



— A STUDENT GUIDE TO —

# DRUGS & ALCOHOL

H A R M   R E D U C T I O N   A N D   S A F E T Y



WINCHESTER  
STUDENTS' UNION

# USEFUL CONTACTS



## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

**Life-threatening emergency** – Call 999 or go to A&E

**Urgent health issue** – Call NHS 111



## CONFIDENTIAL HELP & SUPPORT

**Alcoholics Anonymous** – 0800 9177 650 (Free helpline)

**We Are With You** – Free online chat for drug, alcohol & mental health support:

[www.wearewithyou.org.uk](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk)

**CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)** – 0800 58 58 58 (5pm–Midnight, daily)

**Samaritans** – 116 123 (24/7 listening support)

**Shout** – Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 for 24/7 text support



## DRUG & ALCOHOL INFO/ADVICE

**FRANK** – 0300 123 6600 | [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

**Catch 22** – Support for young people:  
0800 599 9591



## ON CAMPUS

**University Security / Site Stewards** – Report drug use/supply in halls: 01962 827 666

WELCOME TO

# UNIVERSITY

Based in the King Alfred Centre, Winchester Students' Union is run for students, by students. We are an independent organisation from the University itself, and we are dedicated to representing and supporting you as students.

The University of Winchester provides transformational education with our students at the heart of everything we do.

We aim to deliver an outstanding student experience which develops your skills and confidence, so you graduate ready to succeed. We are delighted to support the work of the Students' Union in creating this guide to help you stay safe and well during your time with us.

*University life is full of new experiences, and for some, this may include alcohol and drugs.*

This pocket guide offers support, harm reduction tips, safety advice, and resources from your Students' Union, University, and beyond. Whether you're curious, concerned, or supporting a friend, help is always available. Every student's journey is unique - there's no right way to experience university, and you're never alone.



# UNION SUPPORT

Winchester Students' Union Advice Centre is open to all Winchester students, offering free, impartial, and confidential advice. Independent from the university, we provide support in four key areas:

## ACADEMIC ADVICE

Assistance with academic misconduct, appeals, complaints, exceptional circumstances, and study support. We're here to help you navigate university policies and processes.

## WELLBEING

Support for mental health, drug and alcohol concerns, personal safety, and advice for those worried about friends. We're here for you when you need it most.

## HOUSING / MONEY

- Guidance on tenant rights, home security, and resolving housemate disputes as you settle into student life.
- Support on managing a budget, saving, bills, and additional support.

For more information or to get support, visit  
[winchesterstudents.co.uk/advice](https://winchesterstudents.co.uk/advice)  
and complete the Advice Enquiry Form.





# UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

The University's Student Support and Success department is made up of a number of different professional services, each trained to help and advise students on different areas. You can reach out to them for support for yourself, or to let them know if you're concerned about a friend. The departments consist of: Mental Wellbeing, Student Journey, Academic Success, Students and Money, Disability and Inclusion or International Student Support. The departments you're likely to speak to about drugs and alcohol are:

## MENTAL WELLBEING

Information, support and advice about mental health and wellbeing to students (and staff, in support of students) by a team of professionally trained staff.

## STUDENT JOURNEY

First port of call for students who are experiencing stress, worry and concern about issues in their personal and University life such as transition to University, family and friendship issues, threat of homelessness, estrangement, pregnancy, bullying and traumatic events.

### Not sure who to contact?

Please email your query to Student Services via, [StudentSupport@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:StudentSupport@winchester.ac.uk), or phone Student Support and Success on 01962 827 341.





# SIP SMART STAY SAFE



Your Students' Union is proud to offer the safest late-night venue in Winchester. We want you to enjoy yourself and stay safe while drinking.

