



Guidelines for Patron Welfare at Large Events

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At the time of printing, the legislation in this Guide is current. As changes to legislation and regulations can occur at any time, please check the current obligations with the relevant statutory organisation or authority.

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Hato Hone
St John

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Introduction

This guide has been developed to help event organisers take a proactive, prevention-first approach and deliver safe events for patrons, from a whole-of-event perspective, to complement the emergency services provided by healthcare professionals. Event organisers can draw on its recommendations during their operational risk management planning for the event.

Event organisers are encouraged to approach wellbeing and welfare with an end-to-end model. This means responsibility for the wellbeing and care of patrons begins at the purchase of tickets or registration to the event and ends once the patrons are safely on their journey out at the end of the event, or even in some cases when they are in the care of a competent adult. Organisers can influence and guide perceptions, culture and the course of their event right from the outset, so they deliver an enjoyable and safe event for all involved (patrons, staff and support services).

Patron welfare discussed in this guideline is specific to the provision of support for alcohol and drug harm as well as some environmental harms that may occur within an event context.

This document is intended to provide guidance; it is not a definitive statement that applies to all circumstances. Professional advice should be obtained about the unique requirements for each event.

1. Patron communication

1a. Communication content

Event organisers should consider developing wellbeing and harm reduction messages that are tailored to their event and relate to their audience.

Messaging should be targeted to the event's patron demographic, and based on knowledge of the patrons' expectations of event culture and their substance use behaviours. Post-event evaluation of the messaging will help provide ideas for refreshing and updating messages and their delivery.

Key messages for patron welfare can include:

- You won't get into trouble for seeking help.
- Health services are here to help you.
- Know where you can go to chill out or ask for help.
- Stay cool and well hydrated.
- Take a break.
- Look after yourself and your mates.
- Stay with your mates.
- Know the signs and seek help early.
- Ask for help immediately if you or a mate experience:
 - agitation
 - vomiting
 - fast heart rate
 - faintness
 - breathlessness, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing
 - difficulty walking
 - severe muscle cramps, jaw clenching
 - collapse or unconsciousness.
- Have a plan to get home safely with your mates. Use event-specific discount codes with transport providers.
- Don't drive when tired or with drugs or alcohol in your system.

1b. Pre-event communication

The planning stage of an event is an important chance to communicate wellbeing and harm reduction messages to patrons while they are considering attending the event. This will help drive the expectations, perception and culture of the overall event.

Event organisers can deliver this messaging through:

- a ticket confirmation email, which should include conditions of entry
- the event or venue website
- social media platforms
- emails
- presale ticket promotions
- messages printed on the tickets, wristbands or other promotional material
- event or festival apps (where available)
- partner business communications.

1c. Communication during the event

There are many opportunities to deliver patron welfare messaging during events. However, some patrons may already be affected by alcohol or other drugs, so safety messages should be short, clear and repeated, and include information on services available and how to locate, identify and access them.

Stakeholders can be invited to collaborate on proactive, prevention-first wellbeing and harm reduction messages, and provide volunteers to educate and familiarise patrons with services (who to look out for) and encourage patrons to access the appropriate services.

Important safety information should be highly visible and can include:

On-site signage and announcements

- Printing harm reduction messages on wristbands and event merchandising.
- Placing signage at the event on billboards, posters, and variable message boards. Signage locations could be entrances and exits, fencing and high traffic points, and in toilet cubicles, as well as bars and food providers.
- Where available, using prominent infrastructure such as screens for harm reduction messages.
- Using the venue PA for pre-recorded messages for entry and exit.
- Promoting services like Text Assistance or 'Ask for Angela', to create multiple communication channels.
- Adding harm reduction messaging on staff uniforms.

On-stage announcements

- Arranging for performing artists to deliver harm reduction messages during their sets.
- Having MCs make harm reduction announcements between sets or breaks in activities such as during half time at games or entertainment. These can include encouragement of water and food consumption.

