

Summary of Tobacco, Alcohol & Drug-related Harm

1. Tobacco, alcohol and drugs are leading causes of premature death, inequalities and wider harm locally, nationally and internationally. Taken together, the three risk factors have a significant impact on residents of all ages, on our health and care system, and the nature of Southampton as a place to work and live. All disproportionately affect people who live with trauma and/or chronic stress including poverty. Each substance compounds the effects of the others and make anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions worse.

Examples of the scale of the local impact

2. **Smoking** - Public Health England is clear that “*Smoking is the most important cause of preventable ill health and premature mortality in the UK*”. Smoking is a major risk factor for many diseases, such as lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease. It is also a risk factor for many other cancers, e.g. of the lip, mouth, throat, bladder, kidney, stomach, liver and cervix. Half of smokers die prematurely from smoking, typically 10 years earlier than non-smokers. Tobacco also drives need and/or demand in relation to social care, fire safety, litter and workforce productivity. An estimated 35,000 people in Southampton smoke.
3. **Alcohol** is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among 15-49 year olds in the UK, and the fifth biggest risk factor across all ages. Alcohol is a causal factor in more than 60 medical conditions, including cancers, high blood pressure, cirrhosis of the liver, and depression. It also contributes to obesity and wider social harm. Locally, an estimated:
 - i. 3,459 people are alcohol-dependent
 - ii. 36,000 people drink at higher risk levels of more than 14 units a week.
 - iii. 1,261 local children live with an alcohol-dependent adult.There are over 1,500 alcohol-related admissions to hospital a year in Southampton. There were 2,615 alcohol affected crimes in Southampton in 2019/20 and 70% were violent crimes.
4. **Drugs** - An estimated 1,200 local people use crack cocaine and/or illicit opiates, with half estimated to inject their drugs. An estimated 593 local children live with an opiate-dependent adult. There were 989 recorded drug offences (any drug) in Southampton in 2019/20, a 37.4% increase compared to the previous year, reflecting a considerable focus on drug crime in Southampton. The drug offence rate is over six times higher in our most deprived neighbourhoods compared to our least deprived neighbourhoods. 38 people died directly from drug use between 2018-2020, and this figure would have been substantially higher if not for the prevention measures already in place. There is also harm from the illicit use of prescription medications.
5. Each of the risk factors is a risk factor for increased harm from COVID-19. People who smoke are more likely to be seriously ill. Alcohol and illicit drugs impair our ability to make safer decisions. Most drug-related deaths involve compromised respiratory health.
6. More information about local need is available from [Southampton Data Observatory](#) and [Public Health Outcomes Framework - PHE](#).