

Running an Alcohol Awareness Programme in the Workplace

A guide for employers

hin Health Innovation Network South London

Benefits

Resources

Foreword

Alcohol Misuse is one of the leading risk factors for ill health and early mortality. There are more than 10 million people in the UK who consume alcohol at harmful levels¹.

17.3 million working days are lost each year due to alcohol and alcohol-related illness cost organisations £1.8 billion a year through absenteeism, presenteeism, accidents, poor performance and shorter working lives¹.

This is not only dependent drinkers. 24% of the UK population are drinking at levels which may put their health at risk, many of whom are unaware of the impact¹. That is almost one quarter of the workforce.

Alcohol Identification and Brief Advice (IBA) is an evidence based approach which raises awareness of alcohol-related harm. It consists of screening / identification followed by brief, structured advice. The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) is one tool used to identify harmful alcohol consumption. It was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and has been extensively validated. IBA can **empower individuals** to make more informed choices about their drinking and can motivate those at risk to **reduce their alcohol consumption** to safer levels.

Using alcohol IBA within the workplace offers high population reach and can bring significant benefit. As part of an alcohol awareness programme, alcohol IBA has been found to be **cost effective and well received** by employees².

This how-to guide is aimed at employers, human resource managers, occupational health staff and wellbeing champions to help them to successfully implement an alcohol awareness programme in their workplace.



Drawing on experience gained from evaluating the implementation of alcohol awareness programmes in a number of organisations, this guide provides a step-by-step process of how to successfully implement and embed alcohol awareness and alcohol IBA within the workplace. This can support the organisation in gaining accreditation via a Healthy Workplace Charter. Links to resources and materials are provided which can be used to engage employers with this important issue.

Acknowledgements

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- 1 Public Health England (2016) The public health burden of alcohol and the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of alcohol control policies. An evidence review. London: PHE
- 2 Daley (2017). Workplace Alcohol Awareness Project Report. London: Health Innovation Network

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Benefits of alcohol awareness programmes

Alcohol awareness can bring a range of benefits, and inclusion of alcohol IBA in the programme can strengthen effectiveness.

Benefits this can bring:

- Increased alcohol awareness
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved productivity
- Improved safety, fewer accidents and injuries
- Improved staff morale and team relationships
- Improved organisational reputation

Completing this digitally offers opportunity to:

- Quickly reach high numbers of employees
- Complete IBA anonymously and confidentially
- Deliver this at low cost

Case Studies

“At LSBU we have a strong focus on staff and student wellbeing, addressing alcohol awareness is an important part of this and we are proud to be leading in this area”

Ed Spacey, Head of Health, Safety and Resilience, London South Bank University

“This offered something over and above our current programme, we liked the focus on prevention and that IBA is backed by evidence that it works”

Anonymous

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Step 1 | Readiness & need

- 
 Review your alcohol policy: Is there a written alcohol policy in place? Is the policy comprehensive and up to date? Does it include support mechanisms? Are all employees aware of the policy? Does it include an aspect of prevention?

- 
 Identify current interventions: Is there an existing alcohol awareness programme? Does this contain alcohol IBA? Are there clear procedures around how staff can access support? Does the current offer include prevention?

- 
 Examine organisation's vision and objectives: Do the organisation's objectives and values support an alcohol awareness programme? Is there a commitment to promote health and wellbeing in the organisation?

- 
 Explore alcohol culture and resources: Is there an organisational culture around alcohol? Is there likely to be resistance? Do you have staff and funding available to run an alcohol awareness programme? Is education or training needed?

Step 2 | Project team

- 
 Identify a project team and project lead: Engage Human Resources and Occupational Health staff. Nominate a lead who is able to sign off the project. Include those with a passion for wellbeing and communications staff if possible.

- 
 Get senior buy in: Obtain formal agreement from senior leaders to implement the programme.

Step 3 | Clear objectives

- 
 Set clear objectives for the programme:
 - 
 Create a culture that embraces wellbeing.
 - 
 Increase awareness around alcohol-related harm.
 - 
 Support employees to reduce impact of alcohol related harm.

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 Consider at this stage how you will evaluate if the objectives have been achieved.

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Step 4 | Business case

- ✓ The business case should include all health and well-being benefits, alongside financial savings. It would be important to include the cost of the approach and staff time taken to implement.



500 employees



£310,000

- ✓ An organisation could save an estimated £620 for each employee who completes alcohol IBA over a four year period.

