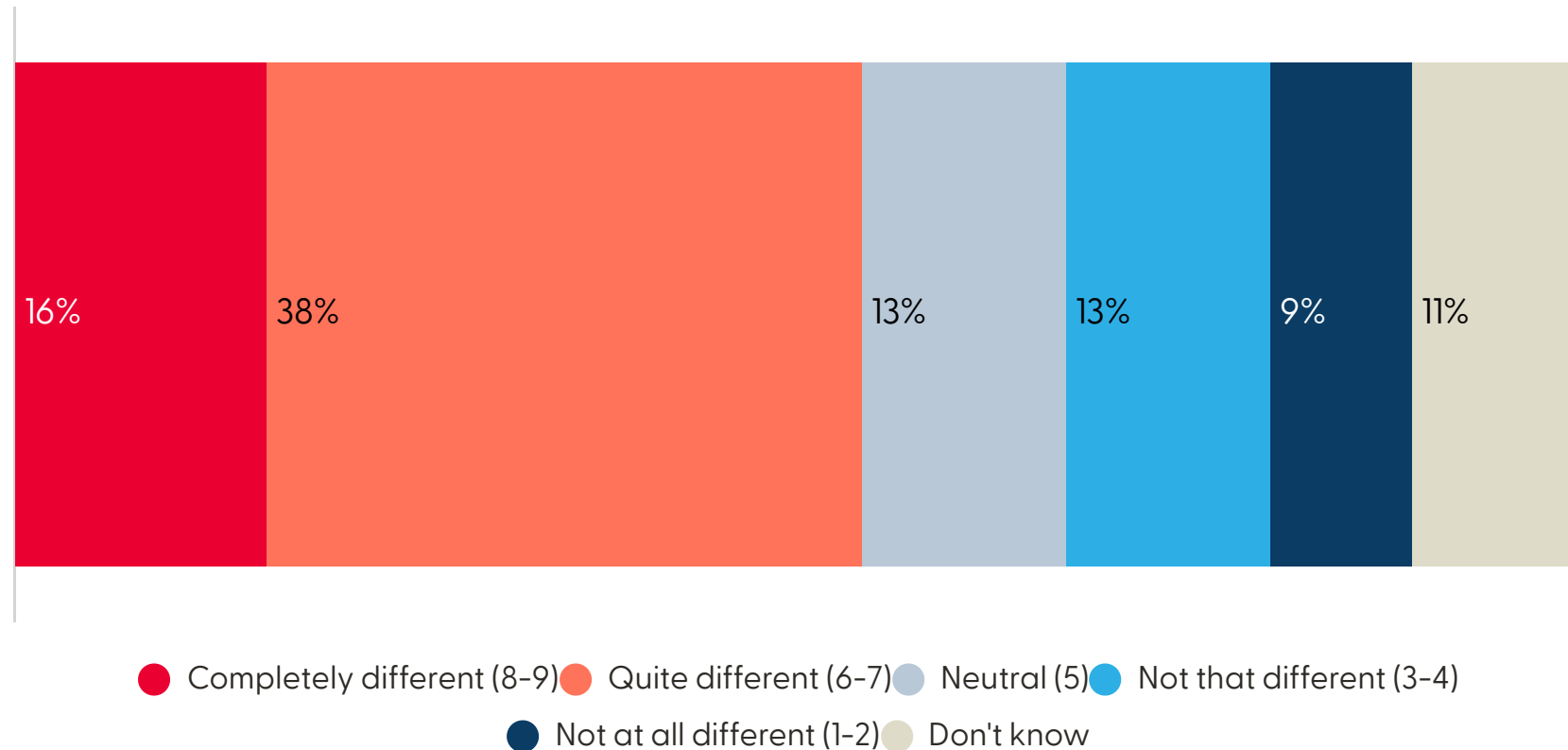
- One in four (24%) of adults aged 55+ feel people with an alcohol problem are not at all respected, compared to 19% of those under the age of 55
- The same proportion (24%) of drinkers who never binge drink feel people with an alcohol problem are not at all respected, compared to 19% if they do binge drink