Here's how:

## BEFORE YOU GO OUT

**Eat well** – A full, carb-heavy meal (pasta, bread, potatoes) helps absorb alcohol more slowly.

**Charge your phone** and plan how you'll get home.

**Carry essentials** – Keys, ID, and phone stored safely.

**Avoid cashpoints at night** – Withdraw money during the day.

**Keep your bag with you** – Never leave it unattended.

## WHILE DRINKING

**Pace yourself** – Start with low-strength drinks and alternate with water or soft drinks.

**Know your limits** – If you're new to drinking or haven't for a while, your tolerance may be lower.

**Avoid mixing drinks and never drink alone** – Stay with people you trust.

**Watch your mood** – If you're upset or angry, drinking may make things worse.

# SIP SMART STAY SAFE



## SPIKING AWARENESS

- Never leave your drink unattended or accept drinks from strangers.
- Spiking can be adding extra alcohol or drugs to a drink. It's illegal and dangerous.
- If you suspect a drink has been spiked, tell someone immediately and stay somewhere safe.
- Spiking with drugs like GHB/Rohypnol is rare but serious – symptoms come on fast (within 30 mins) and can last hours.
- You can get free drinks covers at all of our events, just ask one of our team for one.

## GETTING HOME SAFE



- Don't walk alone – Chat to someone on the phone if you must.
- Stick to well-lit areas and walk facing oncoming traffic.
- Carry a personal alarm – Free from the SU Offices (Level 3, King Alfred Centre).
- If followed, cross the street. Head for a busy place (petrol station, takeaway) and call the police.
- Use licensed taxis only:
  - Wintax: 01962 250250
  - Wessex Cars: 01962 277749
- Never get into unmarked taxis.
- If going home alone, agree with a friend to message each other once you're back safely.



# HARM REDUCTION



At Winchester Students' Union, we have a **zero-tolerance policy on drugs at any of our events or venues** – but your safety is our top priority. If you choose to use recreational drugs, here's how to reduce harm and stay safe.

## KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TAKING

- Be informed – Know the drug, its effects, and how it interacts with alcohol or medication.
- Use trusted sources like FRANK to check drug info.
- Be aware: Drug use can lead to disciplinary or legal action.

## PLAN AHEAD

- Plan what you'll take and stick to your dosage.
- Sort your way home in advance – Book a taxi or arrange a lift.
- Let someone know your plans in case of an emergency.

## START LOW, GO SLOW

- Test the strength – Start with a small dose and wait 1–2 hours before taking more.
- Everyone reacts differently – Don't assume your tolerance matches others.



# HARM REDUCTION



## Know Your Limits...

If you feel unwell or the fun stops, stop taking more.  
Don't give in to peer pressure – Know when to head home.  
Visit FRANK for tips on handling pressure around drug use.

### HAVE A SOBER BUDDY

- A trusted, sober friend can look out for warning signs and help if things go wrong.
- If there's no sober buddy, make sure you're with responsible friends who can respond if needed.

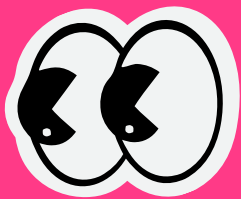
### AVOID MIXING

- Mixing drugs = higher overdose risk.
- Stick to one substance or use less of each.
- Be cautious if you're on prescription meds.
- Search [www.drugsand.me/tools/interactions](http://www.drugsand.me/tools/interactions) for more info.

### STAY HYDRATED, NOT FLOODED

- Eat well before taking drugs.
- Drink water in moderation – Especially with stimulants. Too much water can lead to hyponatremia, a dangerous drop in sodium levels.

# WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR...



## Support is here if you need it.

University life can bring new freedoms - Sometimes that means drinking or using drugs more than usual. Whether it's social pressure, stress, or independence, it's easy to slip into habits that might not be healthy.

We're not here to stop your fun, but it's worth checking in with yourself.

# ASK YOURSELF



Are you drinking more than 14 units of alcohol a week?  
(1 unit = 10ml pure alcohol)

☐

Is it hard to stop drinking or using drugs once you've started?

☐

Do your plans often revolve around alcohol or drugs?

☐

Have you had negative consequences but keep using?

☐

Would you rather buy alcohol or drugs than food?

☐

If this sounds familiar, talk to your GP.

