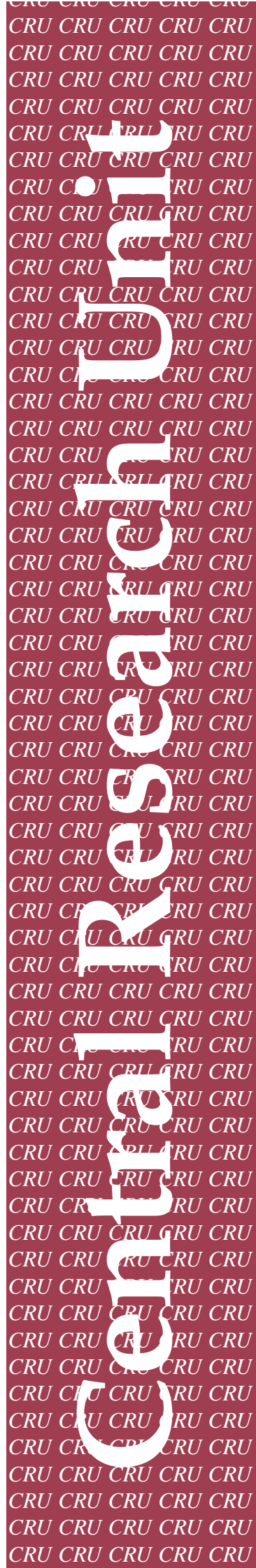


**CONSULTATION  
WITH CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
ON THE SCOTTISH  
EXECUTIVE'S PLAN  
FOR ACTION ON  
ALCOHOL MISUSE**



**SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE**

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**CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE ON THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE'S PLAN FOR  
ACTION ON ALCOHOL MISUSE**

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Save the Children**

**Scottish Executive Central Research Unit  
2002**

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **CONTEXT**

This summary outlines the key features of a consultation with children and young people on alcohol misuse in Scotland, carried out by Save the Children on behalf of the Scottish Executive during May and June 2001. The aim of this work was to ensure that between 80-100 children and young people aged between 9-19 years from a range of backgrounds had an opportunity to contribute to the Scottish Executive's consultation on a Plan for Action on Alcohol Misuse.

Save the Children consulted with 14 groups, totalling 98 children and young people between the ages of 9-19. The average age of those consulted was 14. Groups were accessed across Scotland from rural and urban areas. This report presents a snapshot of children's and young people's views on alcohol use, with the findings broadly concurrent with the existing literature on the subject.

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

### **Children's and young people's views on alcohol**

- While experimenting with alcohol was viewed as a normal experience, tacitly accepted by society, there was evidence of a high level of understanding about the dangers of drinking, on both a personal and social level. This, however, was not seen as a major disincentive to drink.
- The majority of children and young people disagreed that all alcohol use was bad; many associated drinking alcohol with having fun and this element acted as a major incentive to drink.
- For 9-12 year olds, drinking alcohol was associated with breaking the law. For older young people (but still under the age of 18), the illegality of alcohol was not seen as important, nor did it act as a barrier.
- Drinking alcohol was seen as an active and informed choice.

### **Children's and young people's experiences of alcohol use**

- Sixty five percent of respondents (average age 17) said they drank alcohol. The average age of those who said they did not drink alcohol was 12. No significant gender differences were noted.
- Drinking habits were less established in the younger age group (9-13 years).
- Reasons why young people drink are complex and include a combination of:
  - the influence of others: older brothers, sisters and friends
  - feeling good, getting a buzz, showing off, looking cool
  - individual choice/natural experimentation
  - as a way of solving problems
  - to a lesser extent, having nothing to do.
- Young people drink mainly in the streets and away from parental control.
- Young people viewed groups of young people drinking as a significant problem.
- Young people's worries about drinking included risks to health, the risks of getting involved in crime and peer pressure.
- Parental disapproval ranked lowest in terms of worries and concerns.

### **Children and young people and the influence of friends, family, advertising and the media, the wider cultural and social context, health education**

- Peer pressure is a strong contributing factor in decision making vis-à-vis consumption of alcohol.
- The young people felt that there was wide social acceptance of adults drinking whilst young people drinking was perceived to be a problem and something to be curbed.
- Young people worried about adults setting a bad example by drinking and the risks to their health and increased likelihood of aggression.
- Young people acknowledged that there was a Scottish/British culture of drinking which made young people's and adults' use of alcohol acceptable.
- Sixty one percent agreed that alcohol advertising encouraged young people to drink.
- Young people were undecided about whether there was enough health information. Sometimes they were overloaded with too much information and felt that quality was more important than quantity.