Respect of person with an alcohol problem compared to general population Base: all UK adults. 2024 (n=5,143)

# And over half feel people with an alcohol problem are in some way different

- + 53% of UK adults feel someone with an alcohol problem is in some way different to everyone else; one in five (22%) feel they are not different

How different or not people think someone with an alcohol problem is compared to the general population, on a scale of 1-9 where 1 = not at all different and 9 = completely different



**Those who drink more in a typical drinking day are less likely to feel someone with an alcohol problem is different**

48% of drinkers who consume 5+ units when drinking feel someone with an alcohol problem is different (score of 6-9), lower than 55% of those drinking up to 4 units



**UK adults who are lesbian, gay or bisexual are more likely to feel that people with an alcohol problem are not at all different to everyone else**

18% feel this way, more than double the proportion of heterosexual adults (8%)



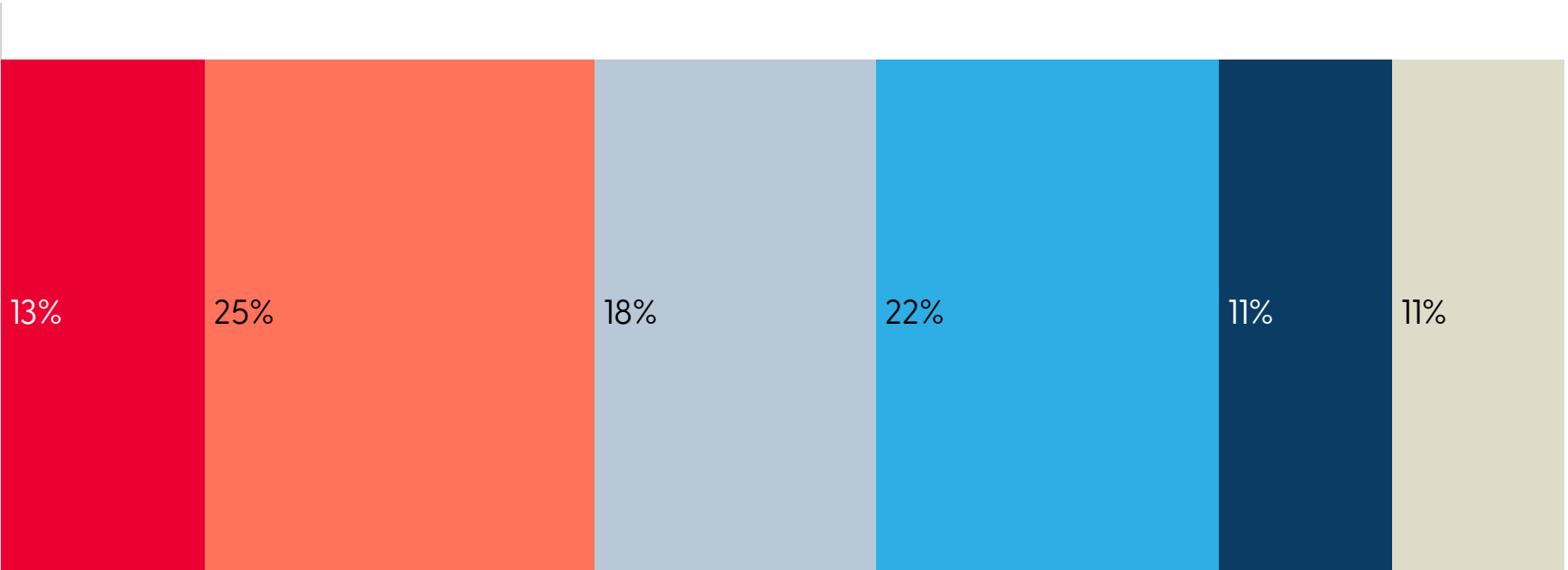
Difference of person with an alcohol problem compared to general population Base: all UK adults. 2024 (n=5,143)

# People are more split on whether someone is responsible for their alcohol struggles

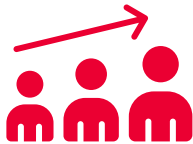


**38% of UK adults feel someone with an alcohol problem is responsible for their alcohol struggles; a third (33%) feel they are not responsible**

