



Press Information

Date 20th October 2009



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Manchester Agency Takes Online Lead In National Alcohol Improvement Programme

This week (19-25 October 2009) marks Alcohol Awareness Week and a Manchester based agency is behind the national launch of a website specifically designed to encourage the UK public to assess their alcohol intake and learn of the issues and dangers of alcohol consumption.

www.boozetalk.co.uk has been developed by digital agency and public sector specialists, D2 for its client NHS Bolton, which operates in a town where one in four drinks more than the Department of Health recommended limits. The website contains information and tools including calculators, case studies, a drinks diary and forums to engage the public, change behaviours and ultimately to reduce levels of alcohol abuse and over-use.

An estimated 33,000 people die each year in the UK from alcohol-related illnesses and it is one of the fast-growing contributors to poor life expectancy. The North West region suffers from the highest rate of mortality attributable to alcohol in England (46 per 100,000 men and 20 women per 100,000). The average number of years of life lost because of alcohol attributed conditions in people the North West is 21 years for men and 16 years for women.

Graham Mallinson, Managing Director of D2 Digital by Design, comments,

“This is about using web based technology to empower ordinary people. It is the first online, peer support project in this area which allows people to say what they think, share ideas or just use the tools to help themselves. For the NHS it gives them another way to get closer to the people they need to reach, it helps them to listen and to have a conversation with people who otherwise wouldn’t engage with health services about their use of alcohol”

Phil Ramsell, Public Health Alcohol Specialist at NHS Bolton says,

“www.boozetalk.co.uk is a vital resource, not just for the public but also for the many professionals from social care, education, health and other public services who play a significant role in tackling problems caused by alcohol. D2 Digital’s experience in public sector and behaviour change through digital channels, has enabled us to create a website that we fully expect will be quickly adopted by other NHS Trusts across the country”

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Notes to Editors:

- The North West is one of the three highest regions for binge drinking in the UK (22% of men and 10% of women in the North West)
- The number of people claiming incapacity benefit due to alcoholism in the North West is three times higher than the East of England.
- For more statistics on alcohol in the North West go to the North West Public Health Observatory www.nwph.net/nwpho/publications/forms/disform.aspx?ID=168