

# SHAAP

SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS  
[www.shaap.org.uk](http://www.shaap.org.uk)

**Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 10 December – 17 December 2020**

**Covid: Lockdown 'devastating' for those affected by alcohol and drug use**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18937664.covid-lockdown-devastating-affected-alcohol-drug-use/>

A Scottish charity supporting those affected by alcohol or drug use has revealed 1,680 people had asked for help between March and November, up from 935 in the same period last year. According to Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs, relatives of people with addiction problems accounted for 34 per cent of the increase, however there was a 244 per cent jump in contacts from people using drugs and alcohol themselves, going from 177 to 609. In a report published on Friday, the charity revealed the 80 per cent rise in people contacting its drug and alcohol abuse helpline, and warned the stark figures could be caused by people finding it difficult to access support services. [...]

Source: The Herald, 11 November 2020

[SFAD's LOCKDOWN AND BEYOND: A COVID Insights Report:

<https://www.sfad.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-Insights-Report-December-2020.pdf>]

**The science of addiction: Do you always like the things you want?**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-55221825>

Until recently, it was generally assumed that if we wanted something, it was because we liked it. But science is now questioning that idea - and pointing the way to a possible cure for addiction. [...] For the addict, wanting becomes detached from liking. The dopamine system learns that certain cues - such as the sight of a coffee machine - can bring rewards. Somehow, in ways that are not fully understood, the dopamine system for the addict becomes sensitised. The wanting never goes away, and is triggered by numerous cues. Drug addicts may find their urge to take drugs sparked by a syringe, a spoon, even a party, or being on a street corner. But the wanting never ceases to go away - or not for a very long time. That makes drug addicts extremely vulnerable to relapse. They want to take the drugs again, even if the drugs give them little or no pleasure. [...]

Source: BBC News, 12 December 2020

[The Big Idea podcast: The science of addiction:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p09155ch>]

### **What is the drink-driving limit in Scotland and what are the penalties for breaking it?**

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/cars/what-drink-driving-limit-scotland-and-what-are-penalties-breaking-it-3062571>

With Christmas now just around the corner police and safety campaigners are driving home the message that drink-driving is dangerous and unacceptable. Every year, the festive season sees a rise in roadside breath tests and an increase in the proportion of drivers failing as revellers take the wheel after consuming too much alcohol. The latest government figures show that in 2018, there were 8,680 casualties, including 240 deaths, as a result of crashes where at least one driver was over the drink-drive limit. [...]

Source: The Scotsman, 9 December 2020

[Road Safety Scotland: <https://roadsafety.scot/topics/drink-driving/>]

### **Google to let YouTube users opt out of gambling and alcohol ads**

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/dec/10/google-to-allow-youtube-users-in-uk-to-opt-out-of-gambling-and-alcohol-ads>

YouTube users will be able to opt out of most gambling and alcohol adverts if they don't want to see them, using tools set to be rolled out by Google in the UK next year. Google told the Guardian that it was responding to feedback from users concerned by the number of ads for alcohol and gambling that they were seeing online, both on YouTube and on third-party websites. It is already possible to adjust the content of personalised ads, which are based on users' browsing history, via Google's Ad Settings function. But the majority of ads are "contextual", meaning they are linked to the content being viewed on YouTube or on websites that use Google Ads to sell space to advertisers. This has led to adverts for online casinos, for instance, appearing on news articles about gambling addiction. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 10 December 2020

### **Hospitality study suggests changes to safeguard 32,000 jobs through Covid**

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/18946833.hospitality-study-suggests-changes-safeguard-32000-jobs-covid/>

Extending pub opening hours and allowing the sale of alcohol under controlled conditions could secure 1800 hospitality firms, an economic study claims. Work by Biggar Economics suggests increasing opening hours by two and a half hours and resuming alcohol sales under "strictly controlled conditions" in areas graded at levels one-three could protect more than 32,000 jobs, increasing turnover for the hospitality sector from £419 million to £1.1 billion.

The study was commissioned by spirits firm Diageo and the Scottish Beer and Pub Association, Scottish Licensed Trade Association and UK Hospitality Scotland are calling on the Scottish Government to “urgently implement the changes to save businesses and jobs”. [...]

Source: The National, 16 December 2020

### **Ministers unveil funding to help homeless with drug and alcohol problems**

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-12-13/ministers-unveil-funding-to-help-homeless-with-drug-and-alcohol-problems>

Rough sleepers across England will receive extra support to help them recover from drug and alcohol misuse, ministers have announced, More than 40 areas across England will receive funds from a £23 million pot designed to assist those with drug and alcohol addictions to access treatment to ditch their habits once and for all. The programme will be boosted by a further £52 million in 2021/22, the Ministry of Housing has confirmed. [...]