How responsible or not people think someone with an alcohol problem is for their struggles with alcohol, on a scale of 1-9 where 1 = not at all responsible and 9 = completely responsible



● Completely responsible (8-9) ● Quite responsible (6-7) ● Neutral (5) ● Not that responsible (3-4)  
● Not at all responsible (1-2) ● Don't know



**Older people are more likely to feel people with an alcohol problem are completely responsible for their struggles**

16% of UK adults aged 55+ feel this way, compared to 10% of adults aged 18-34

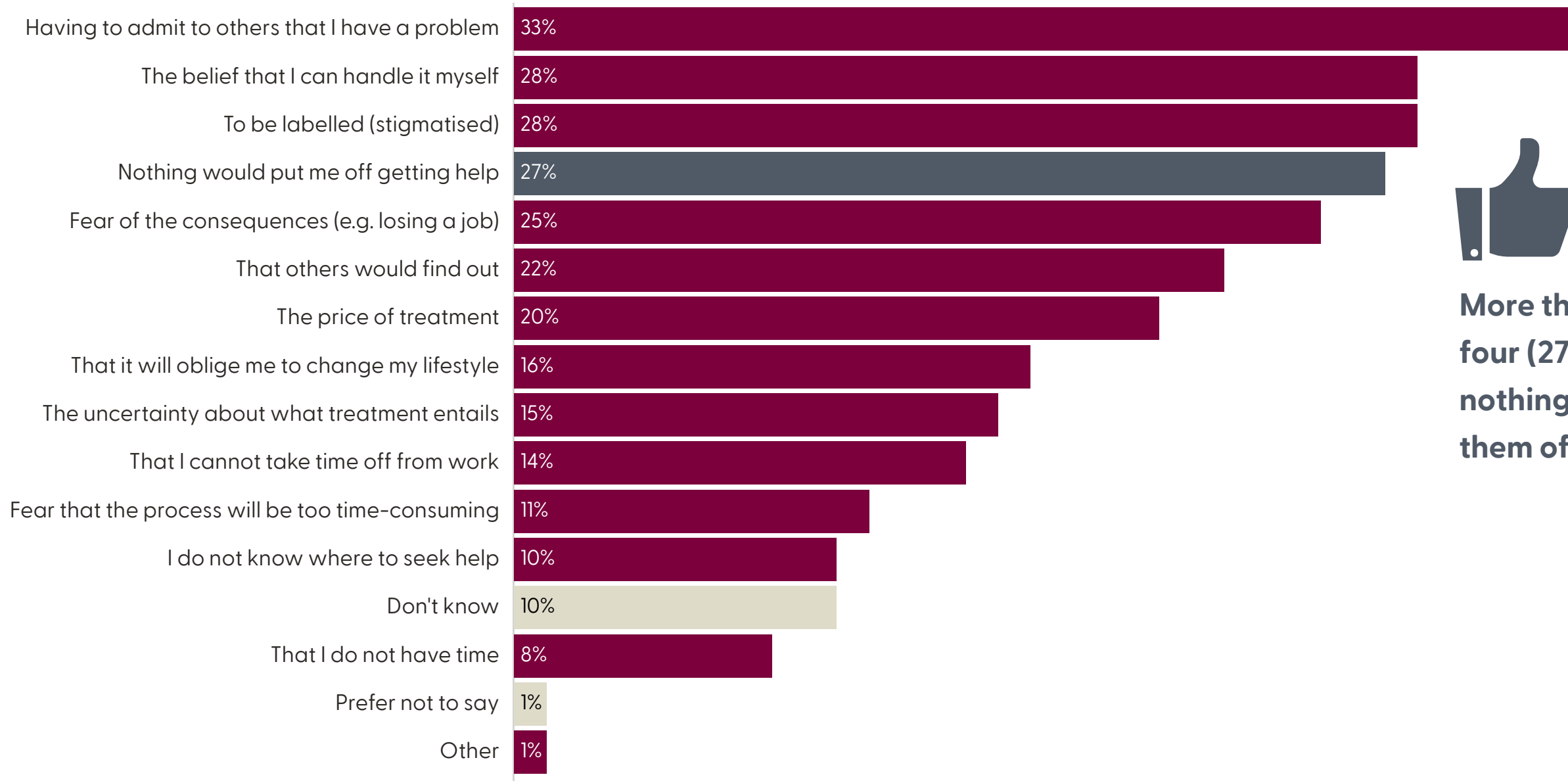


Responsibility of person with an alcohol problem for their struggles. Base: all UK adults. 2024 (n=5,143)



# What might put people off seeking help if they were worried about their drinking?

## Admitting it to others appears to be the biggest barrier overall



More than one in four (27%) feel nothing would put them off getting help



Barriers to seeking help. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376)

# Previous research found that people did not always feel their drinking was an issue when someone else raised a concern



Qualitative research conducted in 2023 amongst people who had raised a concern with a friend/family member about their drinking found that when raising these concerns...



**The person whose drinking was a concern often didn't accept or agree it was a problem**

In the qualitative research, several participants who had started a conversation with someone about their concern over that person's drinking habits found that the individual denied there was an issue



**Others felt the person drinking at concerning levels may be worried about the impact of admitting they needed help**



When you have the conversation with them, they are like, oh don't worry, everything's going to be fine. They just minimise it.

(Qualitative research participant, 2023)



My brother-in-law is in denial. As a man, you always want to be strong and he doesn't want to talk about any weaknesses. And I think he's afraid of what might follow if he realises he's got a problem. Then he would have to maybe get some professional help. Or go somewhere to undergo treatment. Maybe it's a fear.

(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

