

The misuse of alcohol increases the risk of serious medical conditions such as cirrhosis of the liver; heart disease; liver, bowel, mouth and breast cancer; strokes and depression. It can lead to family breakdown; domestic abuse; homelessness and financial problems. The health and social consequences affect not only the individual but those around them and the wider community.

### Why is this important?



Alcohol misuse and dependence harms individuals and communities. There are significant health, social and financial impacts.

### What is the local context?



Torbay's rates of alcohol-specific hospital admissions and mortality are significantly above the national and regional average.

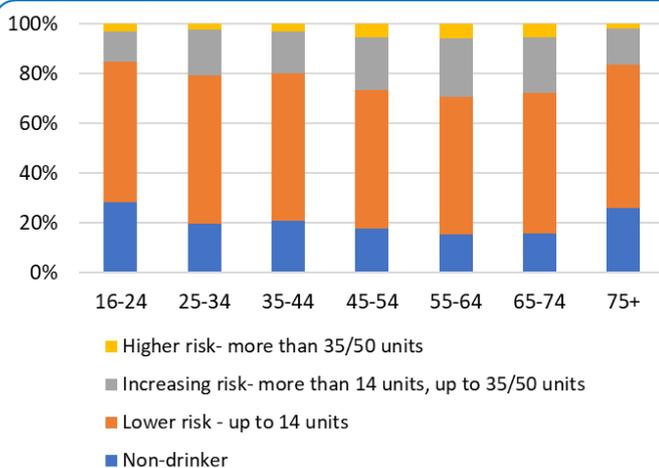
### What should we do?



Commission services to help and support people who are drinking harmfully and those who are affected by this behaviour.

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have affected drinking habits. A Public Health England (PHE) report says that high quality surveys suggest an increase in drinking levels during the pandemic year compared to previous years with a higher proportion of respondents drinking at increasing/higher risk levels. Surveys and monitoring will show whether this prevalence continues. Before the pandemic Torbay already had serious issues with alcohol, with higher levels of alcohol-specific hospital admissions and mortality than in England as a whole.

**Fig 1: Estimated weekly alcohol consumption by age, England, 2019**



Source: Health Survey for England

The Health Survey for England estimates that higher percentages of 45-74 year olds drink at increasing/higher risk levels than other age groups (Fig 1). More men (30%) than women (15%) drink at increasing or higher risk levels. In 2019, 20% of people report as non-drinkers/not

drinking in the last year, 2011-2018 was 17-19% so similar proportions. Torbay's increasing/higher risk intake (2015-18 combined) is lower than England, though not statistically significantly different (Fig 2).

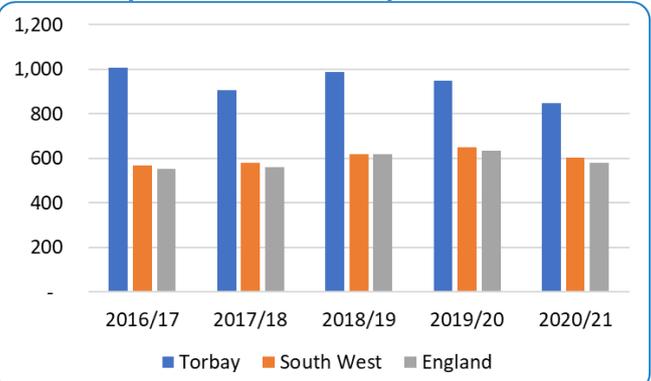
**Fig 2: Estimated alcohol consumption aged 18+, Torbay, 2015-18**

	Torbay	England
Drinking over 14 units (increasing/higher risk) a week	18.3%	22.8%
Binge drinking on heaviest drinking day	8.3%	15.4%

Source: Health Survey for England, PHE [Public Health Profiles](#)

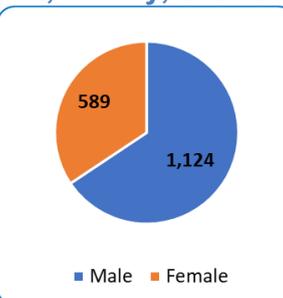
Throughout 2016/17 - 2020/21 Torbay is significantly above the South West and England averages in the rates of hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions (Fig 3). In 2020/21 the rate has reduced which may be linked to the avoidance of hospitals during COVID lockdowns.

**Fig 3: Hospital admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions per 100,000**



Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) (Age Standardised), Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates

**Fig 4: Hospital admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions per 100,000 by sex, Torbay, 2020/21**

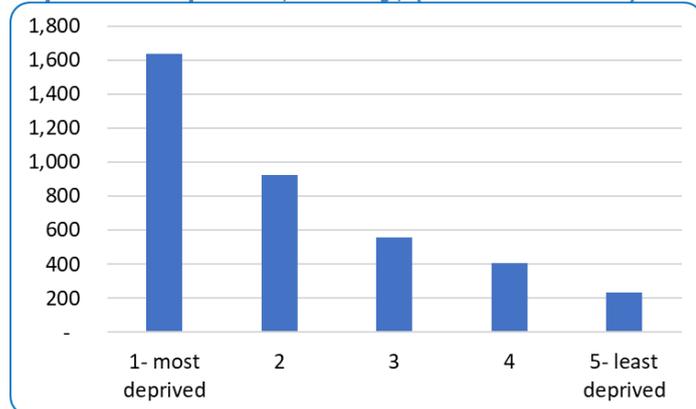


Source: HES (age standardised) ONS population estimates

Torbay admission rates for males are about twice that of females in 2020/21, a similar ratio to the last five years and broadly in line with England's trends (Fig 4). There is a strong relationship with deprivation (Fig 5). Although those in higher income groups report that they drink more alcohol a week than those with lower incomes the adverse effects of

alcohol are exacerbated in more deprived groups. Factors such as food poverty, poorer living conditions and lack of finance make these groups less able to protect themselves from the negative effects of alcohol. Fig 5 clearly shows how Torbay's more deprived areas have higher hospital admission rates than the least deprived areas in the five years combined.

**Fig 5: Hospital admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions per 100,000, by deprivation quintile, Torbay, (2016/17 - 20/21)**

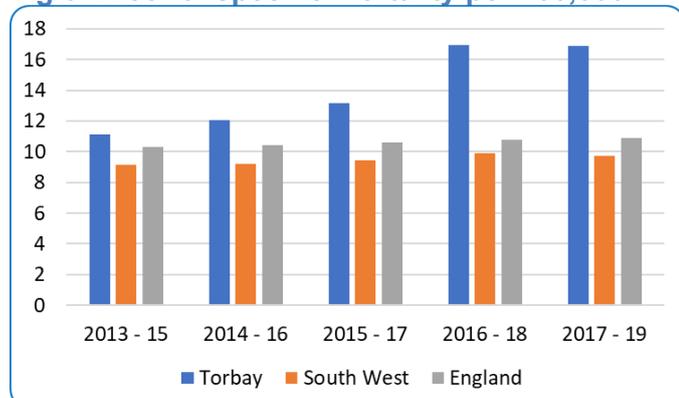


Source: HES (Age standardised), ONS population estimates, English indices of deprivation

Torbay's hospital admissions of those aged under 18 years for alcohol-specific conditions fluctuated in the last five periods (of three years combined) but have remained higher than the South West and England throughout. In 2018/19-20/21 the rate was 66.7 per 100,000 (46.1 in the South West and 29.2 in England), over twice as high as England.

Alcohol-specific mortality rates for Torbay have been higher than the South West and England for the last five periods, particularly rising in the last two periods (Fig 6).

**Fig 6: Alcohol-specific mortality per 100,000**



Source: PHE- [Public Health Profiles](#) (Age standardised)

England average mortality rates for males have been around twice as high as for females for the last five periods (data up to 2017-19). In Torbay,

the ratio between males and females has fluctuated. The number of deaths (Fig 7) shows that in the first two periods female deaths were less than half that of male deaths before increasing to slightly more female than male deaths in 2017-19. Female deaths are slightly fewer than males in 2018-20. These figures are a rolling count of three years so overlap between each period. The numbers are small so slight changes will make a big difference to the figures.

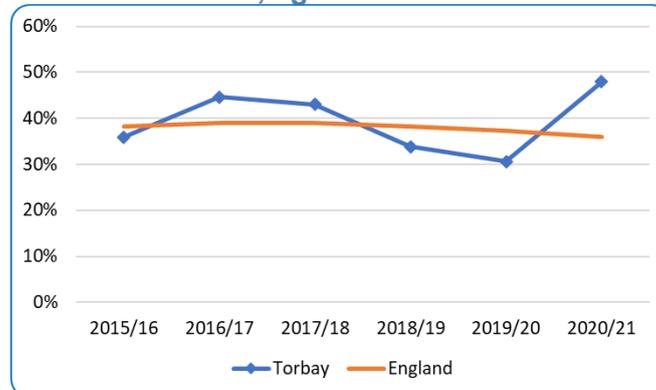
**Fig 7: Alcohol specific mortality- number of deaths, by sex, Torbay**

	2013 - 15	2014 - 16	2015 - 17	2016 - 18	2017 - 19	2018 - 20
Male	35	41	38	44	35	45
Female	12	10	18	29	38	38

Source: NHS Digital, Primary Care Mortality Database

Successful alcohol treatment improves the health and wellbeing of the service user and others affected by their drinking. Success in Fig 8 is defined as leaving structured treatment free of alcohol dependence and not re-presenting within six months. In 2020/21 Torbay has risen to be above the England average with 48% success.

**Fig 8: Successful completion of structured alcohol treatment, aged 18+**



Source: [National Drug Treatment Monitoring System](#)

It is estimated that 70% of dependent drinkers in Torbay are not in contact with alcohol treatment services (2019/20) compared to 82% in England.

### References and further information:

[Torbay Drug and Alcohol Services](#)

[NHS- Alcohol misuse](#)

[NHS Digital- Health Survey for England 2019](#)

[National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\) guidance PH24](#)

[PHE- Monitoring alcohol consumption and harm during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[PHE- Public Health Profiles](#)