

**GINA monthly e-news  
September 08**

**Alcohol Awareness Week 08**

Alcohol Awareness Week is only a month away and it is a great opportunity to target women with information and offer them advice about their drinking. As reported in last month's e-news, GINA is planning to support Alcohol Awareness Week, using it as a platform to reach younger female drinkers. This will be done with the use of pink handbag shaped information leaflets which offer advice to women going on a night out. The same fold out information leaflet has been used in the past by West Lothian and Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Action Team's, and GINA has now commissioned a reprint following its previous success. The leaflet offers information on a wide range of issues for women on a night out, including personal safety, sexual health and drink spiking. It also offers a list of helpline numbers to call in case of an emergency.

Alcohol Focus Scotland will be running an information stall at Braehead shopping centre in Glasgow for the duration of Alcohol Awareness Week, and GINA will also use this as a location for distributing information. There will be particular emphasis on the Friday afternoon period, aiming to reach women in the hours before a Friday night out on the town. To make the event as far reaching as possible, GINA representatives will also be distributing the flyers in Aberdeen, Ayrshire and Lothian.

The event comes shortly after the news that female alcohol related hospital admissions in Scotland have increased by 25% in just 3 years, from 5, 183 in 2005/06, to 6,456 in 2007/08. This rise in hospital admissions can be correlated with the escalating female drinking culture, often referred to as a

'ladette' culture, where women are quickly catching up with men and their levels of alcohol consumption. Dr Angus Bancroft of the University of Edinburgh said the rise could partly be down to women moving closer to the lifestyles of men. He also added "Alcohol companies have made quite an effort to pursue the female market, with female friendly bars, female friendly drinks, and we have this alcohol consumption culture now"<sup>1</sup>.

Other events will be taking place around the country to promote this year's message about making positive choices with drinking. To find out more information about Alcohol Awareness Week visit [www.alcoholawarenessweek.com](http://www.alcoholawarenessweek.com)



**In the news . . . . .**

**Rape compensation cut overturned**

A rape victim who was told her compensation would be cut because she had been drinking before the attack has had the decision overturned. The 25-year-old, who was raped after a night out, had been told the standard £11,000 award would be cut by 25%. The victim, who cannot be

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Daily Express, 20th August 2008

named for legal reasons, was raped five years ago on a night out in the West End of London. When she applied for compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA), which covers England, Scotland and Wales, she was told the standard compensation would be cut in her case to £8,250. The authority told her the reason for the reduction was that "the evidence shows that your excessive consumption of alcohol was a contributing factor in the incident". Her solicitor, Debaleena Dasgupta, said she had been "appalled" by the decision. "It was immoral. My immediate reaction was there has got to be some way to fight this." Her client has now won the full £11,000 after Ms Dasgupta successfully argued that regarding alcohol consumption as a contributing factor in rape cases was unfair because it implied the victim had been responsible for being raped. Lisa Longstaff, of Women Against Rape, said the original decision by the CICA was symptomatic of the "blame culture" experienced by rape victims.

Source: [BBC News online, 12/08/08](#)

### **Stress drives mothers to drink**

Half of mothers drink at home three or four nights a week, with many turning to alcohol because of stress, according to a new poll. The survey of 3000 women for the website Netmums found that 49% regularly reach for the bottle at home. Of those who admitted drinking more than the government guidelines of 14 units of alcohol each week, 81% did so to wind down after a stressful day and 86% thought that they were drinking too much. A second study for the Government's Know Your Limits campaign found that 42% of men and women drink alcohol to relieve stress. Men are more likely to drink through stress than women, the poll showed, with 45% of men saying they do so, and 40% of women. The problem seemed worse among those of parenting age, with more than half (51%), of people aged 25 to 44 saying they drank through stress compared with 30% of those over 55. Siobhan Freegard of Netmums said; "The extent to which our research showed modern mums are drinking really surprised us. It shows many mums and dads are developing a bottle a night habit without thinking of the health consequences".