# More than one in four people worry about being labelled

**28% of UK adults feel being labelled might put them off seeking help with their drinking. This appears to be a valid concern given that close to two thirds of UK adults feel that those with an alcohol problem are not respected.**

**Who is most likely to be worried about being labelled or stigmatised?**



## **Live with housemates**

39% of adults who live with friends or housemates feel being labelled might put them off seeking help, compared to 27% of those who live with a spouse/partner.



## **Women**

30% of female adults feel being labelled might put them off seeking help, compared to 25% of males.



## **Suffer from anxiety**

33% of drinkers with anxiety (PHQ) feel being labelled might put them off seeking help, compared to 24% with a normal mental health score.

“ My mum will say, alcoholics drink in the morning and I don't drink in the morning. Some days she will wait till one minute past 12 just to have the satisfaction that she is not drinking in the morning.

(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

# Many of those who drink the most feel they can do it themselves

28% of UK drinkers feel a belief that they can 'handle it myself' might put them off seeking help

 This rises to...

**41%** If they drink above the weekly guidelines

**42%** If they have some or a large concern about their own drinking

**55%** If someone else has raised a concern about their drinking in the last 12 months



Having to change their lifestyle\* is also a potential barrier for those who have had a concern raised about their drinking in the last 12 months

44% feel it will oblige them to change their lifestyle which might put them off seeking help (compared to 14% of those who have not had a concern raised about their drinking)

\*'Lifestyle' could be considered a simple description and may not reflect the complex issues in someone's life.

# High risk drinkers participating in previous qualitative research also felt they would be able to handle it themselves if it became a problem



Qualitative research conducted in 2023 amongst high risk drinkers (who had had a concern raised about their drinking by someone close to them) found that...



## Drinkers often feel they could change their drinking habits 'if it became a problem'

In the qualitative research, several participants who were classed as high risk drinkers (on AUDIT-C) mentioned that they were confident that they would be able to stop/reduce their drinking if they felt it had become a problem.

