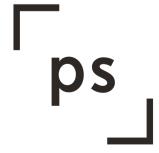
Relationships with alcohol

Attitudes, influences and change in 2025

2025 Drinkaware Monitor

Research Report: August 2025





Take me to...

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Introducing the research

Monitor and qualitative research

Take me to...

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 - individual interviews with 20 adults across the UK to gather more in-depth feedback around moderation. More information on the qualitative approach can be found in the <u>appendix</u>.

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.

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

What doesn't the report cover?

The Drinkaware Monitor 2025 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 Autumn 2025. Drinkaware welcomes secondary analysis of its data, please contact research@drinkaware.co.uk. The technical report \frac{1}{2}, produced by YouGov, includes a copy of the questionnaire.

Acknowledgements

Drinkaware would like to thank YouGov for conducting the survey and PS Research for analysing the survey data, conducting and analysing the qualitative research, and for writing this report; and the participants of the qualitative research for giving their time and being so open and honest.

How to cite this report

Pearson A., & Slater, E. (2025) Relationships with alcohol. Drinkaware Monitor 2025. PS Research and Drinkaware.

Understanding the language

Throughout the report a number of technical terms are used to analyse the results of the Monitor. A <u>glossary</u> is included in the Appendix. The most commonly used are:

- Social Grades are reported using a <u>classification system</u> based on occupation (AB are managerial and professional occupations; DE are semi and unskilled manual workers)²
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation is a measure of relative deprivation for small areas (neighbourhoods) across the UK^{3} . 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.
- We have used the Cabinet Office's advice for writing about ethnicity 4. When analysing findings by ethnicity, we use the term 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except any white categories, including white British.
- <u>AUDIT and AUDIT-C</u>⁵ are methods of screening to assess alcohol use and identify individuals at risk of alcohol-related problems, developed by the World Health Organization.

Where drinking risk levels are referred to when analysing differences across this report, these are based on the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk weekly drinking guidelines. More information on this can be found on <u>page 18</u>.

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 2025 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 to find out more.



Monitor Methodology

- UK wide sample of 7,256 adults aged 18 to 85 were interviewed, including 4,671 in England, 1,031 in Wales, 1,038 in Scotland and 516 in Northern Ireland
- The sample was drawn from the YouGov research panel, with responses collected during June 2025
- 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 $60\% \frac{678}{5}$.

More information on the Methodology can be found in the $\underline{\text{technical report}}^{1}$.

What did we find in 2024?



Positive drinking trends continued and moderation was on the rise

- People were drinking less often and when they did they were drinking fewer units and binge drinking less
- Use of moderation techniques was on the rise but understanding of drinking guidelines was mixed at best



But there were mixed signals around drinking concern

Majority of drinkers had no concerns over their own drinking but concern for other people's drinking had increased



Some drinkers were worried about being labelled

- UK adults were more likely than not to feel someone with a drinking problem is different and not respected
- Concerns about being labelled could deter drinkers from seeking help if they were worried about their drinking



Very few people had assessed their drinking or sought help

One in four adults had been asked to complete an alcohol assessment and very few drinkers had ever sought help or advice for their drinking

Highlights

Summary of key findings

Take me to...

Drinking behaviours



Overall drinking trends are a continuation of what was found in 2024

- No overall change in drinking levels
- When people drink, they are typically drink less than in previous years
- They are increasingly drinking within the weekly unit guidelines
- No change in the frequency of binge drinking or drinking at home alone



People drink to unwind and feel more relaxed in social settings

- Younger drinkers more likely than others to drink for social experiences and confidence, whilst those in middle age groups are more likely to drink to unwind and escape
- People with lower life satisfaction are more likely to drink to unwind too



Buying alcohol from shops appears to be 'all or nothing'

- A third (33%) of drinkers get all their alcohol from shops and off-licences, whilst just over a third (36%) get none of it from shops
- And one in five (22%) start drinking shop-bought alcohol later the same day



Use of low/no alcohol has risen hugely over the last few years

45% of drinkers consumed low or no alcohol in the last 12 months, up from 22% in 2021

Moderation and reducing drinking



The majority of drinkers moderate but it is down on the previous year

- 87% of UK drinkers moderate their drinking, down from 90% in 2024 (this is not necessarily an intention to reduce alcohol use).
- Drinkers who successfully reduce their drinking are more likely to moderate by drinking within the guidelines, staying off alcohol for a fixed period and using non-alcoholic drinks (compared to those who are unsuccessful)



Reasons for moderating vary at different life stages

Younger drinkers aged 18-34 do so to save money (44%) and avoid hangovers (43%), whilst those aged 35-54 are more likely than others to moderate to avoid getting drunk and to get better sleep (both 31%); moderators aged 55+ are more likely to do it to reduce long-term health risks (36%)



More than a third (36%) of drinkers have tried to cut back in the last 12 months

- And three in ten (29%) have successfully reduced their drinking
- One in four (26%) drinkers have felt hungover in the last year and this is the biggest single reason given to want to cut down on drinking



Knowing someone who is cutting back has a positive impact on their own drinking

More than half (57%) of drinkers who have someone in their social circle who is cutting back have tried to reduce their own drinking and close to half (46%) have successfully reduced their drinking, compared to 30% and 24% respectively if they do not have someone in their social circle who is cutting back

Attitudes and concern



57% of UK drinkers feel they are a "fairly normal drinker"

- It is higher for those who drink 2-3 times a week, binge drink monthly or drink at home alone at least once a week
- But the actual data on the UK's drinking reveals that these habits are not "normal"



Most do not think there is anything wrong with their drinking and 77% do not think they need to change

But nearly three in ten (28%) UK adults are concerned about someone else's drinking, mainly due to how much and how often they drink



If someone has had a concern raised about their drinking, they are more likely to recognise that they are a "problem drinker" and need to change

- One in ten (11%) drinkers have had a concern raised about their drinking
- One in five (22%) of these drinkers recognise that they are a "problem drinker" and two in five (40%) think that they need to change their drinking



Few (6%) drinkers have ever sought help or advice about their own drinking

- And two thirds (67%) have never been asked to complete an alcohol assessment
- Two in five (42%) drinkers would not reach out for support or advice

Health



There is a link between health and reducing drinking

- Close to half (47%) identified a reason to cut down relating to their health, particularly to reduce the risk of liver and heart disease
- Those who have tried to cut down are more likely to feel their current drinking will lead to future health problems and to have seen health risks associated with alcohol



Only smoking is considered a bigger public health burden than alcohol

- Those who have seen information about the health risks of alcohol are more likely to feel this way
- Infrequent heavy drinking considered more damaging than regularly drinking smaller amounts



There has been a drop in drinkers feeling their current drinking will lead to future health problems

15% feel it is very or fairly likely, down from 18% in 2024 and as low as it has been over the past 8 years



And people may underestimate alcohol's role in having a healthy lifestyle

When it comes to feeling that they have a healthy lifestyle, there is no significant difference between people who drink regularly and less frequently, whereas there are big differences when it comes to physical activity and diet in particular

Reflections from the Chief Executive



Drinkaware's mission is simple: to reduce alcohol harm.

To achieve this, we know having the right data and insights are crucial. While there have been some encouraging trends in the UK's drinking habits, with more adults drinking less, an increase in people moderating and a decline in binge drinking, significant challenges remain.

That's why **the Drinkaware Monitor** is so important. It's a valuable source of information and offers insights into the UK's drinking patterns and behaviours which can help policy makers, public health, charities and industry when thinking about alcohol. Since 2017, Drinkaware has partnered with YouGov to conduct this annual survey. It remains the UK's only annual, comprehensive, and nationally representative survey of people's drinking patterns, attitudes and experiences.



Karen Tyrell
Drinkaware CEO

This year, we focused on moderation, to better understand what drives people to take that first step in cutting back on their drinking. We found that social connection can be hugely influential in shaping our relationship with alcohol. Four in ten UK adults say they know someone who has stopped drinking or is cutting back. Among younger adults, it's nearly half.

When someone close to us changes their behaviour, it often prompts us to reflect on our own. In fact, you are twice as likely to have reduced your drinking in the past year if you know someone else who has done the same. In essence, as moderation spreads, it can influence those around us, creating a ripple effect.

Despite these encouraging signs, we can't afford to stop there. Around one in five UK drinkers drink above the Chief Medical Officer's low-risk drinking guidelines of 14 units a week, according to our research. We want to work closely with policy makers, public health, industry and wider civil society to reach more of those people who need our support and provide them with the tools and motivation to reduce their drinking. **Collectively, we can turn insight into action and create healthier lives for people across every part of the UK.**

Drinking in the UK in 2025

Alcohol consumption and comparisons

Take me to...

Drinking in the UK in 2025: what to look out for



Overall drinking frequencies have not changed for the last three years but when we look back further, the proportion of UK adults who don't drink has been rising, from 12% in 2018 to 16% in 2025



82% of UK drinkers drink within the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units a week or less, and the proportion who drink 1-2 units in a typical day when drinking has risen over the last three years, from 42% up to 47% of UK drinkers in 2025



Around 1 in 10 (11%) UK drinkers binge drink weekly or more often; the proportion who never binge drink has been rising, from 36% in 2023 to 41% in 2025



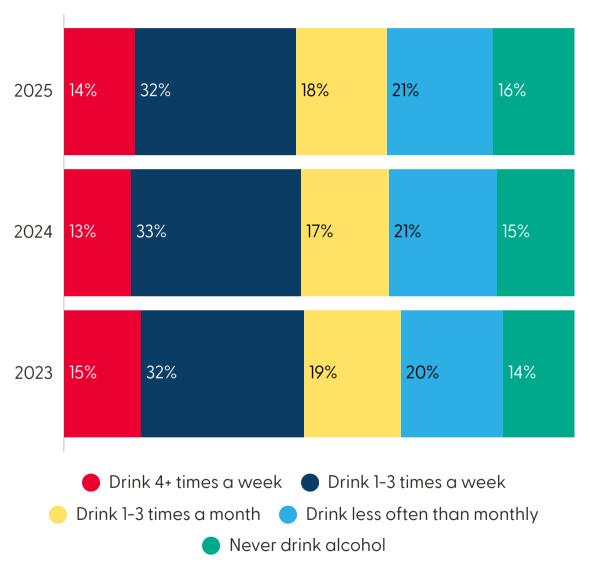
A fifth of drinkers (21%) drink at home alone at least once a week, and those who do are more likely than others to say drinking helps them to unwind or destress



Drinkers mainly unwind/destress (37%), feel more relaxed in social settings (37%) and find socialising easier (33%) when they drink

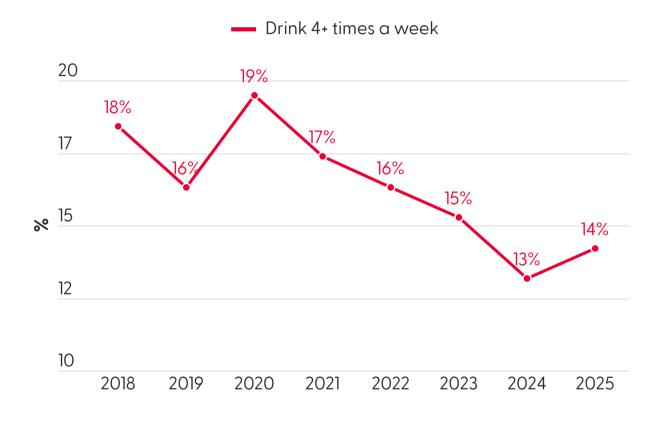
Drinking frequency has not changed over the last 3 years

How often UK adults drink alcohol





Frequent drinking spiked in 2020 but has generally declined since





UK adults who don't drink has been rising over the last 8 years, from 12% in 2018 to 16% in 2025

Previous Monitor reports 9

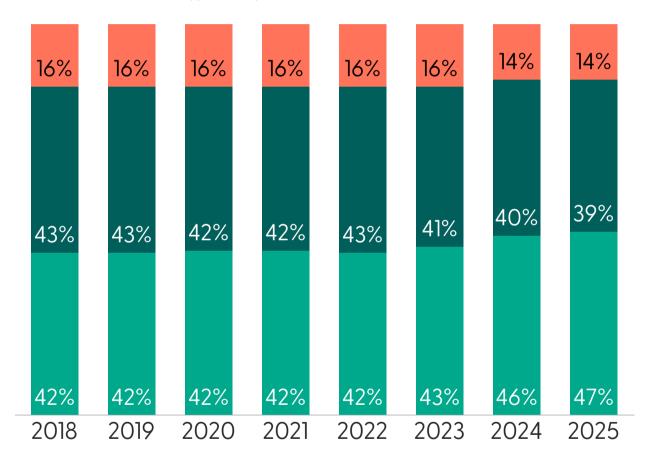


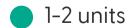
Drinking frequency. Base: all UK adults, 2025 (n=7,256); 2024 (n=5,143); 2023 (n=10,473); 2022 (n=6,318); 2021 (n=9,137); 2020 (n=9,046), 2019 (n=2,145), 2018 (n=8,906)

When people drink, they are typically drinking less

47% of UK drinkers consume 1-2 units in a typical day when drinking, which has been on the rise over the last 3 years

Breakdown of units in a typical day in 2025



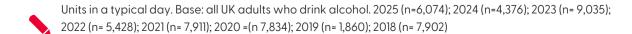




3-6 units



7+ units





Who drinks more units in a typical drinking day?

% drinking 7+ units:

- Males (20%)
- Aged 35-54 (17%)
- LGBTQ+ (20%)
- Smokers (20%)



Who drinks fewer units in a typical drinking day?

% drinking 1-2 units:

- Females (55%)
- Aged 55+ (54%)
- Have a disability or health condition (53%)
- In an ethnic minority group (56%)
- Lower social grades DE (52%)



What's a unit?

NHS advice on alcohol ¹⁰ gives a range of examples:

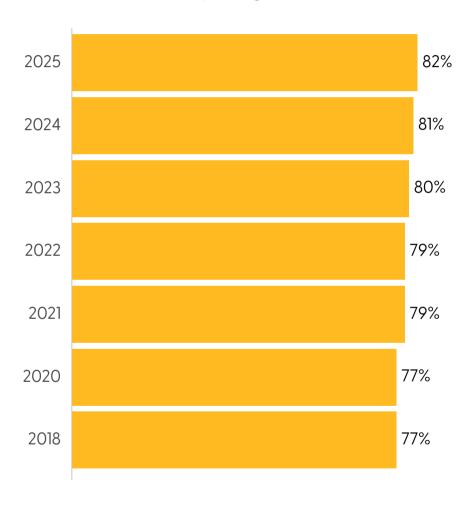
- A small glass of wine is around 1.5 units
- A large glass of wine is around 3 units
- A pint of lower strength beer is around 2 units
- A pint of higher strength beer is around 3 units
- A single 25ml spirit measure (40% ABV)

rps ,

UK drinkers increasingly drink within the weekly unit guidelines

82% of UK drinkers drink within the <u>UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines</u> of 14 units per week 11

This has been slowly rising since 2018





15% of drinkers are increasing risk

Classed as females who drink between 15 and 34 units or males who drink between 15 and 49 units, representing a pattern of alcohol consumption that increases someone's risk of harm, based on <u>public health guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence</u> 12



3% of drinkers are high risk

Classed as females who drink 35+ units or males who drink 50+ units



When we refer to risk levels in this report, it is the risk of harm from alcohol based on the weekly units of alcohol drinkers consume

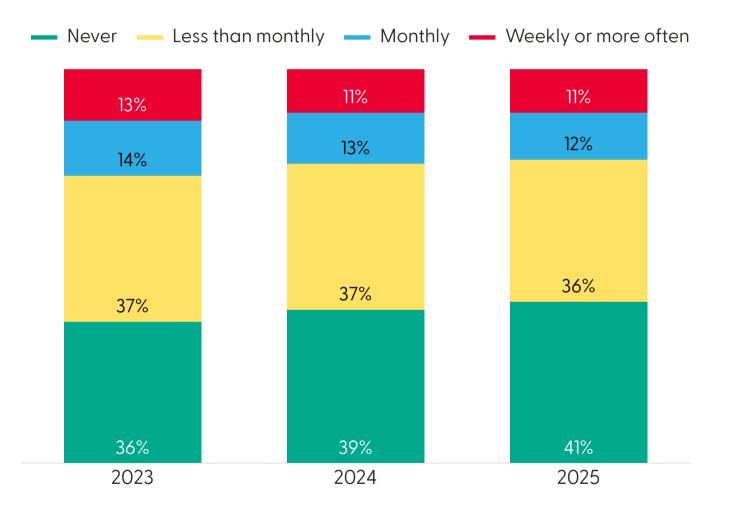


A3_SUM. Weekly units score. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (2018 = 7,902; 2020 = 7.834; 2021 = 7.911; 2022 = 5.428; 2023 = 9.035); 2024 (n=4.376); 2025 (n=6.074)

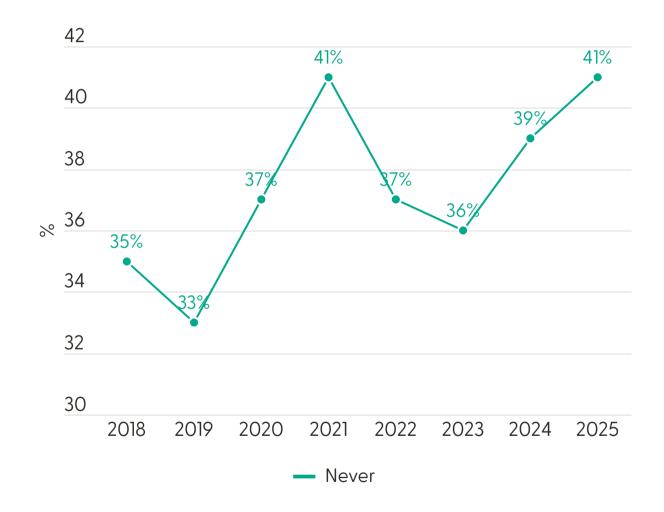
Drinkers who never binge drink has risen over the last 3 years

