



Alcohol

Information sheet for foster carers

This information sheet provides information about alcohol, and alcohol consumption, and why this is relevant for foster carers. It contains information about the licensing laws that relate to children and young people, and the responsibilities of the foster carer and the fostering service to ensure that children and young people are given support and information about alcohol related issues.

Foster carers

A fostering service should have clear written guidance on the use of alcohol in foster homes and this should be fully discussed with all prospective and approved foster carers. Those caring for children and young people have particular responsibility in this area, modelling sensible use of alcohol. Foster carers should understand that alcohol reduces concentration and impairs responses, and may lead to unprofessional conduct.

Foster carers need to be aware that children and young people may have experienced trauma and abuse associated with alcohol consumption or have existing patterns of alcohol abuse themselves. It is therefore vital that carers have full background information about each foster child and are sensitive to the child/young person's perceptions of adult drinking patterns and behaviour.

Children and young people

Foster carers have a crucial role in promoting the health of any child or young person in their care. Any specific issues and behaviour relating to a child/young person and alcohol should be fully and honestly discussed between the foster carer, supervising social worker, child's social worker and child (if appropriate to their age and understanding). This information should be recorded in the child's care plan and the foster placement

agreement. All parties should be clear about the strategies for managing particular issues and behaviour relating to alcohol and how these are recorded and monitored.

Further sources of information, advice and support for children, young people and adults about alcohol are listed at the end of this information sheet.

Licensing laws

The Government is committed to reducing alcohol related harm and published the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England* in 2004.

In England and Wales, licensing is governed by the Licensing Act 2003. In Scotland, the primary legislation is the **Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976** and in Northern Ireland it is the **Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996**. Licensing laws control where, when and to whom alcohol can be sold.

Age	The law in England, Scotland and Wales
Under 5	It is illegal to give an alcoholic drink to a child under 5 except in certain circumstances (eg under medical supervision).
Under 14	A young person under 14 cannot go into the bar of a pub unless the pub has a 'children's certificate'. If it does not have one, the child/young person can only go into parts of licensed premises where alcohol is either sold but not drunk (eg an off-licence or a sales point away from the pub), or drunk but not sold (eg a garden or family room).
14 or 15	14- and 15-year-olds can go anywhere in a pub, but they cannot drink alcohol.
16 or 17	16- and 17-year-olds can buy (or be bought) beer or cider (and wine in Scotland) as an accompaniment to a meal, but not in a bar (ie only in an area specifically set aside for meals).
Under 18	Except for 16- or 17-year-olds having a meal, it is against the law for anyone under 18 to buy alcohol in a pub, off-licence, supermarket, or other outlet; or for anyone else to buy alcohol in a pub for someone who is under 18.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland it is illegal to give alcohol to a young person under 14, for someone under 18 to buy or drink alcohol in a pub, to sell alcohol to a young person under 18, for anyone to buy alcohol for a young person under 18 to drink on licensed premises. Between the ages of 14 and 18 it is legal for a young person to drink alcohol at home.

By-laws and police action

In the UK some towns and cities have local by-laws banning the drinking of alcohol in public places. The police also have authority to confiscate alcohol from those under 18 who are drinking it in a public place and can arrest anyone who tries to prevent them confiscating what they believe to be alcohol.

Sources of information and advice

Drinkline

t 0800 917 8282 (Mon-Fri, 9am-11pm)

Advice and information for people with alcohol problems or anyone concerned about alcohol misuse. Provide advice on sensible drinking and information on services to help people cut down on their drinking. Leaflets and literature available.

National Association for Children of Alcoholics

t 0800 358 3456 (Mon, Tue and Fri, 10am-7pm; Weds-Thurs 10am-9pm; Sat 10am-3pm)

e helpline@nacoa.org.uk

www.nacoa.org.uk

Helpline providing information, advice and support for children of alcoholics and those concerned for their welfare.

Alcohol Concern

t 020 7935 4000 information line (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Works with statutory and voluntary agencies to develop and improve alcohol treatment services, increase awareness of alcohol misuse and bring about a reduction in alcohol related problems. Runs information service and produces magazine, leaflets, factsheets and other publications. Information line for people looking for information/publications on alcohol. Advice on setting up support networks.

Alcohol Focus Scotland

t 0141 572 6700 (Mon-Thurs, 9am-5pm; Fri 9am-4.30pm)

www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Information and advice for people concerned about their own or someone else's drinking, and for professionals. Provides general information on alcohol and sensible drinking. Gives details on where to get counselling and support for alcohol related problems. Produces educational and self-help materials.

Adfam

t 020 7553 7640 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

e admin@adfam.org.uk

www.adfam.org.uk

National organisation working with families affected by drugs/alcohol. Publications and resources for families about substance use and criminal justice. Online message board and searchable database of local support groups.

Parentline Plus

t 0808 800 2222 (24 hours)

e parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

24-hour freephone helpline for anyone involved in caring for children. Listening, support, information and guidance on all issues of concern. Parent Together groups and workshops for parents to share ideas and learn new skills.

Get Connected

t 0808 808 4994 freephone (1pm - 11pm)

e help@getconnected.org.uk

www.getconnected.org.uk

Freephone helpline for young people (under 25) which provides a free connection to local and national services and sources of help, and can text information to callers' mobile phones. Email service also available.

Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2004

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/downloads/su/alcohol/pdf/CabOffice%20AlcoholHar.pdf>

Fosterline

t 0800 040 7675 freephone (Mon-Fri 9am -5pm and until 8pm on Weds)

Textphone users dial 18001 0800 040 7675 (for Typetalk service)

e fosterline@fostering.net

Confidential adviceline for foster carers providing independent and impartial advice about fostering issues.

Fosterline Wales

t 0800 316 7664 (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm)

e fosterlinewales@fostering.net

TB-H February 2007