

# **Risky business**

**How the alcohol social marketing  
strategy for England can help harmful  
drinkers help themselves**

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**Substance Misuse, Department of Health, England**

# ALCOHOL KNOW YOUR LIMITS

**NHS choices**

ALCOHOL LIMITS

Home

**DrinkCheck**

### Your drinking and you

For many of us, drinking with friends and family is one of life's pleasures. But for a lot of people, their drinking habits can lead to problems. And if you're putting your health and welfare at risk.

So how do you know if you could be drinking more than is good for you? Drinking, take the DrinkCheck quiz. It'll help you assess the effects of you are drinking too much, we can also give you advice on how to drink less.

[Click Here to Take The DrinkCheck Quiz](#)

| SHOULD NOT REGULARLY EXCEED |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| MEN                         | WOMEN       |
| <b>3-4</b>                  | <b>2-3</b>  |
| UNITS DAILY                 | UNITS DAILY |

### Your drinking and you

The facts on alcohol and how to cut down



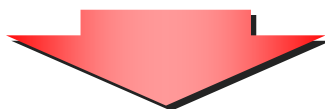
**ALCOHOL KNOW YOUR LIMITS**

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 3-4         | 2-3         |
| UNITS DAILY | UNITS DAILY |



# Alcohol costs

- Alcohol-related hospital admissions have almost doubled in the last decade
- Alcohol-related illness costs the NHS at least £2.7 billion and the UK economy £20 billion a year
- Alcohol-related deaths are 45% higher among the poor
- Harmful drinkers are most at risk



- Reduce the number of people drinking at harmful levels in England
- Contribute to NHS Vital Signs: “Reducing the rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm”



# US Pharmaceutical spend 2004

- Advertising \$4.5 billion
- Marketing \$57.5 billion

Information is important but often not enough to change behaviour

*“It’s not about telling and selling.. It’s about bringing a relationship mind set to everything we do”*

## Traditional information communications & 'message based' approach



## Customer understanding & insight based social marketing approach



*starting with  
'the customers'*

**understanding  
the  
customer**

*everyday lives  
hopes & fears  
values & beliefs*

**generating  
'insight'**

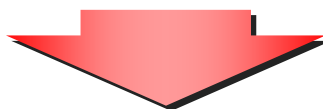
*what really  
'moves & motivates'*

# The start of our journey

- New territory
  - few people understand what “a unit” is
  - most people have never been asked to consider how much they drink
- A massive task
  - drinking is an embedded part of our culture
  - plus a spectrum of stakeholder interests
- It's a process
  - not yet a “solution”