### **Young people's ideas and solutions for reducing alcohol misuse in Scotland**

- Young people's ideas did not focus solely on alcohol and must be seen in the wider context of young people's lives.
- Young people believed that there should be more encouragement to become involved in healthier alternatives to drinking e.g. sport and leisure activities.
- They also thought that a wider range of alternatives should be available to allow informed choices to be made about how leisure time is spent e.g. community activities, drama /other groups, drop in places, youth cafes.
- These alternatives should be better quality, lower cost and easier access than they are already and young people should be involved in setting them up.
- Young people wanted better, rather than more, health education about the effects of alcohol targeted at different age ranges.
- They were also in favour of greater participation of young people in helping to design and promote health messages.
- Proof of age cards were seen to be a good idea if effectively implemented and enforced.
- 'Bad' ideas included making the law stronger, fines for parents and increasing the cost of alcohol.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The young people who took part in this consultation demonstrated wide-ranging and insightful views on the issues surrounding the use and misuse of alcohol in Scotland.

Young people were very aware of the dangers of drinking, both on a personal and a social level and about the associated health risks.

However, a very clear gap existed between knowledge and action, with the majority of young people saying that the 'pull factors' towards drinking are stronger than those

'push factors' away from it. Many young people are making an active and often informed choice to drink. Drinking to get drunk is the norm and drinking amongst young people is seen to be tacitly supported by society in general.

Solutions to problems with alcohol must be contextualised within the day-to-day reality of young people's lives. They must also take account of the great diversity of views, experiences, lifestyles and interests amongst children and young people.

Age in particular is a very strong variable with regard to drinking. As this consultation shows, younger children have far more definite and negative views about the illegal nature of drinking and they do not tend to like the taste or the smell. Health education could therefore usefully focus on the 9-13 age range. Drinking habits become far more ingrained as adolescence progresses and older young people require a different approach to health promotion.

Young people's suggestions for solving problems of alcohol misuse are underpinned by ideas of greater participation and involvement in what is going on around them. They are also aware that alcohol misuse is not just their problem and that a range of different stakeholders must contribute to tackling the problem, including local and national government, youth workers, teachers, parents, local business and of course children and young people themselves.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

1.1 Children and young people are drinking more alcohol and at a younger age (Todd et al, 1999). There is increasing awareness of the impact of alcohol use on their health and wellbeing as well as on the short and long-term consequences for society (Alcohol Concern, 2000; WHO, 2001).

1.2 In the field of public policy, there is increasing interest in developing approaches to combat the negative impacts of alcohol use. The UK Government is developing a strategy for England. In Scotland, the Scottish Executive announced a consultation on a Plan for Action on alcohol misuse (Scottish Executive, 2001), which highlighted a number of areas of specific relevance to children and young people. This report has been commissioned as part of the Scottish Executive's consultation process.

1.3 Internationally, the World Health Organisation has a major programme on alcohol and young people. A conference in early 2001 (WHO: 2001) drew together important research in the field and presented the preliminary findings of the 28 country-wide Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey (unpublished). The conference adopted a 'Declaration on Young People and Alcohol' (WHO: 2001) which reaffirmed the 5 principles of the European Charter on Alcohol, including the third principle which addresses the rights of children and young people:

*“All children and adolescents have the right to grow up in an environment protected from the negative consequences of alcohol consumption and, to the extent possible, from the promotion of alcoholic beverages” (WHO, 2001:1).*

1.4 The Declaration highlights the importance of children's rights in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the impact of particular aspects of alcohol on young people including young people's environments, drinking trends and the cost of youth drinking. The Declaration sets a number of targets for European states, which include delaying the onset of youth drinking, increasing education and reducing high risk drinking. A number of proposed measures for doing this included developing partnerships with young people and developing a comprehensive approach to addressing the social and health needs experienced by young people (WHO, 2001).

