



Community Planning Aberdeen

Progress Report	Project End Report 12.3 Increase % of the population who feel informed about using alcohol responsibly and Increase by 10% the percentage of adults in Aberdeen City who are non-drinkers or drink alcohol in a low risk way by 2023
Lead Officer	Gale Beattie, Chair of ADP
Report Author	Lucy Simpson, ACC
Date of Report	12 th January 2024
Governance Group	CPA Board – 29 February 2024

Purpose of the Report

This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project Aim 12.3 which sought to increase % of the population who feel informed about using alcohol responsibly and Increase by 10% the percentage of adults in Aberdeen City who are non-drinkers or drink alcohol in a low risk way by 2023.

Summary of Key Information

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The UK Chief Medical Officer published recommendations on low-risk alcohol consumption in 2016. High risk alcohol consumption is associated with an increased risk of physical health, mental health, social and economic impacts in the short medium and long term.
- 1.2 Low risk consumption is no more than 14 units of alcohol spread through a week. People with long term conditions and those on regular medication may be recommended to drink less than 14 units. Pregnant women and those planning a pregnancy are recommended to not drink any alcohol at all. The Scottish Health Survey tells us that across Grampian, one in three men and one in six women regularly drink more than 14 units a week. Drinking more than 14 units a week is reported more commonly in people living in our most affluent areas compared to our most socioeconomically deprived areas.
- 1.3 Alcohol is one of five lifestyle behavioural risk factors which contribute to the majority of chronic and non-communicable disease in our population. Clustering of lifestyle risk factors is associated with higher risk of premature disease development and mortality. Research within Grampian into the clustering of lifestyle risk factors indicates that these are spread unevenly through the population, increased multiple lifestyle risk factors were observed in men and in people from socioeconomically deprived neighbourhoods. There is a need to target the whole population, with an emphasis on supporting multiple risk factor reduction in more socioeconomically deprived areas.

2.1 At the time charter 12.3 was initially approved, the most recent Scottish Health survey results for Aberdeen city was for 2014-17 and they indicated that 29% of the population is drinking at harmful or hazardous levels. This equated to almost 56,000 people across the city. 39% of the male population and 19% of the female population are drinking at these harmful levels. Only a very small number of these people, just less than 1% are in alcohol services. However, in the period 2016-19, 25% of adults in Aberdeen City were drinking above the guideline recommendations of 14 units per week. This is higher than the rate for Scotland of 24% but lower than the rate for 2014-17 which was 29%. Whilst data is showing an improvement, this remains an area within 2019/20 there being 1,557 alcohol-related hospital admissions in Aberdeen City – equivalent to a rate of 711 per 100,000 population which is higher than the rate for Scotland of 673 but a decrease from the rate of 759 in 2018/19.

2 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM

2.1 Against this background, in February 2022 the CPA Board approved the revised [project charter](#) for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to Increase % of the population who feel informed about using alcohol responsibly and Increase by 10% the percentage of adults in Aberdeen City who are non-drinkers or drink alcohol in a low risk way by 2023.

2.2 The impact of alcohol consumption in Scotland and the loss to health and life it entails has been well documented. Approximately 6.5% of deaths in Scotland in 2015 were attributable to alcohol consumption. More than one in four (28%) of these alcohol-attributable deaths were due to cancer. For these reasons, promoting responsible drinking and alcohol awareness is a key priority for the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

3 WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?

3.1 Several changes were tested throughout the project and are listed below.

Social Media and community awareness raising

3.2 Test the continuous promotion of the Alcohol Aberdeen website as well as:

- Local campaigns in communities promoting responsible drinking, including awareness of non-alcoholic drinks
- Consistent message on how to reduce harms of alcohol, top tips etc

Alcohol Awareness and Alcohol Brief Intervention Training

3.3 Test the use of training by working with staff who support communities to understand the drinking guidelines and ensure that this message is reaching all of the community by testing the use of ABI training in non-clinical settings. Alcohol Brief Intervention training to be provided to Housing and Support Staff by an in-house trainer. Alcohol Focus Scotland were commissioned to provide alcohol awareness training to Housing and Support Officers and Justice Social Work staff.

