ALCOHOL FOCUS SCOTLAND

This Christmas...

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

with #GiftsForWellbeing



Think Outside The Bottle: Gifts for wellbeing

For the last two years, Alcohol Focus Scotland has been using our social media channels to encourage people to #ThinkOutsideTheBottle when deciding what would make the ideal gift for people who mean the world to us.

Following on from our campaign packs on Mother's Day and Father's Day earlier this year, we're delighted to introduce our #ThinkOutsideTheBottle Christmas pack for Christmas 2026.

Challenging the centrality of alcohol

When it comes to deciding what to buy someone as a gift, it can be a bit of task, maybe even a minefield!

Lots of factors come into play - including our budget, how much we know about a person's interests, whether they already have what we're thinking of buying, are we going to ask someone what they want or surprise them, if we ask will that imply we don't know them well enough. So many things to think about!

It's hardly surprising then that many of us plump for the easy option. A bottle of something they enjoy. It's easy, relatively affordable and probably won't go to waste. But isn't it also a little bit lazy or unimaginative?

Views of people in recovery

Christmas can be a difficult time for people in recovery from an alcohol problem.

Our campaign aims to address some of those problems and make the Christmas period a little easier to navigate - reaffirming the positive choices people have made.

People in recovery have told us:

"Alcohol is everywhere at Christmas. You can't escape it. It's in adverts, at parties and even in songs. It is hard not to feel like you're missing out sometimes."

Challenging the centrality of alcohol

Alcohol companies, perhaps more than most, have been very successful in tying their products to Christmas and the Christmas period.

Aside from Christmas trees, Santa and the baby Jesus - it'd be hard to think of many things that take centre stage at Christmas more than alcohol. When people talk about the festive season those festivities are assumed to involve alcohol. When people say 'eat, drink and be merry' they're usually not talking about drinking mineral water.

Whether it's adverts for alcohol as the perfect gift, Christmas parties where alcohol is absolutely central or even Christmas hits like 'Mistletoe and Wine' - alcohol is almost inescapable around Christmas.

This can make Christmas an especially difficult time for people in recovery from an alcohol problem, having to navigate environments that are even more alcohol centric than usual and where heavy drinking is positively celebrated.

Our #ThinkOutsideTheBottle campaign aims to challenge the centrality of alcohol at Christmas, by encouraging people to give gifts that promote the wellbeing of the special people in our lives, rather than potentially harming it.

In this pack, you'll find a range of thoughtful, affordable suggestions, as well as accompanying social media graphics and posts, which we hope can push alcohol off centre stage when it comes to gifts at Christmas!

Views of people in recovery

"It's mad really. I think they (alcohol adverts) should be banned just like smoking adverts. That seemed normal and now it's incredible it was allowed."

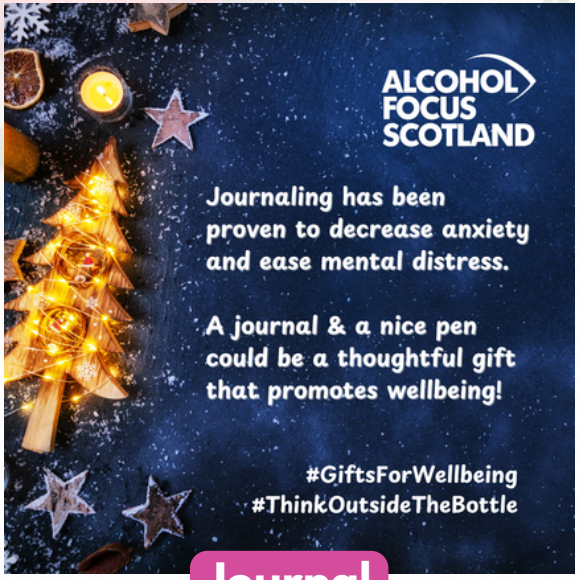
"The adverts are constant, especially in the run-up to Christmas. It is advertised as such luxury and relaxing—not for me though. It ruins my life. It would be helpful to my journey not to see it everywhere I go."

"I feel that at the start of my recovery, there were two times of year I would feel particularly triggered. Christmas and BBQ season."

Gift Ideas

We've come up with what we hope are some thoughtful and affordable suggested gifts people might get their loved ones for Christmas instead of buying alcohol.

We've turned these into graphics which you can post on social media using the hashtag #ThinkOutsideTheBottle.



Journal



Book



Hobby



Show



Shared Activities

Gift Ideas



Bath



Photobook



Teas

We hope you'll find our suggestions for gifts for wellbeing helpful but obviously they are by no means exhaustive.

We'd encourage supporters to come up with your own ideas using our graphic template on Canva! (Requires a Canva account to access).

We've also drafted accompanying social media posts for all of the graphics above to help make supporting #ThinkOutsideTheBottle easier.

All of the above graphics are available without the Alcohol Focus Scotland logo on request from communications@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

"My family don't like buying me cigarettes because they say they 'don't want to encourage me' or they 'wish I would stop smoking.

"But they never thought twice about buying me alcohol or about buying alcohol for each other."

David, Person in recovery from an alcohol problem

Suggested social posts

Journal

Trying to come up with the perfect #Christmas gift?

Daily journaling is known to improve our mental health. Why not encourage a positive habit in someone you love with a good quality journal and a nice pen?

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

Book

Reading fiction has been shown to have mental health benefits, helping us to escape the world and our personal problems, or even helping us navigate those problems by reflecting our own experiences back at us. Treat someone to a good story this Christmas!

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

Hobby

There's enough encouragement to drink at Christmas. Instead, why not encourage a friend or loved one to pick up a neglected hobby - or perhaps even start a brand new one?

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

Show

With all the pressure to drink at Christmas, it can be too easy to end up making a show of ourselves.

Tickets for a show might be a much better option!

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

Suggested social posts

Shared Activities

The alcohol industry works hard to associate the fun times in life with their products, and often they're successful. But is it the alcohol that makes the occasion, or is it quality time with people we love?

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

Bath

As far back as the Romans, bathing was considered a restorative practice.

This Christmas, why not give the gift of restoration rather than inebriation?

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

Photobook

It's well known that alcohol affects our memory. Instead of giving a gift that makes memories hazy, why not give someone a gift that celebrates the best ones?

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle

Tea

Plenty of people are choosing to socialise or chill with alternatives to alcohol these days.

A sparkling tea or selection of herbal teas might be a healthy alternative gift to yet more alcohol.

#ThinkOutsideTheBottle



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