Working with high impact, change resistant drinkers: 
One day Blue Light Training

Introduction
The Blue Light project is Alcohol Concern’s initiative to develop alternative approaches and care pathways for change resistant drinkers who place a burden on public services. It has challenged the traditional approach by showing that there are positive strategies that can be used with this client group.

The project has developed the Blue Light manual which contains:
- Tools for understanding why clients may not engage
- Risk assessment tools which are appropriate for drinkers
- Harm reduction techniques workers can use
- Advice on crucial nutritional approaches which can reduce alcohol related harm
- Questions to help non-clinicians identify potential serious health problems and deliver enhanced personalised education
- Management frameworks
- Guidance on legal frameworks

Above all it offers a fundamental positive message that intervention is possible. We may not always be able to “treat” someone and make them change completely, but we can help them reduce the harm and manage the risk they pose to themselves and others.

The project was a co-production between 23 local authorities. Local staff and service users in each area contributed expertise to the development. The project has been highly praised and has won the support of Public Health England who are now active partners in the process.

This paper provides details on the general one-day training course on working with high impact, change resistant drinkers.
One day training programme

This course is a vital contribution to the continuing professional development of people who:
- work in alcohol services; &
- work in non-alcohol specialist settings but who encounter people with alcohol problems in the course of their work, whether this is in health, social care, housing and homelessness services or the criminal justice system.

Aim
At any one time the majority of problem drinkers are not engaged in services, and of those who do engage approximately 50% will quickly drop out. Specialist alcohol services have traditionally worked with people who are motivated to change. However, research evidence suggests that those who drop out are likely to be among the more risky or vulnerable individuals. This course will help participants:
- To work more effectively with change resistant drinkers.

Training Objectives
By the end of this course participants will be able to:
- Identify change resistant clients who need to be targeted;
- Understand the rationale for attempting to intervene with this client group;
- Understand in greater detail the physical and psychological effects of alcohol
- Be able to use the “assessing barriers to change” framework;
- Understand the range of techniques available for use with this group including risk management, nutrition and harm reduction approaches;
- Be able to use the 12 questions tool
- Understand the legal powers available to manage this client group including the new anti-social framework
- Formulate a realistic intervention plan for a treatment resistant drinker.
Full Day Programme

9.15 am  Arrival/coffee

9.30am Session 1.1 – Welcome
  Introductions
  Objectives
  Ground rules

9.45am Session 2 – Understanding treatment resistant clients and the Blue Light approach
  Who they are and the Blue Light approach
  Case study work drawing on participant experience – *This material will also be used later in the session*
  Tutor presentation of examples of the impact of the client group drawn from serious incident reviews
  The rationale for targeting them
  Groupwork, large group discussion, tutor input

11.00am  Coffee

11.15am Session 3 – Advanced understanding of the physical and psychological impact of alcohol
  *This session informs later harm reduction work*
  Body exercise to identify / enhance participant’s knowledge of the impact of alcohol
  Group work and feedback
  Tutor input, Q&A

12.00pm Session 4 – Why is the client treatment resistant?
  Understanding barriers to change
  Using the barriers to change tool
  Discussion and tutor input

12.30pm  Lunch

1.15pm  Session 5 – Risk assessment
  Introducing the alcohol specific risk assessment tool
  Discussion and tutor input

1.45pm Session 6- Harm reduction approaches
  To introduce and consider a range of harm reduction approaches
  Nutritional approaches
  Groupwork, feedback from groups, tutor input

2.15pm Session 7- The 12 questions tool
  An introduction to this tool which aims to identify physical risk as early as possible
  Group work and feedback plus tutor’s input

2.45pm  Tea

3.00pm  Session 8- Containment strategies – Legal Powers
  Group exercise on potential approaches to containing difficult to engage substance misusers.

3.30pm  Session 9- Developing an Engagement Plan for an Individual Client
  Return to earlier case study clients
  Group work to develop a new approach
  Feedback and discussion with tutor input

4.15pm  Summary and Evaluation

4.30pm  Close