Try Dry App

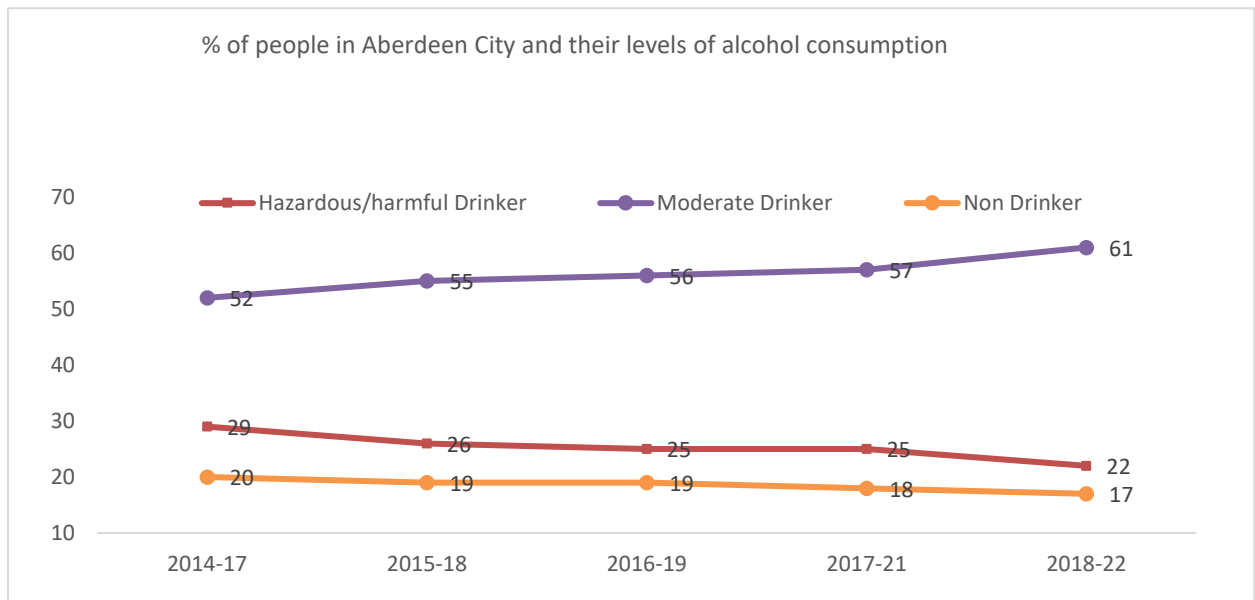
3.4 Test the use of piloting Try Dry in Aberdeen City as the 'app of choice' for heavier drinkers, in Partnership with Alcohol Change and Aberdeen City Alcohol and Drug Partnership. The Try Dry app makes it possible for heavy drinkers to change their own drinking behaviours, through private accountability, reflection, and experimentation. Try Dry lets us intervene with them earlier, change their drinking trajectory, and divert them from possible future dependency.

4 HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

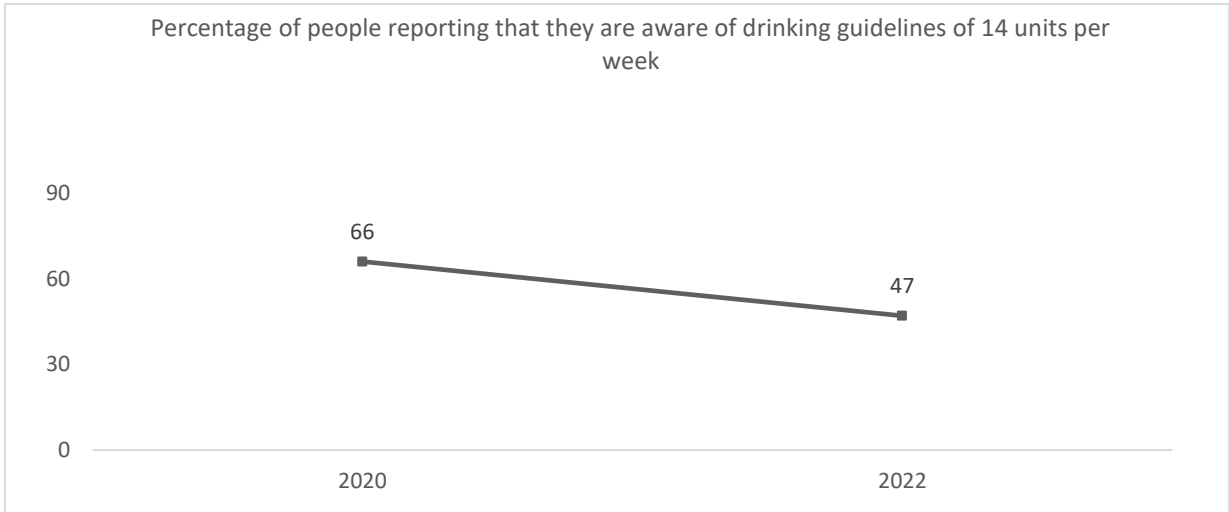
4.1 The project has not met the aim of increase % of the population who feel informed about using alcohol responsibly and Increase by 10% the percentage of adults in Aberdeen City who are non-drinkers or drink alcohol in a low risk way by 2023 as shown in the charts below. There were particular challenges around this project with gathering initial baseline data and as a result, this made it difficult for the aim to be achievable.

