

COUNCIL MOTION

18 JANUARY 2024

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Gareth Lloyd-Johnson

SECONDED BY: Councillor TBC

AN ALCOHOL STRATEGY FOR THE UK

Across the country, many people will be undertaking Dry January or cutting down their alcohol intake in the new year. For many, this will be a healthy break from drinking which will be a boost to their health.

However, we know that in our communities, we have residents who consume alcohol regularly at dangerous levels and would meet the description of alcohol dependency. As reported in November 2022, “A quarter of the Sefton adult population have increased risk of harm through consuming more than the recommended levels of alcohol (over 14 units a week)¹”

Further, “Under 18 alcohol specific admissions for Sefton have risen to 71.0 per 100,000 in 2018/19-20/21. Sefton currently has the second highest rate in the North West (out of 39 Local Authorities) and is in the top 10 nationally.²”

Additionally, “Almost 2% of Sefton’s adult population are estimated to be dependent drinkers, approximately 4237 residents. Of these dependent drinkers, it is estimated that only 16% will be in treatment.”

Like all local authorities, Sefton does have information available for those wanting to lower their alcohol intake. However, local initiatives are undermined by the lack of a National Alcohol Strategy which draws together data and services, allocates resources and has the necessary power to scrutinise the multi-billion-pound alcohol industry.

This Council recognises that;

Many adults will enjoy alcohol in a socially responsible manner and that the aim of any strategy should not be to punish those who do so.

However, amongst this group there are people who wish to lower their alcohol intake, or stop drinking all together, and that they should be supported in making that decision.

Alcohol dependency is a disease and is often linked to social, financial, emotional and physical and mental health issues.

The last National Alcohol Strategy was published in 2012 and is no longer fit for purpose³.

¹ https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/7042/substance-misuse-jsna_.pdf

² https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/7042/substance-misuse-jsna_.pdf

³ <https://ahauk.org/news/independent-review-on-alcohol/>

Excellent work is done within Sefton by both the Council and third-sector organisations to help people wanting to lower their alcohol intake but this work is hampered by a lack of resources and there being no National Alcohol Strategy.

This Council believes that;

The role of providing support to those wanting to lower their alcohol intake and those who are alcohol dependent should not fall solely to local authorities.

A National Alcohol Strategy is required to properly allocate resources, address societal and cultural issues around how alcohol is consumed in the UK and to look at the way that alcohol is marketed and sold.

This council resolves to;

Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care expressing this Council's support for a National Alcohol Strategy and urging them to implement a strategy by the end of the next Parliament.

Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Members of Parliament representing Sefton residents to report the Council's support for a National Alcohol Strategy and urging them to use their powers within Parliament to lobby for its introduction.

Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Harm, thanking them for raising issues around alcohol harm and stating this Council's support for their stated aim of lobbying the Government to produce a National Alcohol Strategy⁴.

Through the Council's Communications Team, on or around 01/02/2024, publish a press release, congratulating those who have taken part in Dry January and signposting to all of the Council's currently available alcohol reduction resources.

⁴ <https://ahauk.org/news/independent-review-on-alcohol/>