

## NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

If you want to find out more or get some advice, there's a wide range of resources available.

### For parents

#### Parenting Across Scotland

[www.parentingacrossscotland.org](http://www.parentingacrossscotland.org)

#### ParentLine Scotland

Tel: 0808 800 2222

#### Relationships Scotland

Tel: 0845 119 2020

[www.relationships-scotland.org.uk](http://www.relationships-scotland.org.uk)

#### Al-anon

[www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

### For children

#### Young Scot

[www.youngscot.org](http://www.youngscot.org)

#### Health and Wellbeing Information

Tel: 0808 802 4444

[www.getthelowdown.co.uk](http://www.getthelowdown.co.uk)

#### Information on drugs

[www.knowthescore.info](http://www.knowthescore.info)

### Drinking advice for adults

#### Alcohol Focus Scotland

[www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)

#### Drinkline

Tel: 0800 7 314 314 – open 24 hours

#### NHS Inform

Tel: 0800 22 44 88

[www.nhsinform.co.uk/home/health-zones/alcohol](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/home/health-zones/alcohol)

### Who to contact for medical advice

Tel NHS24: 08454 24 24 24

**Remember, if you need urgent medical assistance, always call 999**

Source for statistics: SALSUS 2008. This survey monitors and measures smoking, drinking and drug use among young people. It was completed by over 10,000 pupils, aged 13 years old and 15 years old, across Scotland. ChildLine quote courtesy of ChildLine. For more information on ChildLine visit [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)

# You, your child and alcohol



# WHY IT PAYS TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD

When's the best time to talk to your child about alcohol? There's no time like the present. After all, in school, children start to learn about the effects of alcohol by the time they're in Primary 7. So it's a great time to tackle the subject, rather than waiting until they're experimenting with drinking. But it's also never too late to start talking either.

And whatever ideas about drinking we grew up with, the current scientific evidence is that an alcohol-free childhood is the healthiest and best option.

In this booklet we'll give you the facts and information you need to start talking with your child – and help them to understand the effects of drinking alcohol.

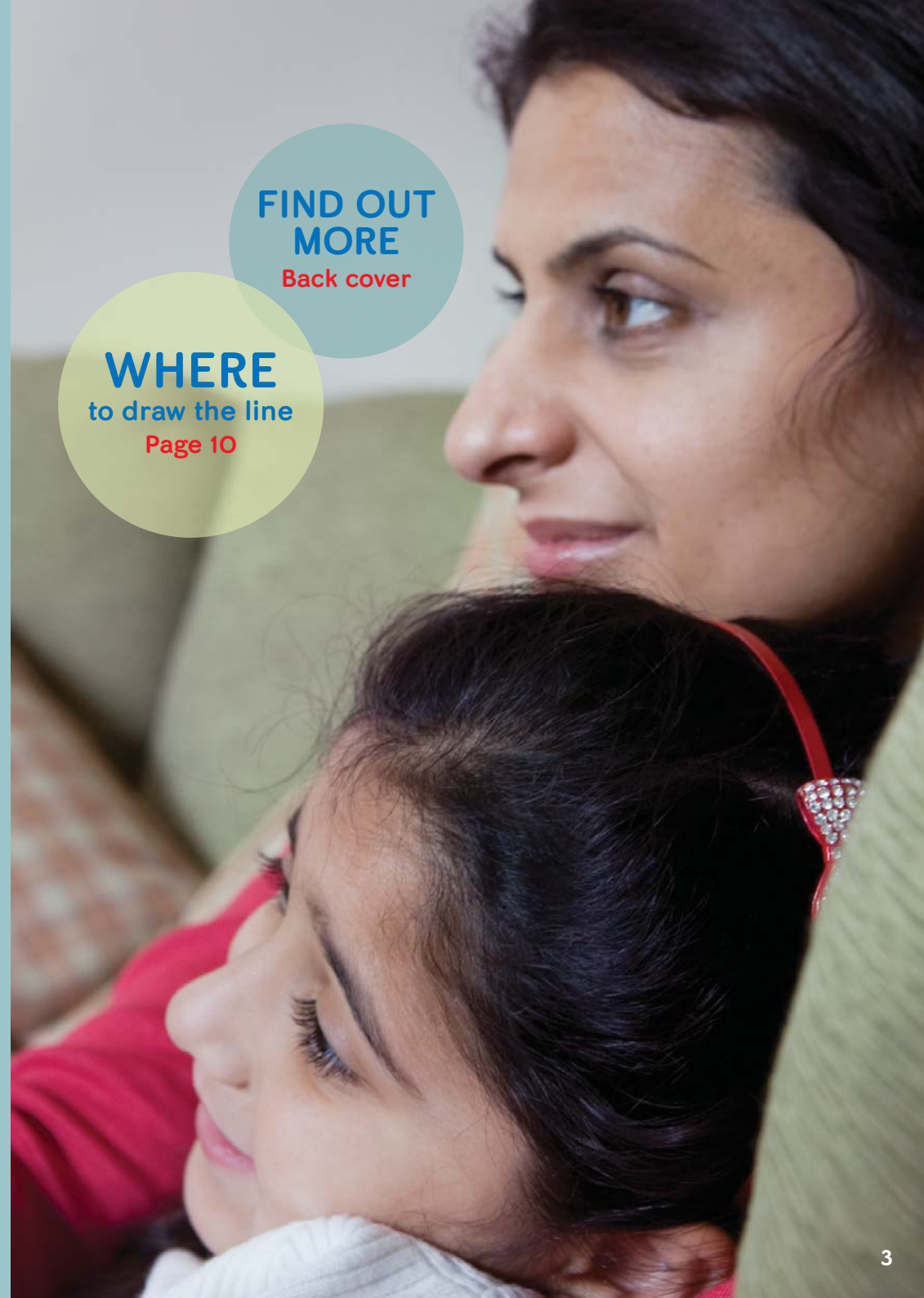
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## THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Did you know that a child's brain is constantly changing and developing? In fact, some parts of the brain don't mature till we're in our early twenties – and the teenage years are a crucial time for developing the areas that handle planning and judgement.

