

Working with Internal Stakeholders

One of the key aspects of Alcohol Impact is partnership working. A strong, strategic partnership between the students' union and the university results in a more impactful approach. There are many stakeholders from across the university who could get involved from academic staff, residential advisors and counselling staff.

Student Services / Advice Staff

There are many members of staff within a student services team who would be valuable stakeholders to have on board. Whether it's the head of the department who oversees supporting students in general, members of the welfare/wellbeing team or those who work in halls of residence – they can all bring useful experience and ideas. Through Alcohol Impact, we have seen two key examples of ways to include members of student services staff: joining the Alcohol Impact Steering Group and running joint campaigns with the students' union

Steering group: The steering group is a working group consisting of key stakeholders across the partnership. Members of a student services team are trained to offer support, guidance and information to students about a range of topics, and alcohol use will be included in this. They will be aware of how to support a student dealing with alcohol use issues or signpost to specialist services if necessary. Chances are, there will a dedicated welfare or wellbeing lead within that department also who can provide valuable insight to the work down within the steering group. This level of input to the steering group is essential to ensuring that a strong partnership is created to support students and create a healthier and more productive student community.

The Lancaster partnership involved their student services department through their steering group, and more specifically with the setting of KPI's. Similarly, UEA utilised the data collected by the student services department to monitor KPI's such as noise complaints and alcohol abuse flags. The UWE partnership report that due to the relationship between the students' union and student services department, they have acquired funding for a role within student life to promote the student surveys and ensure key Alcohol Impact messages are included in ongoing work.

Joint campaigns: Organising, promoting and running a campaign is hard work! Being able to bring together an engaging and educational campaign is resource intensive and time consuming. Creating links with a student services team is a great way to not only share the responsibility but to also create a strong partnership. Being able to share innovative ideas, delegate tasks and create consistent messages are all key to an impactful campaign; all of which will be supported by the involvement of a student services department. In a lot of cases, it may be that work is already

taking place on both sides, and that combining these allows for a more impactful and engaging campaign which shows unity and consistency.

Universities which have benefitted from having a joint students' union and university campaign are Lancaster (Look After Your Mate) and Keele (Alcohol Awareness Week). At UWE, the partnership ran interventions at Welcome 2017 as part of the Late Night, Do It Right activity. Their work has also enabled student placement opportunities to fit within the Alcohol Impact remit. They also carried out Alcohol awareness stalls during Welcome and as part of 'Feel Good February'.

Academic Staff

There are many individuals within the academic sector of a university who could support the implementation of Alcohol Impact; undergraduate students, MSc students, PhD students or teaching/research staff. Relevant disciplines may include psychology, health & Wellbeing, medicine or nursing. You may also wish to reach out to academics in the marketing, communications or design courses.

University of Bradford: The partnership at Bradford involved two academic members of staff from the department of Psychology and Social Work. They regularly attended meetings and provided feedback and suggestions about various aspects of the project. They also reported preliminary findings and insights about the university's survey results. Psychology students volunteered to get involved to work on monitoring and evaluation including analysis of the NUS Students and Alcohol survey data and compiled a report based on findings.

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU): MMU recruited PhD students from the Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care to conduct a bespoke Student Health Survey. This survey acquired over 3,500 responses and the findings were disseminated to the Alcohol Impact steering group.

Keele University: Keele recruited a senior lecturer from the School of Psychology to sit on the steering group and provide evidence based insights on the effectiveness of various alcohol interventions. The partnership also commissioned a PhD student to conduct a piece of research around student alcohol interventions and alongside this be the project lead for Alcohol Impact. Duties included running campaigns, promoting and analysing the survey, compiling the evidence and running workshops.

Students' Union Staff – Keele University

Keele University were in an unusual position when they first joined Alcohol Impact as membership was initiated by the university and not the students' union. Therefore, the Alcohol Impact steering group had to work to generate links with stakeholders within the SU in order to form a strong and strategic partnership. Creating a strong partnership is a key aspect of the Alcohol Impact criteria and ensures significant influence and impact.

Keele University found that one of their initial challenges was gaining buy in from their students' union commercial staff as they were concerned about the loss of revenue from alcohol sales. There are a number of ways that Alcohol Impact can support the bar(s) within a students' union. For example, it may be that an early bird food and drinks deal is initiated in the SU; not only will it mean that students are in a controlled environment with trained staff and standard measures of

alcohol, but it also means increased sales for the SU as students will attend earlier. Additionally, by opening up an alcohol-free space within the students' union, non-drinkers will not only have a space to relax with their friends but sales of food and soft drinks will increase. This also may mean the space is being used at a time it would usually be empty.

Working groups: The steering group is a working group consisting of key stakeholders across the partnership. At Keele University there are two alcohol working groups: a Drug & Alcohol Group and a Bars Operations Group. Representation from the SU were invited to the Drug & Alcohol Group meetings, and the aims of the Alcohol Impact were shared. The Bars Operations Group took a more operational approach e.g. staff training, specific incidents etc. This group consisted of DPS' from each drinking venue on campus and meet prior to each Drug & Alcohol Group. Again, the DPS from the SU helped to create this group alongside the university halls bars and postgraduate association DPS'. Since the development of these two groups, a strong, strategic partnership was developed and the majority of campaigns, initiatives and interventions have since been run collectively.

