

Simple steps to help children affected by adults' harmful drinking

1. Be someone that a child can trust. Respect them, listen to them, tell them that you care.
2. If your work involves producing information or advice to children and young people on lifestyle issues, make sure that you include speaking about the impact of alcohol use within families.
3. If you have a concern about a child, ask them open and supportive questions. Don't make assumptions, listen carefully.
4. If a child needs extra support, talk with them about who can help - that might be another family member or a worker. You could also remind them that they could call ChildLine to speak to somebody confidentially.
5. If you have a concern that a child's safety is at risk, you must do something about it. Speak to your supervisor, or to social work - their contact details are in your local phone book.



All images are posed by models

Further information and support

For parents /adults

Alcohol Focus Scotland

Scotland's national charity working to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Drinkline Scotland

If you are concerned about your own or someone else's problem drinking. Call free on:

0800 7 314 314 (open 24 hours, 7 days a week)

ParentLine Scotland

Provides help, support and information for anyone who cares for a child.

Call free on: **0800 028 2233** or contact the confidential email service parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk

NHS Inform

Provides a single source of quality assured health information for the public in Scotland.

www.nhsinform.co.uk

Relationships Scotland

Offers relationship counselling, family mediation and other forms of family support. Call:

0845 119 2020

For children / young people

ChildLine

ChildLine is a free 24-hour service for any child or young person 365 days a year.

0800 1111

Young Carers.net

Offers information and support to young people who care for a parent or relative who is ill or has other problems such as alcohol.

Young Scot

The national youth information agency for 11 to 26-year-olds.

www.youngscot.org

Are our kids
suffering
from our
hangovers?




Alcohol Focus
SCOTLAND

CHILDREN 1ST

LEAFLET FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN OR FAMILIES

Harmful drinking in Scotland

Alcohol today is more affordable, more available and more heavily marketed than at any time during the past thirty years.

The result is that Scots are drinking too much.

The more we drink, the more the health and social problems caused by alcohol increase.

But drinking too much doesn't just affect the individual. Harmful drinking has become so normal and acceptable that the problems it causes to other people, particularly children, are often overlooked.

Each week, it is estimated that 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women drink more than is good for them and over half of us say the place we drink most often is home.

Children can be affected by a parent's drinking even if they aren't getting drunk.

At least 65,000 children in Scotland live with a parent who has an alcohol problem – that's 2 in every school class.

1 in 3 under 16s live with a parent who binge drinks.

1 in 3 children feel scared when they see an adult drunk or drinking too much.

How adults' drinking can affect children

These are some of the ways that adults drinking can affect children - however it should be noted that all of these could be due to some other factor in the child's home so assumptions should not be made:

- Scared when their parents are drinking
- Disruption in their schooling - failing to turn up or unable to concentrate
- Physical and emotional needs can go unmet because of unpredictable parenting, lack of attention and routine
- Chronically anxious about their parent's health
- Feelings of anxiety, confusion, stress and anger about their parent's drinking and what might happen to their family
- Living with family conflict, aggressive behaviour and violence
- Taking on caring responsibilities for younger siblings

Where children can get help

Stigma and secrecy can prevent children from asking for help, as can fear of splitting up the family.

Despite growing up in what can be very challenging circumstances, children can be supported to cope by extended family members, school or other support services or workers.

How you can help

Anyone who works or volunteers with children and young people is in a good position to look out for any children who are suffering from others' harmful drinking, and to offer a listening ear and support.

You might also work with or know the child's family and become aware that someone is drinking too much.

Simple steps to raise parents' awareness around harmful drinking

1. When you are discussing family or parenting issues, consider how you can include discussion around the impact alcohol can have on family life. Encourage them to think about this from the child's perspective.
2. How can you include alcohol issues within your general work with parents? For example, could a parent's group have one week's focus on alcohol, or could alcohol be discussed as part of a Healthy Living Week?
3. Make sure that you know what specialist agencies work in your local area around alcohol use and how you can refer parents to them when appropriate.
4. Give parents a leaflet or web links on alcohol use, and include alcohol issues within any general health and wellbeing information that you produce.
5. Pay particular attention when a parent is coping with loss of any kind, e.g. bereavement, separation or unemployment. Are they using alcohol to cope? Encourage parents to get support from family, friends or agencies if they are going through a difficult time in their life.

"WE JUST GOT USED TO OPENING A BOTTLE OF WINE MOST NIGHTS, TWO AT THE WEEKEND. IT SORT OF CREPT UP ON US. I DIDN'T REALISE HOW MUCH THE DRINKING WAS INTERFERING WITH OUR TIME WITH THE KIDS."