Source: [The Herald 01/08/08](#)

### **Drink ban proposed to cut domestic abuse**

Men accused of assaulting their partners could be banned from drinking alcohol as part of a new crackdown on domestic abuse. Police chiefs in Strathclyde are considering the move which would see a drink ban imposed as part of bail conditions. It would mean anyone caught drinking after being taken to court for domestic assault could then be rearrested and possibly remanded in custody. Detective Chief Superintendent Campbell Corrigan of Strathclyde Police said the area suffered from a domestic abuse problem, describing cases in the area as "horrific". He said: "The Crown is supportive of it, but it would be difficult to police. "Talks between Strathclyde Police and the Crown are at an early stage, but it is understood discussions about how a move would be enforced are under way. Mr Corrigan, who was addressing a Joint Police Board meeting, said women were assaulted 20 times on average before making a complaint. He said one way to cut the number of incidents could be a bail order banning violent offenders from drinking.

Source: [The Herald online, 19/08/08](#)

### **Sharp rise in island women with major drink problems**

The number of problem women drinkers in the Western Isles which the NHS has to deal with is rising dramatically, according to a recent report. There has been a 60% rise in the number of alcohol related hospital discharges involving women in the islands over a five year period. The report, produced by the islands' public health division, reveals that alcohol related hospital discharges are much higher than the national average, having risen by nearly one third over the five years to 2004/05. In the under 24 age group, the rate is 3 times the national average. The report makes a number of recommendations, including investigating whether the island has an "entrenched" alcohol dependence culture. The island also ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 422 areas in the UK for all alcohol related deaths in the period 1998 – 2004. Ironically the report also said that of non drinkers in the island, there are "significantly higher percentages".

Source: [Press and Journal, 26/08/08](#)

## Alcohol and pregnancy campaign update

Alcohol Focus Scotland and GINA have consulted a variety of key people about the visuals for the campaign, and the feedback has been very positive. As the poster and leaflet will be finalised shortly we are beginning to progress to the next stage of considering the best settings to promote the campaign as widely as possible. For too long women have been given mixed messages about alcohol and pregnancy. Our campaign will give a clear message that drinking alcohol in pregnancy can put a developing baby at risk and should be avoided. We encourage GINA members to think about how they can support and promote the campaign in November, whether it be displaying posters or adding the message to emails and websites.

The campaign is timely, as a recent poll by Tommy's and Johnson's Baby revealed that there is widespread confusion about pregnancy health. Nearly half of the 1,303 women polled said they had received conflicting pregnancy advice. The poll also revealed that 1 in 7 women were confused by how much alcohol, if any, they could drink during pregnancy. For more information about the recent poll visit [www.tommys.org](http://www.tommys.org)

## Older women and Alcohol

A new area of work that GINA will be involved in over the next few months is the issue of older women and alcohol. Though generally alcohol consumption declines with age, there is evidence that today's population of older people may be relatively heavier drinkers than in previous generations. This is particularly true of those who have been affected by the changing social context of drinking, and have lived through changing attitudes towards the acceptability of female drinking. The potential consequence of this combination of increased consumption and growing elderly population is that it will put a huge strain on health and social services, as well as affecting older people's quality of life and

wellbeing. GINA hopes to work with both Age Concern and the Scottish Pensioners Forum to coordinate a series of focus groups. By doing so we hope to discover more about older women's existing knowledge and attitudes towards alcohol, as well as working with them to develop appropriate resources and materials to raise awareness and tackle this area of problem drinking. We also hope to work with carers, paid and unpaid, in order to develop and promote training around the issue. For more information about alcohol and older women please get in touch.



## Sandyford sexual health and brief intervention report

'Determining the effectiveness of brief intervention and screening at a young peoples' sexual health service' is a recently produced report following an AERC funded study carried out at Sandyford clinic in Glasgow. Sandyford clinic offers an integrated sexual, reproductive and emotional health service across Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Alcohol use and its consequences is a major concern for the sexual health service. The study looked at the integration of alcohol screening and brief intervention into the sexual health assessment offered to young people and the practical and service implications involved in implementing routine screening and brief intervention alongside the day-to-day running of the young persons' clinic.