Online messaging

- Sending push notifications through the event app, where available.

2. Event site considerations

2a. Environmental considerations

Heat, shade, cooling measures and sun safety (where applicable)

High temperatures and humidity, and physical effort, such as dancing for long periods, can increase the risk of drug-related harm, including dehydration and heat exhaustion.

All events need to plan for extreme weather conditions, especially those during summer and/or the hottest part of the day.

Regardless of intake of alcohol or other drugs, exposure to heat is a danger that can result in health problems whether indoors or outdoors. Event organisers should consider strategies such as starting the event later in the day, reducing the length of the event, and/or scheduling the event in cooler months.

Shade and cooling measures appropriate to each site will help lower the risk of exposure to heat. Large events may result in long queues to gain entry. If queues at the entrance extend beyond the shade already available, structures or cooling measures should be provided, particularly for events that start around the hottest time of the day or take place in summer. Structures for other areas where people may queue for long periods of time, such as bars and toilets, are also advisable.

Use of existing shade should be factored into the design and layout of the site. The position of stages, merchandise tents and stalls should take advantage of any shade created over the course of the event. For daytime events where existing natural shade is low, event organisers should provide structures to create shade. Other cooling measures could include misting stations, industrial fans and air conditioning.

Water-resistant sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher should be available for patrons to use, in highly visible locations throughout the site. In addition, messaging such as 'Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap' will encourage patron responsibility for their personal sun safety.

Cold weather

Events held during extremely cold weather also require precautions and measures, such as providing appropriate heating, drying stations, and hot drinks and soup.

Indoor environments

For indoor events, venue considerations are set out in the Drugs in Bars Guide (available at drugfoundation.org.nz) including:

- Ensure staff are frequently visible throughout the premises including in bathrooms. Frequent glass collections can achieve this.
- Maintain high standards of service and cleanliness. A commitment to high standards of service will highlight that you are unlikely to tolerate illegal activity.
- CCTV cameras can be a surrogate for staff visibility in secluded areas. But to head-off problems they must be easily and frequently monitored by staff.

3. Food and water provision

3a. Water

Dehydration and heat exhaustion may contribute to medical issues, and can worsen drug and alcohol-related harms.

A condition on the alcohol licence will be that drinking water must be readily available and free of charge to patrons at or near the point of service at all times alcohol is sold or supplied, as required by the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012.

For single-day events, organisers should provide at least 2 litres of free drinking water per person.

For overnight or multi-day camping events, suggested amounts are 20 litres of water per person, per day, of which 4 litres should be specifically water for drinking.

Demand for water may vary depending on the weather and other environmental conditions.

Organisers should use their experience and seek expert advice if needed.

Events should provide a minimum of one water outlet per 500 people. A water outlet is an access point to a drinkable water source, which is provided independent of bars. Patrons should not need to queue for access to water outlets. These should be clearly visible from a distance (eg, have a high banner/flag to mark the locations). There may be multiple water outlets per water source, for example a water fountain with multiple free-flow taps and/or bubblers. Some of the water outlets should be separate from bars and other alcohol areas, especially for all-age events.

Event organisers are encouraged to provide free water at entry and exit points, and in any situation where additional heat may occur (such as among stage crowds). Smaller containers of water may be more appealing to patrons. For events where patrons tend not to move around the venue, roving water dispatchers can move through the crowds and queues, handing out water bottles, refilling bottles via water backpacks, or using misting wands.

3b. Food

Food should be available for the full duration of the event, as is required by the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act at all times alcohol is available for sale or consumption. Event organisers are encouraged to consider pricing food and non-alcoholic beverages to make them accessible to patrons.

Any business offering food for sale (regardless of setting) must comply with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (Food Standards Australia New Zealand) and the Food Act 2014. For more information go to [mpi.govt.nz/food-business](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business)

4. Peer-based patron wellbeing and welfare support

Peer-based patron welfare support can make an important contribution to keeping people safe at events through the delivery of patron welfare support strategies on-site. Patrons perceive these services as credible, friendly and helpful. This enables the supporters to engage appropriately with patrons, deliver information on harm reduction, identify patrons in need of help, and promote the care and support services that are available. They can also help to ensure that patrons in need of medical care receive attention sooner.

