Alcohol and Ageing in Northern Ireland
Alcohol costs Northern Ireland £900m a year

“That’s one tenth of the N.I. Block Grant”
217,000 people drinking at harmful and hazardous levels

The biggest increase in consumption has been among 45+ age group
Alcohol-Related Hospital Admissions, NI

Statistics from DHSSPS highlight:

70% increase in hospital admissions due to alcohol misuse among men aged 50+, and a

90% increase in women aged 50+ during the period 2004/05 - 2014/15

[DHSSPS hospital information branch]
20% of the over 50s population are exceeding recommended alcohol units; that’s 4.5 m people.
NI Alcohol Related Deaths by Age

Figure 2: Alcohol related deaths by age, 2004-2014

Number of Alcohol Related Deaths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and over</td>
<td>150</td>
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</table>
Factors to consider

• 1 in 3 older adults with alcohol problems develop this for the first time in later life.
• Alcohol related harms are less likely to be detected in older people.
• Where problems are detected, they are less likely to be referred to an alcohol service for treatment.
• Older people are more likely to be treated successfully for an alcohol problem than younger people.
“Whenever I see articles about what you should and shouldn't be drinking, I must confess I have to stifle a yawn”.

Laurie Graham, Daily Mail

- Health advice can change
- Nanny state messaging can be rejected
- Media portrayal can be dismissive
- Binge drinking perceived as a young persons issue
- Alcohol use can increase in response to life transitions
- UK wide policy inconsistent
Behind the statistics......

“I had been drinking heavily on a daily basis and was isolated in my home, with hardly any contact with the outside world. My alcohol use escalated out of control as a means of coping with the passing of my husband from cancer whom I had cared for’

Irene, service user at Addaction
Drink Wise Age Well

£25 Million UK wide programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund. £4.2 million for NI

Aims to influence and inform policy and practice in preventing alcohol misuse amongst adults aged 50 and over.
Programme Outcomes:

1. Better informed policy and practice about preventing alcohol dependency in later life
2. Improved health and well being for people age 50 and over who are at risk of developing alcohol dependency
3. The delivery of more effective services to prevent alcohol dependency amongst the ageing population
UK Wide
5 Demonstration Areas

Western Health and Social care Trust area: Rural area with key towns/cities experiencing higher rates of deprivation

Sheffield: 20% Minority ethnic population, post-industrial urban community.

Cwm Taf: Most deprived health board area in Wales, post-mining industry communities with long-term unemployment

Glasgow: Highest rate of alcohol related deaths in Europe. Post-industrial, urban community

Devon County: Rural with dispersed population. 40% of older people living in income deprived households in some areas
Partnership Approach
The programme:

- 5 demonstration areas
- 6 Strategic Partners
- 19 Portfolio Projects
- 89 Drink Wise Age Well staff
Partnership in Western Trust Area:
Where do we cover?
DWAW Office Bases
Drink Wise, Age Well Delivery Model
### 4 Key Work Streams and outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention and Campaigning</th>
<th>Training &amp; Skills Development</th>
<th>Resilience Building</th>
<th>Direct Engagement and Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Recognise Respond Intervene Community participation and learning</td>
<td>Social inclusion Coping strategies Participation Relationships</td>
<td>Reduce harmful drinking Health and well-being Self recovery Families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prevention & Campaigning

Aims to increase awareness and understanding, tackle public stigma and provide information and Advice

Research shows that a short, one-off interaction with someone over 50 who may be at risk of harm from alcohol, will reduce their drinking by more than 20%.
Skills development and increasing knowledge

Alcohol problems are less likely to be identified in older people. The signs of harmful alcohol usage are sometimes attributed to aging or older age groups become better at hiding their drinking behaviours.
Building Resilience

As we age, Life Changes

Resilience - an individual’s capacity to cope with stress and adversity can be boosted through support, developing social networks and learning new, healthier coping strategies.

- Providing reliable, tailored advice
- Providing opportunities to learn new skills and meet new people
- Offering group and individual sessions for building resilience and coping skills
- Connect people to others with similar life experiences
Direct Engagement and Support

Treating existing alcohol problems and minimising harm

- Age appropriate screening and assessments
- Home visits and outreach
- Sensitivity to age needs
- Standalone workshops and stalls in public places
Drink Wise Age Well Help Line

DWAW offer a Help and Advice Line where people can phone and receive guidance on issues and refer into service if they wish.

028 82839240
Monday – Thursday 9am -5pm
Friday 9am -3.30pm
Evaluation and Learning

1st time an evaluation of an over 50s population behaviour change has occurred on this scale worldwide

UK wide co-ordinated research and evaluation with specific area themes

Bespoke Outcome Monitoring Tool

Learning widely disseminated

SMART University of Bedfordshire
Glyndwr University Wales
Queens University Belfast
Edinburgh Napier University

Cultural sensitivities within services for minority ethnic people

Alcohol use in post-conflict communities
Derry and Strabane district from the launch

- 5 information events for professionals and local members of the public introducing them to the Drink Wise Age Well programme
- A range of Social activities
- 3 6-week resilience programmes
- Employment alcohol awareness sessions underway
- 24 Public stalls and 1062 direct contacts with the public raising awareness of alcohol and the over 50 population. Venues include local Boots chemists, Gordon’s chemist, local libraries, local leisure centres, health fairs throughout the area.
• 3 Asda public stalls with 440 direct contacts with the public raising awareness of alcohol and the over 50 population
• 100+ Alcohol Brief interventions completed at public stalls
• 15 referrals for intervention services
• 100+ Advice calls (service wide)
• Family Support
• Partnerships established
• Volunteers recruited to support with the delivery of the programme
Our Highlights

Social Cycle
Workplace Based Standalone
Meet and Greets and Socials
Reminiscing & Library Sessions
Song and Dance
Health Checks
Mens Sheds
Play Your Cards Right
Our Very own Mary Celebrating her 50th!
Making a referral

Open Referral System
Criteria: Over 50 and consent received

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