



Promoting sensible drinking at your community sports club

There are few things in Wales that unite, motivate and engage people like sport. And whether we're celebrating wins or commiserating losses, alcohol often plays a key role. But if drinking gets out of control, it's not long before a club can harm its reputation as a family-friendly hub for the community.

Community-based sports clubs and their members also have a particularly strong influence on young people, and as such they may contribute to alcohol problems if they accept and promote excessive drinking, and provide inappropriate role models. Alcohol Concern Cymru recently undertook a Wales-wide survey of sports clubs just like yours, and nearly all (90%) agreed that it is important for clubs to ensure that alcohol is sold responsibly.

Community sports clubs can commit to a new game plan when it comes to alcohol. That means changing club practices so that alcohol no longer plays such a dominant role, making your club a healthier and safer place for players, members, families and supporters alike.

One way of achieving this is ensuring that your club has an up-to-date alcohol policy. International research has shown that clubs that promote and serve alcohol in a responsible manner, through adopting an alcohol policy, are likely to benefit in a number of ways, including financially. Those benefits include:

- A safer and more welcoming social atmosphere
- Improved retention of players, members and their partners, and greater participation of families in the club
- The approval of local government, police and the local community
- Maintenance of, and even improved, club revenue, despite selling less alcohol

When you took part in our survey of sports clubs, you told us that your club does not currently have a specific alcohol policy. So we've enclosed a policy template, free of charge, that you can adopt for your club without fuss! (If you'd like an electronic version of this, please email us at acwales@alcoholconcern.org.uk). This isn't a legal document, merely a guidance document giving advice for your club on what can be a difficult and sensitive subject.

In the end, the policy you chose will have to meet your own needs, but we hope that our template will help you get started.

It may be that you don't have your own club house, and so don't always have control over how alcohol is served or advertised at your events. If that's the case, we would advise you apply as many of the principles in the policy as you can, and perhaps approach the people whose venue you use to see if they're willing to get on board with a responsible alcohol policy.



We recommend that you follow these steps to draw up and implement your policy:

1. Form a small committee to develop the policy. This should include key people such as players, coaches, members, and parents if you have junior members.
2. Prepare a draft copy of your club's alcohol policy, using our template if you wish. Every club is different, so spend some time thinking about specific issues that affect your club and incidents that may have happened in the past.
3. Circulate to all relevant parties and invite feedback. Make any changes you need to, and finalise the policy. Get the Club Chair or Secretary to sign off the policy and formally adopt its recommendations.
4. Officially launch the policy, making sure everyone at the club gets a copy. You can even try to get some local media coverage, perhaps by hosting a mocktails evening and inviting the local community to celebrate its launch! Display a copy of the policy where everyone can see it – like in the club's social area.
5. Agree to review the policy on an annual basis, and always after any alcohol-related incident, to ensure it remains up-to-date and fit-for-purpose.

Implementing and regularly reviewing your alcohol policy will minimise, or even prevent, alcohol-related harm from occurring during club activities, and ensure that your club maintains a good reputation in the community it serves.

Sample club alcohol policy¹

This policy provides the basis for the responsible sale and consumption of alcohol by ORGANISATION/ CLUB NAME. Whilst the Club recognises the importance of holding an alcohol licence,² enabling it to generate income and hold social functions, it also accepts its duty to promote a responsible attitude to the sale and consumption of alcohol on its premises.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Club players, members and visitors are kept safe from alcohol-related harm whilst on its premises or whilst representing the Club elsewhere.

Our objectives are to:

- provide a consistent approach to alcohol management through establishing clear expectations around behaviour and responsibilities so everyone who is a member of, or visits, the club knows what is expected of them
- provide transparency as to how policy breaches and incidents will be responded to.

To ensure the aims of the club are upheld and that alcohol is managed responsibly by the Club and its members, the following requirements will apply.