When should event organisers collaborate with peer-based patron welfare?

Event organisers should engage the peer-based service early in their pre-event planning. They should consider their patron demographic when they are selecting a suitable service and communicating their event's requirements to the service. This will help the peer-based service to provide strategies that are relevant to patrons and to tailor the response to each risk identified.

4a. Types of support

Roaming

A peer-based service team member may roam around the event, preferably in pairs for safety, to:

- raise awareness of the presence of the service
- identify patrons that may need care and support or referral to medical services
- deliver drug and alcohol peer education where appropriate.

Drug and alcohol peer support

Peer-based team members should:

- engage with patrons and check on patrons that appear to need help or support
- provide basic supplies, such as bottled water, electrolyte drinks, sunscreen and earplugs
- help patrons resolve problems such as locating lost friends or making a plan to get home safely.

Drug and alcohol education

Peer-based education may include:

- looking for opportunities to start a conversation or build on what patrons are already asking or talking about
- listening to patrons' thoughts and concerns and supporting them to make safer choices about their alcohol and drug use
- providing information on support or treatment services
- delivering drug and alcohol brief interventions.

4b. Chill-out zones

Where a patron is experiencing concern or symptoms of alcohol or drug harm, peer-based services may provide a level of support and care. This may take place within the service's supervised care space (where available) but can occur wherever it is feasible and acceptable to the patron.

The peer-based patron welfare support services may include a supervised care space, a 'chill-out zone', to provide a safe and quiet area where patrons can seek relief or recover under supervision.

Enhanced support and care (through chill-out zones) is individualised and proportionate to the risk of harm and should involve:

- a calm, reassuring and safe environment to help the person manage any distress or unpleasant effects they are experiencing
- regular monitoring of the patron's condition by peers and medical staff to prevent quick escalation
- referral to medical and management services as required. See assessment referral flowchart page 11.

Chill-out zones may help meet the needs of patrons who are assessed as not needing medical attention, but who still may benefit from support and monitoring. This includes those who are mildly intoxicated or need a break from the event conditions; however, any patron who is found to be highly intoxicated on any substance, or incoherent, will be directly reported to the medical staff on-site.

The space should be set up to allow distressed patrons to receive private intervention, and there should be a more public space for others to access harm-reduction information, peer connection and support. See page 10 for infrastructure requirements for chill-out zones.

A team leader should always be present at each chill-out zone to supervise peer educators. A system for data collection is required to collect information on numbers and timing of presentations, occasions of service and types of care provided to patrons.

Sample data collection form

1	Time in:	Name	M/F	Age:
Alcohol/drugs/other:			Brought to zone by:	
Time out:			Cared for by:	
		Duty of care transferred to:		
2	Time in:	Name	M/F	Age:
Alcohol/drugs/other:			Brought to zone by:	
Time out:			Cared for by:	
		Duty of care transferred to:		
3	Time in:	Name	M/F	Age:
Alcohol/drugs/other:			Brought to zone by:	
Time out:			Cared for by:	
		Duty of care transferred to:		

This information should be provided to the on-site medical team if a patron is transferred to the on-site medical service. If the information is not required for any further treatment of the patron, it should be safely disposed of, in line with the Privacy Act 2020.

The level of risk of an event will inform the size and number of chill-out zones required. The central chill-out zone should be located close to the on-site medical service, to make it easy to transfer patients between the services if necessary.

Event organisers should consider locating an additional chill-out zone outside or next to the event entrance/exit. This provides support for patrons as they arrive at or depart from the event, including those who may be refused entry, patrons ejected during the event, and those needing support at the end of the event.