Source: ITV News, 14 December 2020

### **Should you avoid alcohol when getting a coronavirus vaccine?**

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2262654-should-you-avoid-alcohol-when-getting-a-coronavirus-vaccine/>

Drinking alcohol after getting a coronavirus vaccine can significantly blunt the immune response and potentially render the vaccine ineffective, according to a leading Russian scientist. “*We strongly recommend refraining from alcohol for three days after each injection,*” Alexander Gintsburg, head of the Gamaleya National Center of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Moscow, which is developing the Sputnik V vaccine, told *New Scientist*. This warning doesn’t just apply to the Sputnik V vaccine, but all covid-19 vaccines and indeed all other vaccines. [...] Existing scientific literature on alcohol and the immune system shows that excess alcohol is an immunosuppressant so people who drink a lot are more susceptible to infections. “*Heavy drinkers have many problems and poor immune function is one of them,*” says immunologist Eleanor Riley at the University of Edinburgh, UK. [...]

Source: *New Scientist*, 11 December 2020

### **Dementia: Three biggest preventable risk factors**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18939269.dementia-three-biggest-preventable-risk-factors/>

POOR education, hearing loss and smoking have been singled out as the main, preventable risk factors for dementia, by the scientist leading a new study. Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) worked with the Lancet Commission to develop 12 evidence-

based factors which could prevent or delay 40 per cent of all dementias if they were removed. Of those, hearing impairment, low education and smoking accounted for half of those cases. Overall, a growing body of evidence supports nine potentially modifiable risk factors for dementia, which also include high blood pressure, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, and low social contact. Researchers said they can now add three more which have newer, convincing evidence; alcohol consumption, traumatic brain injury, and air pollution. [...]

Source: The Herald, 12 December 2020

### **Renfrewshire Council sets out £2 million plan to reduce impact of alcohol and drug use following key report**

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/renfrewshire-council-sets-out-ps2-million-plan-reduce-impact-alcohol-and-drug-use-following-key-report-3065411>

The Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Commission heard first-hand evidence from more than 300 people and organisations who had their own personal or professional experience of alcohol and drug use in the council area, which has some of the highest levels of harm caused by alcohol and drug use in Scotland. [...] The commission, which began in 2019, published its results on Friday. In response, Renfrewshire councillors will next week consider the first set of funding proposals from a £2 million package of investment from the council to tackle some of the challenges raised. [...]

Source: The Scotsman, 11 December 2020

### **New data from WHO/Europe shows links between gender and noncommunicable diseases**

<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/alcohol-use/news/news/2020/12/new-data-from-whoeurope-shows-links-between-gender-and-noncommunicable-diseases>

Men and women have different biological and behavioural risk factors for contracting noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), as shown by a new series of WHO reports released today. The reports analyse gender-specific data on NCDs from 8 different countries providing interesting insights on the links between gender and certain NCDs. [...] According to the study, significantly higher percentages of men than women in most age groups engage in risk-associated behaviour. This includes tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, insufficient intake of fruits and vegetables, adding salt to meals and frequent consumption of processed foods. [...]

Source: World Health Organization (Europe), 9 December 2020

### **38% of leaders use drugs or alcohol to alleviate Covid-19 worries**

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2020/12/38-of-leaders-use-drugs-or-alcohol-to-alleviate-covid-19-worries/>

According to Bupa Global, 64% of UK board-level executives it polled used recreational or over-the-counter drugs, drank more alcohol than they should, used cigarettes, vaping, excessive exercise, or over/under-eating to distract themselves; 34% turned to shopping and spending and 16% used gambling to cope. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 11 December 2020

### **Nine in 10 home workers drinking alcohol on the job**

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/nine-in-10-home-workers-drinking-alcohol-on-the-job/>

Nine out of 10 people have admitted to drinking alcohol while working from home this year – a statistic that a health and safety firm has said could have concerning consequences for worker health and the quality of work produced. Health and safety software firm Protecting’s survey of 1,300 home workers found the majority had consumed alcohol while working in 2020, with consumption ranging from “*just a glass or two with lunch*” to “*getting through a whole bottle of wine a day*”, said founder Mark Hall. [...]

Source: PERSONNEL TODAY, 16 December 2020

### **Health Survey for England 2019 [NS]**

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2019>

The Health Survey for England (HSE) monitors trends in the nation’s health and care. It provides information about adults aged 16 and over, and children aged 0 to 15, living in private households in England. [Topics include adults’ health-related behaviours (includes smoking and alcohol consumption). [...]

Source: NHS Digital, 15 December 2020

### **Irish Health Survey 2019**

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2020/12/irish-health-survey-2019/>

Central Statistics Office survey is based on self-reported data from persons aged 15 years and over, and choices made as regards smoking, alcohol consumption and exercise. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 11 December 2020

### **Beta-blockers display anti-inflammatory effects in advanced liver disease**

<https://www.hippocraticpost.com/pharmacy-drugs/beta-blockers-display-anti-inflammatory-effects-in-advanced-liver-disease/>

Beta-blockers are used to prevent internal bleeding in patients with liver cirrhosis and portal hypertension. Researchers from MedUni Vienna have now shown that Beta-blockers also have beneficial effects on systemic inflammation and this translates into improved clinical outcomes. [...] For this study, the researchers determined biomarkers of systemic inflammation prior to and subsequently during ongoing treatment with beta-blockers. This showed that patients suffering from advanced stages of cirrhosis were not only more likely to display a pronounced systemic inflammatory response but were also more likely to benefit from the anti-inflammatory effects of beta-blockers. [...]

