



Health & Social Care  
Information Centre

# Statistics on Alcohol

England 2016

## Data Quality Statement

Published 30 June 2016



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This report may be of interest to members of the public, policy officials and other stakeholders to make local and national comparisons and to monitor the quality and effectiveness of services.

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## Background

This annual compendium report presents a range of up-to-date information on alcohol use and misuse among both adults and children from a variety of sources, including previously published information from reports such as the Health Survey for England, Local Area Alcohol Profiles and the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

This report also presents new analyses not previously published before which mainly consists of prescriptions data from the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC).

The report mainly focuses on England only where possible, but does include some international comparisons.

## Relevance

This publication is considered to be of particular interest to NHS and independent sector providers in England and to English NHS commissioning organisations. However, data and findings are likely to also be of interest to a much broader base of users.

## Accuracy

This report is a National Statistic and is produced according to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Most of the information in this report has been previously published. The sources of the information are trusted sources; the majority being either National or Official Statistics. Most sources referenced in this report include a Methodology section for further information.

Further general information on HES data quality can be found here:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/1825/The-processing-cycle-and-HES-data-quality>.

Specific data quality issues for the inpatient data for 2014/15 can be seen via the data quality note which accompanied the "Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care, England - 2014-15" report at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB19124>

## Alcohol Related Hospital Admissions

HES data is available from 1989-90 onwards. During this time there have been on-going improvements in data quality and coverage, which particularly affect earlier data years. Some of the increase in figures for later years (particularly 2006-07 onwards) may be due to the improvement in the recording of secondary diagnoses and the coverage of independent sector activity. The former is particularly relevant for the "broad" measure of alcohol related hospital admissions as this is more dependent on the use of secondary diagnoses than the "narrow" measure.

As well as this, there have been a number of changes to the classifications used within HES records. The data presented in this report are for inpatients only and therefore does not reflect all hospital activity. This should be considered when interpreting the data as recording and clinical practice may vary over time and between regions.

## Prescription Data

Data on the number of prescription items and Net Ingredient Cost (NIC) of pharmacotherapies prescribed to help people quit alcohol are not ideal measures of volume or cost since they do not take account of duration of supply. The NIC of all pharmacotherapies is the basic cost of the treatments and does not take account of discounts, dispensing costs, fees or prescription charge income.

## Survey data

Some of the information presented in the report is taken from survey data. Sometimes the mode of data collection used in a survey can have an impact on how respondents answer the questionnaire. For example, surveys conducted via a face-to-face interview such as the Health Survey for England (HSE) provide an opportunity for an interviewer to use a computer to record the respondent's answers which will improve the quality of the data by ensuring all the questions are completed and not allowing any invalid answers. By comparison data collected via a postal survey such as What About Youth (WAY) will have none of these inbuilt validations.

Face-to-face interviews also provide an opportunity to guide the respondent through any interpretation issues such as advice on alcohol strength, which is more difficult in a postal survey.

Both modes however may suffer from respondents being tempted to give answers which are considered to be more socially acceptable. This could occur either through the surveys being completed in the home when other family members are present, or through the interviewer being present at a face-to-face interview. This effect may be reduced in surveys such as Smoking, Drinking and Drugs (SDD) which is conducted in schools in exam conditions.

## Comparability and Coherence

This, like other national statistics published by the HSCIC that report on extracts of HES inpatient data, allocate episodes to time periods on the basis of episode end date.

Some international comparisons are included within the report.

Table 2 has been updated from the tables in last year's report using mid-year population estimates for 2014 which are now available. The England total also includes prescription items that have been written in England but cannot be attributed to a commissioning region or area team.

## Timeliness and Punctuality

This compendium report is published annually and presents or signposts to the most up-to-date information available.

## Accessibility and Clarity

This report is published online and is available free of charge with accompanying tables (in Excel (.xls) and Comma Separated Values (.csv) format).

## Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The compendia reports on alcohol, smoking, drug misuse and obesity were subject to a National Statistics consultation earlier in 2016. The report on the findings of the consultation and the HSCIC response are available at:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/6770/Consultation-on-Lifestyles-Compendia-Reports>

The HSCIC is keen to gain a better understanding of the users of this publication and of their needs; feedback is welcome and may be sent via the “Have your say” link within the feedback section on the publication page, or by sending an email to [enquires@hscic.gov.uk](mailto:enquires@hscic.gov.uk) with “Statistics on Alcohol” as the subject heading. Information on the Users and Uses of the report are included in an annex to the main report.

## Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

All data used within this report is either already published or is part of an existing dataset. Therefore there are no data collected specifically for this report.

## Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

The data contained in this publication are National Statistics. The code of practice for official statistics is adhered to from collecting the data to publishing.

[www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/guidance/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/guidance/index.html)

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**For further information**

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