



NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE



NIFC COMMUNITY AWARENESS UPDATE 9/22 (1 Dec 22)

(The Community Awareness Update provides general information to enable personnel to keep up-to-date with routine correspondence; it is not provided for mission-related items and does not replace the Emergency Messaging System.)

- **Cambridgeshire named as drink-driving capital of England and Wales.**
- **Action Fraud and the National Cyber Security Centre – Seasonal Reminder.**
- **Christmas and mental health.**
- **Stay safe when you're out celebrating this Christmas.**

CAMBRIDGESHIRE NAMED AS DRINK-DRIVING CAPITAL OF ENGLAND AND WALES

One-in-three drivers breathalysed by Cambridgeshire Police were found to be over the legal alcohol limit. The rate is the highest across England and Wales.

Cambridgeshire has been named the drink-driving capital of England and Wales. The title was given after data found the county had the highest percentage of positive breath alcohol tests in the country. The official data, from Gov.uk and analysed by the International Driving Association, found that 7,437 breath tests were carried out by motorists in Cambridgeshire; of these, 2,488 either returned a positive result or the driver refused to complete the test - the equivalent of 33.5% of those tested.

The legal alcohol limit in England and Wales for driving is 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood or 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath. However, there is no way to know how much you can drink and stay under the limit since it can depend on your weight, age, metabolism, the amount of food you've eaten and other factors.

If you're driving, it is recommended that you don't drink any alcohol at all, as alcohol can seriously alter your ability to judge speed or distance and slow your reaction, meaning you are more likely to be involved in a collision.

Alcohol and drug drivers put other people's lives at risk and your information could help prevent an accident from happening, and could even help save lives. They appreciate that if you're close to someone who gets behind the wheel regularly whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs, it can be difficult to come forward. It could be a work colleague, a neighbour, or even a family member or a friend. This can explain why some people are reluctant to go to the police, because of the fear of being identified.

Don't let drink or drug driving put someone you love in danger. If you suspect someone is drink or drug driving regularly, call the police, 100% anonymously. In an emergency, always call 999.

ACROSS THE UK

Across the UK, civil police constabularies are launching their annual drink and drug campaign, and the message remains the same to anyone tempted to get behind the wheel under the influence – you will get caught.

Officers will be taking part in the widespread crackdown to target those who choose to drink or take drugs and drive in a bid to keep our communities and roads safer over the next six weeks.

Traditionally held during the festive period, this year's operation has started two weeks early to coincide with the start of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, and will conclude on Mon 2 Jan 23.

Is it an emergency? Call 999

If it is not life threatening: Call 101 for the Civil Police; Call 111 for the NHS.

If you want to report a concern anonymously, you can report it via the Crimestoppers website or via their hotline on: 0800 555 111.

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Although officers carry out breath tests throughout the year, over the next six weeks, more people are expected to be out celebrating the festivities or watching the football in licensed premises, at home or visiting family and friends. With the increased risk to roads users getting behind the wheel under the influence of drink or drugs, additional patrols will be operating across the country along with proactive operations and roadside checks.

Activities will be held at different times, including early morning operations, when people may be driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs the previous night and may not realise that they are still over the limit and their driving impaired.

The main aim of the campaign is to educate road users on the consequences of driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs however, anyone found to be over the limit will face the full force of the law.

The aim is to reduce the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on our roads. The intention is not to stop people from having fun, but to try and ensure that everyone gets home safely, and no one receives that terrible knock on the door to tell them the devastating news that someone they love has been killed or seriously injured.

Drivers who cause a death while driving under the influence of drink or drugs face up to 14 years' imprisonment. If they're fortunate not to be involved in a collision, if caught, they risk up to six months in prison, an unlimited fine and a substantial driving ban.

To report suspected drink or drug driving in confidence, call the Drivewatch Hotline on 0800 174615 or dial 101. In an emergency, call 999.

ACTION FRAUD AND THE NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTRE – SEASONAL REMINDER

Everyone is under increasing financial pressure at the moment and shopping online can appear to offer big savings; however, it is important to remind personnel to think before you go start transferring your hard-earned money.

Action Fraud and the National Cyber Security Centre are urging everyone to protect their personal accounts, check before they buy, and use secure payment methods in order to stay ahead of the threat from criminals this shopping season. New data from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) shows shoppers lost over £15 million to cyber criminals during the festive period last year, with an average loss of £1,000 per person.

Take these steps to ensure you are more protected during the Christmas shopping period:

- Protect your accounts: set up 2-step verification and use three random words passwords to prevent cyber criminals from gaining access to your shopping, bank or email accounts.
 - Check before you buy: Research online retailers, particularly if you haven't bought from them before, to check they're legitimate. Read feedback from people or organisations that you trust, such as consumer websites.
 - Pay securely: Use a credit card when shopping online, if you have one. Most major credit card providers protect online purchases and are obliged to refund you in certain circumstances. Using a credit card (rather than a debit card) also means that if your payment details are stolen, your main bank account won't be directly affected. Also consider using a payment platform, such as PayPal, Google or Apple Pay. And whenever you pay, look for the closed padlock in the web address bar – it means your connection is secure.
- If you've received an email you're not sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) at report@phishing.gov.uk.
 - If you've received a suspicious text message, forward it to 7726 (free of charge).

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- If you think you've been a victim of fraud, contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud online at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.
- More information on the NCSC's Cyber Aware campaign and online shopping safety can be found on the NCSC website.