# A social marketing approach from the outset

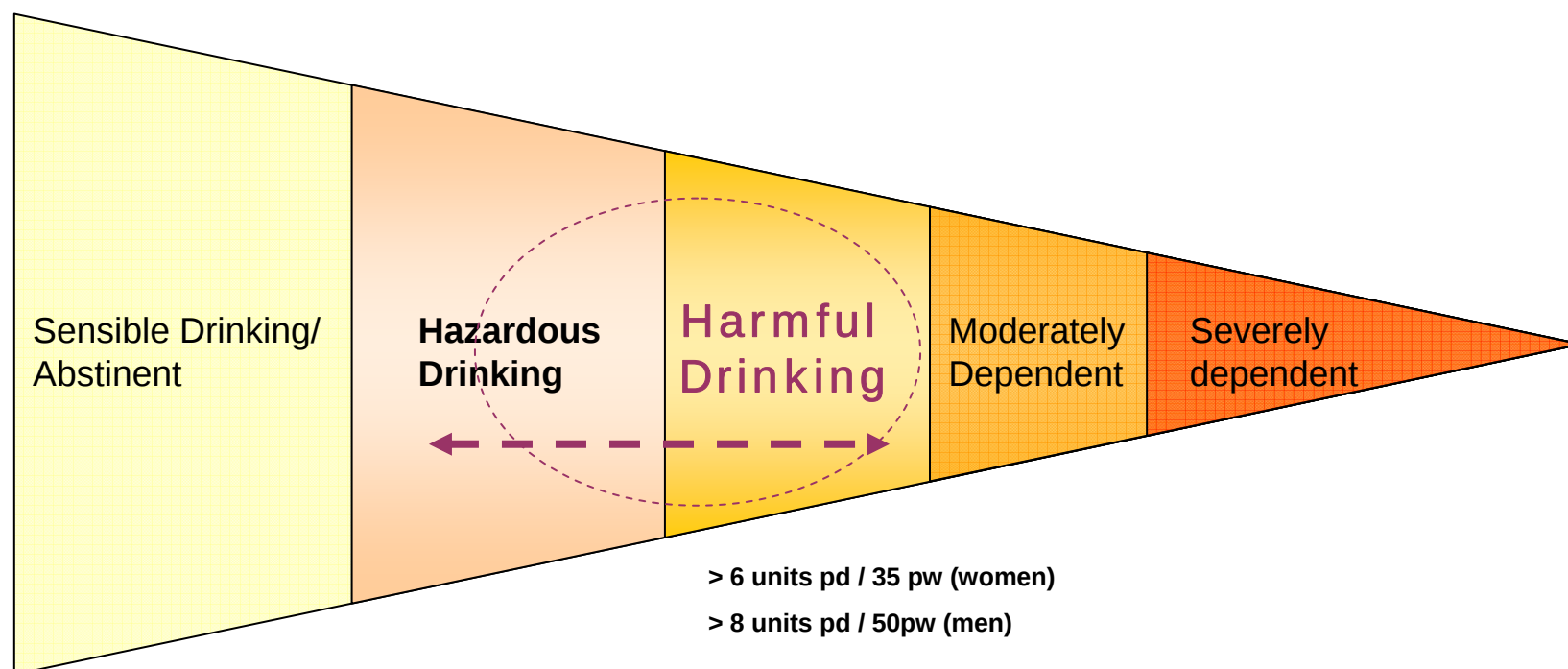
- Initial scoping
  - Epidemiological evidence; clinical expertise and experience; consumer research and industry studies
- Stakeholder involvement
  - From across the sector
- Pricing and promotions review
  - a separate, parallel investigation
- Supplementary ethnographic research
  - social context



- Segmentations, propositions, messaging and interventions to effect voluntary behaviour change

## Our current understanding

# A continuous scale



- Estimated 10 million men and women drinking above defined sensible levels

## **“Sensible” drinkers on the surface...**

**Drink to have fun,  
socialise and to  
relax**

**Don't drink to get  
drunk (not “binge”  
drinkers)**

**In control of their  
consumption**

## **...passionate ambassadors for alcohol**

**Seamless and  
integrated part of  
*everyday* life**

**Adamant belief  
their drinking is  
normal**

**Drinking is part of  
their identity**

**Disassociated  
from negative  
consequences**

**(Subconscious) belief  
that alcohol gives them  
control over their lives**

# Developing the social marketing strategy

- Most people have never been asked to consider how much they drink
- A cultural “blindspot”

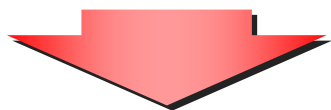


- Not a “linear” approach
- Shift perceptions of risk
  - sensitise drinkers to their behaviour
- Improve the “exchange”
- Encourage cultural and environmental support
  - esp re Identification and Brief Advice (IBA)

# The social marketing strategy

## A parallel approach

- “Why cut down”
- “How to cut down”



- Terminology to reflect risk
  - Lower risk; Increasing risk; Higher risk
- Messaging to achieve cut-through
  - relevant and “newsworthy” health messages
- Identification and Brief Advice (IBA)
  - established clinical best practice
  - the basis for self-help mechanisms
- Regular and robust measurement

# Achievements since May 2008

- New terminology
- Promotion of IBAs to GPs
  - including support material
- & **virtually**:
- DrinkCheck web site
- Expansion of the Drinkline telephone helpline service
- Pilot acquisition campaign
  - North West of England
- support**
- Self-help manual: *Your drinking and you*
- Development of stakeholder channels
  - website, action days, and shared learning

**Free advice to help cut down**  
For more information and advice in confidence or to order your free booklet, call:  
**0800 783 5784**  
You can also order the booklet by sending this coupon in an envelope to our Freepost address: Freepost Units, or by taking our quiz at: [www.nhs.uk/drinkcheck](http://www.nhs.uk/drinkcheck)  
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Alcohol Advice and Information  
For immediate advice and/or information on where to go for help within your region:  
Call 0800 783 5784  
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**NHS**

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3-4 2-3

**You are 13 times more at risk of cirrhosis of the liver if you regularly drink above a certain level.**



**You are 13 times more at risk of cirrhosis of the liver if you regularly drink above a certain level.**

It sounds obvious but it's true. Drinking more really does put your health at greater risk. For instance you're 13 times more at risk of cirrhosis of the liver, which can lead on to complete liver failure. You're also more at risk of heart disease and high blood pressure. If you're a man, you have four times the risk of high blood pressure, and if you're a woman, you double your risk.