“ I think if I was ever getting to a point where I was thinking this is too much or I am becoming reliant on this, I think I would be able to change.  
(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

“ My wife thinks I drink too often. I know that it is in my control to change it. I probably should make more of an effort for her.  
(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

“ I have been reading a self-help book on stopping drinking. I thought that would be a good place to start.  
(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

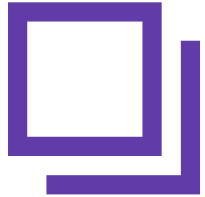
“ I think work stress is a trigger for my drinking. I am going to take some time off work and cut down on drinking when I don't have that stress. I'm going to speak to my doctor tomorrow about my stress, but I don't think I will mention anything about the alcohol. I am going to see if I can reduce my intake. I am basically going to stage my own intervention.  
(Qualitative research participant, 2023)

# And time is raised as a barrier by drinkers who are at highest risk



Those drinkers classified as high risk or possibly dependent were much more likely to identify a potential barrier relating to time

- 21% fear that the process will be too time-consuming (compared to 9% of low risk drinkers)
- 19% simply feel they do not have the time (compared to 6% of low risk drinkers)



This is in addition to being significantly more likely to feel that...



**They can handle it themselves**

42% selected this, the most common selection and significantly higher than low risk drinkers (24%)



**It will oblige them to change their lifestyle**

36% selected this, the second highest selection and significantly higher than low risk drinkers (11%)

# Few drinkers have ever sought help or advice about their drinking

**Just 3% of drinkers have ever contacted a service or organisation for help/advice about their drinking**

% who have ever contacted a service or organisation for help or advice about alcohol on their own behalf

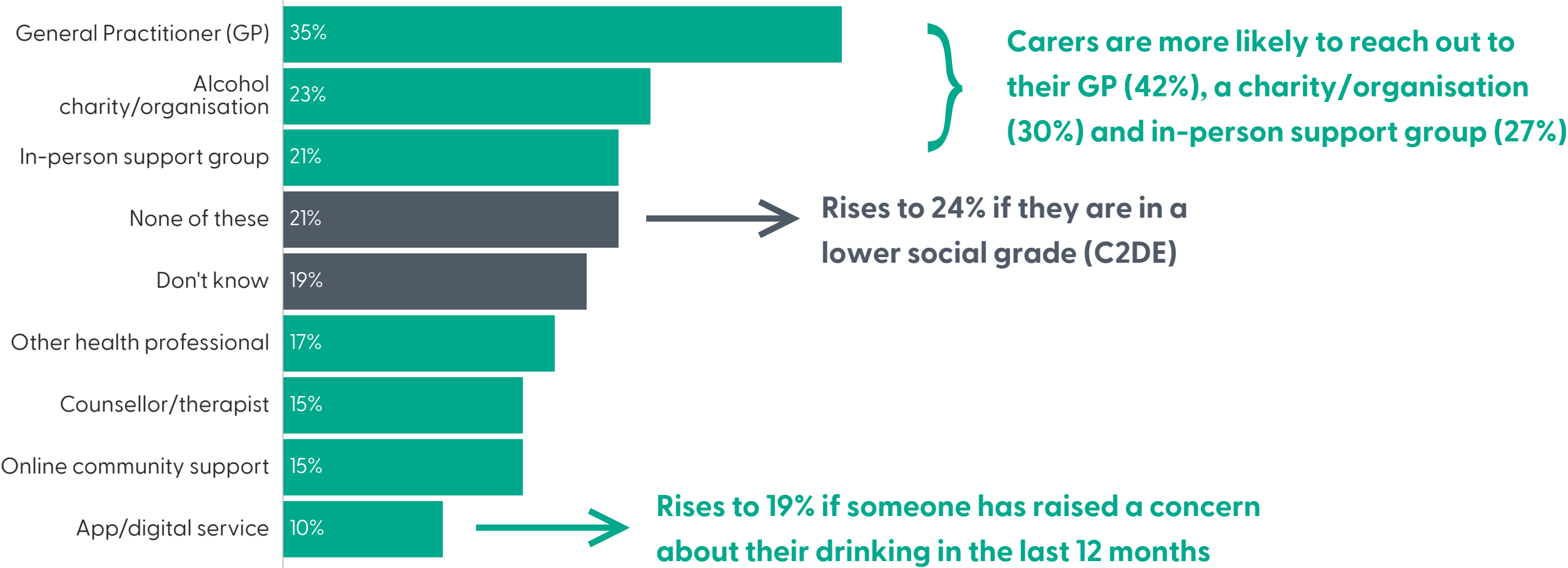


Contacted service or organisation about alcohol. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376); Some concern for own drinking (n=523); Someone else raised a concern (n=445); Large concern for own drinking (n=73); All UK adults (n=5,143)