Sources: NHS England, HSE, UKAT

**YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT THE STUDENTS' UNION ADVICE  
CENTRE OR THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUPPORT & SUCCESS  
TEAMS FOR CONFIDENTIAL HELP.**

*Worried about someone else? We're here to support - not punish. Your health and happiness matter.*

# REPORT & SUPPORT

At Winchester, everyone deserves to feel safe, respected, and included. If you've experienced or witnessed bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct - with or without alcohol or drugs - you can report it through the University's Report + Support platform. Reports can be made anonymously or with your details if you'd like follow-up support. You'll also find helpful info on policies and support services there.

Winchester Students' Union is committed to creating welcoming, inclusive spaces through our events and activities. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards hate crimes, harassment, bullying, and initiations (also called hazing or ragging). These behaviours can be harmful, dangerous, and are never acceptable.



## **Initiations may involve (but are not limited to):**

- Criminal acts
- Actions that damage the Uni's reputation
- Forced excessive drinking
- Humiliating or degrading behaviour

If you're pressured to take part in an initiation, report via the Union's Reporting platform or the University's Report + Support system.

Let's work together to keep our community safe and respectful. If you have questions about what initiation behaviour may be, speak to the SU Activities Team.



# EXPECTATIONS



We all have an idea of what life will be like at university, surrounded by new people, new hobbies, and newfound freedom. However, sometimes the expectation of university life can be daunting, especially with the social pressures to drink or use drugs.

During the 2024/25 SOS Student Drug and Alcohol Survey, 50% of students believed that students 'got drunk most of the time', and 13% believed students 'got drunk all of the time'.

In the same survey, when asked 'Before you started university, what percentage of university students did you think used drugs?', 17% of students responded with between 21-30%, 16% of students responded with between 31-40%, and 14% of students responded with between 41-50% of students.

15% of students believe that taking drugs can be part of university culture, but 91% of students disagreed, or strongly disagreed, with the statement 'I feel under pressure to take drugs at university'.





# REALITY



Reality is often different to our perceptions, for better or for worse. Whilst the majority of students surveyed agreed that drinking and getting drunk can be part of university culture, 74% of students disagreed with the statement 'My university friends expect me to drink regularly and get drunk' and 59% of students never felt that their friends expected them to drink alcohol.

When asked about the reality of how often students drink, only 31% of students responded with 'get drunk most of the time'. Instead, 53% of students responded with 'get drunk occasionally'.

When asked about the reality of drug use, 14% of students responded that 11-20% of students use drugs, 14% also responded that 21-30% of students use drugs, and another 14% responded that 31-40% of students use drugs. But 15% of students stated that they didn't know, which was the highest overall response.

# EXTERNAL SUPPORT



There are a range of external support services available to you if you need support with drug or alcohol use.

## INCLUSION HAMPSHIRE

A confidential, free and easy-to-access service to anyone living in Hampshire impacted by their own or someone else's use of alcohol and drugs. Inclusion Recovery Hampshire, believes that everyone can make positive changes and they are committed to help you do this by providing high quality, evidence-based services that meet your needs.

Find out more at:

<https://www.inclusionhants.org/>

## CATCH 22

County-wide specialist treatment service offering targeted and specialist support to young people. They offer a tailored package of support to young people under 25 including one to one and group work support, a 24-hour help line, pharmacological support and needle exchange.

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/>



## FRANK

FRANK is the best place to go for honest information about drugs. It offers useful information, including an A-Z of drugs and the effects they may have on you.

<https://www.talktofrank.com/>

## GP

Your GP can also offer in-depth support, referrals and treatment programmes for drug and alcohol misuse or addiction. If you're not registered with a local GP, the NHS website can help you find a GP surgery.

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp/>

## DRINK AWARE

Drink Aware has lots of tools and resources that can assist you to make better choices about drinking.

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/>

## ALCOHOL CHANGE

Take the free quiz to find out how healthy your drinking habits are:

[alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/interactive-tools/alcohol-quiz](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/interactive-tools/alcohol-quiz)

## TURNING POINT

Health & social care in many areas including substance use. Also trained to work with disabled or autistic people or any other long-term health conditions

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For more information, visit:  
[WWW.WINCHESTERSTUDENTS.CO.UK/ADVICE](http://WWW.WINCHESTERSTUDENTS.CO.UK/ADVICE)