Around one in ten (11%) drinkers binge drink weekly or more often

Binge drinking frequency (drink more than 6 units in a single occasion if female, or 8 units if male)



Drinkers <u>never</u> binge drinking has risen over time from 35% in 2018 to 41% in 2025





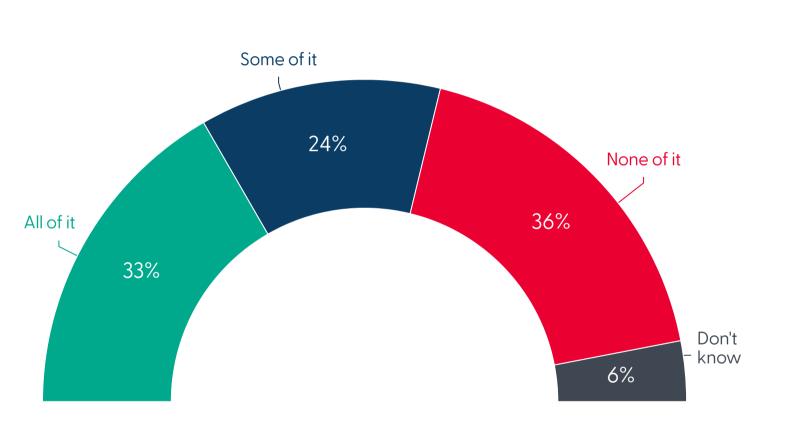
Frequency binge drinking. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol, 2025 (n=6,074); 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2022 (n=5,428); 2021 (n=7,911); 2020 (n=7,834), 2019 (n=1,860), 2018 (n=7,902)

ps_

Buying alcohol from shops appears to be 'all or nothing'

A third of drinkers get all their alcohol from shops and off-licences, whilst just over a third get none of their alcohol from shops

Roughly how much of the alcohol they drank in the last week was bought from a shop, supermarket or off-licence





White drinkers are more likely to get all of the alcohol they consume from shops

34% compared to 25% of drinkers in an ethnic minority group



Two in five (41%) drinkers in the most deprived areas do not get any of their alcohol from shops

Compared to 31% of drinkers in the least deprived areas



Nearly two in five drinkers who live with a partner get all their alcohol from shops

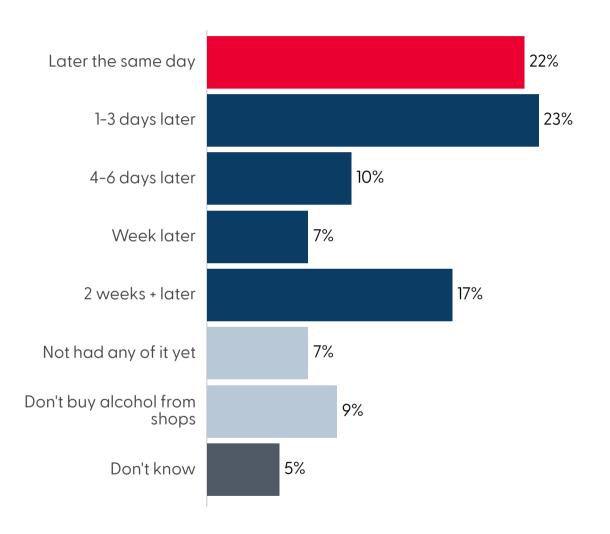
38% compared to 16% of drinkers who live with friends/ housemates, 22% who live with parents/ siblings and 33% who live alone



Alcohol source. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol, 2025 (n=6,074)

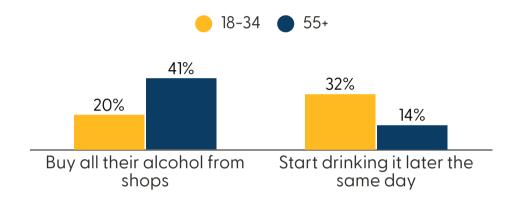
And one in five start drinking shop-bought alcohol later the same day

How soon after last purchasing alcohol from a shop did they start drinking it





Drinkers aged 55+ are more likely to get all their alcohol from shops (41% vs 20% of 18-34s), but they are less likely to start drinking it the same day





Those who drink the most are more likely to start consuming the alcohol they buy the same day

- A third (34%) of those who drink 4+ times a week start drinking the alcohol they buy later the same day
- 35% of increasing risk drinkers start drinking the alcohol they buy the same day, rising to 59% for high risk drinkers



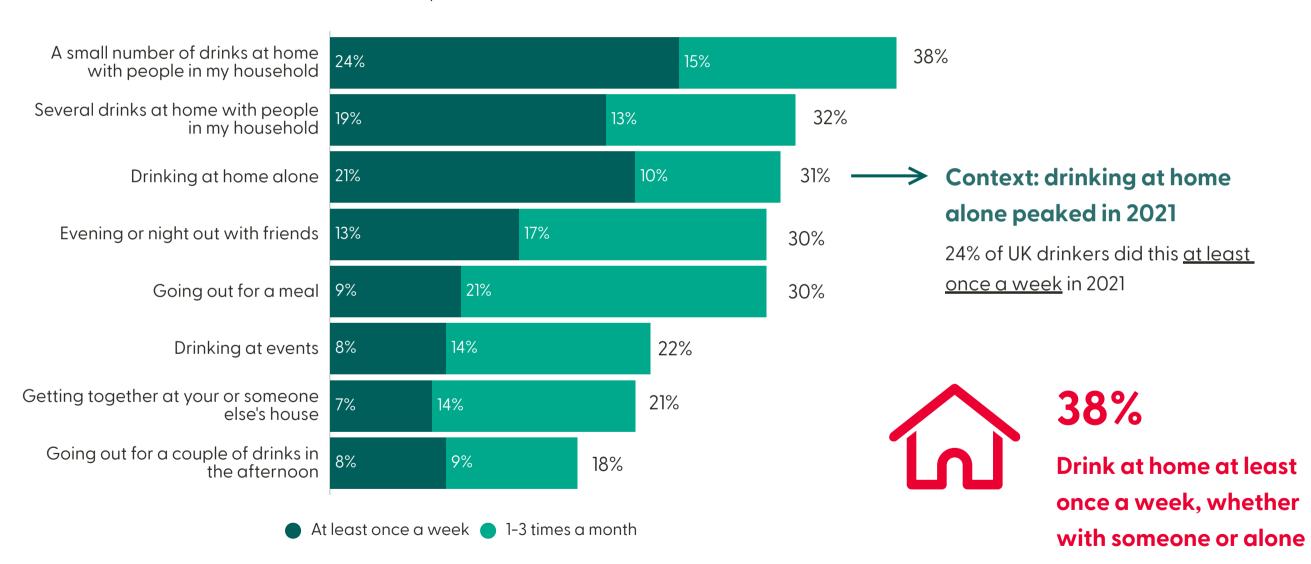
Alcohol source. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol, 2025 (n=6,074)

ps .

UK drinkers most regularly drink at home

Overall, there has been little change in how often people drink across different occasions

% who have had alcohol on different occasions at some point in the last month





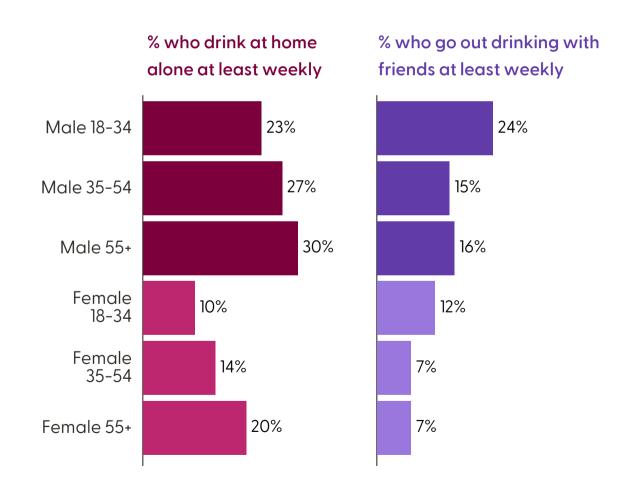
ps

One in four males aged 18-34 go out drinking with friends every week

Comparing those who drink at home alone and those who drink on a night out with friends at least once a week:



Both are more likely to be male drinkers, but those going out with friends are younger than those who drink at home alone





Drinking at home alone and drinking with friends. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. Male 18-34 (n=824); Male 35-54 (n=1,034); Male 55+ (n=1,145); Female 18-34 (n=898); Female 35-54 (n=957); Female 55+ (n=1,216)



Regular home alone drinkers are more likely to drink more often

42% drink 4+ times a week compared to 31% of those who drink on a night out at least weekly





Whilst people who regularly drink on a night out are more likely to binge drink

32% of those who regularly drink on a night out binge drink at least weekly; compared to 26% of regular home alone drinkers





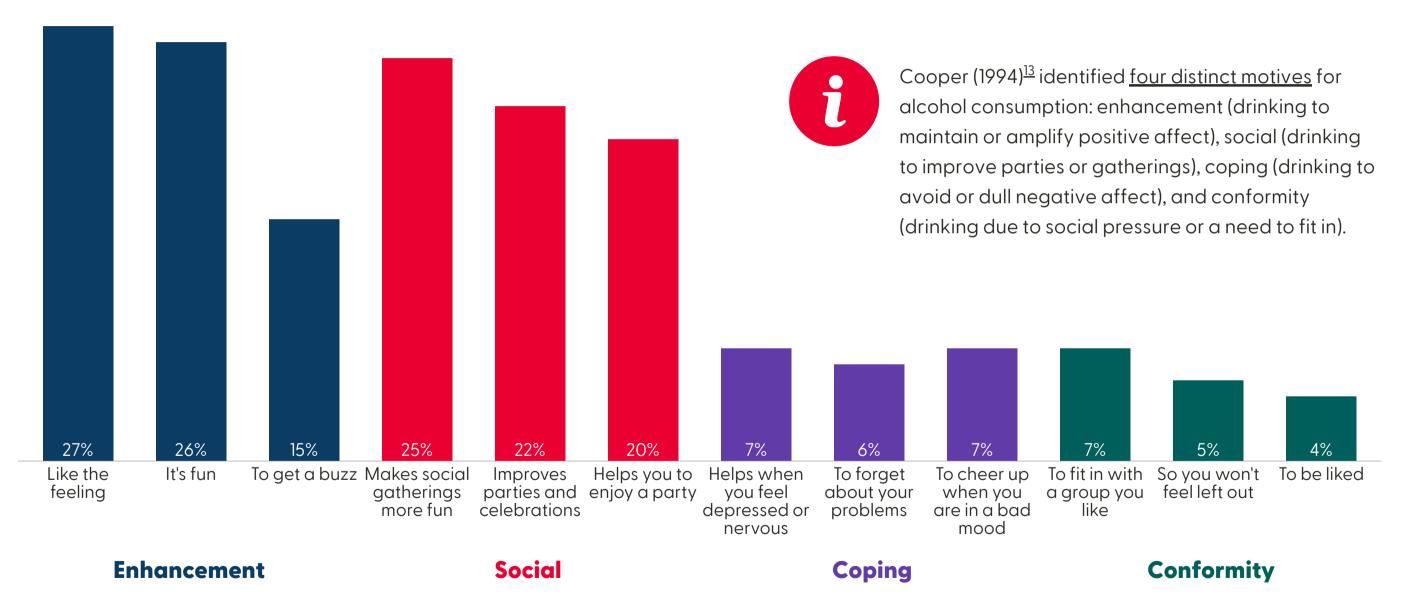
But they are both putting themselves at risk due to their levels of drinking

40% of regular home alone drinkers are drinking to increasing or high risk levels based on weekly units, similar to 42% of those who regularly drink on a night out

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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

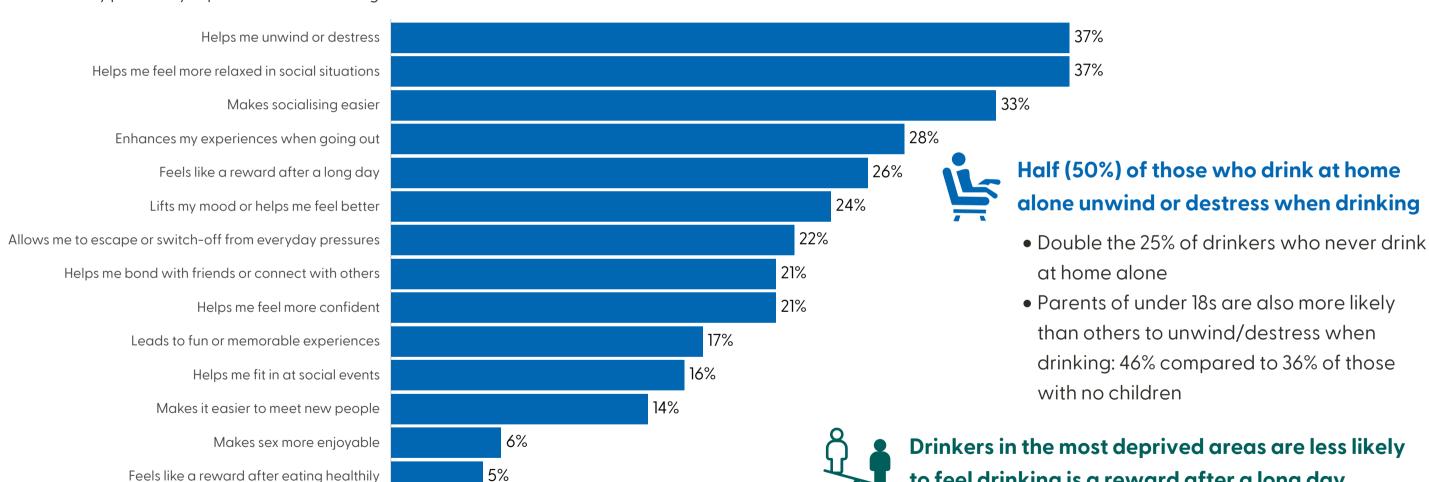


Drinking motivations (DMQ-R). Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=6,074)

Some of these motivations come through in what people experience when drinking

A new question was introduced in the 2025 Monitor to better understand what people experience when they drink

What they personally experience when drinking alcohol:





Drinking experiences. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=6,074)

Feels like a reward after exercising

4%

to feel drinking is a reward after a long day

21% selected this, compared to 28% of those in the least deprived areas

People with lower life satisfaction are more likely to drink to unwind

ONS assesses personal wellbeing using four measures $\frac{14}{2}$, with one of these being life satisfaction*



Those with low life satisfaction are more likely to...

(Compared to those with very high life satisfaction)

Find drinking helps them unwind or destress

44% vs 31%

Find that drinking lifts their mood

31% vs 18%

Feel drinking helps them to escape/switch off

31% vs 17%

Have felt guilt or remorse after drinking

27% vs 19% (experienced this at least monthly)

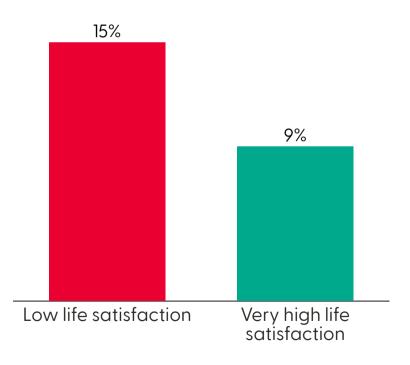
Have had a concern raised about their drinking

16% vs 9%



Drinkers with lower life satisfaction also drink more in a typical day when they are drinking

% who drink 7+ units in a typical drinking day



 $^{^{*}}$ Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays, where 0 is "not at all satisfied" and 10 is "completely satisfied"?

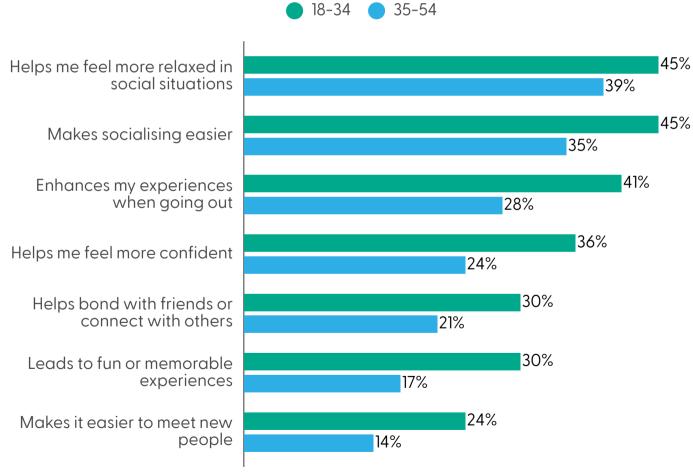
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What people experience when drinking differs by life stage



Younger drinkers are more likely than others to drink for social experiences and confidence

<u>Context</u>: one in five (18%) of 18-34 year olds go out drinking with friends every week, compared to 11% of those aged 35-54

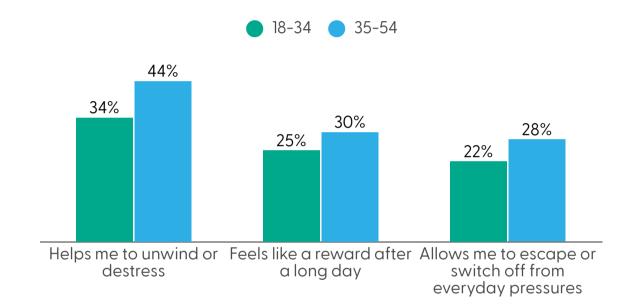




Drinking experiences. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 18-34 (n=1,722); 35-54 (n=1,991)



Whilst drinkers in middle age groups are more likely than others to unwind or 'escape' when drinking





Drinkers aged 55+ are less likely to associate drinking with any of these experiences

29% selected 'none of these' experiences, compared to 15% of 35-54 year olds and 11% of 18-34 year olds



Changing lifestyles can lead to different experiences



Qualitative research revealed that as people's lifestyles and circumstances change, their relationship with alcohol often changes too



Young adults





'Mid life'





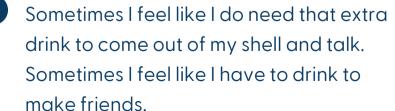
Mature

Young adults describe:

- fewer responsibilities and more opportunities to socialise
- drinking in large groups, frequently meeting new people
- a social acceptability of drinking to excess

And this means drinking for social experiences but can also can mean drinking to ease social anxiety



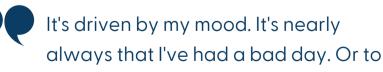


(Qualitative participant Female, 18-34)



- increased responsibilities (work, family, finances)
- fewer opportunities to socialise
- increased self-confidence and selfawareness

And this can mean drinking less for confidence but more to unwind



relax, having a glass of wine is a nice way to relax and chill.

