

UK alcohol clinical guidelines development begins

PHE is working in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments, to produce UK-wide clinical guidelines for alcohol treatment to provide support for alcohol treatment practice.

There is currently no equivalent for alcohol to the [UK drug misuse treatment guidelines](#) (the 'orange book'), which has been vital in establishing and maintaining good practice for drug treatment. The proposed alcohol treatment guidelines will fill this gap.

The main aim of the guidelines is to develop a clear consensus on good practice and help services to implement [interventions for alcohol use disorders](#) that are recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The aim is also to promote and support consistent good practice and improve the quality of service provision, resulting in better outcomes.

PHE will start this project in November 2019, and we intend to publish the guidelines by the end of next year. We will convene a UK-wide expert group of senior clinicians and service users and professionals with specialist alcohol expertise who will oversee the development of the guidelines.

The guidelines will provide:

- a detailed framework for specialist service providers to support service delivery and staff training
- a framework for commissioners to use when designing service specifications and checking quality
- guidance for primary and secondary health care staff
- clear guidance on managing and supporting service user pathways, such as between hospital and community, and prisons and community
- a reference point for national regulatory bodies when inspecting alcohol treatment services

The [NHS Long Term Plan](#) includes [a commitment to improve the provision of hospital-based alcohol care teams](#), with some targeted funding for areas with the highest levels of need. The clinical guidelines will be relevant to alcohol treatment provided by hospital alcohol care teams and the pathways from hospital into community treatment services.

PHE's recent inquiry into the [fall in numbers of people in alcohol treatment](#) found there is a need for more alcohol-related expertise among staff in substance misuse services.

The inquiry also found that some services need to stick closer to the evidence-based interventions for alcohol problems recommended by NICE and

also found that there may be the need for further evidence-based guidelines.

Rosanna O'Connor, Director of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco and Justice, Public Health England said:

Alcohol misuse costs society £21.4 billion each year. Effective alcohol treatment can help to reduce the burden that is placed on health and social care services as well as reducing crime, improving health, and supporting individuals and families on the road to recovery.

We are very proud to be involved in the partnership that is working to develop the first ever UK-wide alcohol clinical guidelines. Our aim is that the guidelines will help to increase the number of people in the UK receiving effective treatment for alcohol related harm or dependence.