# And two in five drinkers would not reach out for support or advice

21% of UK drinkers would not reach out to any of the organisations or services listed and 19% don't know

% of UK drinkers who would reach out to the following if they need support or advice about alcohol



Reach out for support. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2024 (n=4,376)



# Just one in four adults have completed an alcohol assessment

27% of UK adults have been asked to complete an alcohol assessment, meaning seven in ten have never been asked to complete one

 This rises to...

32% If they binge drink

35% If they drink above the weekly guidelines

36% If they drink 4+ times a week

42% If they feel their drinking will lead to future health problems

43% If they are concerned about their own drinking

52% If someone has raised a concern about their drinking



If they have been asked to complete an alcohol assessment, it is most likely to have been at a GP surgery

- 20% of UK adults have been asked to complete an alcohol assessment at a GP surgery, whilst 7% have been asked to complete one in another healthcare setting
- Just 4% have completed an alcohol assessment on a website or app, although this rises to 18% if they are classified as a high risk or possibly dependent drinker (AUDIT)



Two in five (39%) of high risk or possibly dependent drinkers have not been asked to complete an alcohol assessment or accessed any support or advice for alcohol

# Spotlights

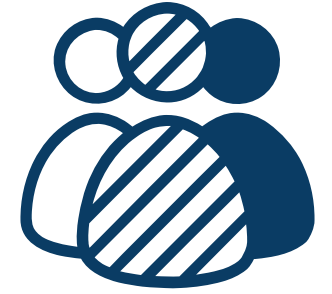
Profiling specific population groups

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# Ethnic minority groups



## A third don't drink, but those who do tend to go out drinking

- 33% of UK adults in ethnic minority groups do not drink alcohol, 2.5x higher than white adults (13%)
- Of those who do drink, they are more likely to go out drinking with others, either as an evening or night out (24% at least once a week compared to 14% of white drinkers) or when getting together at their or someone else's house (22% at least once a week, 3x higher than the 7% of white drinkers)



## They tend to moderate their drinking

- 62% set themselves a drinking limit (compared to 50% of white drinkers), 50% drink smaller glasses or bottles (36% for white drinkers), 45% drink lower strength drinks (33% for white drinkers) and 41% use non-alcoholic substitutes (30% for white drinkers)
- They are twice as likely to feel their drinking could lead to future health problems (30% compared to 15% of white drinkers) which might contribute to moderating their drinking more



## Drinkers are more likely to be 'high risk' when risky behaviours are considered

- When looking only at alcohol consumption (AUDIT-C), UK drinkers in ethnic minority groups are less likely to be classified as a high risk drinker (9% compared to 14% of white drinkers)
- But they are more likely to be a high risk drinker (12% compared to 6% of white drinkers) when risky behaviours are factored in (full AUDIT), meaning they are more likely to have experienced symptoms associated with alcohol dependence and adverse consequences of drinking
- And they are less likely to see the signs of an alcohol problem: for example, 67% think it is likely that giving up a hobby due to drinking is a sign (compared to 81% of white drinkers) and 69% think it is likely that getting into trouble with the police is a sign (compared to 82% of white drinkers)

# Generation Z

**Context: born between 1997 and 2012, 17% live with friends/housemates and nearly half (47%) live with parents/siblings**



## One in four don't drink, but of those who do...

- They drink more units: one in five (20%) drink 7+ units on a typical day when drinking compared to 10% of boomers who drink
- Three in four (75%) have binge drunk in the last year, more than any other generation
- They are more likely than other generations to drink at someone else's house (17% do this at least once a week) and on a night out with friends (28% do this at least once a week)



