Association of British Paediatric Nurses
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Alcohol Awareness Week 6th – 12th July 2026: Children's Nurses Call for Stronger Action to Protect Children and Young People from Alcohol Harm.

As the UK marks Alcohol Awareness Week 2026, the Association of British Paediatric Nurses (ABPN) is calling for greater awareness of the impact alcohol can have on children, young people and families, and for renewed commitment to early prevention, education and support services across all four UK nations.

This year's Alcohol Awareness Week, coordinated by Alcohol Change UK[1], focuses on the theme "Alcohol and Me", encouraging individuals to reflect on their relationship with alcohol and its wider effects on health and wellbeing.

Children's nurses work alongside babies, children, young people and families every day and see first-hand how alcohol-related harm can affect family life, physical health, emotional wellbeing, safeguarding outcomes and long-term life chances.

Children are often the hidden victims of alcohol-related harm. According to the National Association for Children of Alcoholics (Nacoa)[2], one in five children in the UK is affected by a parent's drinking.

The ABPN also highlights the importance of preventing prenatal alcohol exposure[3]. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a lifelong, preventable condition associated with alcohol exposure during pregnancy, and greater awareness and support for affected children and families remains essential.

The ABPN believes that prevention and early intervention must remain central to public health strategies, alongside accessible treatment and recovery services for those who need them.

The ABPN also recognises the important role children's nurses play in promoting healthy behaviours, identifying risks early and creating opportunities for meaningful conversations with young people and families.

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[1] https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week-1#:~:text=It's%20Alcohol%20Awareness%20Week!,theme%20of%20Alcohol%20and%20me.
[2] https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2025/helpline-contacted-30-times-a-day-about-parental-substance-misuse/
[3] fasd_awareness_day_9th_september_2025.pdf

During Alcohol Awareness Week, the ABPN asks:

- Parents and carers to reflect on the messages young people receive about alcohol.
- Health professionals to use every appropriate opportunity to discuss alcohol-related health and wellbeing.
- Policy makers to prioritise services that support children and families affected by alcohol harm.
- Schools, community organisations and healthcare providers to work collaboratively to promote prevention and resilience.

Alcohol Change UK[1] estimates that around 10 million people in the UK regularly drink at levels that could harm their health and wellbeing, underlining the importance of increasing awareness and encouraging healthier choices.

Nicola Fielding, Registered Children's Nurse, Nursing Lecturer and Association of British Paediatric Nurses member says:

"Alcohol-related harm remains a significant public health challenge across the UK, and children are too often overlooked in the conversation. We know that parental alcohol misuse is associated with poorer physical and mental health outcomes, increased safeguarding concerns and long-term inequalities for children and young people. Government data and children's charities continue to highlight the scale of the issue, with one in five children affected by a parent's drinking.

As healthcare professionals, educators and advocates, we have a responsibility to promote prevention, support early intervention and ensure that children and families can access timely, compassionate and evidence-based support. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable and nurturing environment, and reducing alcohol-related harm must remain a priority for all those involved in health, education and social care."

Notes for editors

- The term *child* refers to infants, children, young people and young adults up to 25 years of age.
- For the purposes of this press release, *young people* includes adolescents and young adults aged approximately **11–25 years**.
- The ABPN recognises the vital role of primary care, community services, school nursing, CAMHS, adult mental health services and Emergency Departments in supporting children, young people and families.

- The Association of British Paediatric Nurses is the oldest children's nursing association in the world, established in 1938, with members spanning clinical practice, education, leadership and research.

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