CHRISTMAS AND MENTAL HEALTH

For some people, Christmas and the New Year period can be a mentally challenging. Perhaps a neighbour, family friend or even one of your own relatives will struggle. Based on articles provided by Mind, some tips on how to cope and suggestions for supporting someone else.

Tips for coping during Christmas:

If you find Christmas a difficult time of year, some tips to help you cope:

- Be gentle, generous and patient with yourself.
- Plan ahead.
- Manage relationships.
- Look after yourself.
- Talking to other people.
- Get support.

Be gentle, generous and patient with yourself:

- It's ok to prioritise what's best for you, even if others don't seem to understand.
- Think about what you need and how you might be able to get it.
- Consider talking to someone you trust about what you need to cope.

Plan ahead:

Think about what might be difficult about Christmas for you, and if there's anything that might help you cope. It might be useful to write this down. For example:

- If you sometimes experience flashbacks, panic attacks or dissociation, make a note of what helps during these moments, and keep it with you.
- If you're going to be somewhere unfamiliar for Christmas, think about what you need to help you cope. Are there things you can bring to make you feel more comfortable? Or is there somewhere you can go to take a break?
- Certain places may feel very uncomfortable for you, for example if they bring back difficult memories. Could you plan to spend less time in difficult places, or not go at all? Are there any reasonable excuses for you to stay away?
- Think about whether you really need to do things if you're not looking forward to them. Can you do them differently or for less time?
- Make a list of any services that you might need and their Christmas opening hours. Our page of useful contacts has some suggestions.
- If you're worried about feeling lonely or isolated this Christmas, think of some ways to help pass the time. For example, this might be doing something creative or spending time in nature. See our pages on relaxation for more ideas.
- If you are in hospital or a care home, see what activities might be running over Christmas that you might want to take part in.
- If you can't be with the people you want to see in person, you could arrange a phone or video call to catch up with them on the day. Or try to arrange a visit around Christmas, if there is a time when it's possible to meet.

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- Try to plan something nice to do after Christmas. Having something to look forward to next year could make a real difference.

Manage relationships:

- If other people's questions are difficult, you could think of some answers in advance so you're not caught off guard. For example, about your plans or how you're doing.
- Think about how to end difficult conversations. It's ok to tell someone you don't want to talk about something, or to change the subject. It might help to practise what you'll say.
- Suggest an activity or an easy way to move on, if you want to help end an unwanted conversation. For example, this could be playing a game, or taking a screen break if you're on a video call.
- If other people don't seem to understand how you're feeling, you could share this information with them. You could also think about writing down how you're feeling and sharing this with them, if conversations are difficult.

Look after yourself:

- Set a 'start' and 'finish' time for what you count as Christmas. Remind yourself that it won't last forever.
- Set your boundaries. Say no to things that aren't helpful for you.
- Let yourself experience your own feelings. Even if they don't match what's going on around you, they're still real and valid.
- Take time out. Do something to forget that it's Christmas or distract yourself. For example, you could watch a film or read a book that's set in the summer. Or you could try learning a new skill.
- Let yourself have the things you need. For example, if you need to take a break instead of doing an activity, or need a little bit of quiet time.
- If you can't avoid something difficult, plan something for yourself afterwards to help reduce the stress or distress you might feel.

Talking to other people:

- Let people know you're struggling. It can often feel like it's just you when it's not. See our page on opening up to others about your mental health for tips.
- It doesn't have to be people who are already in your life. You could join an online community to talk others who have similar experiences to yours. Mind's online community Side by Side is a safe place to connect with others who understand what you're going through.
- Tell people what they can stop, start or continue doing to help you. For example, you could let them know any activities you'd like to be involved in, and what they can do to support you during Christmas. Or you could tell them any questions or topics that you find hard to discuss, so they can avoid asking about them.
- You don't have to justify yourself to others. But you might feel pressured to, especially if someone asks a lot of questions. It could help to let them know that certain situations are difficult for you, and tell them what they can do to help. It might also help to tell them that you understand they may see things in a different way.
- You might not be able to make others understand. That's OK. It's not your responsibility to convince other people, or get their permission to look after yourself.

Get support:

If you're struggling this Christmas, you may want to find support for your mental health. There are a few ways that you can do this:

- **Call Samaritans on 116 123** (Freephone). They're always open.
- **Text SHOUT to 85258**. This is a free 24/7 crisis text service run by Shout.

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STAY SAFE WHEN YOU'RE OUT CELEBRATING THIS CHRISTMAS

Ahead of the start of the Christmas party season, please remember some golden rules when planning a trip or night out. If you are arranging an evening out this Christmas, make sure that you plan well in advance how you are getting home by using licensed taxis.

Wherever possible, pre-book a taxi and ask the driver for the name of the booking before you get in. And always keep the number of a reliable firm with you so you don't get caught out.

Here are a few golden rules when using taxis this Christmas:

- Plan how you're going to get home from your night out – arrange a lift or book a taxi in your name. And leave the taxi booking details with a friend
- Always keep the number of a reliable firm with you
- When you make a booking, ask if you can pay by card. It is worth agreeing the fare in advance, so you can make sure you have the correct cash to pay if necessary
- Avoid taxis that tout for business and are unlicensed
- When the taxi arrives, check it is the one you booked by asking for the name in which it was booked. If in doubt, don't get in
- Always sit behind the driver in the back seat
- If you feel uneasy, ask to be let out
- Stick with your friends and choose a meeting point for if you get separated
- Never accept a lift from a stranger.

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