

# Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2023-24

## Alcohol consumption estimates for Kent

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Produced by

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## 1.1 Introduction

This report summarises data on alcohol consumption published by NHS England in November 2025 as part of the 2023-24 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) [1]. The APMS is England's national mental health survey series that, since the 1990s, measures the prevalence of both treated and untreated psychiatric disorders in adults (aged 16+) and tracks changes in mental health and service use over time.

The following analysis applies prevalence estimates for England, as published in the APMS, to the most recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimates for Kent. Where available, upper and lower bounds are presented to reflect published uncertainty in the underlying data due to survey sample sizes.

This publication from the APMS describes the prevalence of hazardous, harmful and dependent patterns of drinking in the general population. As in 2014, all participants in 2023/4 completed the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT [2]) questionnaire in the self-completion part of the interview.

AUDIT is a widely used screening tool developed by the World Health Organization to identify risky or harmful drinking. It consists of ten questions covering alcohol consumption, drinking behaviours, and alcohol-related problems. Scores **0–7** indicate **no or low risk**, **8–15** suggest **hazardous drinking**, **16–19** indicate **harmful drinking**, and a score of **20 or more** points to **probable alcohol dependence**, where more detailed clinical assessment is usually recommended. This report focusses on those scoring **8 or more**, indicating a **probable need of brief alcohol intervention**, and **16 or more** which may warrant an **'extended brief intervention'** or possible **referral to specialist treatment**.

## 1.2 Key Findings

- It is estimated that **between 9,500 and 16,800** adults in Kent may have **alcohol dependence**, likely needing specialist treatment.
- Between **23,600 and 31,500** drink at **harmful levels or above**, likely needing extended alcohol intervention.
- A further **200,000 – 220,000** drink at **hazardous levels or above**, and may benefit from a brief alcohol intervention in primary care.
- Over time there has been an overall **reduction in consumption**, however this reduction is largely seen in younger people, particularly those **aged 16-24**.
- Some older adults aged **65 or over** have reported **higher levels of consumption** compared to previous survey years.
- **Men** continue to consume at hazardous or harmful levels **twice as frequently as women**, but the rates of consumption in men are reducing quicker than women.

- By ethnicity, **White British** people reported consuming more than other ethnic groups.
- By deprivation, those in the **least deprived** areas reported consuming more at hazardous and harmful levels.
- Those who are unemployed, economically inactive or have problem debt reported drinking at higher levels.
- Based on survey respondents, an estimated **60,000** adults in Kent have **received support or treatment** in Kent, **50,000** think they have had **alcohol dependence in the past**, and **16,000** have had a previous **professional diagnosis** of dependence.
- **43.3%** of those scoring **20 or more** reported ever having received treatment or support for drinking.

### 1.3 Prevalence and estimated numbers of AUDIT scores of 8+ and 16+

#### 1.3.1 Prevalence and estimates by AUDIT score and sex

Table 1 below shows estimated national prevalence and estimates for Kent. For the 2023/24 APMS, 82% of adults reported being non-drinkers or drinking at low risk levels. 15.3% reported drinking at ‘hazardous’ levels, which would equate to between 185,000 and 220,000 adults in Kent. This cohort would typically benefit from a brief alcohol intervention. 1.8% reported drinking at ‘harmful’ levels, which would equate to between 23,600 and 31,500 adults in Kent. This cohort is likely to require a brief intervention or extended brief intervention, and possible referral for further treatment. 0.9% (between 12,500 and 16,800 adults) reported drinking at ‘probable dependence’ levels, and would likely benefit from specialist treatment.