(Qualitative participant: Male, 35-54)

And being older can mean:

- decreases in stress and responsibilities
- established social circles
- being more conscious of and more comfortable in own drinking habits



Drinking in the past was about being able to chat to new people in social situations. Now I'm older, there just doesn't seem to be that much point anymore.

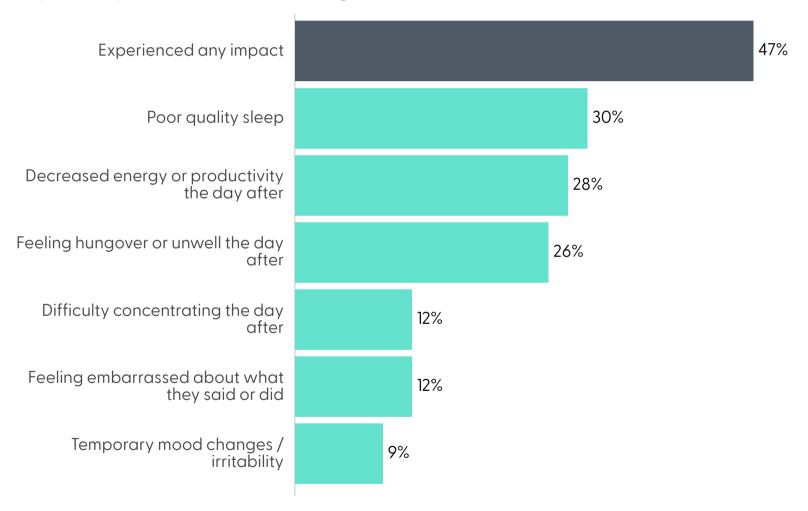
(Qualitative participant: Male, 55+)



One in four drinkers have felt hungover in the last 12 months

47% have experienced some form of impact due to drinking in the last 12 months, with poor sleep, decreased energy and feeling hungover/unwell the main impacts

Impacts experienced due to drinking in the last 12 months





18-34s are more likely to have experienced a negative impact of drinking alcohol

63% have experienced a negative impact of drinking alcohol, compared to 32% of those aged 55+



Higher social grades are more likely to have experienced at least one of these impacts in the last year

53% of drinkers in AB social grades have experienced one of these impacts, compared to 38% of DE drinkers

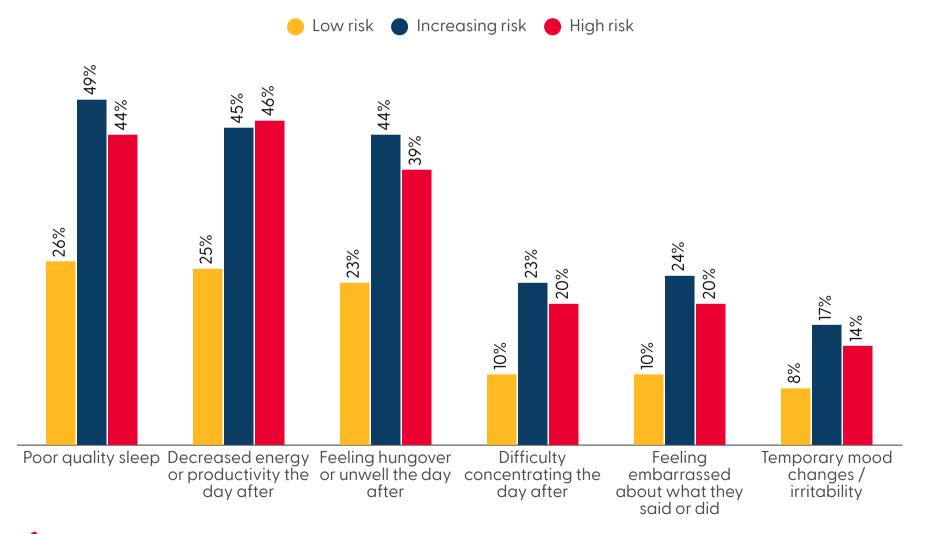


Drinking impacts. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. (n=6,074)

Higher risk drinkers are more likely to have felt hungover

Increasing risk drinkers (based on weekly units) are as likely to have been impacted by their drinking as high risk drinkers (72% vs 71% any impact)

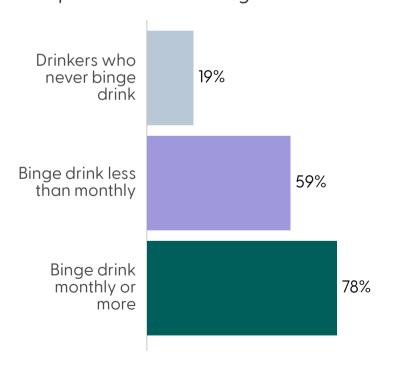
Impacts experienced due to drinking in the last 12 months by risk level (weekly units)





There is also a clear link between binge drinking and experiencing these impacts

Experiencing any of these health impacts due to drinking in last 12 months





Drinking impacts. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. Low risk (n=5,002); increasing risk (n=885); high risk (n=187)

Moderation and reducing drinking

Take me to...

Moderation and reducing drinking: what to look out for



87% of UK drinkers use one or more techniques to moderate their drinking (down on 2024; 90%); taking drink-free days during the week is still the most popular method



Many do not consciously link these techniques to moderation. Among those who take drink-free days during the week, only 39% say they do so specifically to moderate their drinking.



More than a third of UK drinkers (36%) tried to reduce their alcohol consumption in the last 12 months, and this rises to over half (57%) of those drinking more than the weekly unit guidelines

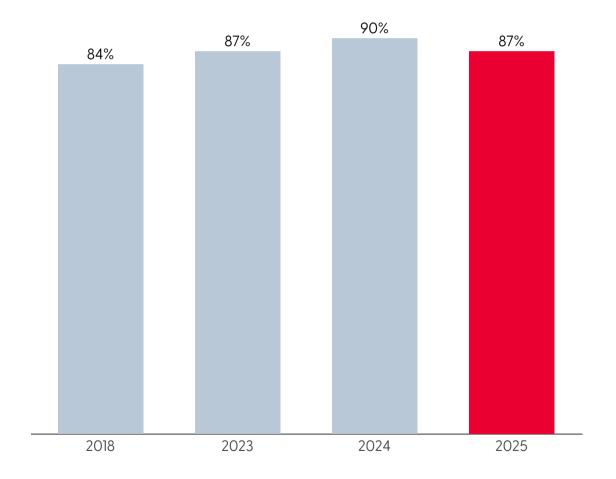


Close to half of UK drinkers (47%) say that knowing drinking increases the risk of at least one of the physical health problems listed in the survey would make them want to cut down

Most drinkers use at least one technique to moderate their drinking

It is down on the previous year, but at the same level it was in 2023 and still above the level in 2018

% of drinkers currently using one or more moderation techniques





What is meant by moderation?

In this context, moderation refers to the techniques or behaviours a person uses to manage how they drink, such as having drink-free days, alternating alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, or avoiding keeping alcohol at home. It may be intentional, aimed at avoiding intoxication, staying within personal limits, or reducing consumption (either on a given occasion or over time), or incidental, where drinking is limited but without conscious effort or planning.

Moderation here does not necessarily involve a long-term goal or intention to reduce alcohol use.

This descriptive definition reflects how drinkers self-report moderation and differs from the normative public health definition, which frames moderation as drinking within the Chief Medical Officers' low-risk drinking guidelines.



Moderation. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2025 (n=6,074); 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2018 (n=7,902)

Who is more likely to use a moderation technique?



Female

- 89% compared to 84% of males
- Half (51%) alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drinks, compared to 37% of male drinkers, and two in five (38%) drink smaller glasses or bottles (26% for male drinkers)



Under 55

- 89% compared to 84% of those aged 55+
- They are twice as likely as those aged 55+ to avoid always having alcohol in the house (29% vs 15%)



Higher social grades

- 89% of drinkers in AB social grades compared to 83% in DE social grades
- They are more likely than those in lower social grades to drink non-alcoholic substitutes (37% vs 22%), a lower strength alcoholic drink (37% vs 28%) and smaller glasses/bottles (39% vs 28%)



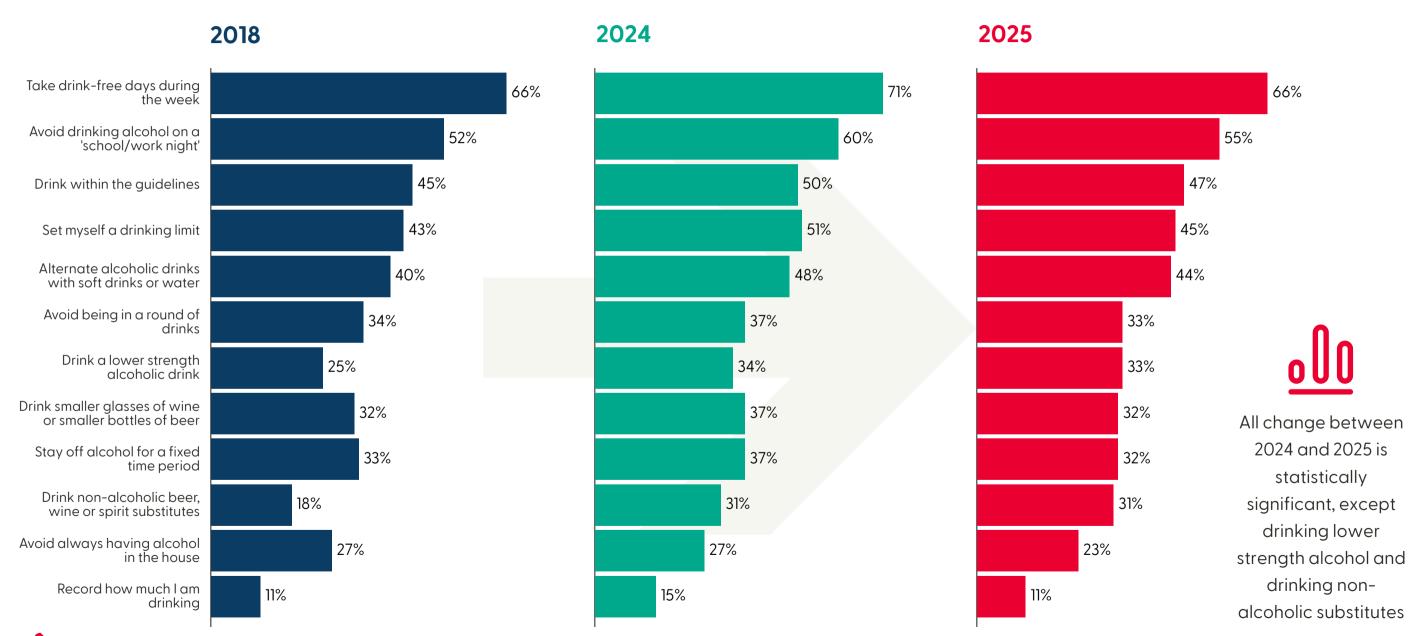
Binge drinkers and increasing risk drinkers are more likely to use a moderation technique

- 88% of drinkers who binge drink moderate their drinking, compared to 84% who never binge drink
- 90% of increasing risk drinkers (weekly units) moderate, compared to 87% of low risk and 76% of high risk drinkers



Overview of moderation techniques: 2018 to 2025

% of UK drinkers currently doing the following

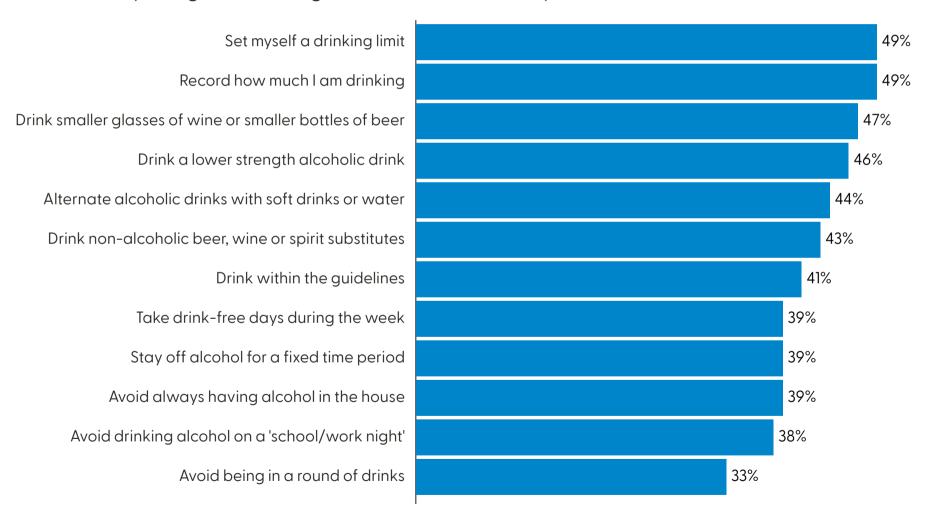


Moderation. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2025 (n=6,074); 2024 (n=4,376)

But are drinkers really doing those things to consciously moderate?

Whilst drinkers are most likely to take drink-free days during the week, only 39% indicate that this is a conscious choice to moderate their drinking

% consciously doing the following as a moderation technique





The most likely to be used as a conscious moderation technique are...

- Setting a drinking limit
- Recording how much they drink
- Drinking smaller glasses/bottles
- Drinking lower strength



Conscious moderation. Base: all UK adults who currently do any of these moderation techniques (n=677-4,092)

Qualitative research revealed some 'techniques' may just be a consequence of a change in lifestyle





Case study: Conscious moderator

Sally, 60, has tried various strategies specifically to moderate her drinking

Sally has been consciously moderating her alcohol intake so that she can be a more positive role model for her teenage daughters and to be as healthy as possible as she gets older.

She has tried a variety of different moderation strategies:

- Stopping drinking during the week
- Not having alcohol in the house unless she plans to drink it
- Recording what she is drinking on an app (first due to Dry January but has now carried this on)



The tracker really opened my eyes. It made me realise how much the odd glass of wine was adding up to over the week. Now I don't routinely have wine in the house, whereas before, if it was sitting in the fridge, I would drink it for no other reason that it was there.

(Qualitative participant: Female, 55+, Increasing risk)



Case study: Natural consequence

Mark, 43, feels having children has naturally led to a reduction in his drinking

Mark has three young children and feels that the increased responsibilities and reduced opportunities to socialise have naturally led to reduced alcohol intake. For Mark, techniques such as taking drink free days during the week and not drinking on a school/work night are a natural consequence of these increased responsibilities.



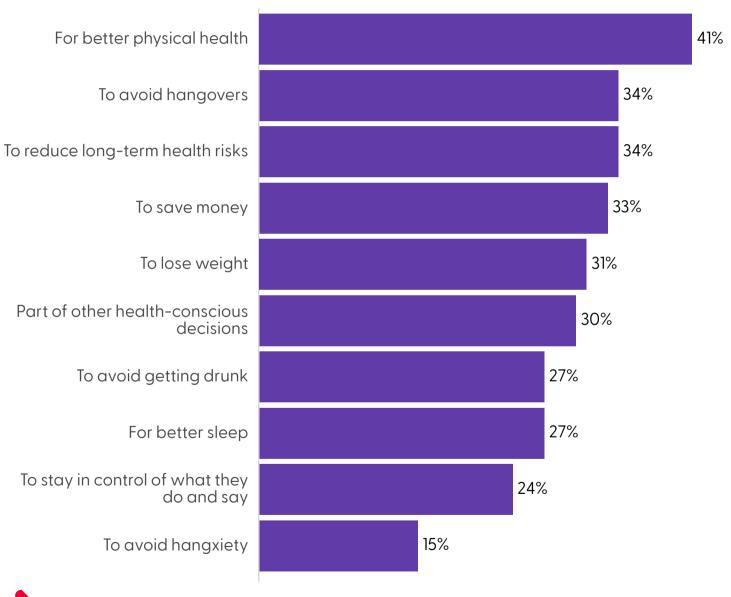
Before I had kids, there were no boundaries on how many drinks I would have. But I'm not in that space as much as I was. I've got kids to get back to and subconsciously, there are barriers in place that stop me drinking as much as I used to.

