

We are well aware that the economic situation in the north-east is having a wide ranging impact. Not only will it impact on those employed directly in the oil industry but its impact will ripple through many other areas. We have already seen a downturn in house sales with people struggling to sell their properties and would expect this to also impact on other areas of the economy as people struggle to retain control of their finances.

Any loss of income to a household will involve a degree of stress. For some this will be a catastrophic loss to others a need to tighten belts. Whatever the impact there is a need to maintain a sense of perspective and try to focus on priorities. Those affected need to concentrate on their own ability to cope with stress and seek help and advice as early as possible. Previous blogs have listed a range of practical sources of help.

Often in times of stress people seek instant relief from the pain by using alcohol. We see it portrayed in so many everyday situations as the cure for bad news, good news or feeling tired. It is portrayed as a means of reward, celebration or commiseration. No occasion seems to be complete without alcohol. We need to be aware that alcohol is no cure for feeling anxious, sad or stressed. Alcohol is a depressant drug and its use will only heighten these feelings and ultimately make them worse. If you are using alcohol in an effort to block out your problems you need to change this behaviour. Are you aware of the new sensible drinking guidance? Do you know that the [Chief Medical Officers for the UK](#) have advised that anyone over the age of 18 should be drinking no more than 14 units of alcohol each week? Visit www.drinkaware.co.uk for more information on the sensible drinking guidance. If you need to think about substituting your use of alcohol by doing something else the "Five Ways to Wellbeing" identifies a range of behaviours that can help and are listed below:

- **Connect** with the people around you. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.
- **Be active** by discovering a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.
- **Take notice** of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflect on your experiences and appreciate what matters to you.
- **Keep learning**. Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.
- **Give**. Do something nice for a friend or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

For more information on the Five Ways to Wellbeing please visit:

<http://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

If you find that these tips are not working for you or you would like help in addressing your alcohol use you can contact:

Alcohol & Drugs Action (ADA)

Telephone helpline open 7 days per week Tel 01224 594700

Text them on 07927 192706

Or visit the website at www.alcoholanddrugaction.org.uk

