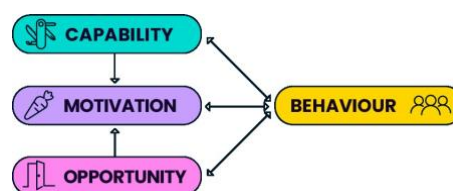


Executive Summary

Understanding risky and, or dependant drinking

ICE worked with East Sussex County Council to understand why people drink and what helps or prevents them from cutting down or stopping.

We engaged 66 residents of Hastings or Eastbourne, including those aged 45+ from groups approaching risky levels of drinking or risky and, or dependent drinking is more common, to make sure their voices were heard when planning future support. This included people living in more deprived areas, and people who are insecurely housed. The findings have been grouped using the COM-B model which believes people must have the capability, opportunity and motivation to change their behaviour.



CAPABILITY

What do people know?

Many residents don't understand what "risky drinking" means, or don't see their drinking as a problem. While some know support is available, there's often confusion about what services offer, how to access them, or whether they're suitable for people "not yet in crisis."

OPPORTUNITY

What makes cutting down or stopping easier or harder?

Alcohol is cheap, easy to buy, and part of everyday life, making it hard to avoid. Many learned to drink at home or through family, and it remains a big part of how people socialise. Drinking alone at home can create feelings of isolation and shame about drinking. Residents discussed peer groups, drop-in support and welcoming community spaces to help make support more accessible. There is also a need to challenge drinking as socially acceptable and promoting, alcohol-free options.

MOTIVATION

What makes people want to cut down or stop drinking?

People want to cut down to improve their health and save money. But alcohol is also a way to cope with loneliness or stress. Shame, stigma, and low confidence hold many back from seeking help. Some believe change is only possible in response to when things get really bad and therefore, delay getting support.

What should happen next

15 recommendations were driven by the insight from residents and stakeholders, with 3 identified as high priority and urgent. Therefore, to help residents stop or cut down their drinking the following priorities are urgent:

1. Encourage support from friends, family and peer networks
2. Increase the visibility and accessibility of lower-level or early intervention support
3. Empower and upskill professionals and community stakeholders