

The start of October brings in the beginning of Macmillan Cancer Support's Sober October where people are asked to give up alcohol for a month to raise money for people with cancer <https://www.gosober.org.uk/about/the-challenge>

Macmillan Cancer Support highlight the benefits for those taking part too <https://www.gosober.org.uk/about/benefits>

- A clearer head
- More energy
- Better sleep
- Weight loss
- A sense of achievement

According to the UK Health Security Agency, in 2020 there were an estimated 589,000 people who were dependent on alcohol in England and around a quarter of those were likely to be receiving mental health medication.

The Mental Health Foundation's website tells us that "Alcohol and mental health are closely linked. Drinking too much can affect your well-being. Some people may drink to try to relieve the symptoms of mental ill-health.

People drink for many reasons: to celebrate, socialise, commiserate or drown our sorrows. We may drink to try and change our mood: to feel more relaxed, courageous or confident. However, the effect of alcohol is only temporary. As it wears off, we often feel worse because of how alcohol withdrawal affects our brain and body.

You may feel like alcohol is your coping mechanism: a way to deal with depression, stress, anxiety or other difficult feelings. You might be nervous about what life would be like if you stopped drinking or cut back. But relying on alcohol to manage your mental well-being can become a problem in itself. There's no shame in asking for help and exploring what a new relationship with alcohol could look like."

The NHS website is a great source of information around alcohol misuse as well as giving suggestions for support organisations

- Drinkline national alcohol helpline 0300 123 1110
- Alcohol Change UK <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/>
- Alcoholics Anonymous <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>
- Al-Anon Family Groups (for anyone whose life is or has been affected by someone else's drinking) <https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/>