Table 1 – Prevalence of adults aged 16+ scoring by risk category from the AUDIT questionnaire and estimates for Kent, APMS 2023/24

Kent estimates 2023-24 - age 16+	England prevalence	Kent estimate	Kent lower estimate	Kent upper estimate
Non-drinkers	23.6	312,198	290,884	334,568
Low risk drinking (AUDIT score 1-7)	58.4	774,106	751,128	796,812
Hazardous drinking (AUDIT score 8-15)	15.3	202,475	186,045	220,075
Harmful drinking (AUDIT score 16-19)	1.8	23,618	17,701	31,465
Probable dependence (AUDIT score 20+)	0.9	12,574	9,412	16,785

Table 2 below shows the prevalence and estimates for Kent by sex. Men reported drinking at higher levels than women both at hazardous (8+) levels, and at harmful / dependence levels (16+). Between 144,000 and 172,000 men are thought to drink at harmful levels in Kent, double the estimated 71,000 to 91,000 women. Between 18,600 and 32,000 males are estimated to drink at harmful / dependence levels, also around double the estimated 8,500 to 16,500 women.

Estimates in this report have been calculated from national results, but overall figures for region are also published. The South East showed a similar rate of hazardous consumption in adults (19%), but a lower rate of harmful / dependent consumption (1.5%) than the national rates for both males and females.

Table 2 – Prevalence of adults aged 16+ scoring 8 or more or 16 or more on the AUDIT questionnaire by sex for England and South East, with estimates for Kent, APMS 2023/24

<b>Kent estimates 2023-24 - age 16+</b>	<b>England prevalence</b>	<b>South East prevalence</b>	<b>Kent estimate</b>	<b>Kent lower estimate</b>	<b>Kent upper estimate</b>
Men - 8 or more	24.8%	26.4%	157,591	143,960	172,058
Women - 8 or more	11.7%	11.5%	80,369	71,132	90,674
Adults - 8 or more	18.0%	19.0%	238,627	220,969	257,452
Men - 16 or more	3.8%	1.8%	24,436	18,621	31,980
Women - 16 or more	1.7%	1.1%	11,800	8,449	16,451
Adults - 16 or more	2.7%	1.5%	36,185	29,337	44,594

Table 3 below shows the trend in self-reported drinking levels from the 4 APMS surveys conducted since the year 2000. In general, there has been a year-on-year reduction in alcohol consumption reported at both hazardous (8+) and harmful or dependence levels (16+). Men who drink at hazardous levels have shown the greatest, and a steady, decline since the year 2000, with an overall 30.4% reduction (or 11.2 percentage points). Rates for women have also fallen, but at a lower rate of 18.9%.

Table 3 – Prevalence of adults aged 16-74 scoring 8 or more or 16 or more on the AUDIT questionnaire by sex and survey year, with estimates for Kent, APMS 2000, 2007, 2014 and 2023/24

<b>APMS Survey Year; sex, ages 16 - 74</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2023/4</b>	<b>% Change 2000 - 2023/24</b>	<b>% Change 2014 - 2023/24</b>
Men - AUDIT score 8 or	36.8%	32.4%	27.9%	25.6%	-30.4%	-8.4%

APMS Survey Year; sex, ages 16 - 74	2000	2007	2014	2023/4	% Change 2000 - 2023/24	% Change 2014 - 2023/24
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Women - AUDIT score 8 or more	15.5%	14.8%	14.7%	12.6%	-18.9%	-14.3%
Adults - AUDIT score 8 or more	26.1%	23.5%	21.3%	18.9%	-27.6%	-11.0%
Men - AUDIT score 16 or more	5.4%	5.5%	4.7%	4.0%	-25.8%	-14.6%
Women - AUDIT score 16 or more	1.4%	2.2%	2.1%	1.9%	30.8%	-8.0%
Adults - AUDIT score 16 or more	3.4%	3.8%	3.4%	2.9%	-14.6%	-13.2%

### 1.3.2 Prevalence and estimates by AUDIT score and age

The table below show rates of hazardous consumption (8+ AUDIT score) by age band for the 2014 and 2023/24 survey years. Overall, in 2023/24 consumption rates are similar between the ages of 16 and 64, before falling in older age groups. The changes between the 2014 APMS survey show a sharp decline in consumption in the younger age groups, particularly in 16 – 24-year-olds, and a relatively large increase in consumption in the 65-74 and 75+ age groups. This clearly indicates a shift in drinking patterns, and possibly indicates habitual drinking that stays similar as an individual ages.

