

# THE SCOTTISH ENHANCED SERVICES PROGRAMME FOR PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY CARE (2007-2009)

## Alcohol Screening and Brief Interventions Service Specification

### Rationale

Scots, across all ages and socio-economic groups, are drinking more than is good for them by regularly exceeding the daily and weekly recommended levels of alcohol:

- The Scottish Health Survey 2003 reports that 63% of men and 57% of women who drank alcohol in the previous 7 days exceeded daily recommended limits, while 37% of men and 28% of women drank more than double the daily recommended amount on at least one day in the previous week;
- In a typical week, 27% of men and 14% of women exceed weekly recommended limits. Excessive weekly consumption occurs across all socio-economic groups;
- Excessive consumption is not confined to young people: 18% of women aged 45-54, for example, drink more than the recommended number of weekly units, 29% of men in the same age bracket;
- 13% of men and 7% of women are considered potential 'problem drinkers', as measured by agreement on two or more CAGE questionnaire statements; and
- Young people are drinking more than in the past. There has been a 29% increase in reported drinking by 15 year olds (50% among 15 year old girls) and a 40% rise in reported drinking by 13 year olds since 1990.

The effects of excessive consumption are getting worse:

- Scotland has the fastest growing liver cirrhosis rates in the world (now 2.5 times higher than in England and Wales);
- One Scot dies every six hours as a result of an alcohol-related illness. Fifteen of the 20 local areas with the highest male alcohol-related death rate in the UK are in Scotland;
- The alcohol-related death rate among the most deprived members of society is over six times higher than among the most affluent;
- The number of discharges from general hospitals with an alcohol-related diagnosis has increased by 40% in the last decade; and
- Young people drinking alcohol is associated with other risky behaviours – such as fighting, getting into trouble with the police and sexual risk taking

The Updated Plan for Action on Alcohol published on 22 February 2007, (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/02/19150222/0>) commits the government and key health partners in Scotland to action on reducing the health and social harms resulting from alcohol misuse. In addition, the new Government has committed to developing a long term strategy to tackling alcohol misuse.

SIGN guideline 74, 'The Management of Harmful Drinking and Alcohol Dependence in Primary Care' (2003), recommends opportunistic screening and brief interventions in primary care for patients with hazardous and harmful drinking patterns. Whole population screening was rejected by SIGN as not cost-effective.

<http://www.sign.ac.uk/guidelines/fulltext/74/index.html>

## **Aims**

The overall purpose is to reduce hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption in the practice population, and thereby improve health and reduce disease. The specific aims are:

- to improve the identification of patients with harmful and hazardous drinking patterns presenting to general practices.
- to offer and deliver appropriate brief interventions to these patients, with the aim of reducing their alcohol consumption to safer and healthier levels.

## **Brief Description of Service**

This service will provide:

- targeted screening using on an opportunistic basis when patients present with certain clinical symptoms, using list in SIGN 74 using FAST screening questionnaire;
- thereafter an offer of a brief intervention appointment;
- onward referral to a specialist service, as appropriate, based on guidelines.

## **Service Specification**

### **GP practices**

Participating GP practices should undertake :

- (i) To screen opportunistically patients with at risk clinical presentations (selected from Annex 2 of SIGN 74) in general practice consultations, using the FAST screening questionnaire to identify those with hazardous and harmful drinking patterns.

During the 14 month period 1 February 2008 to 31 March 2009 the GP Practice will have screened a minimum of 100 patients per 1000 on the practices list.

- (ii) To offer and deliver a ten minute brief intervention to those who screen positive for hazardous and harmful drinking. Appropriate health promotion materials and local service information leaflets should be made available to all patients (Health Scotland National Suite of Leaflets, Unit Calculators etc) all of which are available from the HIRS (Health Information Resource Service) Gladstone Place; all practices should be registered with the service. This should be set up on a recurring order system which automatically dispatches stocks of the resources to practices

- (iii) Patient review at six months

**Health professionals engaged in this programme should have read and understood the SIGN74 Guideline and be appropriately aware of the methods used to deliver brief interventions.**

This SESP should also link with services and resources provided through health, social services, local authority and voluntary services to support patients found to have alcohol dependency and those with hazardous or harmful drinking patterns who request further help.

Future work (outwith the scope of this SESP) could consider pathways for those patients identified with hazardous or harmful drinking patterns who request or would benefit from further support. This resource may be within or outwith practices and might include both alcohol related and/or general counselling services. This work may best be achieved by multidisciplinary working and targeting vulnerable populations.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- A minimum of 100 per 1000 patients screened using the FAST Assessment tool;
- An increased awareness of hazardous and harmful drinking;
- Improved identification and treatment of patients receiving this enhanced service;
- Reduction in hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption.

### **How outcomes will be measured locally and the process evaluated**

Extraction of data from ESCro, showing for each individual:

- Number of patients screened
- Number of patients offered a brief intervention
- Alcohol consumption on assessment (and category)
- Number of patients attending a follow up appointment
- Alcohol consumption 6 months following brief intervention
- Change in status and pattern of consumption

### **Further information**

#### **Screening Tool- Fast Alcohol Screening Test (FAST)**

The recommended screening tool is FAST. Detailed guidance is available from: <http://www.druglibrary.stir.ac.uk/documents/fastmanual.pdf>

The following links provide guidance that may be useful whilst administering care to patients:

- Annex 3 of SIGN 74: <http://www.sign.ac.uk/guidelines/fulltext/74/annex3.html>
- Alcohol and Brief Interventions Trailblazer project: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ihs/assets/pdfs/hmitm/screeningtools.pdf>

#### **Training**

The FAST screening and brief intervention training package for primary care and other appropriately targeted staff groups will be linked with Moodjuice (Addictions) the newly commissioned aspect of the Moodjuice site (available from March 2008).

Uptake and competency levels can be measured by this method. The Moodjuice development officer has been approached to draw up a plan for the development of the resource in partnership with the Psychologist currently working within addictions services.

Create sessions can be booked well in advance to provide more in depth support and training to staff delivering these interventions, the opportunity exists to have one large event to market all three enhanced services.

The trainers for these sessions will be drawn from staff working within Alcohol services across Forth Valley; these positions would need locum cover.

**Research**

There is an opportunity to link this work to similar work developing in Tayside and become involved in joint research

**Health Promotion Material**

A number of health promotion materials are available from the Scottish Government's dedicated alcohol website. It includes a large amount of information relating to alcohol and culture, relationships, work, health and the law, including interactive features. The link is: <http://www.infoscotland.com/alcohol>