(Qualitative participant: Male, 35-54+, Increasing risk)

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Drinkers are most likely to moderate for better physical health

Top 10 reasons for moderating





64% of drinkers who moderate do so for a reason relating to their health

- Whether it is better physical health, to reduce longterm risks or some other health-related option
- But this drops to 58% amongst those in the most deprived areas (compared to 67% in the least deprived areas)



Those who have tried to reduce their drinking in the last 12 months are more likely to moderate to reduce long-term health risks (47%) than to avoid hangovers (39%)

Whilst for those who haven't tried to cut down, 31% moderate to avoid hangovers; only 'for better physical health' (32%) was selected more



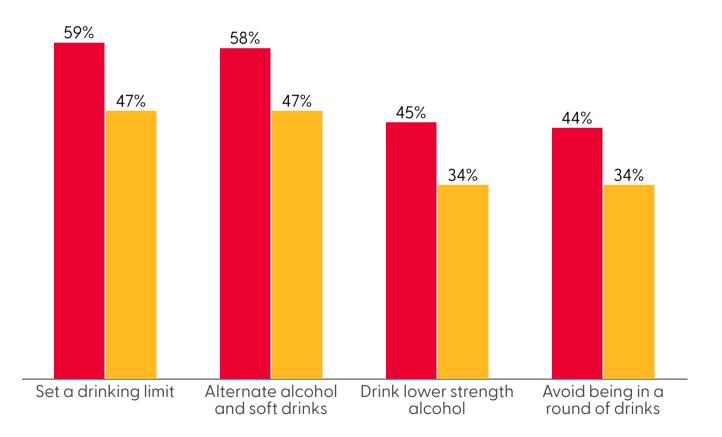
Reasons for moderating. Base: all UK adults who currently do any moderation techniques (n=5,295)

Those who moderate to not get too drunk are more likely to set a limit



If drinkers moderate to 'not get too drunk' or to 'stay in control', there are a number of moderation techniques they are more likely to adopt

- Those who moderate to not get too drunk or to stay in control
 - Those who moderate but not for these reasons





Those trying to conceive are more likely to moderate their drinking with non-alcoholic drinks

57% compared to 37% of those not trying to conceive



Drinkers who moderate by not having alcohol in the house are more likely to start drinking the alcohol they do buy later that day

29% compared to 20% of those who do not use that moderation technique



Moderation techniques. Base: all UK adults who currently moderate. To not get too drunk or to stay in control (n=1,999); moderate but for other reasons (n=3,296)

Reasons for moderating vary at different life stages

There are some noticeable differences by age when it comes to why drinkers moderate



Younger drinkers want to save money and avoid hangovers

- 44% of 18-34 year old drinkers do it to save money, compared to 36% of 35-54 year olds and 23% of those aged 55+
- 43% do it to avoid hangovers, compared to 40% of 35-54 year olds and 23% of those aged 55+



Drinkers aged 35-54 are more likely than others to do it to avoid getting drunk and for better sleep

31% do it for each of these reasons, compared to 29% of 18-34 year olds and 23% of those aged 55+



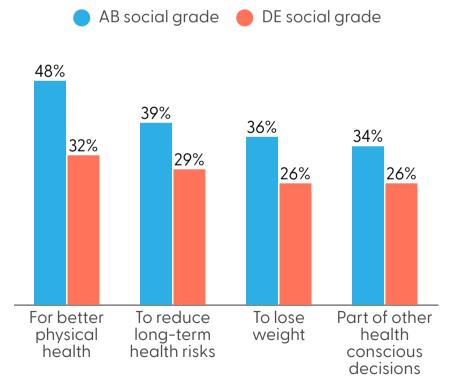
Older drinkers are more likely to do it to reduce long-term health risks (or have no particular reasons)

- 36% of drinkers aged 55+ do it to reduce long-term health risks, compared to 31% of 18-34 year olds and 33% of 35-54 year olds
- One in five (19%) have no particular reasons for moderating, compared to 12% of those under the age of 55



There are also some differences by the social grade of drinkers

With higher social grades more likely to use moderation techniques for a range of health reasons





And qualitative research also revealed motivations to moderate can change with age and lifestyle



Case study: 18-34



Saving money

Ava, 21, has just finished her university course. She has reduced her alcohol intake over the past couple of years, mainly due to cost but also to enable her to study more effectively.



If I'm out somewhere, like a club, I don't drink much because it's expensive. Money is a big thing at this point. If I decide not to drink that much, it's mostly due to money. Money and assignments. (Qualitative participant: Female, 18-34+, High risk)

Case study: 35-54



Staying in control

Steve, 40, uses strategies to try to ensure he doesn't get drunk such as eating before drinking or drinking lower strength 'session IPAs' (at around 3.5%).



In my younger days, I would go beyond what I am comfortable with now. It's the not being in control and not being able to do things for yourself that I didn't enjoy. I want to be a person that it is in control and perhaps can even help others. (Qualitative participant: Male, 35-54, Increasing risk) Case study: 55+



Reducing health risks

James, 55, is trying to reduce how much he drinks as part of a wider focus on being healthier and losing weight.

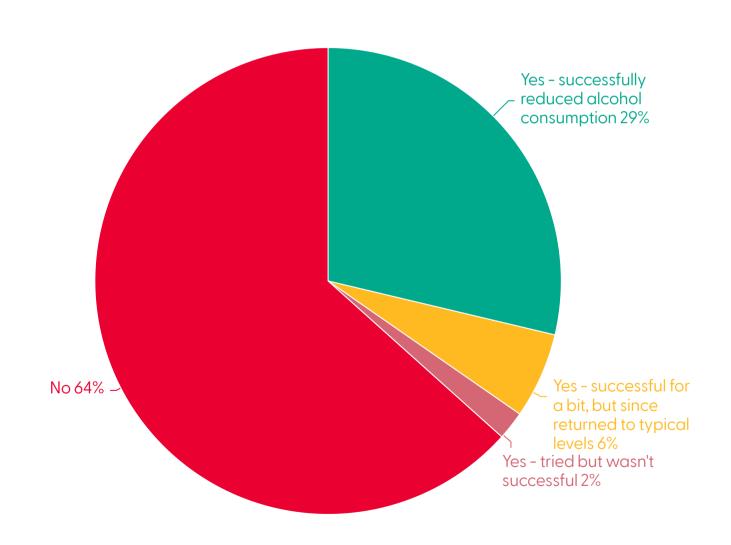


It all fits together, alcohol, body weight, general health and fitness. I think they are all interlinked. I do talk with my partner about a total lifestyle change. We have changed our eating habits and trying to do more exercise too. (Qualitative participant: Male, 55+, Increasing risk)

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More than a third of drinkers have tried to cut back in the last 12 months

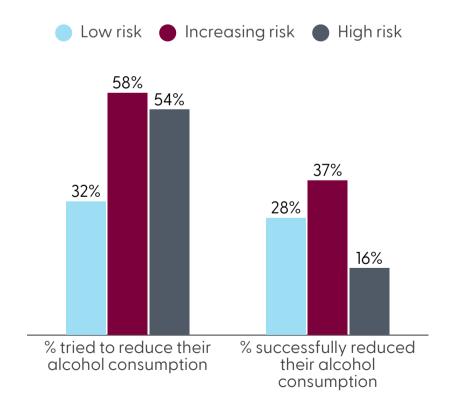
36% tried to reduce alcohol consumption in last 12 months, down from 38% in 2023. The same proportion successfully reduced their alcohol consumption in 2023 and 2025 (29%).





Those drinking to increasing risk levels were most likely to have tried to and successfully reduced their drinking

By drinking risk levels (weekly units)



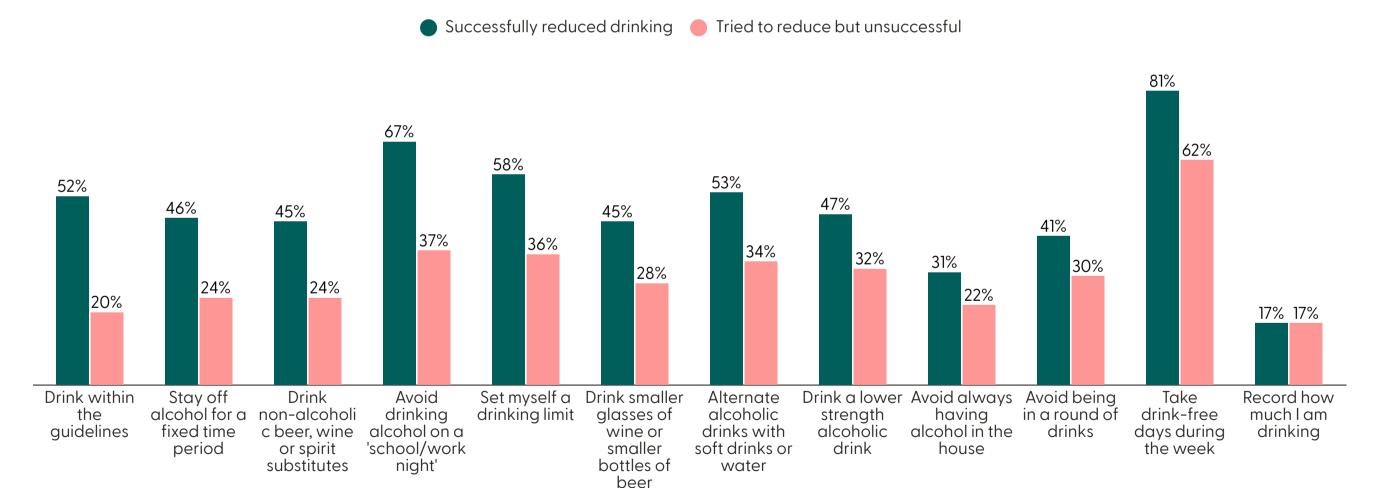


Reduce drinking. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. (n=6,074)

Those who successfully reduced their drinking were more likely to use a range of different moderation techniques

Drinking within the guidelines, staying off alcohol for a fixed period and non-alcoholic drinks are the techniques that they are most likely to use compared to those who were unsuccessful

% using the following moderation techniques (in order of biggest gap between successful and unsuccessful)



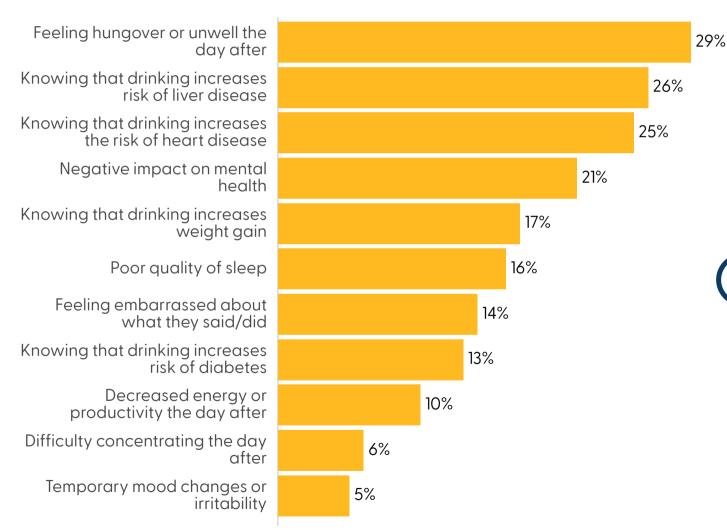


Moderation techniques. Base: all UK adults who currently do any of these moderation techniques. Successfully reduced drinking (n=1,772); tried to reduce but not successful (n=451)

Feeling hungover is the top single reason drinkers would cut down

73% of drinkers have identified something that would make them want to cut down on their drinking, whilst 18% indicated 'none of these' and 9% did not know

What would most make drinkers want to cut down on their drinking (select up to 3)





In 2023, one in five (19%) UK drinkers indicated that knowing that alcohol increases the risk of cancer would make them want to change their drinking habits



The 2025 Monitor explored a wider range of long-term health conditions linked to alcohol

- Such as liver disease, heart disease, weight gain, as well as short-term effects like poor sleep, hangovers, and reduced productivity
- The goal was to understand whether these different kinds of health impacts influence people's attitudes toward reducing their drinking in similar or different ways



What would make them reduce drinking. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. (n=6,074)

Whilst close to half of drinkers indicated that a physical health risk would make them want to reduce their drinking



47% of drinkers identified knowledge of a physical health risk as something that would make them want to cut down on their drinking

Selecting either the risk of liver disease, heart disease, diabetes or obesity



Previous Monitor research revealed that people were less aware of the link between drinking and heart problems

In the 2023 Monitor, 92% of drinkers identified liver disease as a condition linked to alcohol consumption, compared to 67% identifying heart problems

In the qualitative research, some found that becoming more aware of the physical effects of alcohol is a motivating factor to cut down, e.g.:



Seeing the impact of drinking on their heart rate on smart watches



After drinking, my FitBit said my heart rate had been high all night. I can see what it is doing to my heart. (Qualitative participant: Male, 35-54, Increasing risk)



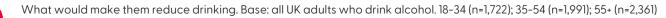
Physical conditions that are worsened by drinking



I have an inflammation issue and alcohol makes it worse. The pain is horrendous the next few days. And I think menopause and alcohol don't go. I think I am more sensitive to alcohol now.

(Qualitative participant: Female, 35-54, Increasing risk)



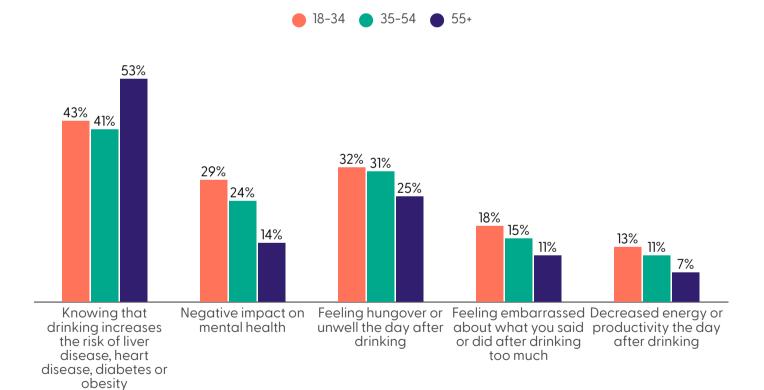


And older drinkers are more likely to cut down due to health risks



Older drinkers are more likely to cut down due to health risks; younger drinkers are more likely to choose the impact on mental health and short-term effects

What would make drinkers want to cut down on their drinking by age



The qualitative research also found that older participants were more likely to be motivated to cut down due to impact of drinking on physical health, whereas younger participants were more motivated by the short-term impact on mental health

- The next day, I am mentally not as good, not in as good a headspace mentally. I can be a bit moody.

 (Qualitative participant: Male, 18-34, Increasing risk)
- If I do take it too far, I will have a couple of days where I just feel anxious and a bit iffy.

 (Qualitative participant: Female, 18-34, High risk)
- I think as you get older, you feel the impact more. I am trying to make a conscious effort to be healthier and look after myself more. And drinking is probably one of the worst things you can do for your health.

 (Qualitative participant: Female, 55+, Increasing risk)



What would make them reduce drinking. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 18-34 (n=1,722); 35-54 (n=1,991); 55+ (n=2,361)

The decision to cut down on drinking is often for both shortterm and long-term reasons



Qualitative research revealed that most people who have consciously chosen to cut down on their drinking were motivated to do this for a mix of both short-term and longer-term reasons, and that longer-term reasons appear to have more of a lasting effect on their intention to cut back.



Reduce the immediate impact

People are often first motivated to cut down on drinking to minimise the next-day impact

- People describe hangovers in terms of wasting days, feeling unmotivated, being moody or more shorttempered and unable to meet responsibilities
- Hangovers last longer and are harder to recover from as people get older
- Feeling anxious or embarrassed about actions when drunk is also a key motivator, particularly amongst female participants in the qualitative research



I have really cut back. It just doesn't agree with me anymore. I get really bad hangovers. (Qualitative participant: Female, 35-54, Increasing risk)



Reduce the longer-term impact

People can also be motivated to cut down for health reasons

- Increased awareness of the negative impact alcohol has on their physical health
- Reducing alcohol is often part of a wider decision to try to 'be healthier' and often happens in tandem with exercising more and eating more healthily
- Some are prompted by a specific health issue



I was starting to get headaches after drinking and started to feel I was drinking too much. I was getting a bit of a beer belly. I wasn't happy and I just had a feeling of not being healthy. I thought I need to change my lifestyle.

(Qualitative participant: Male, 35-54, Increasing risk)

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There is a link between awareness of health risks and cutting down

Those drinkers who have tried to cut down their drinking in the last year are more likely to...



Feel it is likely their current drinking will lead to future health problems

30% selected very/fairly likely, 4x times higher than those who have not tried to reduce their drinking (7%)



Indicate that knowing that drinking increases health risks would make them want to cut down

58% vs 40% not reduced



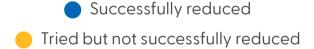
Have seen or heard information about associated health risks

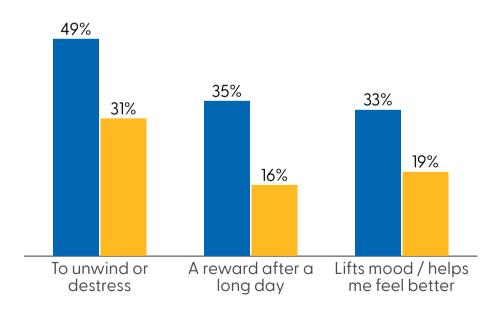
52% vs 35% of those who haven't reduced drinking; 37% vs 23% from the NHS, 26% vs 20% from Drinkaware



Those drinkers who have tried to cut down are also much more likely to drink to destress and lift their mood

Top 3 biggest differences in experiences between those who have and haven't tried to reduce their drinking levels





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Alcohol-free and low alcohol drinks

Take me to...