4.2 There has, however, still been some positive results from the tests undertaken throughout the project.

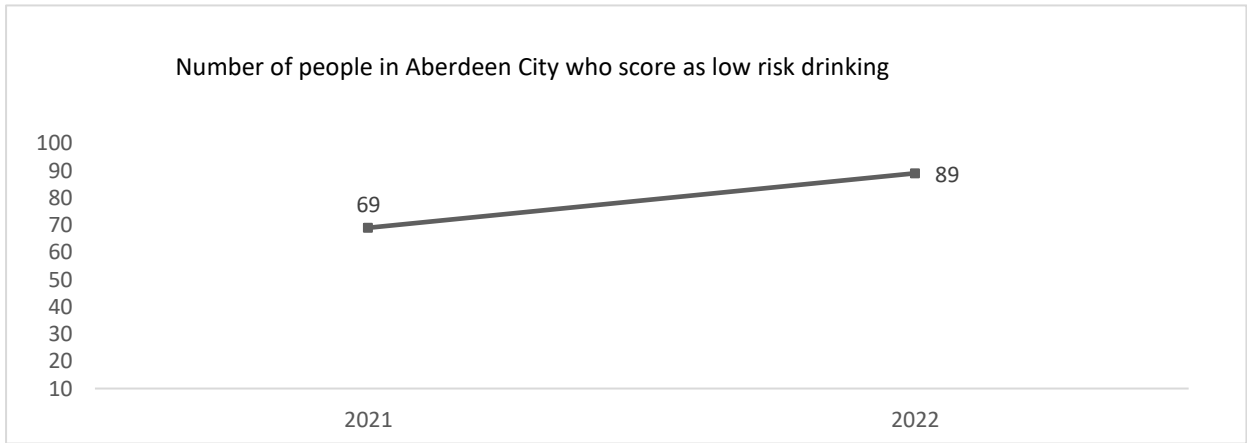
4.3 The chart below details the percentage of people in Aberdeen and their levels of alcohol consumption from the Scottish Health survey results. In 2014-17, **20%** the Scottish Health survey results for Aberdeen city indicated that 20% of the population were non-drinkers and had increased by **1%** in 2016-19. However we saw a decrease in those identifying as non-drinkers in the 2017-21 results as well as the 2018-22 results. More positively though, we saw a decrease in those within the hazardous/harmful drinker from **25%** to **22%**. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the percentage of people who identify as a moderate drinker from **57%** to **61%**.



