

Useful contacts

Drinkline

Helpline for people worried about their own or someone else's drinking

T| 0800 917 8282 (Freephone)

W| www.patient.co.uk/support/drinkline

Alcoholics Anonymous

Helpline and support organisation for people concerned about their drinking

T| 0845 769 7555 (local rate phone number)

W| www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

Help and support for families and friends

T| 08080 10 10 11 (Freephone)

W| <http://www.sfad.org.uk/>

Useful reading

"A Fuller Life" - Report of the expert group on Alcohol Related Brain Damage, University of Stirling, 2004.

“Alcohol related brain damage can be prevented”

Local services

Borders Addictions service 01896 664430

Addaction Galashiels 01896 757843

Border Carers Centre 01896 752431

NHS 24 111

Action for Children 01896 750173

If you have any further queries,
you can contact

Alcohol Related Brain Damage Co-ordinator
Scottish Borders Council
Council Headquarters
Newtown St. Boswells
Melrose TD6 0SA

Telephone: 01835 824000

You can get this document on audio CD, in large print, and various other formats by contacting us at the address above. In addition, contact the address above for information on language translations, additional copies, or to arrange for an officer to meet with you to explain any areas of the publication that you would like clarified.

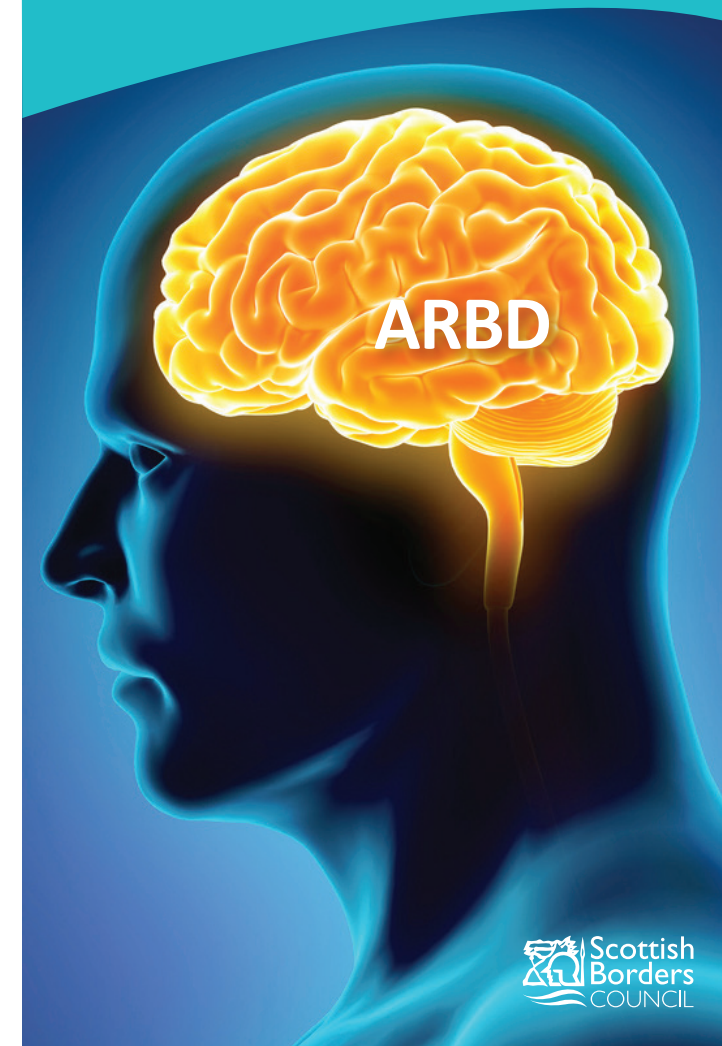
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Alcohol-related Brain Damage:

Information for friends, families and carers



What is Alcohol Related Brain Damage (ARBD)?

ARBD is the term used to describe the range of symptoms that can occur as a result of alcohol misuse.

Abuse from alcohol can have a direct affect on brain cells, resulting in poor judgement, difficulty making decisions and a lack of insight.

Nutrition problems often accompany excessive alcohol misuse and vitamin deficiencies may also contribute to brain cell damage.

What are the symptoms of ARBD?

The symptoms of ARBD may persist for a long time after an individual has stopped abusing alcohol.

ARBD can affect people in a number of different ways, including:

- Difficulty remembering recent events
- Fabricated, distorted or misinterpreted memories used to fill memory gaps, creating inaccurate accounts of recent or past events
- Difficulty processing new information
- Poor concentration
- Reduced spontaneity, motivation and initiative
- Indecision
- Reduced sensation in arms and legs
- Poor balance and co-ordination
- Wandering
- Problems sleeping and maintaining healthy sleep patterns



Can you recover from ARBD?

Although its symptoms are similar to dementia, ARBD is not a degenerative illness.

75% of people diagnosed with ARBD will make some form of recovery and 25% of this group will make a full recovery.

10 ways to help someone who has ARBD

1. To recover it is vital that they **abstain from alcohol completely** (do not stop drinking alcohol abruptly and seek medical advice on reducing at safe levels).
2. **Encourage them to eat a healthy and balanced diet.** They should talk to their doctor about Thiamine and other vitamins essential to the brain's recovery.

3. **Keep choices clear and simple** and give information in **short clear statements.**
4. **Encourage independence.** If you do need to offer assistance, try to do things with them rather than for them.
5. **Leave things in the same place** so the person can find them easily.
6. **Try to limit background noise,** such as the radio, TV or other people talking.
7. **Use notes, lists, diaries, weekly planners, photo galleries and checklists** to help your loved one remember.
8. **Support them to get involved** in the community and encourage them to attend support groups to meet others on the same journey.
9. **Be hopeful and positive about their recovery** and reassure them that they are doing well: it's not easy!
10. **Be patient and listen,** when things are difficult encourage them to talk to someone.

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