Alcohol-free and low alcohol drinks: what to look out for



45% of UK drinkers consumed low or no alcohol drinks in the last 12 months, up from 22% in 2021; and three in five (61%) use these as a replacement for alcoholic drinks



The main reasons for drinking low/no alcohol are needing to drive soon afterwards (34%), out of curiosity/interest (26%) and liking that it tastes like alcohol (24%)

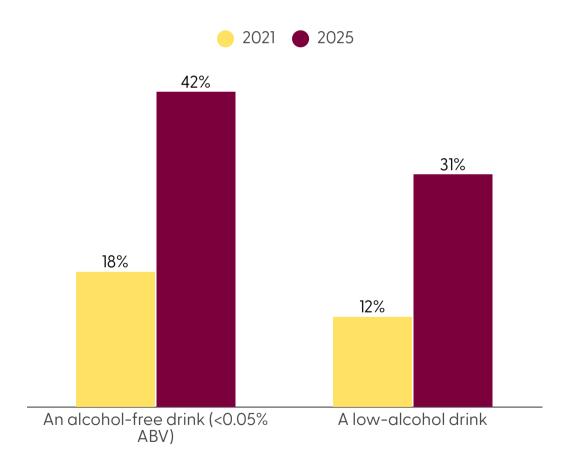


If drinkers don't drink low or no alcohol, this is mainly because they prefer soft drinks (52%) or don't feel the need to cut back on alcohol (36%)

Use of low/no alcohol has risen hugely over the last few years

45% of drinkers consumed either low or no alcohol in the last 12 months, compared to 22% in 2021

Drinkers are more likely to drink alcohol-free products than low-alcohol drinks





Three in five only drink low/no as a <u>replacement</u> for regular alcoholic drinks

- 61% only drink low/no as a replacement for alcoholic drinks
- 23% drink both as a replacement and alongside, depending on the situation
- 5% only drink them alongside regular alcoholic drinks



I have been choosing them as a way to reduce my units. If it's a lovely day and we go and sit on the deck, we will open a non-alcoholic cider. I just feel I want a cold, refreshing drink but if I didn't have the non-alcoholic one in the fridge, I would probably have an alcoholic one.

(Qualitative participant: Female, 35-54+, High risk)



Drinking non-alcoholic substitutes is one of the few moderation techniques to remain at the same level as in 2024

31% drink non-alcoholic beer, wine or spirit substitutes as a technique to moderate their drinking, same as in 2024 and up from 18% in 2018



Use of low and no alcohol. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2025 (n=6,074); 2021 (7,911). Those who selected 'don't know' are included in the base. Note: in the 2021 Drinkaware Monitor reports, the base size for this statistic excluded those selecting 'Don't know'

Who is more likely to drink low/no alcohol?



Younger drinkers

50% of those aged 18-34, compared to 46% of 35-54 year olds and 42% those aged 55+



Live in the least deprived areas

48% of those in least deprived areas, compared to 39% in most deprived areas



Higher social grades

56% of AB social grades compared to 30% of DE social grades



More frequent drinkers

52% of those drinking 4+ times a week, compared to 35% who drink monthly or less

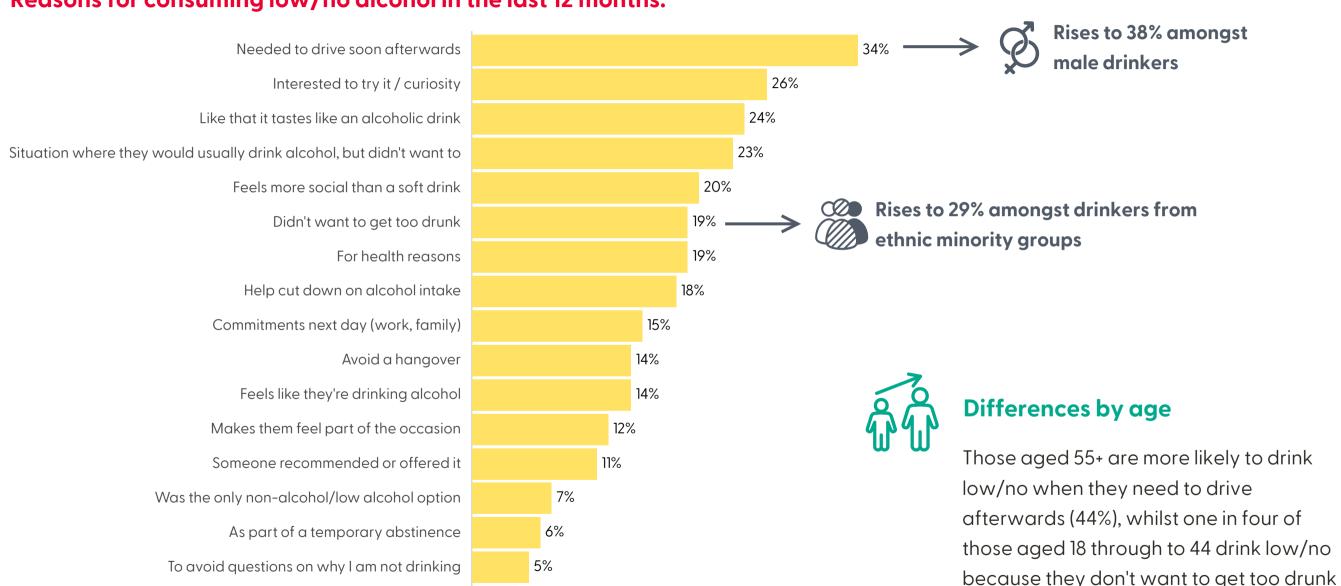


Increasing risk drinkers

53%, compared to 44% of low risk drinkers and 37% of high risk drinkers

There are a wide range of reasons for drinking low/no alcohol

Reasons for consuming low/no alcohol in the last 12 months:



4%

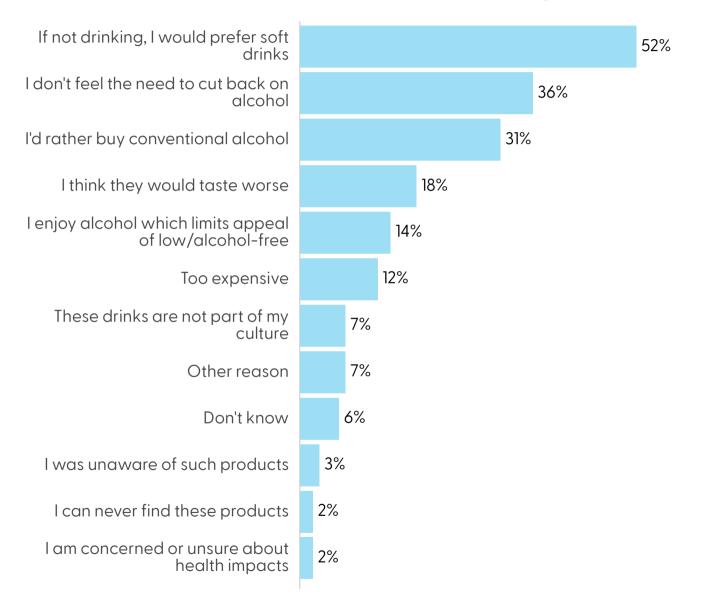


Reasons for drinking low/no. Base: all UK adults who drink low/no alcohol (n=2,673)

Pregnant/supporting pregnant partner

Those who don't drink low/no prefer soft drinks or don't "feel the need"

What are the reasons drinkers do not drink low/no alcohol?





Male drinkers are more likely to prefer buying conventional alcohol

- 39% of male drinkers who do not drink low/no feel this way, compared to 24% of females
- Male drinkers are also more likely to think that they would taste worse (21% vs 15% of females) and enjoy alcohol so low/no has limited appeal (17% vs 10% of females)



Nearly half (45%) of increasing/high risk drinkers who do not drink low/no would rather buy conventional alcohol

Compared to 28% of low risk drinkers



Reasons for not drinking low/no. Base: all UK drinkers who do not drink low/no alcohol (n=2,374)

Influence of social groups

Take me to...

Influence of social groups: what to look out for



Half of drinkers (49%) know someone in their social circle who has never drunk, stopped or cut back on their drinking, with one in five (22%) knowing someone who is currently trying to cut back



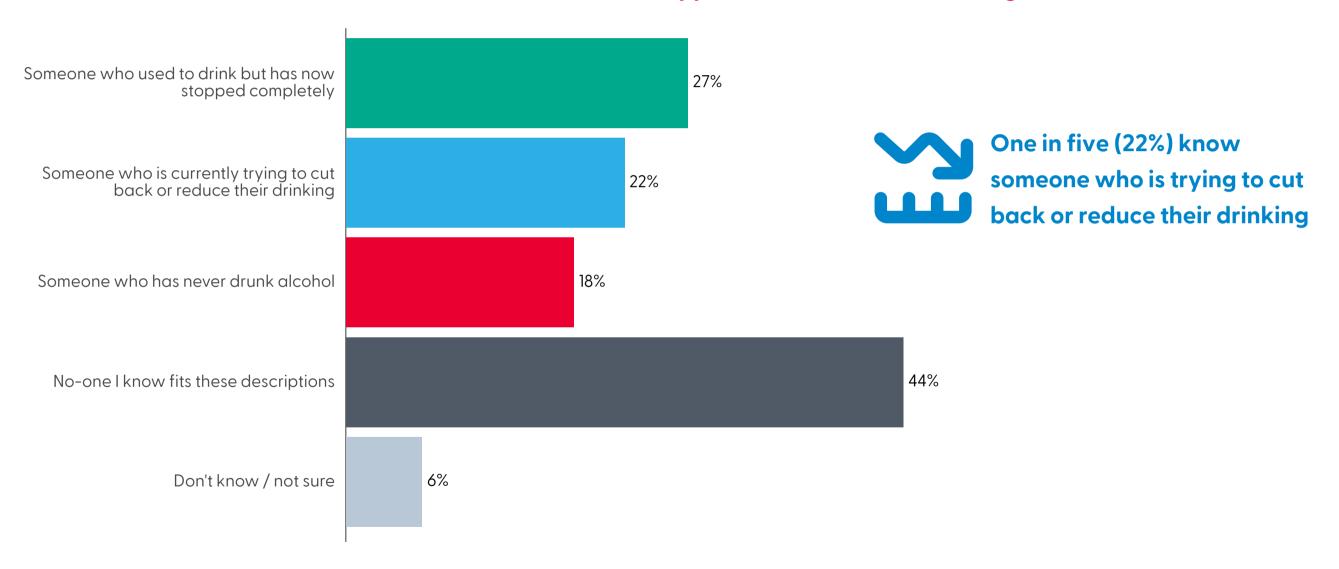
Younger drinkers are more likely to have someone in their social circle who has stopped or cut back on drinking (47% of 18-34 year old drinkers compared to 36% of drinkers aged 55+)



Drinkers with someone in their social circle who is cutting back on their drinking are around twice as likely as those who don't know anyone who is cutting back to have tried (57% vs 30%) and succeeded (46% vs 24%) in reducing their own drinking levels

Half (49%) of drinkers have someone in their close social circle who has never drunk, stopped or cut back on drinking

Two in five (41%) have someone in their social circle who stopped or cut back their drinking



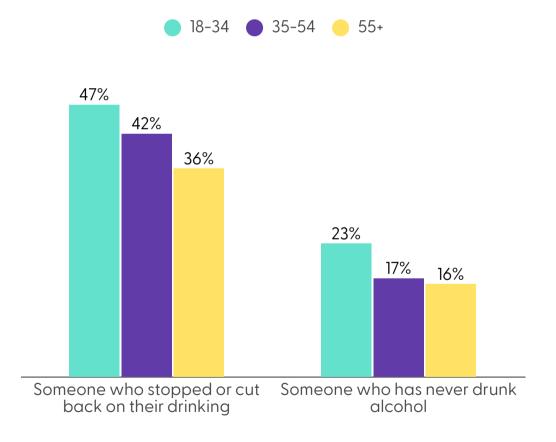


Social circle. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. (n=6,074)

Younger drinkers are more likely to have someone in their social circle who has stopped or cut back on drinking



Nearly half (47%) of 18-34 year old drinkers are close to someone who has stopped or cut back





Who else is more likely to have someone in their social circle who has stopped or cut back their drinking?

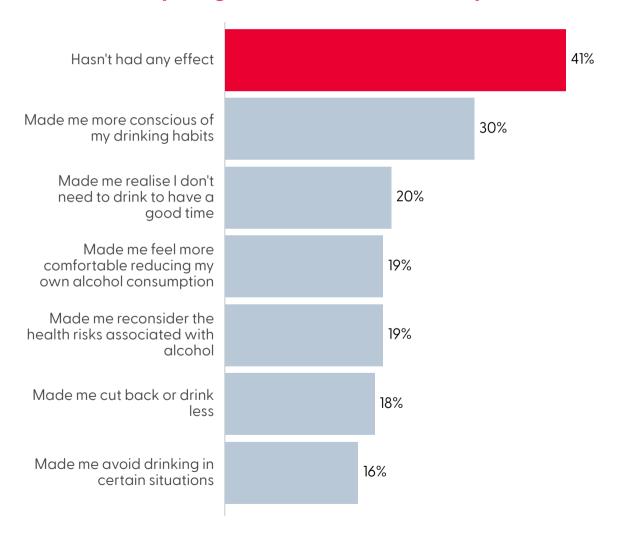
- Higher social grade AB (47% vs 36% DE)
- Increasing or high risk drinkers (49% vs 39% low risk)
- Live with friends or housemates (55% vs 42% of all who live with someone and 40% who live alone)





More than half of drinkers with someone in their social circle who is cutting back indicate that this has had an effect on their drinking

57% identified at least one effect and this rises to 64% if they binge drink at least monthly



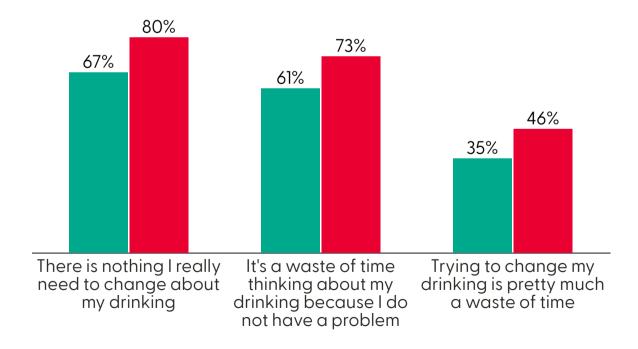


And knowing someone who is cutting back means they are less likely to feel that changing their own drinking is a waste of time

% strongly or tend to agree

Know someone who is cutting back

Don't know someone who is cutting back

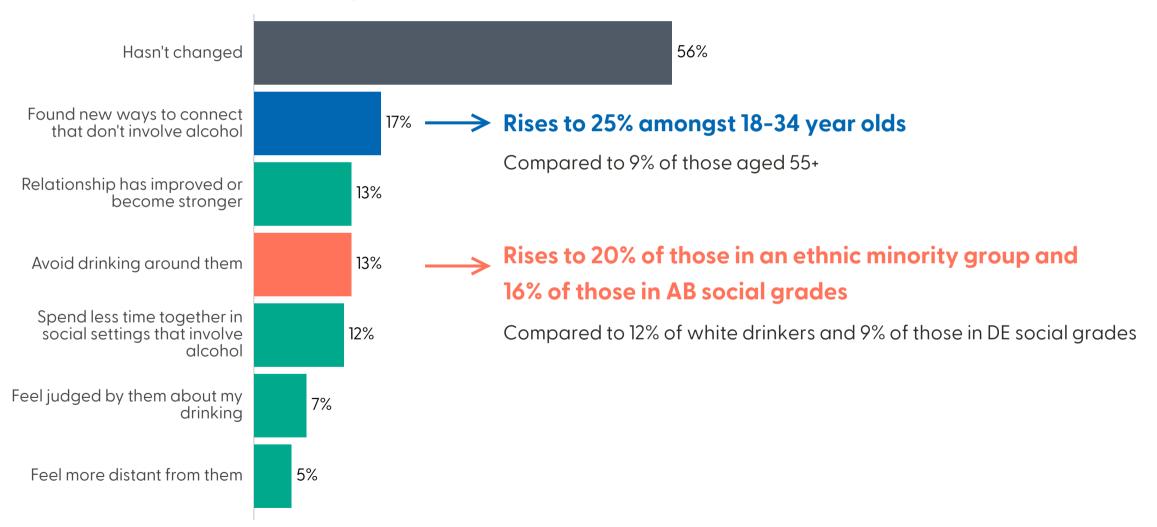




Social circle drinking and relationship effect. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol and have someone in social circle who is cutting back their drinking. (n=1,376)

Knowing someone who is cutting back can have an impact on the relationship with that person too

Two in five (43%) drinkers who know someone who is cutting back indicate that it has changed their relationship in some way, most likely having found new ways to connect



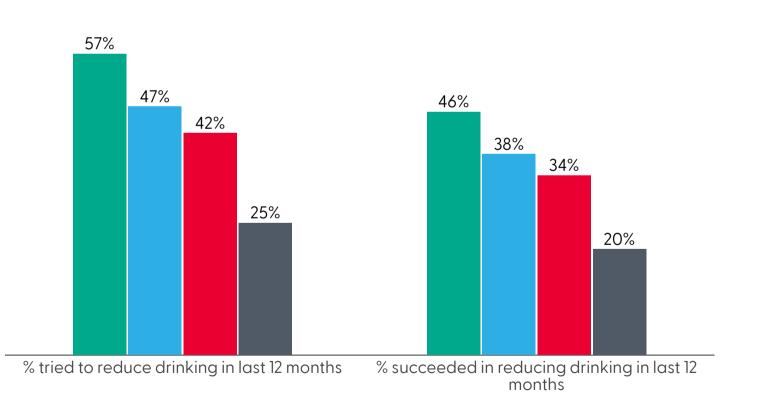


Social circle drinking and relationship effect. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol and have someone in social circle who is cutting back. (n=1,376)

And those who know someone who is trying to cut back are much more likely to reduce their own drinking

With 57% trying to reduce their own drinking over the last 12 months and 46% succeeding, around twice (30% and 24% respectively) those who do not know someone who is trying to cut back their drinking

- Someone who is currently trying to cut back or reduce their drinking
 - Someone who used to drink but has now stopped completely
- Someone who has never drunk alcohol
 No-one I know fits these descriptions





Males are even more likely than females to try to reduce their drinking if they know someone else who has

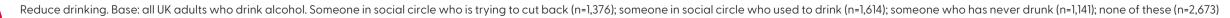
60% of males with someone in their social circle who has cut back, compared to 54% of females



Three in ten regular binge drinkers have tried to cut down if they know someone else who has

72% of those who binge drink at least monthly, compared to 57% who binge drink less frequently and 39% of drinkers who do not binge drink





Attitudes to drinking

Take me to...

