

## Community Pharmacy **Living Well** Campaign

# Get to know your units

To reduce health risks from alcohol,  
drink no more than 14 units a week.



The 'Know your units' campaign aimed to increase awareness of the low risk drinking guidelines and the health risks associated with drinking alcohol in excess of these guidelines.

The campaign ran throughout June and July 2025.

# Campaign overview



**Over 45,100** alcohol unit calculator wheels were handed out



**504** pharmacies participated in the campaign



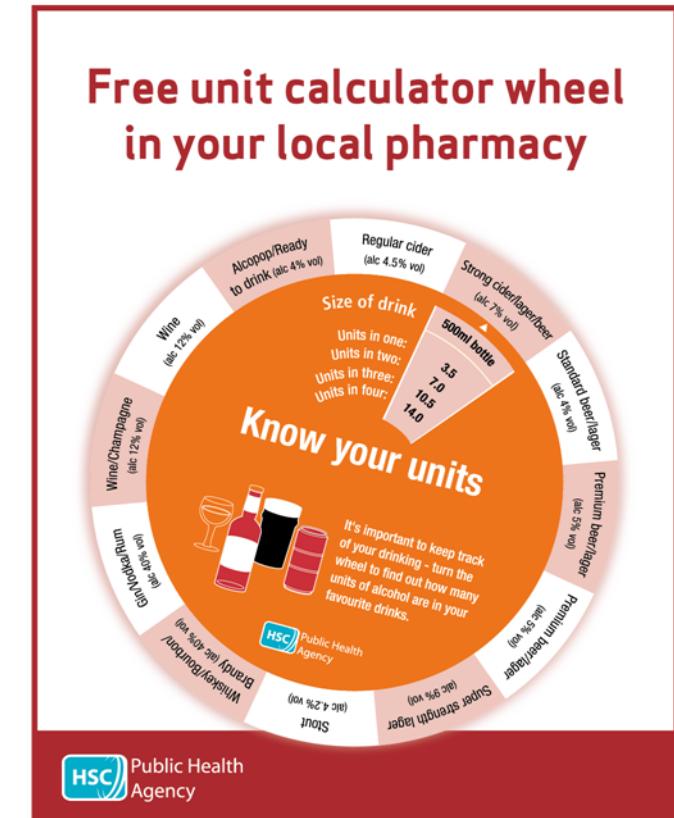
**430** pharmacies felt that the campaign supported the health and wellbeing of the pharmacy team



**386** pharmacies reported the public's feedback to be positive or very positive



**73** pharmacies used the Alcohol MOT brief intervention tool with over **550** patients

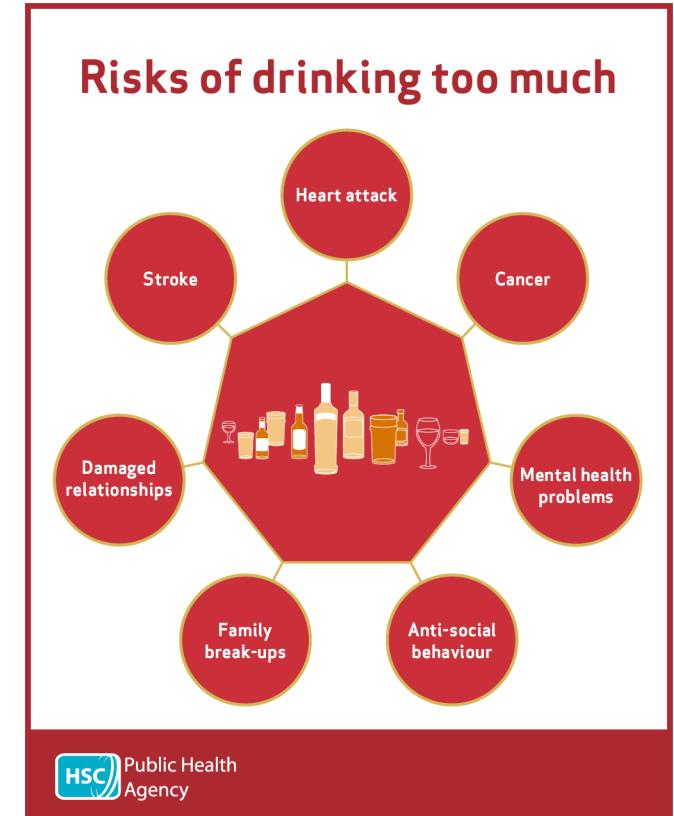


# Campaign overview

The main queries were in relation to **alcohol units, how to reduce your risk, binge drinking, short and long-term risks of drinking too much, alcohol addiction, and alcohol and weight.**

