

A man and a woman are sitting on a couch, smiling and talking. The woman is wearing glasses and a brown top, and the man is wearing a green hoodie. They are in a relaxed, indoor setting.

drinkaware

Drinkaware Strategy 2026 – 2030

drinkaware.co.uk

Foreword

For over 25 years I've worked to reduce alcohol harm, first in treatment services and now leading Drinkaware. During this time, we've reached millions through tools like the Drinking Check and MyDrinkaware app, strengthened partnerships, and remained a trusted source of information, with one in five adults turning to us for advice in 2025!

For 20 years, Drinkaware has offered clear, accessible, trusted guidance for anyone concerned about their own, or someone else's drinking. While I'm proud of our achievements so far, we now have the right conditions to accelerate cultural change: a greater focus on prevention, shifting social norms, deeper insight into increasing risk drinkers, and an industry responding to consumer interest in moderation. With these trends moving in the right direction, we can make a real and lasting impact.

While we are here for everyone, our core focus is the one in five drinkers who regularly drink above the Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs') low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week, but not those at the very highest risk of harm.² Through this strategy we will convene government, public health, industry and communities, to shift norms among increasing risk drinkers and prevent future harm.

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This strategy reflects extensive engagement with stakeholders and the public. I'm grateful to everyone who contributed their time and insight to help shape it.
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Karen Tyrell

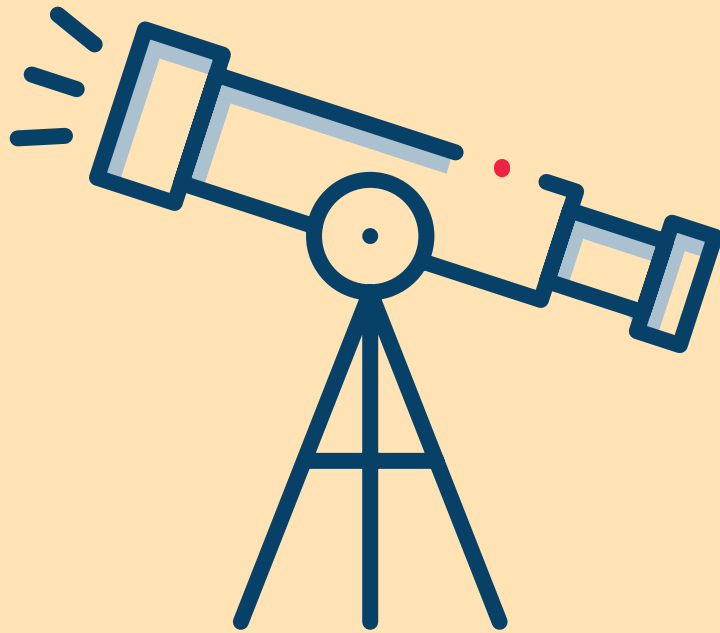
Karen Tyrell
Drinkaware
Chief Executive



1 in 5 drinkers

Our core focus is the 1 in 5 drinkers who regularly drink above the CMOs' low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units per week.





Our vision

Working together
to reduce alcohol
harm across the UK

Our mission

Using our expertise to give governments, industry, communities and individuals the knowledge and support to make informed decisions about alcohol and how to reduce the harm that risky consumption can cause.



Delivered through:



Public-facing campaigns, information and guidance, and digital services



Evidence-led advice to governments and industry



Independent research, consumer insight, and evaluation

Our values



Solid Reasoning

We seek and use both hard evidence and expert insight to shape our work and inform our voice.



Clarity with Empathy

To reduce alcohol harm and strengthen informed choice, we make every effort to communicate clearly and constructively, and express our thoughts with care to make a positive difference.



Principled Partnership

We work with others to maximise impact, whilst exercising our independence, to deliver on our purpose.



Understanding and Connecting

In every aspect of our work, we support people by listening well and focusing on what matters most to them, we embrace each individual's unique situation, perspectives and skills.



Determination and Curiosity

Determined to meet challenges together, we adapt to discover fresh and more effective ways to work by being open to learning and flexible in our response.

Our goals



Reinforcing moderation as the cultural norm, making it an easier choice for more people

We want to make drinking within low risk guidelines feel normal and supported within UK drinking culture. This includes encouraging earlier, more open conversations about drinking and strengthening community-level support.