## They are more likely to exhibit risky behaviours associated with drinking

- They are the generation most likely to be high risk based on the AUDIT when risky behaviours are considered: 15% of drinkers in this generation are high risk, around double that of millennial drinkers (8%) and generation X (7%) and 5x higher than boomers (3%)
- 16% are unable to remember what happened the night before due to drinking at least monthly, twice as high as any other generation
- 9% have injured themselves or others due to their drinking in the last year, 3x higher than any other generation



## They recognise their drinking could lead to future health problems

- This generation are more likely than others to feel their drinking is likely to lead to future health problems (22% feel it is very/fairly likely)
- And they don't necessarily know where to seek help, with 19% selecting this as a barrier compared to 11% of millennials and 6% of boomers
- They are less likely than other generations to feel being labelled is a barrier and don't attach the same stigma to people with an alcohol problem: 23% of Generation Z adults gave a high stigma score, significantly lower than boomers (38%) and half that of the silent generation (50%)



## Whilst not more likely to be a high risk drinker overall, they are more likely to exhibit certain risky behaviours

- 8% of drinkers are high risk drinkers, not significantly different to the 6% of heterosexual drinkers, but more likely to be increasing risk (27% compared to 21% of heterosexual drinkers)\*
- 34% have felt guilt or remorse in the last year due to drinking, higher than 24% of heterosexual drinkers
- 29% have been unable to remember what happened the night before due to drinking, higher than 20% of heterosexual drinkers
- 18% have injured themselves or others due to drinking, higher than 11% of heterosexual drinkers



## They are both more likely to have caused concern and be concerned about others

- 14% have had a concern raised about their drinking, higher than 9% of heterosexual drinkers
- 38% of LGBTQ+ adults are concerned about someone else's drinking, higher than 27% of heterosexual adults



## They do not attach the same stigma to an alcohol problem that others do

- 35% do not think that someone with an alcohol problem is different to the rest of the population, compared to 20% of heterosexual adults
- They are more likely to feel being labelled is a barrier to seeking help (34% compared to 27% of heterosexual drinkers)
- Although they are also more likely to identify a number of barriers compared to heterosexual drinkers, including price, time and a reluctance to change their lifestyle

\*Based on the full AUDIT assessment which considers a range of risky behaviours alongside alcohol consumption

# Higher social grades

Those in the highest AB social grades, compared to those in the lowest DE social grades



## They are more likely to drink, but not to high risk levels

- One in ten (10%) never drink alcohol, half the proportion of UK adults in lower social grades (20%)
- One in four (26%) binge drink at least monthly, higher than 21% of drinkers in lower social grades
- They are more likely to go out drinking on nights out with friends (18% do this weekly or more often compared to 11% of drinkers in lower social grades)
- But there is no difference in levels of high risk drinking (AUDIT), although they are more likely to be 'increasing risk' both for AUDIT-C alcohol consumption (31% compared to 23% of drinkers in lower social grades) and AUDIT with additional risk behaviours factored (26% compared to 17% of drinkers in lower social grades)



## There is some concern around their own drinking and they are more likely to moderate

- They are more concerned about their own drinking (17% compared to 11% of drinkers in lower social grades) and are more likely to feel their drinking will affect their future health (20% compared to 13% of drinkers in lower social grades)
- They are more likely to moderate drinking through a range of techniques including smaller glasses/bottles (41% compared to 32% of drinkers in lower social grades) and lower strength drinks (38% compared to 30% of drinkers in lower social grades)
- They are increasingly using non-alcoholic substitutes too, with this more than doubling from 18% in 2018 to 38%



## They are more open than others to reach out for support, but also feel they can handle it themselves

- They appear more open to reaching out for support if needed (68% compared to 56% of drinkers in lower social grades) and to have completed an alcohol assessment (36% compared to 23% of drinkers in lower social grades)
- But being labelled could be a barrier (31% compared to 25% of drinkers in lower social grades) and they are also more likely to feel they can handle it themselves (33% compared to 23% of drinkers in lower social grades)

# Appendix

And how to find out more

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# References (1 of 2)

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# 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.

# 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 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.

In 2023, we were Highly Commended at the MRS Awards.