Attitudes around drinking: what to look out for



57% of UK drinkers feel they are a "fairly normal drinker" and increasing risk drinkers are as likely as low risk drinkers to feel this way



Those who are most likely to feel that they are a "fairly normal drinker" (drink 2-3 times a week, binge drink monthly and drink at home alone once a week) are not "normal" drinkers according to Monitor data



Most (84%) feel there is "nothing seriously wrong" with their drinking; three in five (58%) increasing or high risk drinkers feel this way



Three in five (60%) high risk drinkers do not think of themselves as a "problem drinker", but they are more likely than others to recognise that they need to change their drinking

57% of UK drinkers feel they are a "fairly normal drinker"

Younger drinkers are more likely to feel they are a "fairly normal drinker"

65% of 18-34 year old drinkers strongly/tend to agree that they are a "fairly normal drinker", compared to 56% of 35-54 year old drinkers and 52% of drinkers aged 55+

How do drinking behaviours impact on the likelihood of someone feeling they are a "fairly normal drinker"?

% strongly/tend to agree that they are a "fairly normal drinker"



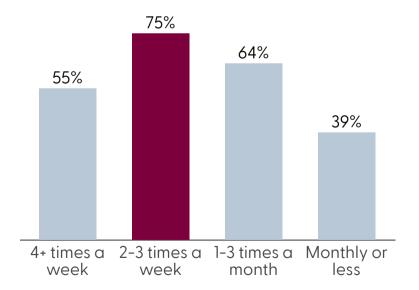
Drinking frequency

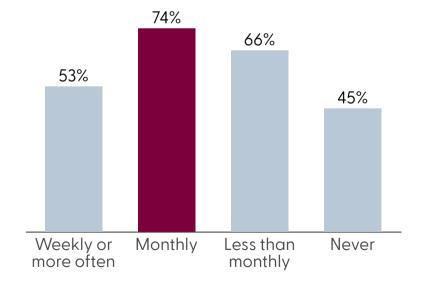


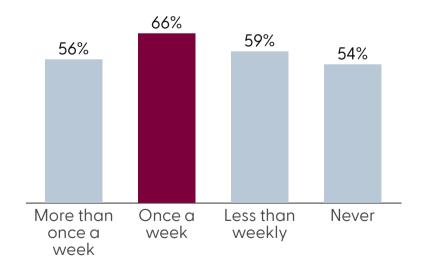
Binge drinking



Drink at home alone









But these drinking behaviours are not "normal"

Based on the drinking behaviours of all UK adults from the 2025 Monitor

Drinkers are most likely to feel they are a "fairly normal drinker" if they....



But most people do not drink like this:



Drink 2-3 times a week



UK adults drink less than 2-3 times a week or don't drink at all



Binge drink monthly



UK drinkers binge drink less than monthly or not at all



Drink at home alone once a week

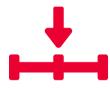


UK drinkers drink at home alone less than weekly or not at all

People often compare themselves to others in their social circle when deciding if they are a "normal drinker"



Most participants in the qualitative research feel they are a "fairly normal drinker" and when making this judgement, they often compare themselves to the drinking of other people they know.



Common reasons given for feeling they are "a fairly normal drinker":

- "I am similar to other people I know"
- "I know people who drink less than me and people who drink more than me, I am somewhere in the middle"
- "I used to drink a lot more and that wasn't normal, so now I am probably normal"
- "I can take it or leave it, I don't need alcohol"
- "I know my limits, I don't push things too far"



I think for the people around me and the people I'm close with, I'm definitely a normal drinker, but then obviously some people don't drink at all and some people drink every night. (Qualitative participant: Female, 18-34, Increasing risk)



Several recognise that they don't know what a normal drinker is and feel this is subjective

But they do feel they could recognise a 'problem drinker' and this is often described as someone who:

- drinks every day
- relies on alcohol or feels they need it
- drinks for reasons other than social reasons
- has a negative impact on others due to drinking

And a handful of people felt that they probably drink more than the average person



I wouldn't say normal. I tend to drink about 10 pints on my nights out and that's two or three times a week. I think normal would be about half that. (Qualitative participant: Male, 18-34, Increasing risk)

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Most think there is "nothing seriously wrong" with their drinking

84% of UK drinkers agree (strongly/tend to) that there is "nothing seriously wrong" with their drinking, rising to 87% amongst female drinkers



Nine in ten (88%) drinkers also do not think of themselves as a "problem drinker"

Rising to 95% if they never binge drink



Three in four (77%) feel that "there is nothing they really need to change about their drinking"

This drops to 72% amongst drinkers in higher (AB) social grades, compared to 80% of drinkers in DE social grades



Seven in ten (71%) feel it's a "waste of time" thinking about their drinking because they do not have a problem

Although this drops to 43% if they are drinking to increasing or high risk levels based on weekly alcohol units



Two in five (43%) feel that <u>changing their drinking</u> is "pretty much a waste of time"

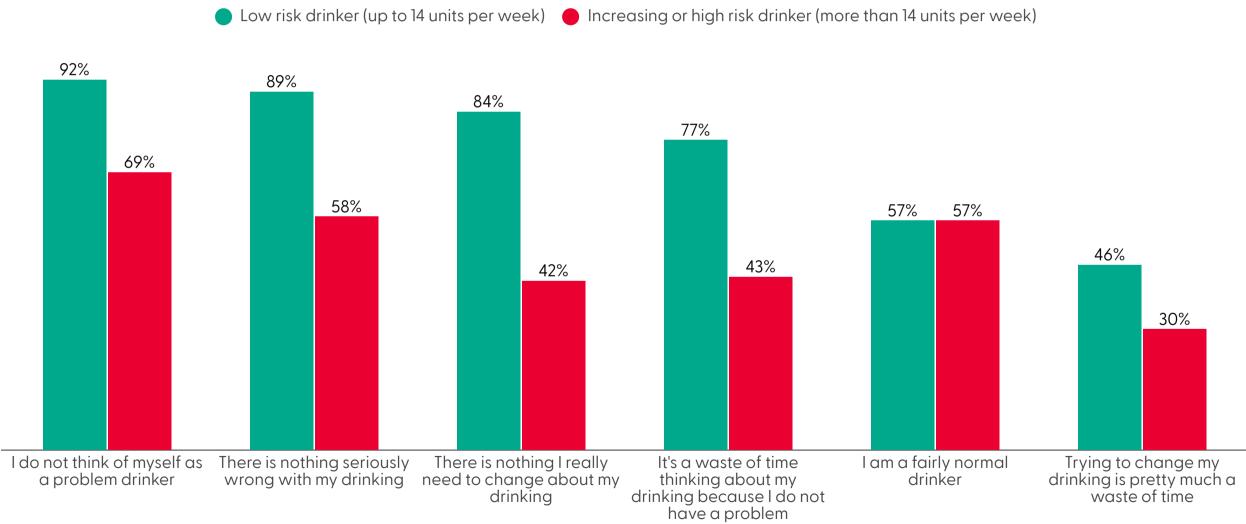
Those living in the most deprived areas were more likely to feel this way: 46% agree compared to 40% of those in the least deprived areas

^{*}All percentages refer to the proportion of drinkers who strongly or tend to agree with each attitudinal statement

Generally, risky drinkers are less likely to agree with these statements

But agreement levels are still relatively high given the amount they drink, and there is no difference between low and increasing/high risk drinkers when it comes to being a "fairly normal drinker"

% strongly/tend to agree with attitude statements about their drinking



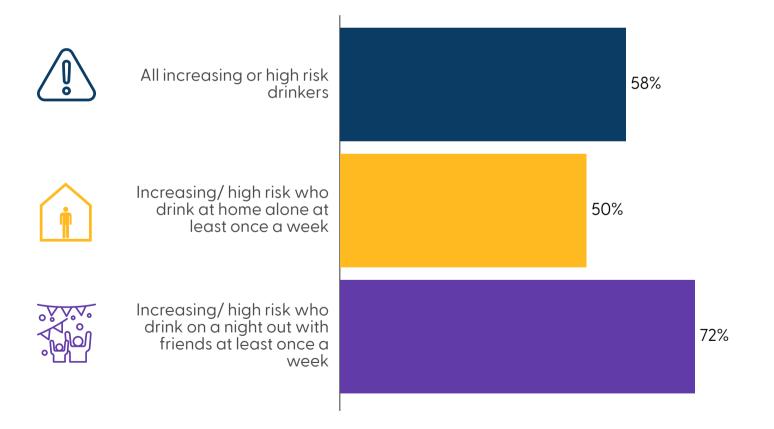


Attitude statements. Base: all UK adults who are low risk drinkers (n=5,002); all UK adults who are high risk drinkers. (n=1,072)

Where people drink may shape their views on whether there is anything "seriously wrong" with their drinking

Increasing or high risk drinkers are more likely to feel there is "nothing seriously wrong" if they regularly drink on a night out with friends compared to those who drink at home alone

% who agree (strongly/ tend to) with the statement: "There is nothing seriously wrong with my drinking"





Increasing/high risk drinkers who drink at home alone at least once a week are also less likely to feel that...

(% strongly/tend to agree compared to increasing/high risk drinkers who never drink at home alone)

- They are a "fairly normal drinker" (47% vs 69%)
- They are not a "problem drinker" (61% vs 81%)
- There is nothing they really need to change about their drinking (34% vs 54%)

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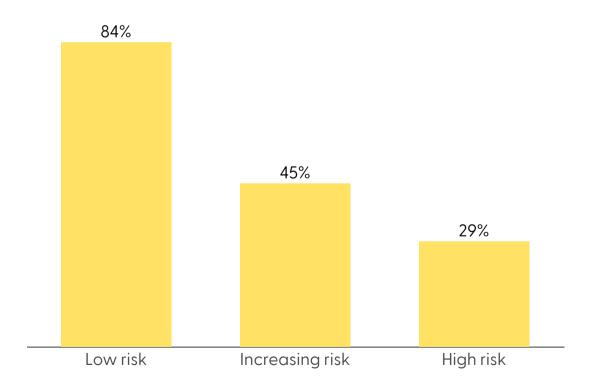
Three in five (60%) high risk drinkers do not think of themselves as a "problem drinker"

Compared to 71% of increasing risk drinkers and 92% of low risk drinkers



But high risk drinkers do appear more likely to recognise that they need to change their drinking

% strongly or tend to agree with the statement: "There is nothing I really need to change about my drinking"





It is increasing risk drinkers who appear to recognise most that changing their drinking is <u>not</u> a "waste of time"

43% disagree with the statement, compared to 20% of low risk drinkers and 39% of high risk drinkers

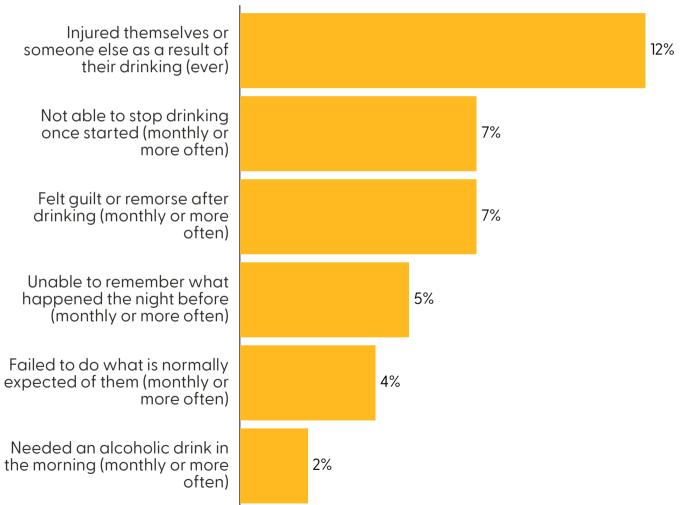




But some drinkers exhibit risky behaviours due to drinking alcohol

With one in five (20%) drinkers doing at least one of these, rising to half (51%) amongst high risk drinkers

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





Rises to 15% of drinkers from the most deprived areas

Compared to 11% of drinkers in the least deprived areas



Younger drinkers are more likely to report a range of these risky behaviours

- 18% of drinkers aged 18-34 have injured themselves or someone else as a result of their drinking, compared to 6% of drinkers aged 55+
- 12% of drinkers aged 18–34 have felt guilt or remorse after drinking at least once a month, compared to 3% of drinkers aged 55+
- 8% of drinkers aged 18-34 have failed to do what is expected of them after drinking at least once a month, compared to 1% of drinkers aged 55+

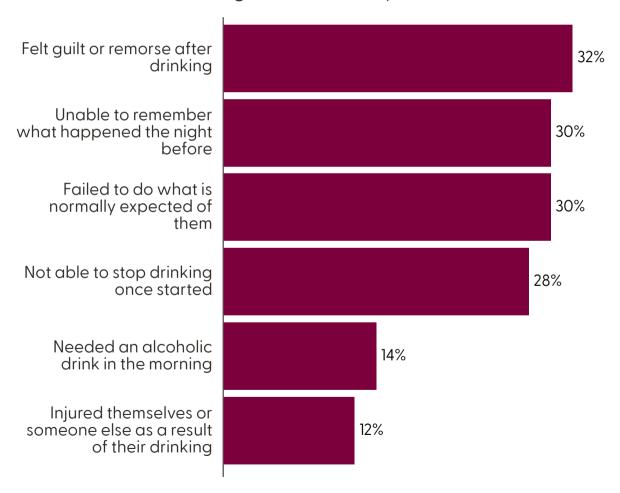


Risky drinking behaviours. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol (n=6,074)

Those who drink in the morning or have caused injuries while drinking appear less likely to feel they are a "problem drinker"

Relative to other risk behaviours

% who disagree with the statement: I do not think of myself as a problem drinker: (Do each of the following at least monthly)





One in five drinkers who have had a concern raised about their drinking would think of themselves as a "problem drinker"

22% disagree with the statement: "I do not think of myself as a problem drinker"



Disagree that they are a problem drinker. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. Guilt or remorse (n=436); can't remember (n=303); failed to do what was expected (n=254); can't stop (n=437); drink in morning (n=153); injury (n=763)

Concern and support

Take me to...

Concern and support: what to look out for



Nearly three in ten UK adults (28%) are concerned about someone else's drinking and it is most likely to be about how much and how often they drink



One in ten (11%) UK drinkers have had a concern raised about their drinking, rising to nearly half (46%) of high risk drinkers



If a drinker has had a concern raised about their drinking, they appear more likely to feel that they have a problem and need to change

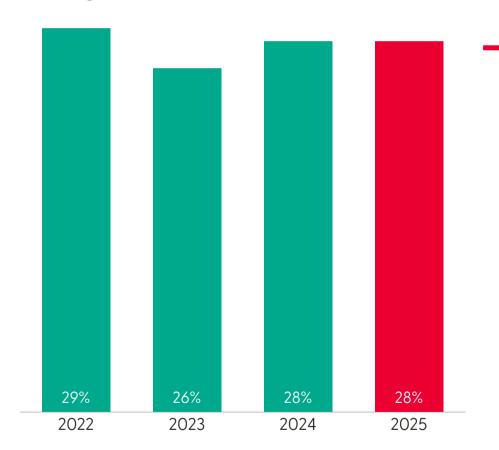


Few drinkers have ever sought help or advice about their own drinking and two thirds (67%) have never been asked to complete an alcohol assessment

Nearly three in ten people are concerned about someone else's drinking

28% of UK adults are concerned about someone else's drinking; same as in 2024

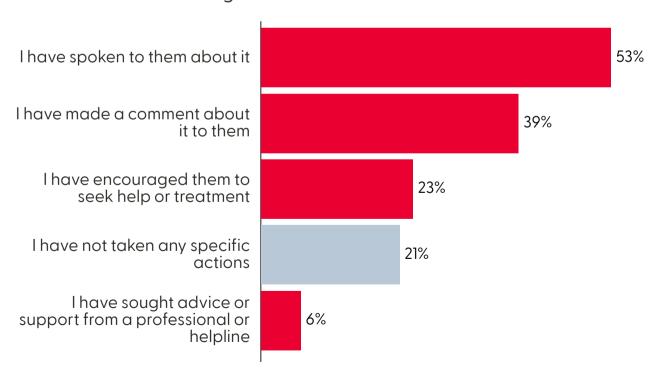
% of UK adults concerned about someone else's drinking over time





Half then spoke to this person about their drinking; one in five did not take any actions

What actions they took to address their concerns about someone else's drinking

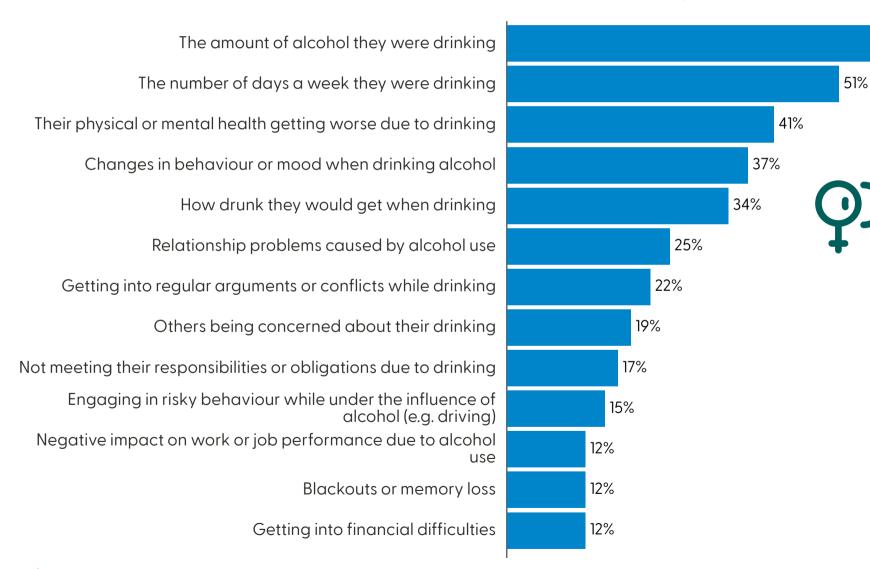




Concern about someone else's drinking. Base: all UK adults. 2025 (n=7,256); 2024 (n=5,143); 2023 (n=10,473); 2022 (n=6,318)