We will achieve this by:

- Delivering national behaviour change campaigns featuring positive role models
- Raising awareness of moderation techniques
- Sharing evidence and insights into UK drinking trends



Provide people with the guidance and support they need to cut back

Focusing on the one in five drinkers who drink above the CMOs' low risk drinking guidelines, we will provide simple, tailored support for people and communities who are often missed by traditional services.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing digital tools and services for increasing risk drinkers
- Supporting local neighbourhoods with targeted community interventions
- Providing advice and resources for partners and supporters, including a shared resource hub



Working together to influence and accelerate shifts in moderation

Drinkaware sits at the heart of a wide network that includes national and local government, the alcohol production and sales industry, health care providers and charities. This position allows us to reach more people and achieve more than we ever could alone. We will bring people and organisations together to normalise low-risk drinking across the UK.

We will achieve this by:

- Supporting partners to implement best practice that supports moderation
- Sharing alcohol-related insight, data and evidence with the public, industry, media and government
- Acting as an inclusive convener, championing the voices of people and communities we support

Produce leading research and demonstrate our impact

We will continue to deliver high quality alcohol research, including the Drinkaware Monitor - the UK's only annual nationwide survey of attitudes and behaviours, alongside new studies that deepen our understanding of how and why people drink.

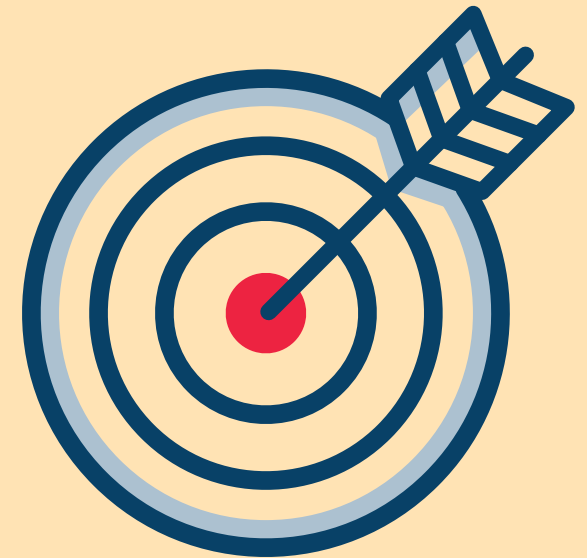
To make sure our work continues to drive impact, we will:

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our programmes to maximise their impact
- Use a test and learn approach, creating safe spaces to trial new ideas
- Facilitate cross sector collaboration on initiatives that help create a low-risk drinking culture in the UK



Drinkaware Monitor

The UK's only annual nationwide study of drinking habits



Impact

By the end of 2030, Drinkaware's shared ambition is to see two million fewer risky drinkers



Why and how this plan was developed

Since 2006, UK drinking patterns, especially among younger adults, have moved towards moderation. Greater awareness of health impacts and expanding low and no alcohol options are helping more people moderate. However, alcohol-specific deaths hit a record high in 2025,³ and clear action is needed. Our strategy aims to accelerate progress and prevent alcohol-related harms before they occur.

Around seven million people drink at increasing-risk levels, defined by the CMOs' guidelines as between 15 and 34 units per week for women, and between 15 and 49 units for men.⁴ With the NHS 10 Year Plan for England prioritising prevention and calling for a more community-led model of care, there is now a real opportunity to shape what prevention for this underserved group looks like in practice.

This strategy was shaped through public engagement, expert consultation, industry partnerships, academic insight and staff input. We will continue to use our unique approach of working alongside government, industry, public health, and wider civil society. These partnerships are key to reaching more people, influencing society more widely, and delivering meaningful change.



**Around 7 million people
drink at increasing-risk level**

Defined by the CMOs' guidelines as between 15 and 34 units per week for women, and between 15 and 49 units for men

Underserved drinkers

We know most people drinking above the low risk guidelines don't think of themselves as risky drinkers and don't need to access formal treatment. Our research shows that 60% of increasing-risk drinkers don't think of themselves as having a problem with alcohol, and almost two-thirds have never checked how much they drink.⁵ Even when they are concerned, they are unlikely to seek help through traditional health services.

Drinkaware meets people where they are, without judgement, through our alcohol screening tool Drinking Check, real stories, and local support options.

Behaviour change is also influenced by those around us. Our research shows we're more likely to change our drinking habits when we see friends or family doing the same.⁶ That's why our approach focuses on social norms, conversations, and personal motivation, working at both the individual and system level.



Working together to reduce alcohol harm across the UK

To create a more supportive low risk drinking culture we need to work together across government, industry, public health and civil society sectors to create lasting change. Our role as a convener helps to build and maintain trusted relationships across these different partners. Drinkaware offers a scalable, low-cost prevention model that can ease pressure on the NHS, empower healthier choices and ensure resources are directed to where they're needed most.