A chill-out zone located outside or next to the event entrance/exit may be particularly important for events that have patrons aged under 18 years. This is to ensure that if a minor is removed from a venue, appropriate and safe care is provided for them until a guardian can take over the duty of care.

To encourage patrons to use supervised chill-out zones, the zones should be relaxed and approachable, and:

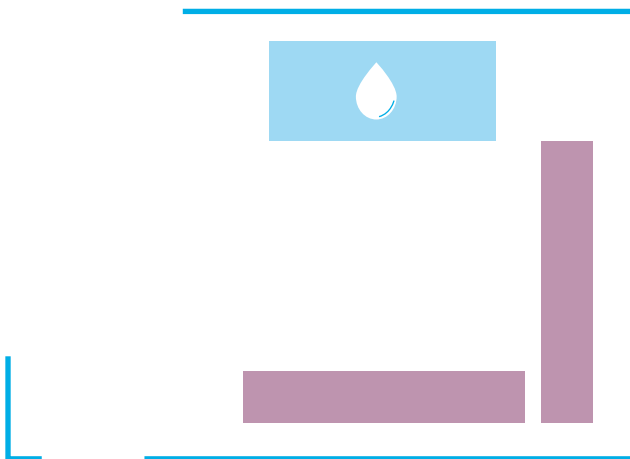
- have an entrance that is clearly separate from the entrance to medical services
- not be attended (either inside the service or close to the entrance) by Police except on the request of the peer-based harm reduction service staff or where Police are otherwise required
- not have access to alcohol or allow alcohol to be consumed there.






Infastructure

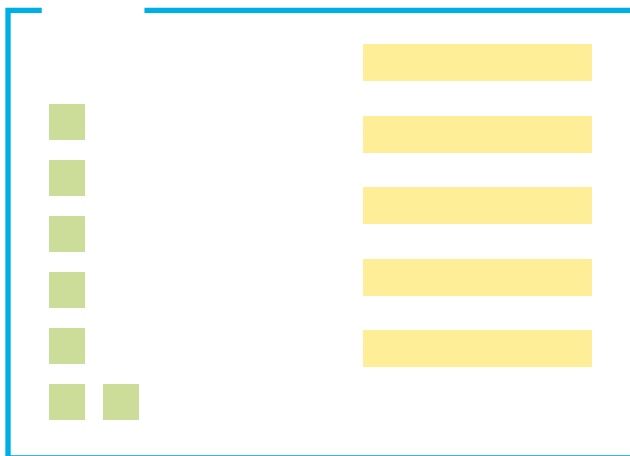
Three levels of chill-out zones can be provided, reflecting the level of treatment needed. Event managers are encouraged to collaborate with peer support services to determine which levels of response are required for each event.

Suggested chill-out zone layout

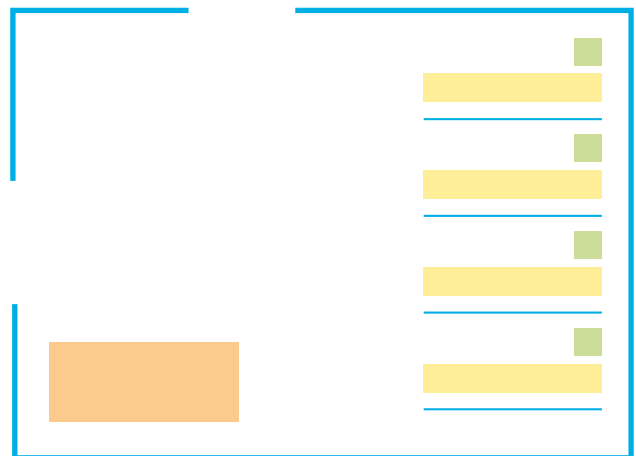
Level 1 – Initial chill-out zone for low-risk patrons – with water and rest area



-  **Seating**
-  **Chairs**
-  **Stretchers**
-  **Medical storage**
-  **Privacy dividers**



Level 2 – Medium risk response area (rest and recover) – medical triage officer to be present