Drinking alcohol can stop young people reaching their full potential. That's the biggest reason why an alcohol-free childhood is the healthiest and best choice.

**When you look at the facts, it's clear that drinking can lead to harm:**

- Each year in Scotland there are on average around 350 alcohol-related hospital admissions amongst people under 15 years

- Alcohol could make your child more vulnerable to risky behaviour, such as unsafe sexual activity or becoming a victim of crime
- Young people's bodies are more vulnerable than adults' to the effects of alcohol
- Drinking can lead to and be a symptom of poor mental health, like depression
- The earlier a child starts drinking, the higher their chances of alcohol-related problems as adults

But the good news is that you can make a big difference to the way your child thinks about drinking, as you'll see over the page.

Around a quarter of 13-year-olds say they have been "really drunk"



## DON'T KNOW HOW TO START? HERE ARE SOME IDEAS

The things you tell your children have more impact than you might realise – but as we all know, young people don't like being lectured! That's why a great idea is to start by chatting to them, finding out what they know, rather than telling them what you think.

Also, whenever the effects of alcohol are mentioned in TV programmes, this is a good opportunity to have a talk about it with your child.

### Some tips:

- Pick a time when you're not rushed
- Be honest! Discuss why some people enjoy drinking as well as pointing out the potential risks
- If you don't know the answer to something, why not find out together? There are some useful ways to find out more on the back page
  - Remember, the way you talk about alcohol will develop as your child gets older

Hobbies and other activities can help divert your child from drinking, so it's well worth encouraging interests they have.



### What's stopping you?

#### **"I'll do it when they're older."**

Around a quarter of all 13-year-olds say they've been "really drunk" at least once.

