

ShowCase

Pssst! Be Alcohol Aware

Topic: Alcohol

Organisation: Liverpool Primary Care Trust

Location: Liverpool (North West)

Dates: 2006 to ongoing

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Overview

In 2007, Liverpool PCT and its key partners launched an innovative social marketing campaign that aimed to encourage students to behave responsibly towards alcohol consumption.

Based on Social Norms Theory and the Social Learning Model, a 'Chill Out Cabin' was opened in the city centre on nights popular with students. Visitors were offered free mocktails and could take part in a range of entertainment. The cabin provided an alternative to alcohol – giving visitors time to relax and consider how much they had been drinking.

This was supported by health and safety messages sent by Bluetooth, messages projected onto buildings in high-density drinking areas and promotion of the night bus service.

Results:

- 3,000 visitors to the Chill Out Cabin, over 19 nights
- 84 per cent of visitors felt it had an impact on their own drinking behaviours
- 41 per cent of visitors said they drank less that evening following their visit to the cabin
- 70 per cent stated they were likely to look for other non-alcoholic options in the future
- Three months after the campaign, 60 per cent of cabin visitors felt that the cabin had some impact on their drinking behaviours

1. BEHAVIOUR

For targeted students to:

- Eat a substantial meal before drinking
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic ones
- Drink less
- Plan how to get home in advance
- Travel home in groups

2. CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

- Review of previous campaigns targeting 18- to 35-year-olds in Liverpool
- Focus groups with students aged 18 to 21 to explore attitudes and behaviours around alcohol and drinking
- Pretesting of all concepts with students (via focus groups)

3. THEORY

- **Social Norms Theory:** People's behaviour is strongly influenced by their perception of how other members of their social group behave and their level of desire for conformity with the group
- **Social Learning Theory:** People learn from one another, via observation, imitation and modelling

Chill Out Cabin offered a chance for students to watch their peers enjoying activities that did not involve alcohol and to try something new alongside peers

4. INSIGHT

- Students acknowledge the negative consequences of excessive drinking, but...
- Ignore these factors because of social norms and perceived benefits
- Beliefs that drinking is an integral part of university experience and binge drinking is the social norm during university years

5. EXCHANGE

Benefits of drinking alcohol:

- Social confidence
- Group bonding
- Sense of freedom

Pssst! provided realistic, attractive alternatives (e.g. relaxation, beauty treatments, mocktails) to excessive alcohol consumption, including tips on drinking safely

Benefits of sensible alcohol consumption:

- More relaxed evening, less of a hangover
- Less likelihood of suffering unattractive physical effects
- Greater likelihood of arriving home earlier and safer

6. COMPETITION

- **Other alcohol-related campaigns:** Pssst! umbrella brand formed to unify multiple, competing alcohol-misuse campaigns, to avoid duplication or confusion
- **University events encouraging drinking:** Campaign team worked with universities (including Student Union bars) and attended Freshers' Weeks to ensure university buy-in

7. SEGMENTATION

- **Age:** 18- to 35-year-olds, of whom 40 per cent are students
- **Geographical area:** Highest density of drinkers and most alcohol-related incidents

8. METHODS MIX

- Presence at Freshers' Week to promote Pssst! brand and highlight alternatives to binge drinking
- 'Chill Out Cabin' in city centre, offering mocktails, music, games, relaxation therapies and informal advice
- Alcohol 'wheels' showing alcohol units by type of drink
- Integrated communications campaign – Broadcast and print media advertising
- Partnership with night bus service to get students home safely