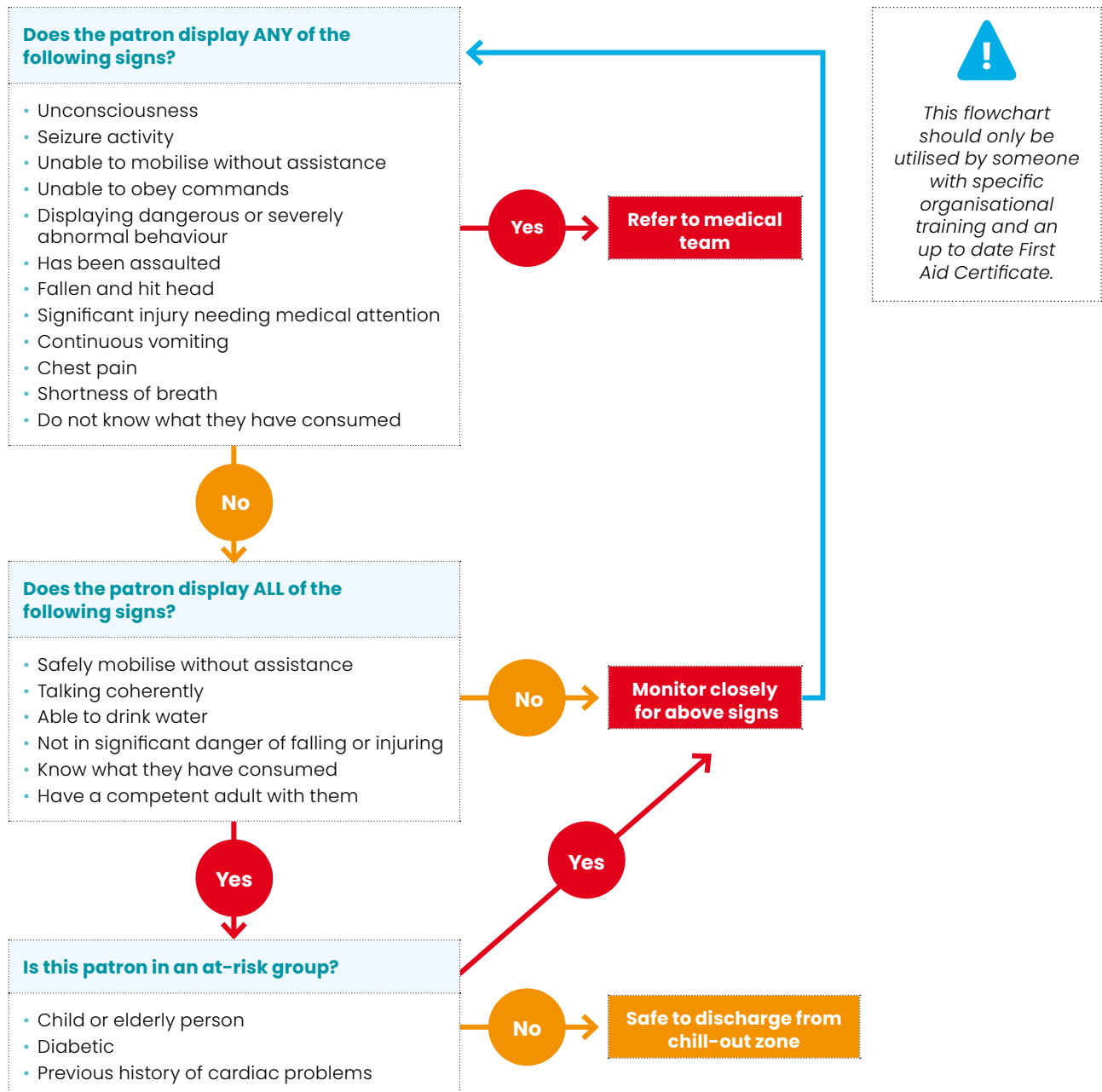


Level 3 – Medical provision area for high-risk patrons, if co-located at the medical sector

Assessment of patrons and transfer to and from the medical service

Peer-based networks must have clear criteria for determining whether to transfer patrons to the medical service. Event organisers can facilitate prompt and appropriate transfer to medical intervention by supporting the development of relationships between the peer-based service, the private on-site medical provider, ambulance staff, and security staff – through engagement and briefings with all parties before and during events. A post-event debrief can identify opportunities for improvement.