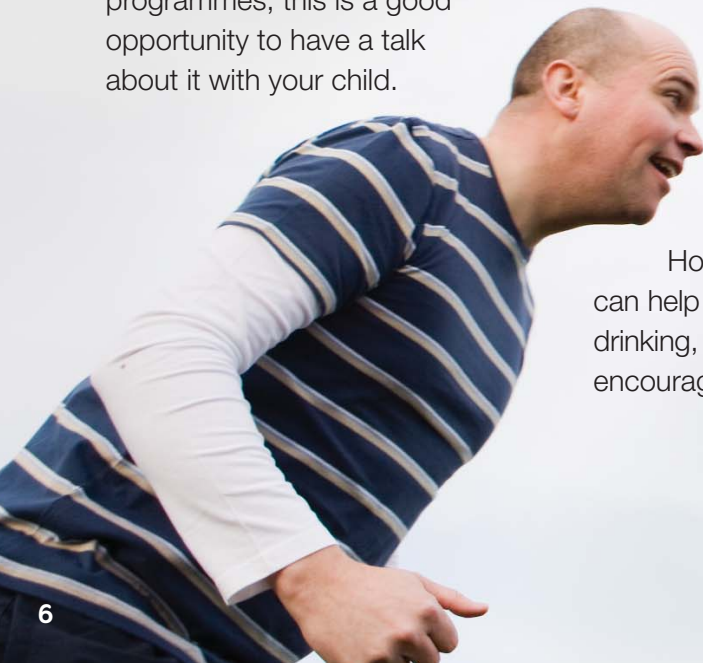
#### **"I'd know if there was a problem."**

Half of those 13-year-olds who have drunk alcohol say they usually drink in their home.

#### **"Don't they talk about this at school?"**

Yes, but parents can have a big influence, and you can back up the positive messages they're hearing.

63% of children who never drink alcohol take part in a hobby at least once a week





## WHO DOES YOUR CHILD LEARN FROM?

# WHO DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO LEARN FROM?

Children and young people learn about alcohol in lots of different places: television, films and the internet are just some of them. And of course, they learn from their mates.

But parents are a big influence and many children first start to learn about alcohol in the home.

### Agree the boundaries

Many parents with older children might think there's no harm in a drink now and then. But the reality is, it could be stopping them reaching their full potential.

That's why it's worth agreeing boundaries of behaviour with your children. After all, as they get older, there'll be more pressure from their friends.

For example, a good idea might be that they always tell you where they are, and who they're with when they go out. And a good safety tip is making sure their mobile phone is fully charged and has credit on it.

Rewarding them for staying within the boundaries can work well – but it's a good idea to think about what you'll do if they break them.

The most important thing? Make sure your child knows you're setting boundaries because you care about them and their safety.

17% of 13 year olds said they'd been in trouble with the police because of drinking alcohol



## WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE?

# SENSIBLE DRINKING: WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

Children can also learn about alcohol in the home so it's a good idea to think about your own drinking.

Do you know your sensible drinking guidelines? You've probably heard of units and that men shouldn't regularly drink more than 3-4 units a day and women 2-3 units.

But there's no such thing as a safe limit. And units add up quicker than you think. There are around 6 units in a couple of pints and 3 in a large glass of wine. It's 1 unit per single measure for spirits. So if you have a pint of lager and a whisky, that's already 4 units.

And by regularly having more than the sensible drinking guidelines you increase your risk of liver problems, heart disease, and even cancer.

It can also have a harmful effect on family and friends. If you want to talk about your drinking, there are some helpful contacts on the back cover of this guide.

*Children in Scotland, more than anywhere else in the UK, talk to ChildLine about their parents' drinking, resulting in family problems and about feeling worried and isolated*



	Drink	Units per drink
	<b>Small glass of wine</b> (Alc 12% Vol) – 175ml	<b>2.1</b>
	<b>Large glass of wine</b> (Alc 12% Vol) – 250ml	<b>3</b>
	<b>Single measure of spirit (whisky, gin or vodka)</b> (Alc 40% Vol) – 25ml	<b>1</b>
	<b>Bottle of beer or lager</b> (Alc 5% Vol) – 330ml	<b>1.7</b>
	<b>Pint of beer or lager</b> (Alc 5% Vol)	<b>2.8</b>
	<b>Bottle of cider</b> (Alc 5% Vol) – 275ml	<b>1.4</b>
	<b>Pint of cider</b> (Alc 5% Vol)	<b>2.8</b>
	<b>Alcopop</b> (Alc 4% Vol) – 275ml	<b>1.1</b>
	<b>Tequila shot</b> (Alc 38% Vol) – 25ml	<b>1</b>

**The sensible drinking guidelines only apply to people aged 18 and over. Avoid alcohol if pregnant or trying to conceive.**