



**This information sheet is the third in a series produced by the Public Health Wales central alcohol team. It is designed to inform health and social care professionals about the training and delivery of Alcohol Brief Interventions.**

#### **So what is an Alcohol Brief Intervention?**

An Alcohol brief intervention (or an 'ABI') is an efficient, attentive and evidence based intervention that can:

- Significantly reduce the alcohol drinking levels of people who have been identified as drinking Hazardous and Harmful amounts
- Provide a valuable framework to facilitate referral of cases of alcohol dependence to specialised services

#### **So it's a specialist alcohol service delivered by an alcohol specialist?**

No. It is a five to ten minute structured conversation about alcohol with someone who may be consuming too much alcohol. Anyone who has been on the two hour training session can deliver one. Most people who work in health or social care have probably already delivered an ABI but haven't termed it as such.

#### **An ABI training course? What's that?**

Public Health Wales delivers a fully accredited and certified 2 hour training course. It is accredited at Level 4 (1 unit at Degree level) by Agored Cymru and certified by the RCN. Although the qualification is not mandatory, everyone who attends the training is encouraged to complete it.

### So who can access Public Health Wales' ABI training?

Seven 'alcohol collaboratives' have been established across Wales, one for each Local Health Board. It is the role of the collaborative to signpost groups of professionals from internal and partner agencies to the ABI training based on need. Public Health Wales will train anyone who can put a tick in the 'good to go boxes':

Availability of **teachable moments** when people are ready and able to engage with ABI

Regular contact with people with an alcohol problem

Practical opportunity to deliver ABI.

### And if someone has been on the course then they can help anyone with an alcohol issue?

Not everyone. ABI works for a very specific type of drinker, the 'hazardous or harmful' drinker. This can be defined by how many units they drink in a week. The aim of an ABI is to nudge their drinking back towards the sensible drinking limits. It is all about cutting down, not cutting out.

Category	Men	Women
Sensible drinking (recommended limit)	Not more than 3-4 units per day	Not more than 2-3 units per day
Hazardous drinking (data not available for Wales)	22-50 units per week	15-35 units per week
Harmful drinking (data not available for Wales)	Above 50 units per week	Above 35 units per week
Binge drinking	Above 8 units during a single session	Above 6 units during a single session

### So what does the course cover?

The Public Health Wales ABI training course gives a brief overview of the problems of alcohol in Wales and then takes the delegates through the ABI Pathway. This includes raising the issue of alcohol, screening, listening for readiness to change and then selecting a suitable approach to facilitate that change.

## Screening? Like a blood test?

Well a blood test would give you an accurate result but is pretty useless for a five to ten minute conversation. For that the delegates will need something quick and easy, like a three question screening tool that gives an immediate result. Such a screening tool is AUDIT-C.



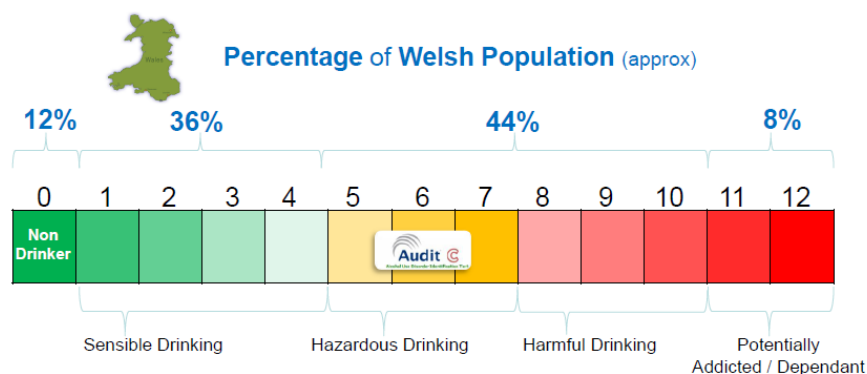
Questions	Scoring system					Your score
	0	1	2	3	4	
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?	Never	Monthly or less	2 - 4 times per month	2 - 3 times per week	4+ times per week	
How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 9	10+	
How often have you had 6 or more units if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in the last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily	

**Scoring:**  
A total of 5+ indicates increasing or higher risk drinking.  
An overall total score of 5 or above is AUDIT-C positive.



## But what do the results mean? Is it easy to interpret?

It certainly is. Basically the client will end up with a score between 0-12. Simply place them on this continuum. If they score between 5 and 10 then carry on with an ABI. If they score 11 or 12 then they may need to be referred to a specialist service. Anyone who scores between 0 and 4 should be patted on the back for drinking sensibly.



### **A specialist service? How do I access those for my client?**

Public Health Wales have compiled a database of specialist services in each Local health Board area and this information is shared during the training. Many of these services also provide ABI training and delivery so if there isn't a Public Health Wales course convenient for you then one of the local providers may have something more accessible. Contact the alcohol team for more information.

### **So your telling me that a five minute 'chat' about alcohol can change someone's drinking behaviour?**

Don't just take our word for it. There have been 56 RCTs that have shown ABI works as well as a Cochrane review and a key paper by the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse.



### **I want to go on an ABI training course. What do I do next?**

Either contact the central Public Health Wales alcohol team or your local alcohol collaborative.



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