Assessment referral flowchart



5. Peer-based support training

Peer-based support services need to be managed and resourced by event managers. Training for staff and/or volunteers should focus primarily on ways to provide the services outlined in section 4b, and also cover duty of care, referral services and culture creation described in sections 5b and 5c below. Ultimately, the event manager and their staff are still responsible for the outcomes and health of each patron; responsibility cannot be transferred to the peer group, particularly if peers are volunteers.

5a. Who should be a 'peer'?

A 'peer' is someone a patron recognises as approachable and similar to them. An ideal peer:

- has a non-judgemental approach
- is a similar age to the patron, but ideally a few years older. They should be old enough to be experienced and seem credible, but young enough to still be seen as relatable – a sibling approach
- is approachable, trustworthy, knowledgeable and experienced
- has a first aid qualification (but this is not a requirement).
- has completed a Ministry of Justice Police Check.

Peers do not need to have personal experience of drug or alcohol use to deliver peer-based patron welfare support.

Peer-based team members may be paid or volunteer staff and must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol themselves at any time during their shift.

To ensure there is no conflict between the delivery of patron welfare support and other responsibilities, peer-based team members should have no other role at the event while on duty (such as being part of a medical or first aid team, bar staff, or security).

It is important that event organisers have in place a vulnerable person's policy.

5b. Duty of care

Duty of care is "A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety or well-being of others" (Oxford English Dictionary).

The duty of care of a peer is to act within their knowledge, skills and training to care for a person. Duty of care passes from a peer when care is transferred to a qualified professional or back to a patron's family or guardian.

A peer's duty of care means:

- engaging with attendees throughout the event site
- delivering information on drug and alcohol harms and harm reduction
- identifying patrons in need of assistance
- promoting access to appropriate care and support, such as chill-out zones, medical support and other services
- hosting chill-out zones for patrons.

5c. Culture creation

Peer-based support services can use the following suggestions in training their staff or volunteers in culture creation.

Peers are encouraged to:

- create atmosphere – engaging in the atmosphere with patrons empowers peers to control and improve it
- include all patrons – peers have the ability to make a patron feel like they belong and are not discriminated against because of their choices. Everyone is worthy of your time
- provide excellent service, and try to help in every situation
- create a supportive team environment
- refer patrons to appropriate care – medical professionals should always be available to assist.

Peers are encouraged to avoid:

- leaving patrons under their care alone (unless it is a critical situation)
- imposing on patrons – the best first impressions are short. Leave people wanting you to stay, not wishing you would give them space. Read the moment and don't intrude
- accepting drinks or food from patrons
- speaking negatively about or to individuals
- speaking to media on behalf of the event.

6. Provision of medical services

The medical services provider should be compliant with the New Zealand Ambulance Standard S8156:2019 (which includes a specific section on requirements when delivering medical services at mass gatherings).

The Standard sets appropriate standards of service covering how ambulance and paramedical services are organised and provided. It provides a means of assessing the extent to which ambulance and paramedical services are worthy of patients' confidence and trust, through the demonstration of clinical safety, reliability, efficiencies, and effectiveness.

The term 'Paramedic' has historically been utilised by a wide range of providers without any guarantee of clinical qualification, experience, or skills. In 2020 the term paramedic was formally recognised and regulated under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, the transition to paramedic registration is due to be completed in 2021.

Health Promotion, Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora

Email: enquiries@hpa.org.nz

For help contact the Alcohol Drug Helpline
on **0800 787 797**

To order resources visit resources.alcohol.org.nz