A background image showing a group of people sitting around a table in a meeting or workshop. One person in the foreground is holding a pen and looking at a document. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the hands and the pen.

## Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD): A Joint Public Health Campaign by NHS GM ICB and Bolton Council

Case Study

### Executive summary

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) is a range of conditions caused by alcohol exposure during pregnancy, leading to lifelong physical, behavioural, and cognitive impairments. This initiative emerged after the success of Sandy's Law, a Canadian legislation which highlights the risks of drinking during pregnancy. The legislation requires certain licensed premises to display signage highlighting the risks of prenatal alcohol exposure and its link to FASD.

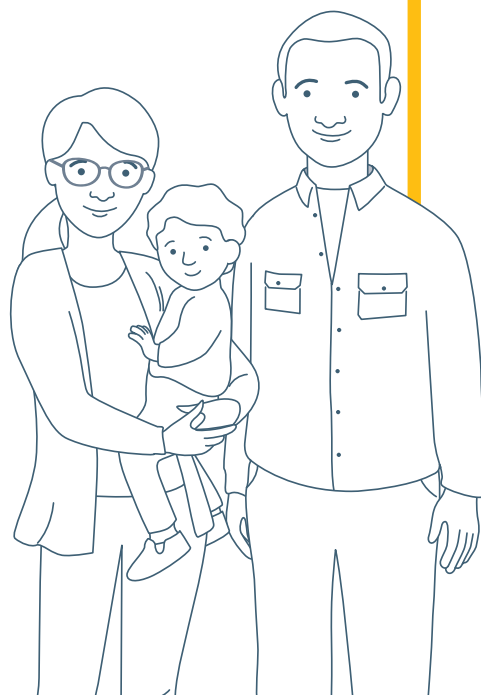
Inspired by the success of Sandy's Law in Canada, a pilot awareness campaign was developed in Greater Manchester and led by Greater Manchester NHS (NHS GM). Bolton Council agreed to trial the initiative locally as part of this pilot. The campaign aligned with the government's focus on prevention and Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) guidance, at a time when no national alcohol-free pregnancy campaign had been conducted or funded by the UK government.

## What did we do?

A joint public health awareness campaign was delivered by NHS GM and Bolton Council, with initial work led by the Bolton Public Health Team, with particular involvement from Donna McGarry-Bolton, Joseph Rooney and Yusuf Atcha.

The team engaged directly with licensed premises in Horwich to raise awareness of FASD. In December 2025, they attended a meeting of the Horwich Pub Watch group to introduce the campaign to local landlords and landladies, outline the public health rationale, and share campaign posters. The Bolton Public Health Team confirmed that they would return to the pubs in Horwich within the following weeks to discuss how the campaign was progressing.

Many pub owners expressed interest in supporting the initiative. Participating premises agreed to display campaign posters supplied by NHS GM, recognising the significant role that licensed premises can play in public health by raising awareness of the campaign and promoting responsible practices. A review was scheduled a few weeks after implementation to gather feedback on how the posters were received.



## How did we do it?

In the new year, the Bolton Public Health Team returned to the participating pubs in Horwich to carry out follow-up engagement. Prior to these visits, a structured but flexible set of questions were asked.

The questions were strategically kept simple and open-ended to encourage honest discussion and fruitful feedback. They explored motivations for involvement in the campaign, whether and where posters had been displayed, and any feedback received from staff or customers. Licensed premises were also asked about reactions to the imagery and wording used on the posters, whether they intended to continue displaying the materials, and their views on expanding the campaign across Greater Manchester.

Additional questions considered whether landlords had prior awareness of Sandy's Law, whether they felt the alcohol industry should contribute to the campaign, and whether any further information or support was needed. Space was also provided for any additional comments.

This approach allowed the team to gather consistent information while maintaining a conversational style suited to community-based engagement.

## What did we find?

After the initial work in Horwich, we wanted to ensure that if people saw the posters and wanted to know more, pub staff wouldn't be put in a position where they couldn't answer questions. Donna McGarry-Bolton sourced an FASD factsheet, which was made available to licensed premises to display alongside the posters. Many pubs chose to display both, giving staff and customers accessible information about FASD.

