

Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team

# Alcohol and driving

Information for patients



**This leaflet has been given to you by the Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team.**

We can be contacted on **01623 622515, extension 3935** where we can offer brief telephone advice, but we do not offer one to one/ongoing support outside of hospital.

The community alcohol service for Nottinghamshire, Change, Grow, Live (CGL), can offer ongoing support and advice and can be contacted on **01158 960 798**, or if you live in Derbyshire, the Derbyshire Recovery Partnership can be contacted on **0845 308 4010**.

You can also get support from your GP who will give you advice and support about your drinking as well as your general health.

## **What are your responsibilities?**

It is your responsibility to tell the DVLA about any form of disability that is alcohol related. This means if you are either alcohol dependent, persistently misuse alcohol, have an alcohol related seizure (fit), or you have an alcohol related disorder, **you must not drive and must notify the DVLA**. If you don't, you are breaking the law.

Even if you have had a lengthy stay in hospital, have received a full alcohol detox in hospital/plan of abstinence/controlled drinking post hospital discharge, **you still must not drive and must notify the DVLA**.

Your GP and / or hospital consultant may also share this information with the DVLA.

## **How does the DVLA define alcohol problems?**

There are two types of alcohol problem identified by the DVLA. There is no singular definition for each of these, but the DVLA offer the following:

**Persistent alcohol misuse** - "A state that causes, because of consumption of alcohol, disturbance of behaviour, related disease or other consequences likely to cause the patient, their family or society present or future harm and that may or may not be associated with dependence".

**Alcohol dependence** - "A cluster of behaviour, cognitive and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated alcohol use, including a strong desire to take alcohol, difficulties in controlling use, persistent use despite harmful consequences, evidence of increased tolerance and sometimes a physical withdrawal state. Indicators may include any history of withdrawal symptoms, tolerance, detoxification or alcohol related seizures".

## **What if I don't feel that my alcohol intake is a problem?**

If you disagree and don't believe you have a disability in terms of your alcohol use, you can get a second opinion. However, you must still avoid driving until such an opinion has been provided.

## What will happen if I still drive?

If you continue to drive against advice, and evidence is found of this, the DVLA will be told.

## Will my GP be informed about my admission to hospital?

Your GP will receive a letter from the Drug and Alcohol Liaison Team and medical team caring for you. This will include any advice given to you about driving.

## How long am I likely to be unable to drive?

The DVLA advise the following:

### **Persistent alcohol misuse - Must not drive and must notify the DVLA**

Your licence will be refused or revoked for a minimum of 6 months; if you drive a bus or a lorry your licence will be refused or revoked for a minimum of 1 year. The DVLA will then reassess the situation.

### **Alcohol dependent - Must not drive and must notify the DVLA**

Your licence will be refused or revoked until a minimum of 1 years abstinence from alcohol consumption has been attained. Continued licensing will there after require ongoing abstinence. If you are a Bus or Lorry Driver, your licence will be refused or revoked until a minimum of 3 years abstinence from alcohol consumption has been attained.

### **Fits (alcohol-related seizure) - Must not drive and must notify the DVLA**

If it is a solitary seizure your licence will be refused or revoked for a minimum of 6 months from the date of the seizure; if you are bus or lorry driver your licence will be refused or revoked for a minimum of 5 years from the date of the seizure. The DVLA will then reassess the situation.

### **Alcohol related disorders - Must not drive and must notify the DVLA**

Examples include hepatic cirrhosis with chronic encephalopathy, alcohol induced psychosis, cognitive impairment. Your licence will be refused or revoked until recovery is satisfactory and any other relevant standards for fitness to drive are satisfied.

Please seek further advice and information about the above from the DVLA.

## How do I inform the DVLA?

All up to date contact numbers for the DVLA can be found online via GOV.UK

## What if I need more support?

Some people find it easy to make changes to their drinking. Others find it more difficult and need support. Talking things through can often be the most helpful thing to do as it can help you to work out what to do for the best.



### **Further sources of information**

**Diabetes UK:** [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

**NHS Choices:** [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

**Our website:** [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### **King's Mill Hospital:**

01623 672222

### **Newark Hospital:**

01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

### **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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