How much you drink on a regular basis determines where you fit in the key categories. So how do you work out if this amount you drink is putting you at risk? Have a look at the alcohol units guide below.

|                                        | Women                                             | Men                                               |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| who regularly drink                    | who regularly drink                               | who regularly drink                               |
| risk of getting cirrhosis of the liver | risk of getting cirrhosis of the liver            | risk of getting cirrhosis of the liver            |
| Over 2-3 units a day                   | Over 3-4 units a day                              | Over 3-4 units a day                              |
| Increased risk                         | Around 1.7 times more likely                      | More than 2 times more likely                     |
| Higher risk                            | More than 6 units a day (or over 30 units a week) | More than 8 units a day (or over 40 units a week) |
|                                        | More than 12 times more likely                    | More than 13 times more likely                    |

The alcohol risk guide above shows which category people fall into depending on what they drink from day to day - and you might be surprised how little it takes to be in the increasing or higher risk category.

Want more information? Or advice on cutting down? Get in touch.  
[Click here](http://www.nhs.uk/drinkcheck) or call 0800 783 5784.

**NHS**

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[CLICK HERE](#)

**FOR A FREE BOOKLET:**

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**NHS**

**ALCOHOL KNOW YOUR LIMITS**  
3-4 2-3

**Regular drinking has serious health risks.**

Research shows that if you drink regularly above a certain level there are serious health risks. In fact, if you drink regularly, it has been proved to contribute to more than 60 different medical conditions.

So what is regular drinking? Regular drinking means drinking every day or most days of the week. The NHS recommends that men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units a day, and women no more than 2-3 units a day and you're in the 'increased risk' category.

**Find out more about the risks of regular drinking.**

In the enclosed leaflet, you will see a guide that illustrates the 3 different risk categories relating to the amount of units a person drinks.

You may not think that you drink that much. Maybe you just have a couple after work or a glass of wine with dinner a few times a week. But when you consider that one pint of 4% lager, or a 175ml glass of 13% wine has 2.5 units in them you can see that it soon adds up.

Check out the leaflet and the risk categories. If it makes you think about your drinking and you'd like more information, there's a booklet available that has the facts and figures on drinking and units, as well as a 6-step plan to help you cut down.

To order yours, take our short quiz at [www.nhs.uk/drinkcheck](http://www.nhs.uk/drinkcheck), call the\* anytime on 0800 783 5784 or fill in the coupon below and send it back in the Freepost envelope provided.

The Know Your Limits Team

**NHS**

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3-4 2-3

**What are the health risks of drinking?**

What are the health risks of drinking?