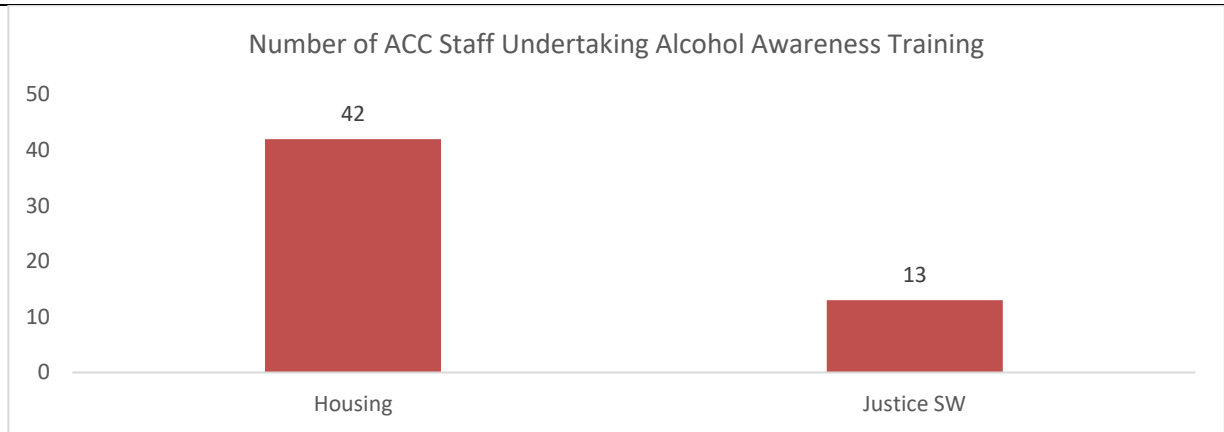
4.4 The chart below details the percentage of City Voice respondents reporting that they are aware of drinking guidelines of 14 units per week has decreased from **66** to **47%**. The % of non-risk drinkers has remained static relatively static at 18% for 2017/20, although a **1%** decline since the previous reporting period.



4.5 The chart below details the number of people in Aberdeen who score as low risk drinking on the Alcohol Aberdeen alcohol consumption screening quiz. There was a **28%** increase in those who scored as low risk from 2021 to 2022. Data from 2023 for those who score risk however is below 5. There could be a number of reasons for why this is the case. One main reason being that another improvement project on alcohol use was focusing on those who were drinking more harmfully in and there was a more focused target on those who are higher-risk drinkers. In addition, there was a shift in the project to promoting the Try Dry App from July 2023. The decision was made to test the Try Dry App as we deemed it as being more accessible to a wider population as it's not based within an alcohol service and is marketed in general to the whole adult population.



The chart below details the number of Housing and Support staff and Justice Social Work staff that undertook some form of alcohol awareness training in 2023. Up until 2023, no formal training around alcohol had been offered to council staff. Plans are being made to improve and continue Alcohol Brief Intervention training in the next alcohol awareness improvement project.



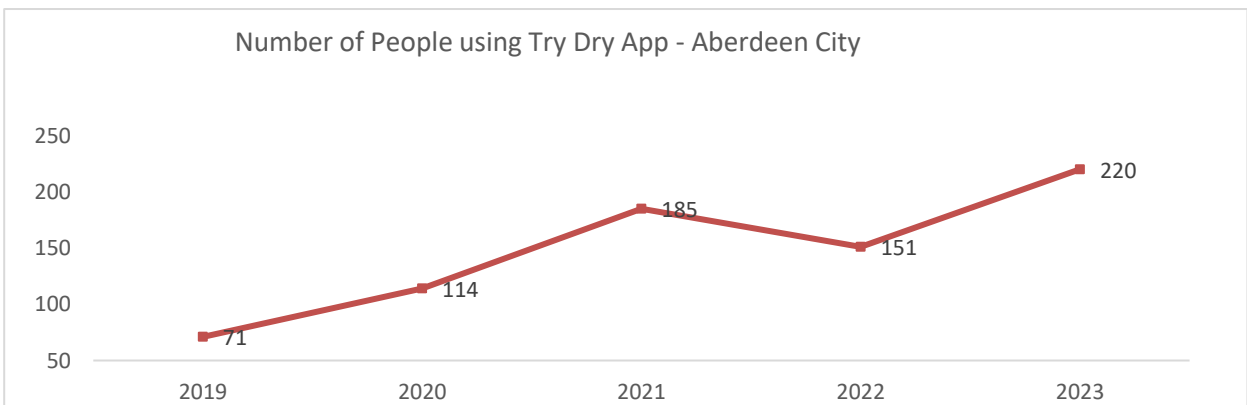
4.6 Feedback from the training was positive with 97% of participants stated that their learning objectives were achieved. Further feedback from training is below:

'I really enjoyed this AB1 Training and felt it reached a high standard for Information gained and new practice skills learned for the FAST scoring tool and also has built my confidence in having an alcohol intervention with a tenant especially around the OARS and also have learned more about how to calculate Units of alcohol which can be hazardous and cause serious harm.'