Table 4 – Prevalence of hazardous consumption and estimates for Kent by age band, 2014 and 2023/24 APMS surveys.

Age band	2014	2023/4	Kent estimate 2023/24	Kent lower estimate	Kent upper estimate
16-24 - AUDIT score 8 or more	28.9%	18.1%	27,656	19,986	37,440
25-34 - AUDIT score 8 or more	23.5%	20.6%	40,426	33,263	48,671
35-44 - AUDIT score 8 or more	20.9%	17.0%	37,234	31,192	44,172
45-54 - AUDIT score 8 or more	19.1%	20.2%	41,637	35,284	48,807
55-64 - AUDIT score 8 or more	21.5%	21.0%	45,314	39,445	51,799
65-74 - AUDIT score 8 or more	12.0%	15.6%	25,468	21,543	29,957
75+ - AUDIT score 8 or more	4.7%	10.2%	17,572	13,938	22,023

Table 5 below shows rates of harmful or dependent consumption (16+ AUDIT score) by age band for the 2014 and 2023/24 survey years. For 2023/24, ages 25 to 54 showed the highest rates of consumption at this level. Comparing with 2014, a similar pattern can be seen as the hazardous consumption in that rates in young people aged 16 – 24 have reduced significantly, and increased significantly in ages 65 – 74 and 75+. To note confidence intervals are quite wide due to small numbers of survey respondents falling into these categories.

Table 5 – Prevalence of harmful or dependent consumption and estimates for Kent by age band, 2014 and 2023/24 APMS surveys.

Age band	2014	2023/4	Kent estimate 2023/24	Kent lower estimate	Kent upper estimate
16-24 - AUDIT score 16 or more	4.2%	2.0%	3,020	1,012	8,781
25-34 - AUDIT score 16 or more	4.4%	3.7%	7,283	4,410	11,911
35-44 - AUDIT score 16 or more	4.3%	3.7%	8,093	5,337	12,190
45-54 - AUDIT score 16 or more	2.8%	3.9%	8,049	5,406	11,909
55-64 - AUDIT score 16 or more	2.8%	2.3%	4,869	3,121	7,561
65-74 - AUDIT score 16 or more	1.1%	1.5%	2,457	1,582	3,805
75+ - AUDIT score 16 or more	0.3%	0.9%	1,624	611	4,275

### 1.3.3 Prevalence by ethnicity

Tables 6 and 7 below shows the estimated prevalence of consumption by ethnicity for England. White British adults reported the highest rates of consumption at both hazardous and harmful / dependent levels.

For hazardous consumption, rates were significantly lower than ‘White British’ in the other ethnic categories with the exception of ‘Mixed / multiple / other’.

Table 6 - Prevalence of hazardous consumption for England by ethnic group, 2023/24 APMS survey.

Ethnic group	2023/4 Prevalence	2023/24 Lower Confidence Interval	2023/24 Upper Confidence Interval
Adults Asian/ Asian British – AUDIT score 8 or more	4.3%	2.1%	8.4%

Ethnic group	2023/4 Prevalence	2023/24 Lower Confidence Interval	2023/24 Upper Confidence Interval
Adults Black/ Black British - AUDIT score 8 or more	5.8%	2.8%	11.9%
Adults Mixed/ multiple/ other - AUDIT score 8 or more	16.4%	9.3%	27.1%
Adults White British - AUDIT score 8 or more	21.3%	19.7%	23.1%
Adults White other - AUDIT score 8 or more	12.8%	8.8%	18.3%

For harmful / dependent consumption, confidence intervals were too wide for the smaller ethnic categories to determine significance due to low numbers of respondents, but it is still likely to be higher in White British.

