

# Alcohol Misuse



There are high rates of alcohol misuse amongst people on probation in the UK. Often researchers measure this using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)

- In a study of 132 people on probation in Reading and Newbury "about 44% of female and 43% of male probationers were deemed to be hazardous drinkers (AUDIT >8)" (p21) (Pari et al., 2012)
- In a health needs assessment of 183 people on probation in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, nearly half were found to be at risk of alcohol abuse or dependence (p49) (Brooker et al., 2009)

55.5%

In a study of a stratified random sample of 173 offenders on probation in Lincolnshire, 55.5% (95% CI [48.1, 62.9]) scored positive for alcohol abuse (8+ on AUDIT). Many people that misused alcohol also had a mental illness (Brooker et al., 2012)

29%

In a study of residents in an a Probation Approved premises for men with mental illness, 29% received a diagnosis of alcohol abuse or dependence (Geelan et al., 2000)

In a study of alcohol use amongst people in prison and on probation, AUDIT scores showed that of the 266 people on probation

- 25.6% were drinking at 'hazardous levels',
- 7.9% were drinking at 'harmful' levels, and
- 32.7% were 'possibly dependent' (Newbury-Birch et al., 2009)

In this study, "seventy-three per cent of hazardous drinkers, half of the harmful drinkers and 14% of possibly dependant drinkers, identified via AUDIT were deemed not to need an alcohol intervention using OASys" (Newbury-Birch et al., 2009: 207), so a screening tool like AUDIT should be used instead

There are also high rates of poly substance misuse amongst people on probation in the UK:

42%

Findings from the Probation Service's Drugs and Alcohol Survey 2011 completed by Probation Officers in Ireland showed that 42% had misused both drugs and alcohol, and 20% had misused only alcohol (Martyn, 2012) Similarly, a study of Approved Premises residents found that 35% had a history of both alcohol and drug misuse (Geelan et al., 2000)

## References

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