



## Press release

Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2024

# Greater awareness around alcohol needed to save lives

The dangers of drinking too much alcohol need to be more widely understood to help prevent unnecessary deaths, according to local health leaders.

Alcohol causes more harm to those who drink excessively and to those around them than any illegal drug, with impacts including everything from short-term illness and injury to long-term serious medical conditions and death.

Dr Kuldeep Cheent is a Consultant Gastroenterologist at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust and an expert in alcoholic liver disease. He said: “Alcohol is the biggest risk factor to premature death in the UK and there has been a 20 per cent rise in deaths from alcohol-related liver disease since the COVID pandemic.

“UK Government guidelines recommend that men and women should drink no more than 14 units per week, with one to two alcohol-free days. It is easy to slip into a pattern of having an extra few drinks per day, but the health risks can be serious, including liver disease, cancer, high blood pressure, and pancreatitis. Binge drinking can be equally as harmful.

“It is crucial we improve awareness of the health risks associated with alcohol excess and support people to take control of their drinking.”

It is common for people with an alcohol problem to be in denial about how much they drink – in common with other addictions. This can cause physical and mental health problems for the



# Frimley Health and Care



drinkers and great distress and a feeling of helplessness among their families and friends.

However, there is advice available to those living with people with drink problems, not only to support them in coping with what they're experiencing but also to help them speak with the excessive drinker and move them towards treatment and rehabilitation.

Tessa Lindfield, Director of Public Health for Berkshire East, said: "Drinking too much alcohol leads to physical, mental and emotional harm, to the drinker and those around them. None of us wants to hurt our families, friends and communities and this is why it is so important to be aware of how much you drink and to understand the impact it's having on you and your loved ones. Being under the influence is no excuse for hurtful and harmful behaviour.

"Tackling alcohol problems early will make a huge difference to your quality of life in both the short and long term – and could well save your life completely."

If you live with or know someone who you think may have an alcohol problem, and you have the opportunity to speak with them about it – without putting yourself at risk – your love, care and support can be what they need to realise they have a problem.

A range of information and resources can be found here: [www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/alcohol](http://www.frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/alcohol) to support those with a drinking problem and people whose lives are affected by drinkers.

**ENDS**

## Notes for editors

Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System (ICS) is a formal partnership of health and social care organisations working together to improve services for the 800,000 people across East Berkshire, North East Hampshire and Farnham and Surrey Heath. The ICS includes NHS Trusts, Clinical Commissioners, GP federations and out-of-hours GP providers, Hampshire and Surrey County Councils and Bracknell Forest District Council.