1.5 Both current government interest and the findings of the WHO conference are set in the context of surveys of children and young people's changing drinking patterns. These have tended to gather data from children from the age of 11 or 12 up to 18 years. Statistical data available from the UK shows that in 1998, 19% of young people aged 12 to 15 years had had an alcoholic drink in the last 10 days. Most of the young people in this age group had drunk a relatively small amount. A small number, however, drank regularly.

1.6 These figures are slightly lower than those contained in a report produced by the Research Unit in Health and Behavioural Change (Todd et al, 1999) as part of the World Health Organisation's Cross National Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study which draws on data from three surveys of 11, 13 and 15 year olds carried out in Scotland during the 1990s. The findings of this survey show that there has been a significant increase in the number of children in these age groups who have drunk alcohol, weekly or irregularly. Generally the figures reveal an ongoing upward trend of drinking alcohol amongst all the three age groups. At the younger age range of the survey, there has been an increase in the percentage of 11 year olds who have tried alcohol as well as those who drink alcohol weekly.

1.7 Organisations concerned about alcohol have drawn attention to children's use, although substantial qualitative research has not been carried out, particularly with younger children. Alcohol Concern identifies the negative impacts of alcohol misuse in Britain (Alcohol Concern: 2000). Those which are of direct relevance to children, include the impact of alcohol use on the family and on children of problem drinkers, the health affects of long term drinking and habits of drinking developed in the teenage years. The double impact on children and young people of the effect of their own drinking and that which arises from adult misuse of alcohol, is emphasised.

1.8 A number of organisations work directly with children and young people. The findings of an evaluation of the Teenwise Alcohol projects, which interviewed young people in 4 projects across Scotland, reflected a broad range of common adolescent views on young people's attitudes to, and experience of, alcohol. The outcomes of the evaluation confirmed the statistical data that underage drinking was common, with the age group getting younger, and binge drinking increasing (Anderson and Sawyer, 1999).

1.9 This consultation has been informed by the outcomes of two major participative events for young people. The WHO conference involved a group of young people from across Europe. The young people's report 'We are not a problem - we are a resource' (WHO, 2001) was presented as an outcome of three pre-conference meetings. Their contribution highlighted the importance of involving young people in the 'process of developing and implementing alcohol- related policies' (WHO, 2001:4). The second was a Young Person's Health Congress held by the Scottish Parliament Education Unit involving 13 and 14 year old pupils from across Scotland in debating a mock health bill on substance misuse and healthy eating (Scottish Parliament. 2001). Although not research based, both these events demonstrated the value of involving children and young people as social actors in their own right (Alderson, 1995).

## **CONTEXT**

1.10 In April 2001, the Scottish Executive commissioned Save the Children to consult with children and young people about their views on alcohol misuse in Scotland. This consultation forms part of a wider consultation process outlined in the *Consultation Paper on Plan for Action on Alcohol Misuse* issued by the Scottish

Executive in February 2001. A separate consultation was commissioned because it was recognised that children and young people were not likely to respond to the consultation otherwise.

1.11 Together with the wider consultation process, the children's and young people's views contained in this report informed the subsequent development of the *Plan for Action on alcohol problems*, published by the Scottish Executive. A separate children's and young people's summary was also produced to provide direct feedback to all those who took part in the consultation.

1.12 The consultations with young people took place throughout Scotland between May and June 2001. Save the Children consulted with 14 different groups across Scotland, totalling 98 children and young people. This report reflects what has been said to Save the Children by those participating. Their views show a sophisticated understanding of the subject. They are wide-ranging and sometimes contradictory, providing a valuable snapshot of opinion and experience with regard to alcohol use in Scotland at this time.

1.13 In order to gain the widest range of views, the overall sample took into account the following variables:

- Age

The age of the children and young people who took part ranged between 9 and 19 years. There were a few exceptions outwith this range but this did not affect the sample to any significant degree. Some young people turned up to focus group sessions who were not strictly within the sample age range but it was felt important not to exclude those who made an effort to attend. The average age of those consulted was 14 years.

- Gender

A reasonable gender balance was achieved with 44 males and 54 females consulted. This balance was generally reflected across the groups. Three out of the 14 groups consulted were single-sex groups.

- Ethnicity

The views of children and young people from different minority ethnic groups were actively sought. Seven young people of Black African origin took part in the consultation, as did 2 Muslim young people of Bangladeshi origin. Attempts were made to include more children and young people from Asian communities but this proved difficult within the limited timescale.