Step 5 | Engage, build capacity, motivate

- ✓ Meet with key stakeholders: Engage local opinion leaders and keep them involved throughout implementation
- ✓ Identify and engage champions: Identify employees who can champion alcohol awareness training throughout the organisation
- ✓ Training and education: Deliver in-house training to the project team who will implement the programme

Training must be interactive and engaging, and should include:

- Statistics on the impact of alcohol-related harm
- Benefits of alcohol IBA to employees and employers
- What Alcohol IBA offers above current programmes
- Development of clear plans for implementation
- Links to trusted sources such as the National Health Service (NHS), Public Health England (PHE) and the World Health Organisation (WHO)

An example of a training agenda can be found [here](#).

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Step 6| Implementation blueprint

- ✓ Clear tasks and time frames: Clear objectives, activities and time frames, with named people to deliver each action. Consider timing of programme and when more staff are likely to see campaigns.
- ✓ Include the right people: Employees from across the organisation who champion wellbeing and a leader with influence to drive the project forward.
- ✓ Co-design: Design the implementation plan with employees, tailored to the organisation sector, structure, size. Consider what has worked previously and the target audience.
- ✓ Include a range of strategies to raise awareness: Use a combination of strategies to maximise impact.
- ✓ Call to action message: In any communication or promotion activities employees should be directed towards alcohol IBA.
- ✓ Communication: Emphasise the approach is confidential and anonymous. Use neutral and engaging language, focusing on wellbeing or prevention rather than compliance.
- ✓ Sustainability: Consider how to sustain in the longer term, making changes to policies if needed. Set dates for future events and review of implementation.

Strategies to raise awareness:

Attention grabbing

- Posters
- Leaflets

Targeted information giving

- Newsletters
- Payslips
- Company website / portal

Activities

- Wellbeing days
- Pub quiz
- Non or low alcohol tasting
- Measure pouring

Timing

- Sustained and repeated
- Link to local or national campaigns
e.g. Alcohol Awareness Week

www.resources.drinkaware.co.uk/
www.nhs.uk/oneyou

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Step 7 | Alcohol IBA

- ✓ Consider if existing approach is sufficient: Does it include screening / identification and brief advice? If not, can the existing approach can be modified to include this or do you need to commission something new? Examples of companies who offer alcohol IBA can be found on page 8, although there may be others available.
- ✓ Budget: What is your business case? What funds are available to support this work? Some companies offer free resources, but they may not deliver the same functionality.
- ✓ Consider organisation fit: Is it a good fit with the organisation's values and ethos? Does it have right feel?
- ✓ Usability: Is it quick to administer? Easy to navigate? User friendly? Do your employees consider it acceptable for use in the workplace?
- ✓ Quality: Does it use a validated identification tool, is it evidence-based? Does it identify risk of alcohol-related harm? Is the feedback given helpful, accurate and appropriate? Is there normative feedback? Does it signpost to additional support?
- ✓ Consider evaluation: Do you want data on access or completion of IBA and numbers drinking at risky levels? If so, does the approach you've chosen offer this data?
- ✓ Ensure confidentiality and data security: Is it completed anonymously? Where is the data stored? Who can access the data?

Step 8 | Implement

- ✓ Implement the planned blueprint.
- ✓ Review and amend plan as needed.

Step 9 | Evaluate

- ✓ Measure impact: How many employees have been trained? How many have completed IBA? How many were drinking at risk levels? Is there a change in alcohol culture? Were any changes made to policies or procedures?
- ✓ Feedback: How was the intervention received by employees? Could anything have been done differently? Ensure both quantitative and qualitative information relating to the objectives is collected.
- ✓ Sustainability: When will it be repeated? Are any changes to systems needed to embed alcohol awareness? How can the approach be sustained beyond the life of the current project? Could changes be made to policies or procedures, or organisational structures?

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Resources and supporting materials



Project Report | Training Outline |
<https://healthinnovationnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/WAAP-Final-Report.pdf>



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Healthy Workplace Charter |
<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/healthy-workplace-charter>



Alcohol Health Network |
www.alcoholhealthnetwork.org.uk



Club Soda |
www.joinclubsoda.co.uk



HAGA |
www.haga.co.uk

Alcohol Concern |
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcohol Learning Centre |
www.alcohollearningcentre.org

Drinkaware |
www.drinkaware.co.uk

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