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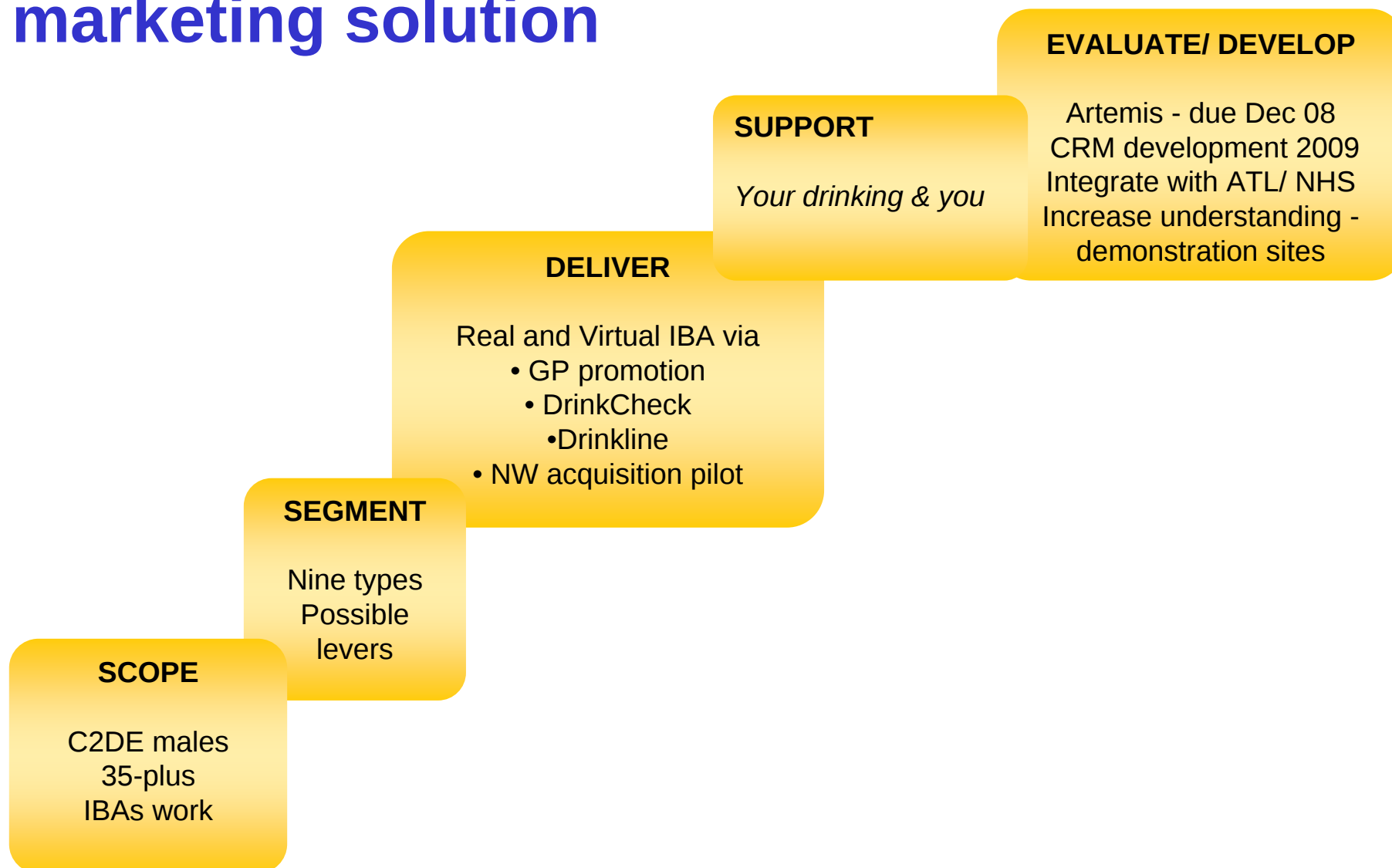
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# Steps toward a social marketing solution



**You are 13 times more at risk of cirrhosis of the liver if you regularly drink above a certain level.**

**NHS**

Information about your region:  
 Alcohol limits: 3-4 units for men, 2-3 units for women.

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**You are 13 times more at risk of cirrhosis of the liver if you regularly drink above a certain level.**

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**Is more risk.**

After it's a few years with drinking more or less, you can determine the risk you are in. Take a look at the chart opposite to see what the risks are. Then go to [www.nhs.uk/adrinkcheck](http://www.nhs.uk/adrinkcheck) and find out which category you fall into.

**Free advice to help cut down.**  
 For more information and advice in confidence or to order your free booklet, call 0800 783 5827. You can also order the booklet by filling in the coupon on the letter, or taking our quiz at [www.nhs.uk/adrinkcheck](http://www.nhs.uk/adrinkcheck).

Drinking too much can seriously damage your health and this level of drinking can play a part in more than 60 different medical problems.

Drinking too much can also contribute to developing certain serious medical conditions.

And finally, there's **Higher risk**. Compared with the other categories there's even more risk of

First the **lower risk** category; this is men who regularly drink no more than 3-4 units a day, and no more than 2-3 units a day for women. Bear in mind that drinking consistently within these limits is called **lower risk**, rather than **safe**, because drinking is never completely safe in all circumstances.

Look at the chart below to find out about the next two categories:

| Women                                                             | Men                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| who regularly drink 5 or more units a day (or more)               | who regularly drink 6 or more units a day (or more)               |
| Risk of getting cirrhosis of the liver (compared to non-drinking) | Risk of getting cirrhosis of the liver (compared to non-drinking) |
| Over 2-3 units a day                                              | Over 3-4 units a day                                              |
| Increasing risk                                                   | More than 2                                                       |
| Higher risk                                                       | More than 6 units a day or over 15 units a week                   |

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**NHS**

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**ALCOHOL KNOW YOUR LIMITS**  
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