Source: Hippocratic Post, 11 December 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1136/gutjnl-2020-322712](https://doi.org/10.1136/gutjnl-2020-322712)]

### **Young people who go to bed later drink and smoke more due to their impulsivity**

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-12-young-people-bed-due-impulsivity.html>

Young people who prefer to stay up late are more impulsive than their peers who go to bed earlier, which makes them more likely to drink alcohol and smoke, a new study in the journal Chronobiology International, reports. In the first study of its kind, researchers from the University of Surrey and Brunel University London investigated how being an evening type (someone who prefers to stay up late and functions better in the evening) links to impulsivity, anxiety, and substance use. Young people often prefer to stay up late, and those who do are known to be at higher risk of mental health issues and problematic substance use. [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 14 December 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1080/07420528.2020.1810063](https://doi.org/10.1080/07420528.2020.1810063)]

### **Rehab in Scotland: joining things up**

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2020/12/14/rehab-in-scotland-joining-things-up/>

There's an urgent need to improve our response to Scotland's drug problems. The focus has quite rightly been on harm reduction interventions, but some (including me) have also called for better access to residential rehab as part of the spectrum of approaches. While clearly not a panacea, could residential rehab make an impact on drug (and alcohol) deaths? It would be good to find out. Following a survey of the field, the Residential Rehabilitation Working Group has just reported back to the Scottish Government with its findings and recommendations. I'm pleased to say these have been broadly welcomed – the Public Health Minister has pledged £90,000 to take some of this forward. [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 14 December 2020

### **Guest blog: Supporting older people with alcohol problems under COVID-19**

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/2020/12/16/guest-blog-supporting-older-people-with-alcohol-problems-under-covid-19/>

In this guest blog, Dr Paulina Trevena, from Glasgow Caledonian University, explores older adults' experiences of using alcohol services during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on Scotland. [...]

Source: SPICe Spotlight, 16 December 2020

### **ALLIANCE Live podcast – supporting women with histories of substance use and domestic abuse**

<https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/news/alliance-live-podcast-supporting-women-with-histories-of-substance-use-and-domestic-abuse/>

[...] Dr Sarah Fox from Manchester Metropolitan University spent time with ALLIANCE Live discussing her research into support for women with histories of substance use and domestic abuse. Sarah's research concentrated on listening to women who shared their experiences of accessing support across health and social care. The support landscape is particularly siloed, causing many women to fall through the gaps. In this edition of ALLIANCE Live Sarah imparts the knowledge she gained from the women she spoke to during her research and discusses issues surrounding support and services at the present time. [...]

Source: ALLIANCE, 9 December 2020

### **Our Sick Society Podcast – Episode 4: Recovery and Lockdown**

<https://soundcloud.com/oursicksociety/recovery-and-lockdown>

In this episode, our host Lavinia Black speaks to Geraldine about the challenges of recovery during lockdown. Geraldine has been in recovery for 14 years and has used the skills and networks she developed through Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to get through the pandemic. [...]

Source: Soundcloud, 15 December 2020

### **The Ethics of Public Recovery Self-disclosure (Bill White, Bill Stauffer, and Danielle Tarino)**

<http://www.williamwhitepapers.com/blog/2020/12/the-ethics-of-public-recovery-self-disclosure-bill-white-bill-stauffer-and-danielle-tarino.html>

Ethics involves the application of moral principles to promote good and prevent harm. Ethical decision-making within our service and advocacy activities is an assessment of the ratio of potential benefits to potential harms in any course of action—with a particular

emphasis on “first do no harm.” Such decision-making involves asking ourselves three questions. [...]

Source: Selected Papers of William L. White, 10 December 2020

**I've cut down my drinking dramatically. So why do people think I tried to stop – and failed? *Adrian Chiles***

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/commentisfree/2020/dec/16/ive-cut-down-my-drinking-dramatically-so-why-do-people-think-i-tried-to-stop-and-failed>

Drinking doesn't have to be all or nothing, yet our model for alcohol misuse assumes abstinence is the only answer [...]

Source: The Guardian, 16 December 2020

**Staying sober this Christmas season**

<https://ahauk.org/staying-sober-this-christmas-season/>

From mulled wine at a carol service to bucks fizz on Christmas morning, alcohol features heavily in many people's holiday celebrations. But for those in recovery or anyone who is trying to create healthier drinking habits, Christmas doesn't always feel like the most wonderful time of the year. In this blog, Susan Laurie, who has been sober for six years, shares her top tips for how to avoid drinking and truly embrace the holiday season. [...]

Source: Alcohol Health Alliance UK, December 2020