Really informative session, positive use of case studies which show practical application of training.

Was a good in depth knowledge of alcohol and the risks involved, really enjoyed it'

4.7 The chart below details the number of users registering with the Try Dry App in Aberdeen city. There has been a **45%** increase in the number of users from 2022 to 2023. There has been a greater sign up from July 2023 when we started working directly with Alcohol Change to promote the app locally with **119** sign ups from July to December 2023. Promoting was done via a variety of online means including social media posts. A stakeholder session was also held for multi-agency professionals to give them an overview of the app and how they can use and promote it to individuals and communities that they are working with.



In terms of postcode reach, the majority of new sign-ups from July to December 2023 were from AB24, AB15 and AB10. The chart below outlines the number of sign-ups from each area in Aberdeen City.



4.8 From July 2023 to September 2023 there were **3037** dry days recorded over the quarter, an average of **30.4** dry days per person. A total of **819** drinking days were recorded over the quarter. The average number of recorded drinking days were **8.2** days per person. There were **325** planned drinking days entered in the quarter. This was an average of **3.3** planned drinking days per person.

4.9 From September 2023 to December 2023 there were **2,521** dry days recorded over the quarter, an average of **26.8** dry days per person. A total of **617** drinking days were recorded over the quarter. The average number of recorded drinking days were **11.6** days per person. There were **220** planned drinking days entered in the quarter. This was an average of **8.8** planned drinking days per person.

5 HOW HAVE OUR COMMUNITIES/PROTECTED GROUPS PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT AND THE IMPACT OF THIS

5.1. Feedback from clients of alcohol services and insight from public health research and lived experience supported development of awareness raising messaging and targeted approaches as well as the choice to pilot the Try Dry app with a view to providing an accessible and modern tool for calculating alcohol intake as well as gaining information on the wider health and financial benefits of reducing alcohol intake.

6 HOW WILL WE MONITOR AND SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

6.1 The change ideas have been embedded as business as usual and will continue to be monitored and sustained. Data will continue to be reported to the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership through the two data sources for the overall aim as detailed above. The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) are reviewing the impact and data in relation to alcohol for the city and each locality in developing revised aims as part of the refresh of the LOIP.

6.2 We continue to work closely with Alcohol and Drugs Action (ADA) and Alcohol Change who are able to provide regular data from the Alcohol Aberdeen website and the Try Dry App – all data will be reported to the ADP.

7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

7.1 The project focused specifically on increasing % of the population who feel informed about using alcohol responsibly and Increase by 10% the percentage of adults in Aberdeen City who are non-drinkers or drink alcohol in a low risk way.

7.2 Although the aim has not been made, some of the improvement work will continue as part of a new improvement project around alcohol awareness and support.

7.3 Further opportunities to scale up targeted promotion and learning from the promotion could be spread to other future behavioural choice focused aims.

7.4 The Try Dry app will continue to be promoted and plans are underway for a second Stakeholder session and to explore opportunities to scale up usage. Opportunities for other projects to explore the use of apps as a change idea.

7.5 We are currently making some changes to the Alcohol Brief Intervention training to encourage better update from staff. This will then be rolled out to Housing and Support Officers and Justice Social Work in the first instance with opportunities for the training to be offered to other relevant customer facing services.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Board:

- i) Agree that whilst the aim had not been achieved, positive outcomes have been achieved as a result of the improvement activity; and
- ii) Note that further improvement activity in relation to alcohol interventions is being considered by the ADP as part of the refresh of the LOIP

Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities:

To work closer together with Public Health Scotland Alcohol and Drugs Action to take forward the next iteration of the project.

To offer Alcohol Brief Intervention training to further frontline services.

Risks:

Not sustaining opportunities through insufficient funding or capacity to design and implement work.

Consultation

Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Background Papers

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report.

[12.3 Increase Alcohol Awareness](#)

Contact details:

Project Lead; Lucy Simpson, lumcnicol@aberdeencity.gov.uk, Development Officer, ACC