- Groups consulted

Save the Children accessed children and young people via two routes: through established groups who meet regularly and through groups of children and young people who were brought together specifically for the purposes of the consultation. Some groups were very experienced in giving their views in this type of consultation, whilst others found it a much newer experience.

1.14 Save the Children consulted with groups from rural and urban areas in places of disadvantage and advantage across Scotland in Thurso, Fort William, Dundee and

surrounding area, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Eyemouth, West Lothian, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Stirling. Five groups were attended by young people from mainly urban areas while 6 were from rural settings and 3 groups consisted of a mixture of young people from both rural and urban areas.

1.15 A variety of different groups were consulted. These included mixed and single sex groups, groups in formal settings such as a school, groups with specific experience or knowledge e.g. young people in contact with an alcohol awareness project, an alcohol free café, a black and minority ethnic group and a group working with children leaving residential care.

**Table 1.1 Profile of Groups Consulted**

| <b>Group</b>    | <b>Young People in Group</b> | <b>Male</b>     | <b>Female</b>   | <b>Age Range</b> |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>1</b>        | <b>(4)</b>                   | <b>2</b>        | <b>2</b>        | <b>12 -18</b>    |
| <b>2</b>        | <b>(11)</b>                  | <b>5</b>        | <b>6</b>        | <b>13 -14</b>    |
| <b>3</b>        | <b>(3)</b>                   | <b>0</b>        | <b>3</b>        | <b>13 -15</b>    |
| <b>4</b>        | <b>(6)</b>                   | <b>1</b>        | <b>5</b>        | <b>17 -21</b>    |
| <b>5</b>        | <b>(6)</b>                   | <b>1</b>        | <b>5</b>        | <b>9 -11</b>     |
| <b>6</b>        | <b>(4)</b>                   | <b>2</b>        | <b>2</b>        | <b>19 -27</b>    |
| <b>7</b>        | <b>(15)</b>                  | <b>6</b>        | <b>9</b>        | <b>11 - 12</b>   |
| <b>8</b>        | <b>(10)</b>                  | <b>6</b>        | <b>4</b>        | <b>14 - 18</b>   |
| <b>9</b>        | <b>(8)</b>                   | <b>5</b>        | <b>3</b>        | <b>7 - 13</b>    |
| <b>10</b>       | <b>(2)</b>                   | <b>2</b>        |                 | <b>15</b>        |
| <b>11</b>       | <b>(13)</b>                  | <b>9</b>        | <b>4</b>        | <b>13 -16</b>    |
| <b>12</b>       | <b>(6)</b>                   | <b>2</b>        | <b>4</b>        | <b>13 - 19</b>   |
| <b>13</b>       | <b>(5)</b>                   | <b>3</b>        | <b>2</b>        | <b>17</b>        |
| <b>14</b>       | <b>(5)</b>                   |                 | <b>5</b>        | <b>14 – 16</b>   |
| <b>Total 14</b> | <b>Total 98</b>              | <b>Total 44</b> | <b>Total 54</b> |                  |

For a list of the groups consulted, please see Annex 1.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

1.16 The aims and objectives of the consultation were as follows.

### *Aim of the consultation*

- To ensure that between 80-100 children and young people aged between 9-19 years from a range of backgrounds had an opportunity to contribute to the Scottish Executive's consultation on alcohol misuse in Scotland

### *Objectives*

- To identify and facilitate up to 15 participatory focus group sessions to enable children and young people to share their views about alcohol

- To ensure a cross section of children and young people of both sexes, aged 9-19 years, across rural and urban localities
- To devise participatory and inclusive methods and techniques to make each focus group session enjoyable and productive
- To produce a report and executive summary of children's and young people's views to feed into the Scottish Executive's *Plan for Action on Alcohol Misuse*
- To produce a children's and young people's summary of their views and ideas to feedback directly to those who took part

## RESEARCH METHODS

1.17 Two main methods were used to access children's and young people's views

- A qualitative participative research method

This involved focus group sessions lasting an average of 90 minutes. A range of participatory techniques were devised to enable maximum participation by children and young people of different ages and experience. These included a graffiti wall, brainstorming, worksheets and the use of suggestion cards followed up by exercises in voting and ranking. As many of the exercises were highly structured, discussions around some issues arising from them were limited. Information on these is contained in Annex Nos 3 to 5 inclusive and Annex 7.