Table 7 - Prevalence of harmful or dependent consumption for England by ethnic group, 2023/24 APMS survey.

Ethnic group	2023/4 Prevalence	2023/24 Lower Confidence Interval	2023/24 Upper Confidence Interval
Adults Asian/ Asian British - AUDIT score 16 or more	1.0%	0.3%	3.7%
Adults Black/ Black British - AUDIT score 16 or more	1.1%	0.3%	3.9%
Adults Mixed/ multiple/ other - AUDIT score 16 or more	0.9%	0.3%	3.2%
Adults White British - AUDIT score 16 or more	3.3%	2.6%	4.1%
Adults White other - AUDIT score 16 or more	1.7%	0.4%	6.9%

### 1.3.4 Prevalence by other categories

Table 8 below summarises other characteristics and categories of consumption published in the 2023/24 APMS for England.

Those who were unemployed or economically inactive reported lower levels of consumption at hazardous levels, but were more likely to drink at harmful or dependent levels. Those with problem debt reported consuming more.

Those living in the least deprived areas reported consuming more than those in the most deprived. Those with a limiting health condition reported similar levels of consumption to the general population, but those with a common mental health condition reported higher consumption.

Table 8 - Prevalence of harmful or dependent consumption for England by other categories and characteristics, 2023/24 APMS survey.

Category	AUDIT score 8 or more	AUDIT score 16 or more
<b>All adults</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
Employed (age 16-64)	21.5%	3.0%
Unemployed (age 16-64)	15.2%	4.9%
Economically inactive (age 16-64)	16.3%	5.4%
Has problem debt	20.3%	5.8%
Least deprived quintile	23.5%	3.4%
Most deprived quintile	17.7%	2.4%
Limiting physical health condition	18.4%	3.5%
Common mental health condition	20.7%	5.3%

Table 9 below shows the respondents opinion if they have ever had a dependence on alcohol, if they have received a professional diagnosis, or if they have ever received treatment or support. A significant number of respondents thought they have had alcohol dependence either recently or in the past, with an estimated 50,000 for Kent. An estimated 16,000 have ever had a professional diagnosis, and 60,000 have received help or support in the past.

Only a third (33.3%) of respondents scoring 16 or more said they have ever received treatment or support, which equates to 24,000 in Kent. This figure increases to 43.3% of those scoring 20 or more, giving an estimated 7,000 who have not received treatment.

Table 9 - Prevalence of harmful or dependent consumption for England by self-diagnosis or professional diagnosis of dependence and estimates for Kent, 2023/24 APMS survey.

Alcohol treatment	All adults	Audit score 16 or more	Kent estimate - adults	Kent estimate – Audit score 16+
Participant thinks they have had alcohol dependence	3.7%	36.1%	49,299	13,047
Professional ever diagnosed alcohol dependence	1.2%	14.9%	16,155	5,408
Professional diagnosed alcohol dependence and present in past 12 months	0.4%	12.6%	5,785	4,572
Ever received treatment or support	4.6%	33.3%	60,485	12,037

## 1.4 References

- [ “Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England, 1 2023/4 - Chapter 5: Alcohol: hazardous, harmful and dependent patterns of drinking,” November 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey/survey-of-mental-health-and-wellbeing-england-2023-24/alcohol-dependence>.
- [ “Alcohol use disorders identification test (AUDIT) - GOV.UK,” [Online]. Available: <https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=224b5317d76650b86b8db76699f162420fad326a901ad6de50f623a4069d75fJmltdHM9MTc3MjA2NDAwMA&p=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=297a5b86-250b-6080-0bc3-4f6f240d61f4&psq=AUDIT+test&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9hc3NldHMuchVibGlzaGluZy5zZXJ2aWNlLmdvdi51ay9nb>.