In 2003 three hundred young people attending sexual health clinic completed a questionnaire about their alcohol use,

highlighting a wide range of adverse events; unprotected and regretted sex were common. The results of the questionnaire identified a need and an opportunity to introduce alcohol education with a harm prevention strategy to the clinic. The report considers how this model brief intervention and screening can be successfully implemented at the clinic. The report can be downloaded online at [www.aerc.org.uk](http://www.aerc.org.uk)

## Events

### **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008, Tayside Council on Alcohol's AGM – Discovery Quay, Dundee**

AGM includes "Almost a Century . . . Reflections on Women's Drinking".  
Tel: 01382 223965  
Email: [anna@alcoholtayside.com](mailto:anna@alcoholtayside.com)

### **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008, Fife Alcohol Support Service's AGM – Council Chamber, Kirkcaldy**

Following AGM business a one woman play 'Acceptance' will be performed by Lisa Nicoll. Tel: 01592 206200 Email: [enquiries@fife-alcohol-support.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@fife-alcohol-support.org.uk)

### **5 – 11 October 2008, Alcohol Awareness Week** [www.alcoholawarenessweek.com](http://www.alcoholawarenessweek.com)

### **Monday 6th October 2008, Alcohol and violence – Holyrood Conference, Edinburgh**

The conference will bring together experts in alcohol addiction, community safety and policing strategies who will discuss what solutions can be implemented to produce positive cultural change.

### **Tuesday 7th October, "Birds & Booze": Taking a Closer Look at Women's Relationship with Alcohol - Almondvale Suite, Livingston Football Club**

A conference examining the changes in women's alcohol consumption and the impact this is having on their lives. Tel: 01506 777 134 Fax: 01506 777 123 E-mail: [julie.bird@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:julie.bird@westlothian.gov.uk)

### **Wednesday 8 October, Alcohol Focus Scotland AGM - Glasgow City Chambers**

This year's Annual General Meeting will start with a buffet lunch at 1.30pm followed by speakers on the theme of 'Hidden harm - both ends of the spectrum' (children and elderly affected by alcohol misuse). The AGM will follow, with the meeting finishing by 4pm. If you would like to attend please call Vickie Longmuir on 0141 572 6708 or email: [vickie.longmuir@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](mailto:vickie.longmuir@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)

## Resources

### **Pink handbag leaflets**

The pink handbag shaped information leaflets that are being produced by GINA for Alcohol Awareness Week will also be available to order on our website shortly. The leaflets offer information and advice to women going on a night out.  
[www.ginascotland.org.uk](http://www.ginascotland.org.uk)

### **Alcohol and pregnancy materials**

The poster and leaflet produced for the Alcohol Focus Scotland and GINA alcohol and pregnancy campaign will be available to order in October. Please email GINA if you would like to order these resources.

## Training

**Social Networks Training: Monday 22nd September and on Tuesday 28th October, at Shelter Training, 5th floor, Scotiabank House, 6 South Charlotte St, Edinburgh EH2 4AW, 10am-4pm.** This training is designed for everyone - staff and volunteers - working with people who are vulnerable or excluded. Helping individuals to develop their social networks can enable individuals to take control of their lives and move on. contact [trainingscotland@shelter.org.uk](mailto:trainingscotland@shelter.org.uk)

### **The Giant Workshop Space - Training Events September / October /November**

Giant have just launched their Autumn/Winter programme of creative training events at the Giant Workshop Space for all those interested in working creatively with children and families. With

two hour twilight sessions allowing time in a busy schedule for some creative inspiration to full day courses full of practical exercises, theory and reflection. For full programme details visit: [www.giantproductions.org](http://www.giantproductions.org)

## **Do you have any information you would like to share with the GINA network?**

We would love to hear from you if you have examples of best practice, studies of interest, information on services or up coming events etc. If so please get in touch.

The next GINA newsletter will be distributed in October 2008.

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