Within the direction set out in the NHS 10 Year Plan for England, there is scope to act more directly on the routines and norms that shape the UK's drinking, particularly among those who drink above guidelines.

What delivery will look like in practice and our shared ambition

Over the next five years, we will deliver our work through a combination of targeted actions designed to create meaningful and lasting impact. By the end of 2030, Drinkaware's shared ambition is to see two million fewer risky drinkers.⁷

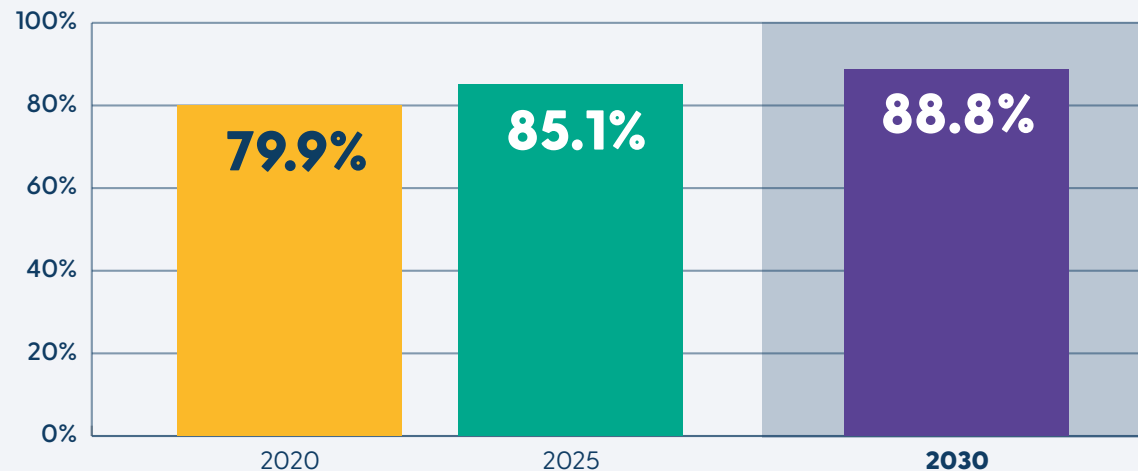
We will contribute to this target through:

- Scaled up strategic partnerships to extend our reach and impact
- Behaviour change campaigns to reach increasing-risk drinkers
- Best in class tools and services, such as the Drinking Check, our service finder and brief interventions, to support those wishing to make a change
- Easily accessible information and guidance for all UK drinkers and those supporting others
- Neighbourhood-level interventions to support communities at increasing risk of alcohol harm
- Ongoing research to deepen understanding of alcohol harm in the UK, informing the discussion on how best to support those in need

With the support of others, this strategy sets out Drinkaware's aim to accelerate the positive trends that we've already seen in recent years. The proportion of all UK adults consuming 0-14 units per week (defined as low-risk drinkers) has risen by 6.5% since 2020 and the proportion of all units consumed by risky drinkers has fallen by 7.6% in this time to 66%.

Over the next five years, by working together, we aspire to reduce the proportion of all units being consumed by risky drinkers further to 59%. This would lead to an increase in the percentage of drinkers drinking within the guidelines – equivalent to two million fewer risky drinkers.

% of all UK adults drinking within the CMO's low risk drinking guidelines



Note: The estimate for 2030 assumes a uniform 25% decrease in weekly unit consumption among all risky drinkers (those drinking above the CMO's weekly unit limit), and also assumes that the percentage of non-drinking stays constant between 2025 and 2030.

Tracking progress

Drinkaware's plan will run for five years, from January 2026 to December 2030.

We will monitor the following outcomes:

- Helping more adults understand their personal drinking risk levels
- Enabling better-quality, earlier conversations about drinking
- Reducing the stigma involved in talking about alcohol
- Increasing the number of role models available to the public
- Raising awareness of moderation techniques
- Strengthening social support for change
- Progress towards our shared ambition of seeing two million fewer risky drinkers by the end of 2030

We review progress against our plans annually. In 2028, we will check progress against our strategic goals and explore whether changes in the external environment mean that we need to update our plans.



A man and a woman are sitting on a brown leather couch. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and is looking at a smartphone held by the woman. The woman, on the right, is wearing a light yellow turtleneck sweater and has her hair styled in a bun. She is looking at the phone with a focused expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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Thank you for supporting us in our vision of working together to reduce alcohol harm across the UK.

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If you have any questions, thoughts or feedback on our plans for the next five years, or would like to partner with us, please email contact@drinkaware.co.uk