Ring round system: Prior to Alcohol Impact, if a student was removed from a premises for causing issues while intoxicated then this would occur with no further action other than the standard disciplinary procedures. Since working as a partnership, Keele has implemented the 'ring round' system, whereby each venue has a radio they can use to contact all other venues informing them of the situation and the student in question, so that they couldn't enter another bar on campus and cause more issues. If there are any issues of this nature, whether it be a student being removed from a bar, or if a bar crawl is seen etc. then the system is used to warn other venues of the situation so that they are prepared to deal with the student/group if they decide to try to enter another venue. This again demonstrates to students that the drinking establishments are working together to ensure a safer drinking culture, and that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated in any venue. Previously, it was very possible for a student to be removed from a bar, and then head for the next one, instead this way, the approach is fair, consistent and reliable.

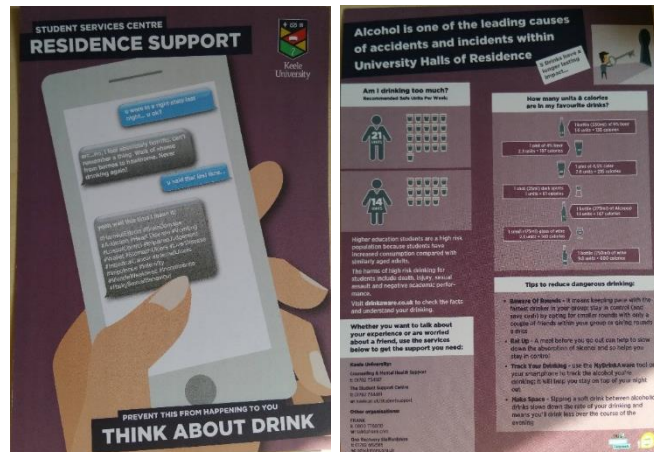
Student alcohol policy: The alcohol policy for students was essentially two documents tagged together; a policy from the university, and a policy from the SU. There was no connection between the two documents. Due to involvement in Alcohol Impact the alcohol policy has been revised. The new policy equally covers all alcohol outlets on campus, to show a consistent approach to student alcohol consumption. The general bulk of the policy provides information to students about alcohol, and the appropriate way to act in order to ensure safe drinking episodes. There are also commitments from the alcohol outlets about how they will support students to drink safely and ensure they have the best experience that they can whilst on a night out at university. This policy was a massive step forward for the Keele partnership and shows students that all venues stand together as a whole, compared to the somewhat disjointed approach that was previously in place.

Residence Advisors

Residence Advisors (RA's) have active engagement with students on a regular basis and they have the advantage of getting to know the students who live within their halls. They hold regular conversations with students and help to develop an atmosphere which is safe, inclusive and respectful. Through Alcohol Impact we have seen two examples of ways to involve RA's; through training them to offer advice and support to students around alcohol and through engagement when running campaigns.

RA Training: RA's are often the first resource for students with academic, institutional, or personal questions. RA's will be trained to be confident to answer questions about issues such as alcohol use which ensures that students receive instant advice and support. One university that has benefitted from training RA's to assist students with questions about consumption is Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). Their RA's provide advice and support for alcohol-related incidents in student accommodation. Since implementing this initiative MMU have reported an increase in interaction with students, and an increase in awareness of support services on campus. MMU has also noted an increase in students attending morning lectures/seminars after attending non-alcohol related events the previous evening. Furthermore, no ASB/alcohol-related incidents have been reported.

RA alcohol campaigns: RA's have direct access to students, so getting them involved with alcohol awareness campaigns is a great way to increase student engagement. At Keele University the RA's have implemented an annual alcohol awareness postcard campaign which runs alongside Alcohol Awareness Week. The postcards include the AUDIT-C (a brief screening tool for excessive consumption), units and calories in popular drinks, tips to reduce drinking and where students can access support on and off campus. RA's went round each kitchen distributing the postcards and chatting with students about alcohol-related harm.



Challenges you may face

- Academic/SU/student services staff may struggle to find the time to dedicate to Alcohol Impact due to workloads
- Time commitments and work patterns of relevant stakeholders may make it difficult for them to be as involved e.g. if they work night shifts
- Lack of funding to support an additional role to help take forward work on Alcohol Impact, if voluntary support cannot be found
- Varying levels of engagement with Alcohol Impact as workload varies over the academic year
- Changeover of staff can mean that the prioritising of Alcohol Impact can vary according to individual staff members
- Conflicting relationship with the SU and fears about what Alcohol Impact is aiming to do e.g. stopping all students drinking
- Want the venue to seem like a fun and enjoyable place to be rather than telling students how to act
- RA's would require in-depth alcohol training to be able to support students on issues around alcohol
- RA's may not have the confidence to start a conversation with a peer about their alcohol use
- Students may not want to engage with peers about personal issues

What opportunities could the project create?

- Improved partnership between the students' union and the university as well as between professional and academic staff
- Clearer and more consistent messaging for students

- Evidence based input and insight, improved and higher quality campaigns
- Valuable input into the work being done within the Alcohol Impact steering group
- Emphasis on whole institution approach and helping to keep students safe across the whole campus
- Opportunities to publish research and get wider recognition for Alcohol Impact related work
- Volunteer placements, sometimes as part of students' academic work
- Direct access to students
- Peer support
- Increased engagement with campaigns