**Number of pharmacies that provided information to the following groups:**

- ◆ **352 to people experiencing drug or alcohol dependence**
- ◆ **325 to older people**
- ◆ **290 to people with long-term conditions or their carers**
- ◆ **252 to young families**
- ◆ **234 to socially isolated people**
- ◆ **192 to people living in poverty or deprivation**
- ◆ **177 to people of ethnic minorities**



# Patient stories

**"The wife a of heavy drinker came into the pharmacy for advice, feeling extremely stressed. Her husband didn't think he had a problem with alcohol and wouldn't seek help. I knew this man and asked his wife if he could pick up her prescription when it was due. This gave me the opportunity to engage with him. After a long conversation he agreed to speak with his GP, who subsequently referred him to a counsellor."**

**Is your drinking putting your health at risk?**

**Take the alcohol test**



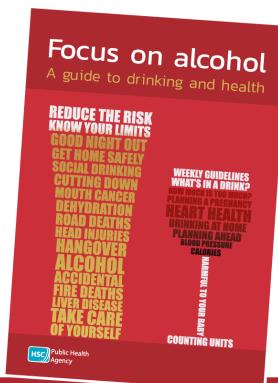
**"A patient was struggling with anxiety and was reluctant to leave their home. They admitted to having a drink with their dinner most nights, and then continuing on through the evening, citing anxiety as their reason. I made them aware of the health risks associated with increased alcohol intake, and referred them to the GP for counselling for their anxiety."**

**"A gentleman in his early 50s noticed our campaign. He asked about alcohol units and after a discussion with the pharmacist he realised his alcohol use was in excess. He mentioned that his mood was also low as he had gone through a marriage breakup. The pharmacist explained that alcohol has a depressant effect and would exacerbate the situation. We advised him on reducing/cutting out his alcohol consumption and advised him to see his GP regarding his depression. Later the gentleman returned to the pharmacy and thanked us for our advice. He said that the doctor had given him antidepressants to help and advised him to stop alcohol or reduce his intake at least. He said he was feeling much better and realised that he was using alcohol in the wrong way and has stopped it with the view to only drinking in moderation when he is in a better frame of mind."**

**"During a consultation about vitamins, a patient admitted that she drank excessively in secret most days. She engaged with a member of our team and agreed to a referral to her GP."**

# Patient stories

Pick up a leaflet in your local pharmacy



HSC Public Health Agency

**"We found the unit calculator wheels to really help with patient engagement. A lot of patients took the wheels, and we received very positive feedback about them. There was one patient who knew that their units had crept up since they retired but thought they were still drinking within safe limits. They were shocked after reading the leaflet and using the wheel to discover that the amount they were drinking each day was actually 14 units."**

**"A patient came into me after his wife had brought one of the leaflets home with her when she had been in the pharmacy to pick up a prescription. When he read the leaflet, it struck a chord and he wanted some advice. After a discussion we decided that going to the GP was the best option. He came back in a week later to thank me. His GP started him on an antidepressant as depression seemed to be the root of his problems, and also prescribed acamprosate to help with any cravings in the short term."**

**"A pregnant lady with a long history of alcohol dependence reached out for help as she knew that her drinking could have a negative impact on the health of the baby. She desperately wanted to stop drinking whilst pregnant so I referred her to two local support groups. One was a woman's general support organisation and also to the local alcohol abuse support group."**

**"I had a patient with general health and wellbeing and self-esteem issues. They knew what they had to do to make changes but were afraid to start in case of failure. I explained some small or incremental changes they could make. The first thing we tackled was the issue of regular drinking. This patient has agreed to cut down the time they spend in the pub and the habit of going there after work. The patient will do that for a few weeks and substitute the visit for a walk around the local riverside path and try progressing from there. We discussed the health and general mental wellbeing benefits from reducing alcohol intake and getting outdoors more. More to follow I hope!!"**