It is the amount someone drinks, followed by how often they drink, that is most likely to raise concern

What made people concerned about someone else's drinking:



Females are more likely to be concerned about the amount and frequency of someone else's drinking

69%

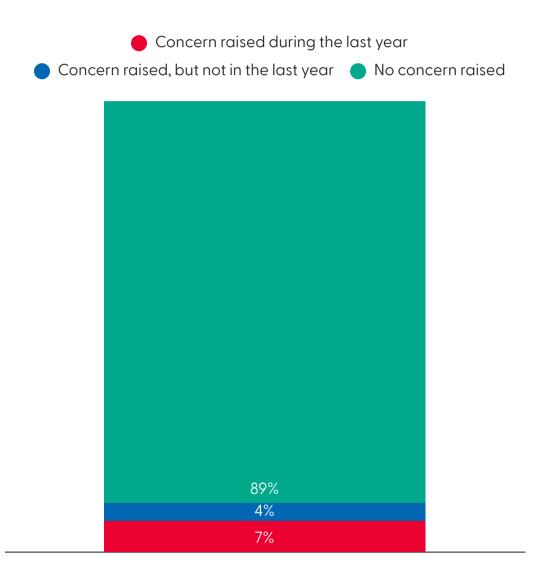
- 72% were concerned about the amount of alcohol this person was drinking (compared to 64% of males concerned about someone else's drinking)
- 56% were concerned about the number of days they were drinking (compared to 43% of males who are concerned)
- Males more likely than females to be concerned about someone if they get into financial difficulties or it is impacting on their work/job (24% of males selected either of these vs 16% of females)



Why people are concerned. Base: all UK adults who are concerned about someone else's drinking. (n=2,004)

One in ten drinkers have had a concern raised about their drinking

11% of drinkers have had a relative, friend, doctor or health worker raise a concern about their drinking





Male drinkers are twice as likely to have had a concern raised about their drinking than female drinkers

15% compared to 7%



Drinking behaviours impact on whether someone has raised a concern about their drinking

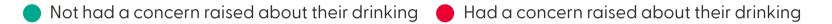
- Nearly half (46%) of high risk drinkers have had a concern raised about their drinking, compared to 27% increasing risk drinkers and 7% of low risk drinkers
- One in four (26%) drinkers who binge monthly or more often have had a concern raised, compared to 10% of those who binge less than monthly
- One in four (24%) who drink 4+ times a week have had a concern raised, compared to 8% of those who drink 2-4 times a month

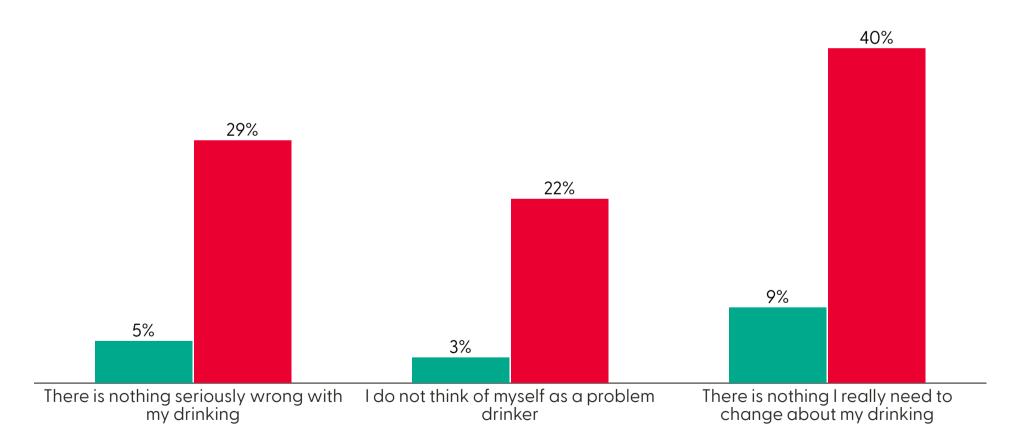


Concern raised. Base: all UK drinkers. (n=6,074)

If someone has had a concern raised about their drinking, they are more likely to feel that they are a "problem drinker" and need to change

% of drinkers who <u>disagree</u> with range of attitude statements, by whether or not someone has expressed concern about their drinking







Disagree with attitude statements. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. Not had a concern raised (n=5,429); had a concern raised (n=645)

Few drinkers have ever sought help or advice about their drinking

And two thirds (67%) have never been asked to complete an alcohol assessment

6%

Of UK drinkers have ever contacted a service or organisation for help or advice about alcohol

- Down slightly from 7% in 2024
- 3% of UK drinkers did this on their own behalf (same in 2024)





This rises to 7% of all UK adults* who have ever contacted an alcohol service or organisation

Down slightly from 8% in 2024



29% of UK adults have been asked to complete an alcohol assessment, up slightly from 27% in 2024

Drops to 25% for those in the most deprived areas, compared to 31% in the least deprived areas



This rises to two in five (38%) of increasing or high risk drinkers based on their weekly units

Compared to 29% of low risk drinkers



Drinkers would be most comfortable being asked to complete an assessment at their GP surgery

- 65% selected this, with 34% selecting another healthcare setting and 31% an online website or app
- 36% of 18-34 year old drinkers would be comfortable completing one on a website or app, compared to 26% of drinkers aged 55+

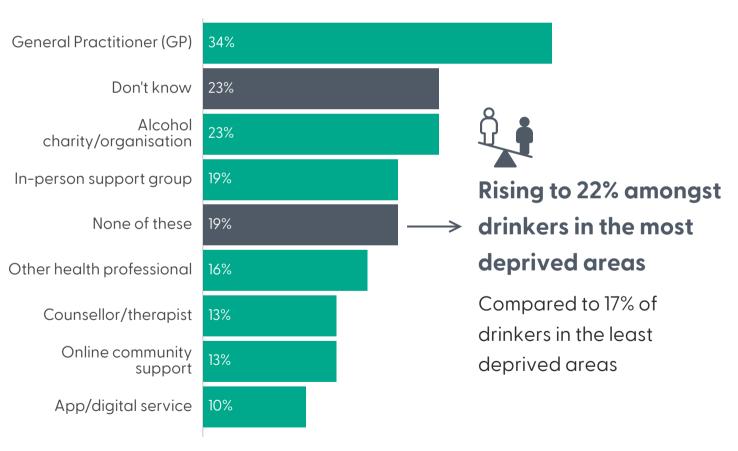
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^{*}Either for themselves or on behalf of someone else

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

With close to one in four indicating that they don't know where to reach out to if they need support or advice about alcohol

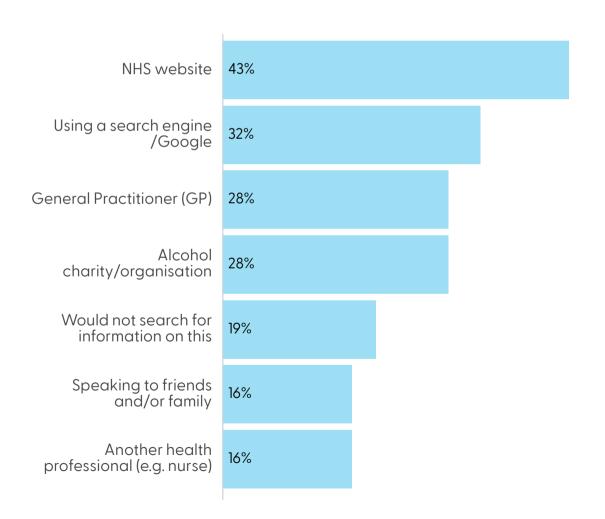
% of UK drinkers who would reach out to the following if they need support or advice about alcohol





But they are more likely to visit the NHS website for information on how to reduce their drinking

% of UK drinkers who would typically get information from the following on how to reduce their drinking (top 7)





Reach out for support. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2025 (n=6,074) $\,$

Health and drinking

Take me to...

Health and drinking: what to look out for



There has been a drop in drinkers feeling their current drinking is likely to lead to future health problems (15% in 2025 from 18% in 2024)



Only smoking is considered a bigger public health burden than alcohol and infrequent heavy drinking is considered more damaging to someone's health than regularly drinking smaller amounts



A fifth (21%) of UK adults say they have seen information about health risks associated with drinking alcohol from Drinkaware in the last 12 months, and this rises to 27% of those drinking more than the recommended 14 units a week

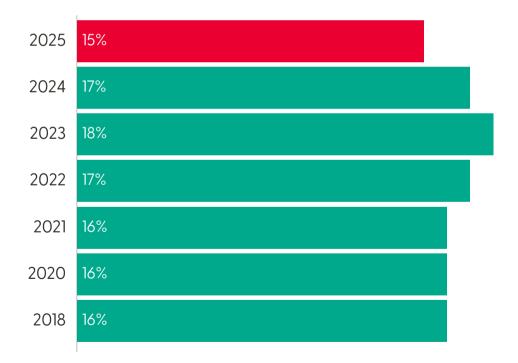


Over half (55%) of UK drinkers feel they have a very or quite healthy lifestyle, similar to all UK adults (54%); how often someone drinks appears to have less of an impact on whether someone feels they have a healthy lifestyle than how often they exercise and how much fruit and vegetables they eat

There has been a drop in drinkers feeling their drinking will lead to future health problems

15% of UK drinkers feel their drinking will lead to future health problems, compared to a high of 18% in 2023

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

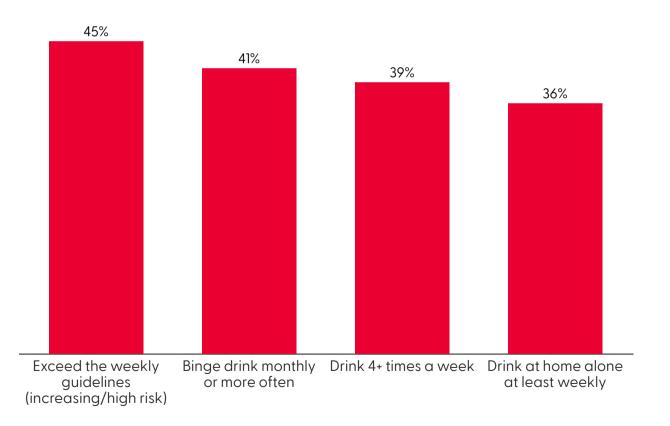




Future health problems. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol, 2025 (n=6,074); 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2022 (n=5,428); 2021 (n=7,911); 2020 (n=7,834); 2018 (n=7,902)

If they engage in higher risk drinking behaviours, they are much more likely to feel this way

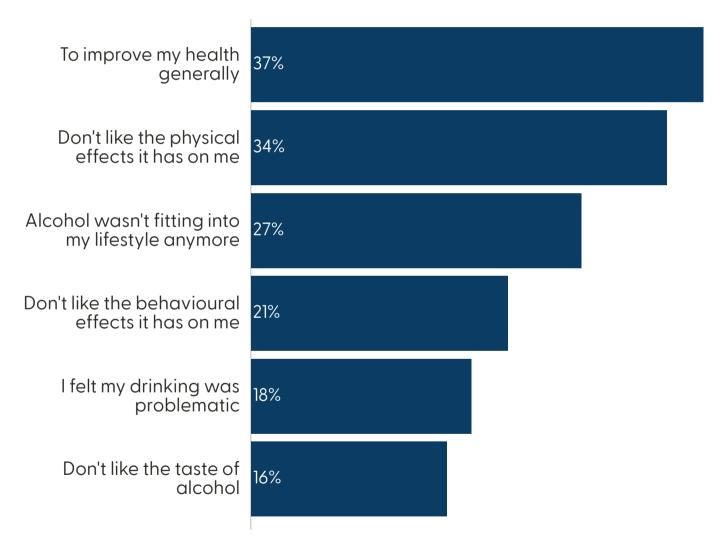
% who feel it is very or fairly likely that their drinking will lead to future health problems



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





Those aged 18 to 44 are more likely to give up because of the physical or behavioural effects

- 41% of non-drinkers aged 18-44 who gave up did so for the physical effects (30% of those aged 45+)
- And 27% gave up for the behavioural effects (18% of those aged 45+)



15% of non-drinkers aged 55+ who gave up alcohol did so because they were advised to by a healthcare professional

Compared to 6% of those under the age of 55

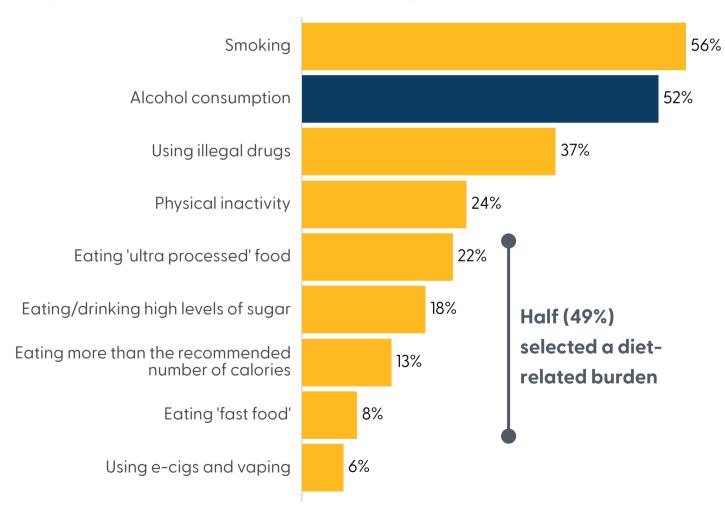


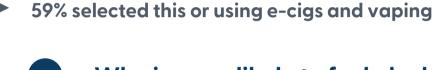
Reasons for giving up alcohol. Base: all UK adults who do not drink alcohol but previously did (n=623)

Only smoking is considered a bigger burden on public health services than alcohol

Alcohol consumption is seen as a greater burden than drugs and physical inactivity

Respondents could select a maximum of 3 options







- Non-drinkers (60% vs 57% of drinkers)
- Older people (60% of 55+ vs 45% of 18-34s)
- Females (56% vs 48% males)
- White (54% vs 45% ethnic minority)
- Those who never binge drink (56% vs 48% who do)
- Those with a disability (58% vs 50% no disability)



Those who drink most frequently are the least likely to see alcohol as a public health burden

46% of those who drink 4+ times a week selected alcohol, compared to 55% of those who drink monthly or less often and 60% who never drink

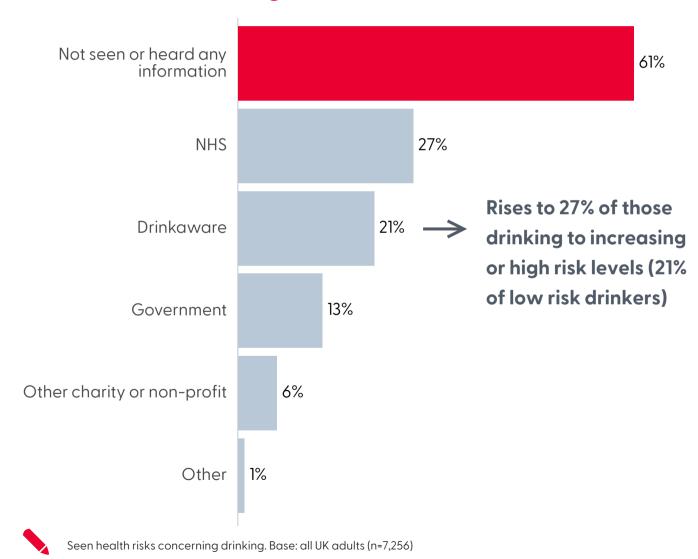


Greatest burden on public health. Base: all UK adults (n=7,256)

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Those who have seen or heard information about the health risks of alcohol are more likely to consider it a burden on public health services

Two in five have seen/heard information about health risks associated with drinking alcohol in the last 12 months





Who is more likely to have seen information on health risks of alcohol?

