Role for Pharmacotherapy in the Treatment Pathway for Increasing and Higher Risk Drinkers

**Indication of Increasing or Higher Risk Drinking**

- **Reassurance and no further action**
  - Yes: AUDIT-C Score ≤5?
    - No: Full AUDIT
    - Yes: Score 0-7
      - Lower Risk: Brief Advice (BA) & define Treatment Goal
    - Score 8-15
      - Increasing Risk: Brief Advice (BA) & define Treatment Goal
    - Score 16-19
      - Higher Risk: Follow-up > 2 weeks
    - Score 20+ Likely Moderate or Severe Dependence
      - Onward Referral

**Score 0-7 Lower Risk**

- Brief Advice (BA) & define Treatment Goal

**Score 8-15 Increasing Risk**

- Brief Advice (BA) & define Treatment Goal

**Score 16-19 Higher Risk**

- Follow-up > 2 weeks
  - Withdrawal Symptoms?
    - No: Treatment Goal Met?
      - Yes: Consider Nalmefene (as per local protocol and prescribing notes) with psychosocial support. Define Reduction Goal.
      - No: Follow-up 2-4 weeks:
        - Engaging with treatment
          - Yes: Continue treatment
          - No: SIGNPOSTING Stop Treatment & Exit
    - Yes: SIGNPOSTING Stop Treatment & Exit

**Score 20+ Likely Moderate or Severe Dependence**

- Onward Referral

**Follow-up > 2 weeks**

- Withdrawal Symptoms?
  - No: Treatment Goal Met?
    - Yes: Consider Nalmefene (as per local protocol and prescribing notes) with psychosocial support. Define Reduction Goal.
    - No: Follow-up 2-4 weeks:
      - Engaging with treatment
        - Yes: Continue treatment
        - No: SIGNPOSTING Stop Treatment & Exit
  - Yes: SIGNPOSTING Stop Treatment & Exit

**Onward Referral**

- SADQ 20+?
  - Yes: Assisted withdrawal / detoxification
  - No: Consider (as per local protocol and prescribing notes):
    - Thiamine hydrochloride
    - Chlordiazepoxide

**LETTERING**

- Stop Treatment & Exit

**Response well?**

- Yes: Treatment Goal Met?
  - Yes: Consider (as per local protocol and prescribing notes) with psychosocial intervention:
    - Acamprosate
    - Disulfiram
    - Naltrexone
  - No: Follow-up monthly for 6/12
    - Responding well?
      - Yes: Treatment Goal Met?
        - Yes: Consider (as per local protocol and prescribing notes) with psychosocial intervention:
          - Acamprosate
          - Disulfiram
          - Naltrexone
        - No: Follow-up monthly for 6/12
      - No: Follow-up monthly for 6/12
    - No: Follow-up monthly for 6/12

**Legend**

- Stage or Process
- Question / Decision
  - Yes
  - No
Definitions, Roles and Prescribing Notes

Definitions
- AUDIT C questions and scores
  [http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/BriefAdvice/?parent=4444&child=4898](http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/BriefAdvice/?parent=4444&child=4898)
- Full AUDIT questions and scores
  [http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/BriefAdvice/?parent=4444&child=4896](http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/BriefAdvice/?parent=4444&child=4896)
- SADQ questions and scores
- Brief Advice (BA) – FRAMES
- Psychosocial Support
  Advice regarding medication compliance and definition of alcohol reduction goal which can be delivered in any care setting
- Psychosocial Intervention
  Extended brief interventions or high intensity interventions depending on service specification and patient choice

Roles
Prescriber Role
- Provide support to the patient in terms of initial and repeat prescribing. Evaluate the need for continued pharmacotherapy on a regular (e.g. monthly) basis
- Advise the patient that they may experience some side effects – headache, insomnia, nausea and dizziness are most frequent – usually in the first day or two of treatment but these are mostly mild to moderate in intensity and usually of short duration
- Provide ongoing psychosocial support – this does not have to be intense but what you would normally do in terms of adherence to any therapy and also to encourage reduced drinking behaviour (e.g. similar approach to that used in primary care for mental health brief advice)?
- Monitor alcohol consumption in terms of units consumed - the patient should have agreed a reduced consumption goal after 2 or 3 months of treatment – and for you to track progress towards their objectives

Signposting
- This includes
  - Sign-posting to online resources (e.g. Soberistas, drink coach, change for life; include all websites)
  - Local support groups and well being centres (use of map of medicine)
  - Onward referral where appropriate (e.g. substance misuse services, mental health services etc.)?

Prescribing Notes
- Nalmefene
  [https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta325](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta325)
- Thiamine hydrochloride
- Chlordiazepoxide
- Acamprosate
- Disulfiram
- Naltrexone