1. Serving alcohol

- It is illegal to sell alcohol to anyone who is under 18. The Club operates a Challenge 25 policy, whereby anyone who looks under 25 years old will be asked to prove they are 18 or over when attempting to buy alcohol.
- It is illegal to sell, or attempt to sell, alcohol to someone who is drunk. The Club takes all necessary precautions to ensure that no alcohol is sold to anyone believed to be intoxicated, nor does it sell alcohol if it is deemed to be for consumption by a person who is already intoxicated.
- The Club does not encourage excessive or rapid consumption of alcohol.
- Those permitted to sell alcohol must not consume alcohol themselves when on duty.

2. Alternatives to alcohol

- In the Club's ongoing efforts to offer a safe and welcoming social atmosphere to all members of the community, and in recognition that alcohol is not the only revenue stream available, it actively encourages the sale of non-alcohol alternatives, ensuring that:
 - Drinking water is available at the bar free of charge
 - A range of non-alcoholic drinks (e.g. tea/coffee/soft drinks) are available at the bar and actively promoted, and sold at prices cheaper to, or competitive with, alcoholic products
 - The sale of snacks and meals is promoted and made available whenever alcohol is available.

3. Promoting the responsible use of alcohol

- The Club does not advertise, promote or serve alcohol at junior events or activities.
- Any alcohol advertising or promotions will appear at the bar area only.
- The Club endeavours to educate club players, members and supporters about our alcohol policy.
- The Club shall pursue non-alcohol sponsorship and other revenue sources where possible.
- The Club does not use alcohol for player awards and fundraising prizes.
- The Club not promote alcohol through cheap drink offers, such as 'happy hours' and 'buy-one-get-one-free' deals.

4. Inappropriate behaviour

- The Club ensures that any club trips strictly adhere to rules of responsible behaviour and responsible alcohol consumption, in accordance with the aims and objectives of this policy.
- Alcohol shall not be consumed on the home pitch/playing areas, including on the sidelines, nor in any player areas (such as dressing rooms and substitutes benches). The only exception is within designated spectator areas. Alcohol shall not be consumed by spectators at youth/junior team matches.
- It is unacceptable for any players to be involved in training or matches under the influence of alcohol.
- Coaches and officials shall not drink alcohol, or be under the influence of alcohol, when representing the club at matches or training sessions.
- Persons responsible for the transportation of players/members for club activities that take place away from the club premises should not consume alcohol prior to undertaking such work.



5. Dealing with incidents

- Alleged or confirmed incidents in breach of this policy will be referred promptly to the Club Welfare Officer and/or an appropriate person (such as the Head Coach or Chair).
- Information regarding alleged or confirmed incidents in breach of this policy shall be recorded in writing. The recording of factual information is preferable, and opinions should be stated as such. How the club responded to each incident shall be recorded in writing – for example, any disciplinary steps, and/or any changes to policies and procedures as a result. Only in confirmed cases shall individual names be recorded.
- Incidents involving any person under the age of 18 will require their parents/guardians to be informed.
- The Club reserve the right to take appropriate and reasonable action in the event of alcohol-related incidents, which can include warnings, suspensions and, in the most serious cases, expulsions.

- ¹ Thanks to the Goods Sports Programme Australia and Northop Hall Hockey Club whose own template/policies have aided in the production of this template policy.
- ² Some sections of this template are especially relevant to clubs that have a license to sell alcohol. If this isn't the case at your club, you might want to delete this sections.

Drinkwise Wales campaign: Don't let booze ruin the result

Our work to assist community sports clubs to adopt and implement their own alcohol policies represents Phase 2 of our campaign to engage with sports clubs in Wales, and with all those interesting in playing and watching sport.

Phase 1 was launched in October 2012, with the messages that excessive consumption of alcohol and sporting success are not compatible, and that participating in sport and watching it will be more rewarding in a less alcohol-fuelled environment.

The campaign was endorsed by well-known sports celebrities Jamie Baulch and Paul Thorburn, and achieved widespread media coverage in Wales. A number of local clubs also took part in local media work to support the campaign.

In addition, 400 posters were displayed in pubs, sports clubs and stadiums in Wales. **We have enclosed some extra A3 copies of the campaign posters for your club, free of charge, which can be displayed in the bar, washrooms, changing rooms, or on your club notice board.**

Follow Drinkwise Wales on Twitter @drinkwisewales and find out more at our website www.drinkwisewales.org.uk