The campaign was then expanded across Bolton. Thanks to Donna's strong community engagement, she successfully engaged landlords, landlords, and customers, resulting in 28 licensed premises now displaying posters and sharing factsheets with staff and patrons.

Licensed premises were generally supportive of public health initiatives and enthusiastic to take part.

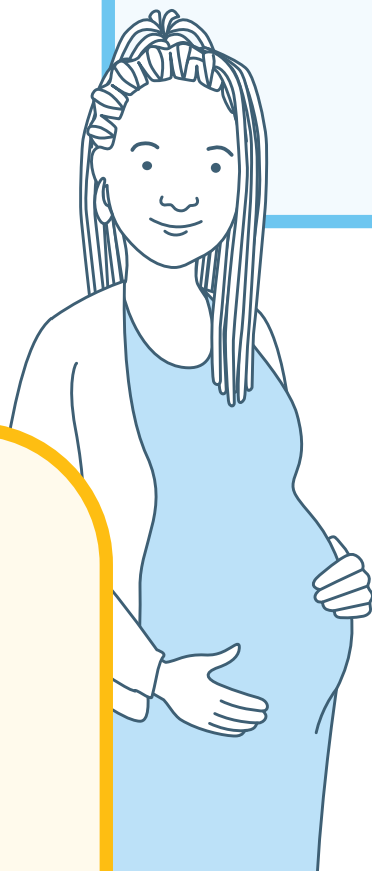
"These posters and the factsheet will help me to discuss FASD with my staff and enable them to explain to customers with confidence."

**John, Landlord of House Without A Name**

### Feedback from staff and customers shows the campaign's impact:

"This is the type of information that should be taught in schools to inform students about the impact of drinking during pregnancy."

**Jenny, Customer at Porters Café & Wine Bar**



"I'll make sure I put the posters in the male and female toilets because I think it's important that boyfriends should be made aware of FASD as well."

**Bernadette, Landlady of Mosley Arms**

## Key challenges & lessons learned

We encountered some challenges during delivery and follow-up. Variations in pub opening times, changes in landlord availability, and changes in ownership made it difficult to conduct consistent follow-up. Where posters had been displayed in the absence of the landlord, staff were not always able to respond to questions about the campaign.

As we were delivering more than one public health campaign through licensed premises (including Suicide Prevention and Stop Smoking), a more coordinated approach became necessary to avoid over-engagement. In response, a live Excel tracking system was developed to record participation across campaigns, support coordinated distribution of materials, and reduce repeat visits. A red amber green (RAG) rating was also introduced to identify premises open to ongoing engagement, helping to streamline outreach and minimise the risk of licensed premises feeling overburdened.



# Next steps

Drymester is Greater Manchester's award-winning campaign that highlights the risks associated with drinking alcohol during pregnancy. To find out more view the [Drymester report](#).

For those families affected by FASD, there is the [Greater Manchester FASD Network](#).

We will continue engaging with licensed premises, having conversations and providing materials to raise awareness of FASD. This initiative demonstrates that individuals, businesses, and communities all play a vital role in promoting healthier pregnancies and preventing FASD.

CCTV CAMERAS  
IN OPERATION  
24 HOURS  
NO DRUGS ALLOWED  
ON PREMISES  
DRUG USE OR SALES ON THESE  
PREMISES WILL BE REPORTED TO  
POLICE AND MAY LEAD TO ARREST AND  
PROSECUTION

All under 18's  
To be out  
by 7pm

Thankyou

**WARNING!**



ME & MY FASD CLUB Living FASD  
Awesome People Amazing Minds  
SERIES 3 COMING SOON!  
FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS ACROSS GREATER MANCHESTER  
Featuring young people with FASD sharing their successes & their strategies. Backed up with expert-reviewed information & resources  
Perfect to display in waiting areas or family hubs  
Family coupon code: gmfamilylivingfasd53  
Professional coupon code: gmproslivingfasd53

To find out more about reducing alcohol harm please visit the [National FASD website](#).