- Males (43% vs 36% females)
- Aged 18-34 (46% vs 36% aged 55+)
- Higher social grades AB (48% vs 31% DE)
- Increasing/high risk drinker (47% vs 40% low risk)



If they have seen information about the health risks of alcohol, they are more likely to consider alcohol consumption a public health burden

55% vs 50% of those who have not seen or heard anything



And they are also more likely to feel their drinking will lead to future health problems

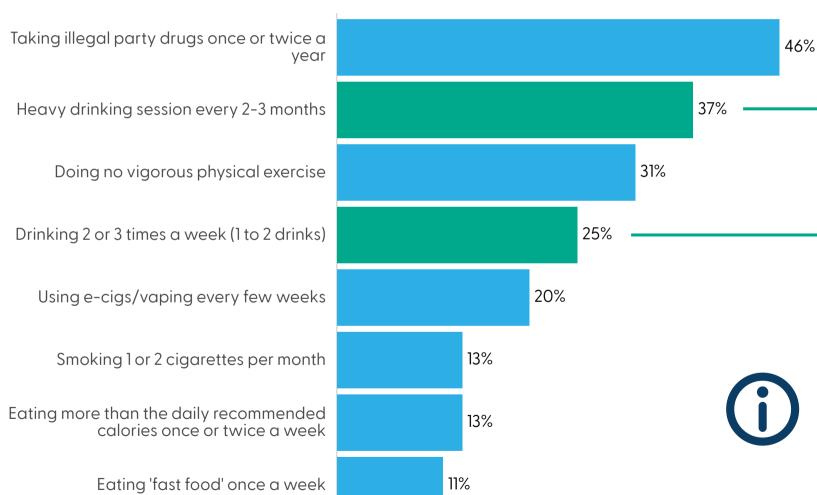
20% of those who have seen information on alcohol health risks feel it is very/fairly likely, compared to 11% who have not seen anything about the health risks

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Infrequent heavy drinking is considered more damaging to someone's health than regularly drinking smaller amounts

And only taking illegal drugs is considered more damaging to someone's health than heavy drinking

What UK adults feel are most damaging to someone's physical health (select 3)



Binge drinkers are less likely to select heavy drinking sessions

29% vs 46% who don't binge drink

Most frequent drinkers are less likely to select 2 or 3 times a week

11% of those who drink 4+ times a week vs 32% who drink monthly or less often



This reflects findings from the 2024 Monitor

82% of UK adults felt that drinking a lot in a single session often is risky behaviour, with 76% feeling that drinking frequently (e.g. most days of the week) is risky

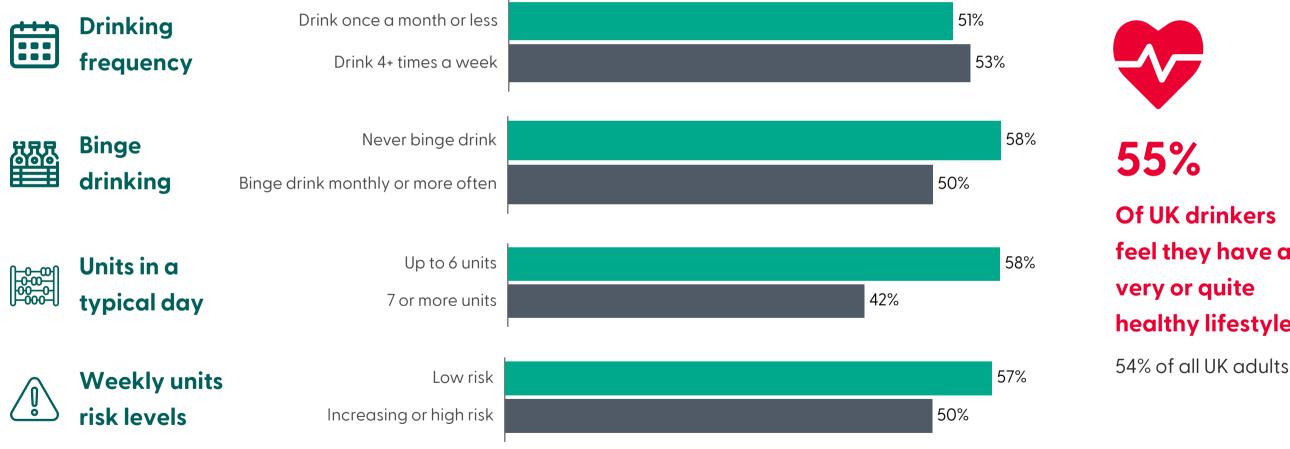


Seen health risks concerning drinking, Base: all UK adults (n=7,256)

How often someone drinks does not appear to impact on whether they feel they have a healthy lifestyle

But binge drinking and how much they drink in a day or week does

% who feel they have a very or quite healthy lifestyle (all differences are statistically significant except drinking frequency)



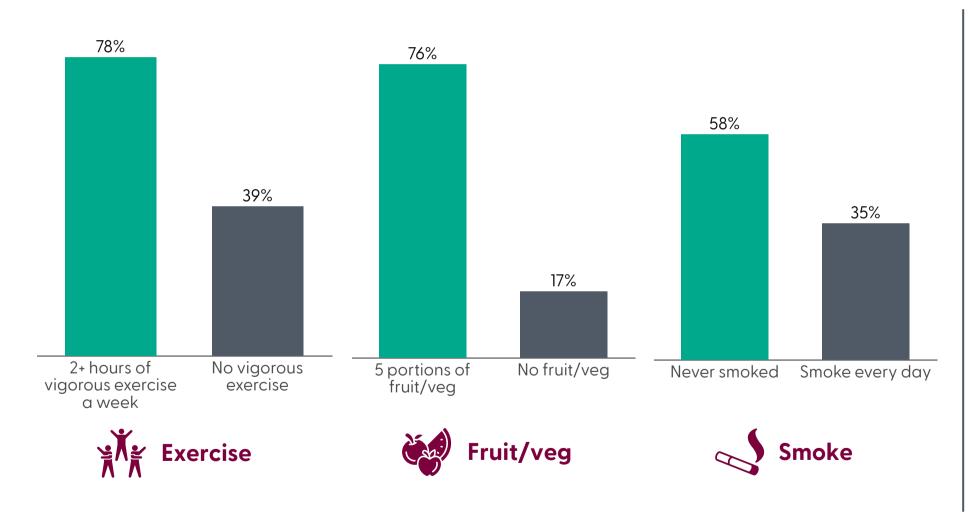
feel they have a healthy lifestyle



Very or quite healthy lifestyle. Base: all UK adults (n=7,256); all UK drinkers (n=6,074); drink 4+ times a week (n=911); drink monthly or less (n=2003); never binge drink (n=2431); binge drink monthly or more often (n=1447); drink up to 6 units in a typical day (n=5137); drink 7+ units in a typical day (n=937); low risk weekly units (n=5002); increasing or high risk weekly units (n=1072)

Exercise and diet may have more impact on whether someone feels they have a healthy lifestyle

% who feel they have a very or quite healthy lifestyle by different behaviours/habits:





Drinkers in the most deprived areas are less likely to feel that they have a healthy lifestyle

45% feel they have a very/quite healthy lifestyle, compared to 60% of drinkers in the least deprived areas

But this might not necessarily be about their drinking

- Those in the most deprived areas are more likely to drink within the weekly unit guidelines (84% vs 80% in the least deprived areas)
- But they are less likely to eat their '5-a-day' of fruit/veg (18% vs 28%) and exercise vigorously for 2+ hours a week (21% vs 30%)
- And more likely to smoke every day (12% vs 5%)



Very or quite healthy lifestyle. Base: all UK adults (n=7,256); all UK drinkers (n=6,074); 2+ hours of exercise (n=1830); no exercise (n=2258); 5 portions of veg (n=1658); no veg (n=340); never smoked (n=4076); smoke daily (n=542)

One-to-watch: weight loss drugs

Semaglutide-based medication, such as Ozempic or Wegovy, is commonly prescribed to treat diabetes or to promote weight loss but may also have other uses



4%

Of UK adults take semaglutide-based weight loss drugs



1%

Of UK drinkers take semaglutide-based weight loss drugs to reduce their alcohol consumption



Weight-loss drugs and potential implications for alcohol harm reduction

In recent years, the use of GLP-1 receptor agonist weight-loss drugs, such as semaglutide, has risen in the UK and internationally. While their primary purpose is to support weight management ¹⁵, emerging evidence suggests they may also influence other reward-driven behaviours, including smoking ¹⁶ and alcohol use. Early studies have indicated potential benefits for people with alcohol use disorder, with reported reductions in cravings and consumption ¹⁷, ¹⁸, ¹⁹. If such effects are confirmed in larger and longer-term studies, weight-loss drugs could have a significant influence on drinking behaviours and alcohol-related harm over the coming decade.

As evidence on their impact on alcohol use develops, we plan to expand our data collection in this area. This is particularly important given concerns about the accessibility and affordability of these treatments, which could risk worsening existing health inequalities $\frac{20}{2}$, an issue already prevalent within alcohol harm (see alcohol harm paradox $\frac{22}{2}$).

Spotlights

Profiling specific population groups

Take me to...

Introducing the research | Highlights | Drinking in the UK in 2025 | Moderation and reducing drinking | Alcohol-free and low alcohol drinks | Influence of social groups | Attitudes to drinking | Concern and support | Health and drinking | Spotlights | Appendix

Most deprived areas

Comparing drinkers in the most deprived 20% of areas with those in the least deprived 20% (IMD)





They drink less often and within the weekly guidelines

- 9% of those in the most deprived areas drink alcohol 4+ times a week, compared to 16% of those in the least deprived areas
- One in five (20%) never drink alcohol, compared to 14% of adults in the least deprived areas
- Drinkers in the most deprived areas are more likely to drink within the weekly guidelines (84% compared to 80% of those in the least deprived areas)



But when they drink, they drink more

- 17% of drinkers in the most deprived areas drink 7+ units in a typical drinking day, compared to 14% of drinkers in the least deprived areas
- And they are more likely to have caused an injury, either to themselves or others, due to their drinking (15% compared to 11% in the least deprived areas)



And they are less likely to consider heavy drinking as damaging to their health

- 32% feel having a heavy drinking session is damaging to health, compared to 38% of those in the least deprived areas, whilst 26% feel drinking little but often damages your health (compared to 20% of those in the least deprived areas)
- Three in five (58%) moderate their drinking for health reasons, compared to two thirds (67%) of those in the least deprived areas



They are also less likely to reach out for support or complete an alcohol assessment

- Drinkers in the most deprived areas are more likely to feel trying to change their drinking is "pretty much a waste of time" (46% agree compared to 40% of those in the least deprived areas)
- One in five (22%) would not reach out for support around alcohol (compared to 17% of those in the least deprived areas), and they are less likely to have completed an alcohol assessment (25% compared to 31% of those in the least deprived areas)

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Ethnic minority groups



Close to a third don't drink alcohol

- 32% of UK adults in ethnic minority groups do not drink alcohol, more than 2x higher than white adults (14%)
- Nine in ten (90%) drink within the CMO weekly guidelines, compared to 81% of white drinkers
- Of those who do drink, they are more likely to get together at their or someone else's house to drink (13% at least once a week, 2x higher than the 7% of white drinkers)



Three in five have someone in their social circle who doesn't drink or has cut back

- 48% of drinkers in ethnic minority groups have someone in their social circle who has cut back or stopped drinking, compared to 41% of white drinkers
- They are twice as likely to have found new ways to connect with these people that doesn't involve alcohol: 27% compared to 13% of white drinkers



And they are more likely to have tried to reduce their drinking and moderate

- Nearly half (46%) have tried to reduce their drinking in the last 12 months, compared to 36% of white drinkers
- 91% use at least one moderation technique, compared to 87% of white drinkers, and are significantly more likely to be doing most of the different techniques
- A third (34%) moderate their drinking to avoid getting drunk, compared to 27% of white drinkers; 18% also moderate their drinking for better skin health, significantly higher than white drinkers (11%)



Generation Z

Context: born between 1997 and 2012, 15% live with friends/housemates and more than half (57%) live with parents/siblings





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

- Three in ten (29%) binge drink at least monthly, with only Generation X at a similar level
- They are more likely than other generations to drink at someone else's house (15% do this at least once a week) and on a night out with friends (25% do this at least once a week)



They are most likely to feel they are a 'fairly normal' drinker

- 68% agree with this statement, higher than any other generation
- But two in five (41%) have tried to reduce their drinking in the last 12 months
- And more than one in four (27%) have felt embarrassed about what they said or did after drinking over the last 12 months, higher than any other generation



Three in five have someone in their social circle who has never drunk, doesn't drink or is cutting back

- This is higher than any other generation
- Nine in ten moderate their drinking but they are less likely to drink low/no alcohol (32% in last 12 months) compared to all other generations except the Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945)
- They are more likely than any other generation to moderate to save money (45% of moderators do this)

LGBTQ+





They are more likely to have someone in their social circle who has stopped drinking or cut back

- 57% are close to someone like this, compared to 49% of heterosexual drinkers
- And they are more likely to have tried to reduce their own drinking in the last 12 months (40% vs 36% of heterosexual drinkers)



They are more likely to have been hungover and felt other impacts of their drinking

- 39% have been hungover in the last 12 months compared to 25% of heterosexual drinkers and 40% have had decreased energy after drinking (compared to 27% of heterosexual drinkers)
- They are no more likely to moderate their drinking than heterosexual drinkers though
- When they do moderate their drinking, they are more likely to do this to avoid hangovers (47% vs 33% heterosexual drinkers), to save money (45% vs 31%) and to stay in control of what they do and say (32% vs 23%)



Their mental health and embarrassment would impact on them reducing their drinking

Compared to heterosexual drinkers, they are more likely to think they will cut down their drinking if it has a negative impact on their mental health (35% vs 20%) and if they feel embarrassed about what they said or did (20% vs 13%)

Higher social grades

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





They drink more often and more through the week

- 18% drink 4+ times a week compared to 11% of UK adults in DE social grades
- They drink more units across a week: 22% are drinking increasing or high risk amounts vs 16% of DE drinkers
- 16% go out drinking with friends at least once a week, compared to 11% of DE drinkers



But there is some recognition that they need to change their drinking

- 72% agree that "there is nothing I really need to change about my drinking", lower than the 80% of DE drinkers
- They are more likely to have tried to reduce their drinking in the last year (40% vs 33% of DE drinkers)
- And they are more likely to know someone in their social circle who has stopped drinking or cut back (47% vs 36% of DE drinkers)



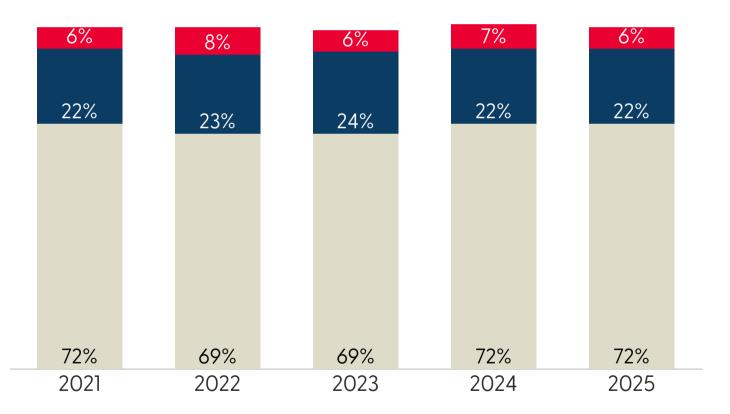
Health appears to be a consideration for them in this

- 19% feel it is likely that their current drinking levels will lead to future health problems (compared to 14% of DE drinkers)
- Half (52%) identified a health-related factor that would make them want to cut down on their drinking (compared to 42% of DE drinkers)
- But they are more likely to have seen health risks associated with alcohol in the last year (48% vs 31% of DE drinkers)

Weekly units is not the only way to assess alcohol 'risk'

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) $\frac{5}{2}$ is a series of questions used to understand someone's alcohol use. It assesses three domains: alcohol intake, symptoms of dependence, and adverse consequences of drinking.

Levels of high risk drinking based on the AUDIT assessment have not changed over recent years







Increasing risk
High risk or possible dependence



AUDIT. Base: all UK adults who drink alcohol. 2025 (n=6,074); 2024 (n=4,376); 2023 (n=9,035); 2022 (n=5,428); 2021 (n=7,911)



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

High risk drinkers (AUDIT)





Two in five appear more likely to think of themselves as a "problem drinker"

- 38% disagree with the statement: "I do not think of myself as a problem drinker", compared to 9% of increasing risk drinkers and 2% of low risk drinkers
- But three in ten (32%) feel changing their drinking is "pretty much a waste of time", compared to 48% of low risk drinkers



They are more likely to know someone who has stopped or cut back on drinking

- 60% compared to 52% of increasing risk drinkers and 36% of low risk drinkers
- And four in five (79%) have tried to reduce their drinking, compared to 58% of increasing risk drinkers and 26% of low risk drinkers
- But they have not necessarily successfully reduced their drinking: 36% compared to 43% of increasing risk and 24% of low risk drinkers



More likely than other drinkers to find their mood lifts when they drink

- Half (48%) experience this when they drink compared to 38% of increasing and 17% of low risk drinkers
- But much more likely to have felt embarrassed about what they said or did after thinking too much: 45% compared to 27% of increasing risk drinkers and 5% of low risk drinkers

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Appendix

And how to find out more

Take me to...

Introducing the research | Highlights | Drinking in the UK in 2025 | Moderation and reducing drinking | Alcohol-free and low alcohol drinks | Influence of social groups | Attitudes to drinking | Concern and support | Health and drinking | Spotlights | Appendix

Qualitative approach: recruitment quotas



Quotas set and achieved:

Minimum quotas were set on the following to ensure a range of demographics and experiences were represented:

Self-identified gender:

	Target	Number of participants
Male	10	11
Female	10	9

Age:

	Target	Number of participants
18-34	Min. 4	6
35-54	Min. 4	10
55 +	Min 4.	4

Region:

	Target	Number of participants
England	Min. 5	11
Scotland	Min. 2	3
Wales	Min. 4	4
N. Ireland	Min. 2	2

Note: any shortfalls in original quotas set were accepted

Drinking behaviours:

	Target	Number of participants
Drink most often at home with others	9	8
Drink most often when out socialising	9	12

AUDIT score:

	Target	Number of participants
Increasing risk (score of 8-15	15	15
High risk (score of 16-19)	5	5

Moderation techniques:

All participants had to currently use one of the following to reduce how much they drink:

- Avoid always having alcohol in the house
- Record how much I am drinking
- Drink a lower strength alcoholic drink
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drinks or water
- \bullet Drink smaller glasses of wine or smaller bottles of beer
- Set myself a drinking limit, e.g. just a glass/bottle
- Avoid drinking alcohol on a 'school/work night'
- Avoid being in a round of drinks
- Drink within the guidelines
- Stay off alcohol for a fixed time period
- Take drink-free days during the week
- Drink non-alcoholic beer, wine or spirit substitutes

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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 drinking: Those who drink more than the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week, which represents a pattern of alcohol consumption that increases someone's risk of harm.

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

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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.

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