

**FIND US**

**Engage Merton**  
(formerly 'The MACS Project')  
**296a Kingston Road**  
**Wimbledon Chase**  
**London SW20 8LX**

We are located directly opposite Wimbledon Chase main line Station. Access our building by walking through the archway between the Indian takeaway and the pharmacy.

Buses 163, 164, 152 and K5 stop outside our service.

We are close to Raynes Park station and Merton Park Tramlink.

We do not have visitor car parking.

*If you are interested in learning more about the Engage Merton Controlled Drinking Group for yourself, a friend, or a relative, please contact Helen O'Connor or Simon Billson on*

**020 8417 1960**

**THE NEXT GROUP STARTS ON**

- Session 1 .....
- Session 2 .....
- Session 3 .....
- Session 4 .....
- Session 5 .....
- Session 6 .....



# **CONTROLLED DRINKING GROUP**

*For people who are not alcohol-dependent*

**Engage Merton**

Client Information



## Who is the Controlled Drinking Group for?

The group is suitable for people who have been assessed by us as *not alcohol dependent*.

Some people drink at unhealthy or even dangerous levels, and want to cut down or stop drinking, but are not as physically dependent upon alcohol in the same way other people are.

These people can, with support, manage to reduce or even stop drinking completely without medical supervision.

The Engage Merton Controlled Drinking Group has been designed for these types of drinkers.

The group is likely to be suitable for people who:

- Drink more than the recommended guidelines for alcohol (14 units for both men and women) but who:
- Do not experience physical withdrawal symptoms from alcohol (shakes, sweating, morning anxiety, fits, seizures).
- Do not need a drink in the morning to feel better.
- Can go all day, sometimes even more than one day, without a drink.
- Despite this are still concerned about how much they drink, do things they regret when they drink, get into trouble when they drink, or are experiencing relationship or health problems because of alcohol.
- Want help to reduce their drinking and have at least two alcohol-free days a week.

## How does it work?

When you first contact us to ask for help with your drinking (or you are referred by someone else such as your GP) a member of our alcohol team will be in touch with you within three working days to arrange an assessment session.

Assessment sessions take about one hour, because we need to find out about your history with alcohol, your current drinking habits, and possible side effects (withdrawal symptoms) you experience when you don't drink. We will also ask you about your reasons for wanting to cut down or stop drinking. This will help us understand whether the Controlled Drinking Group would be a suitable form of support for you.

After your assessment session you will be allocated a keyworker—this is usually the person who does your assessment. If your keyworker thinks that you would be suitable for the group, they will tell you about the group dates and times, what happens in the groups, and what is expected of you. You will also contact or see your keyworker outside of the group sessions.

Usually we have between 5-7 people per group. Everyone starts group at the same time - in the first session everyone is new, so you can all get to know each other as the sessions go on.

## How long do I see you for?

We initially offer six group sessions, which take place weekly. The aim is to cut down on your drinking in small, manageable steps of 10% per week. Over the 6-week course that could be a reduction of as much as 50%.

As well as coming to the weekly group meeting, you will also have a keyworker you can speak to privately. Your keyworker will arrange their sessions with you separately. In some instances, we can extend the amount of sessions on a case-by-case basis.

## Group Boundaries

Part of attending a group is respecting the group boundaries. These include: not turning up drunk or on any other substance, confidentiality, respect, time-keeping, keeping a drink diary, and setting goals for yourself each week.

We know that some people find it hard to open up in a group, and you will never be forced to speak. But we hope everyone will feel safe enough to contribute, share their thoughts about cutting down, and give one another support, encouragement, and ideas.

We breathalyse you each week before group. The reading should be 0. If you can not manage this, you will probably need a different type of support because you are drinking in the day.