It is important to note that the focus group were not tape-recorded but were documented through facilitator notes on discussions, flipchart notes and Post Its notes from young people. Therefore any quotations from young people that are used in this report have been taken from these notes. In addition, no indication of the source of the quote is given due to the method of recording discussions. A full discussion on the focus group session format appears in Annex 2.

- A small-scale quantitative method

This involved questionnaires which were self-completed during the focus group session. In this way, information about age, gender and drinking habits could be elicited. The quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel.

### *Reasons for choosing research methods*

1.18 These methods were chosen because they were considered to be the most suitable in terms of meeting the stated aims and objectives. As the groups of children and young people were diverse in terms of age and ability these methods provided flexibility and adaptability, enabling participants to engage as fully as possible.

1.19 In addition, the research had to be completed within two months and the methods enabled access to the maximum number of children and young people within the given time frame.

1.20 The use of a range of qualitative methods balanced by the self-completed questionnaire enabled the cross-checking of data to ensure greater accuracy. Together these methods provided a rich source of material and a more in-depth insight into the views and opinions of children and young people.

1.21 Throughout this report, the analysis draws on information provided by a number of different exercises, both qualitative and quantitative, and this should be borne in mind by the reader. Where appropriate, however, the information on which type of exercise is being reported, is provided.

1.22 By using a mixture of two methods and techniques, greater involvement in the consultation was encouraged, which enabled us to relate the specific topic of alcohol to wider social and cultural contexts. The information that was elicited by these methods allowed us to build up a picture of how children and young people feel about alcohol. This mosaic approach does not claim to represent the views of all children and young people but does have validity in terms of the participants in this consultation.

#### *Limitations of Research Method*

1.23 Gaining access to groups is very time consuming due to the procedures and processes that must be adhered to when working with children and young people. Permission must be sought from parents and group workers before access can be negotiated. This takes time and does not always lead to a successful outcome as arrangements may be cancelled or postponed unexpectedly. Young people have a number of demands on their time and groups who meet, perhaps once a week, may be unwilling to give up this time to requests to participation in research. Given the short time-scale allowed for the fieldwork (two months) and the need to secure the assistance of skilled facilitators, the results of the consultation are therefore limited by each of these factors.

1.24 This consultation provides a snapshot of young people's views. In addition, children and young people in each group engaged with the material and the topic in different ways. Despite using the same format each time, no two sessions were identical as some groups decided not to complete some of the exercises. Within groups, young people may provide responses based on what their peers say or what they think the facilitator wants to hear. Sharing sensitive issues within a group can also be difficult. Some young people are more likely to participate, e.g. those who are more confident, hence the need to use a range of group methods to ensure as wide a participation as possible.

1.25 This reflects the nature of this style of work as well as the different ages and experiences of those participating. Choosing not to participate during a session is each young person's choice. As a result the information presented in this report represents the general attitudes and views of the participants and does not as such draw on any detailed personal experience.

1.26 In addition, the number of respondents in each group can vary between each of the exercises. Therefore the numerical information contained within the charts should

be interpreted as an indication of the level of response to a question by those that participated.

1.27 The exercises were highly structured, particularly for the younger groups. This approach has the advantage of maximising participation, allowing quieter members to join in, however, it can sometimes limit fuller discussion. Therefore data from discussions around a number of focus group exercises is limited.

1.28 Overall, given these limitations, the research does provide a snap-shot of children and young people's views and a valuable insight into a number of important issues.

### *Research questions*

1.29 The overall methodology and the specific research questions were framed around the assertion that drinking behaviours need to be understood in the context of children's and young people's daily lives and their general position in society.

1.30 Four key research questions were identified, each reflecting a different focus and each linked to questions contained within the Scottish Executive's *Consultation Paper on Plan for Action on Alcohol Misuse*.

#### Focus on personal views

1. What are children's and young people's views on alcohol?

Links to Scottish Executive consultation question 1:

*How do children and young people define alcohol misuse in terms of consumption and its consequences?*

And to question 2:

*What concerns do children and young people have about current drinking patterns and trends in Scotland?*

#### Focus on personal experience

2. What are children's and young people's experiences of alcohol use?

Links to Scottish Executive consultation question 1:

*How do children and young people define alcohol misuse in terms of consumption and its consequences?*

And to question 2

*What concerns do children and young people have about current drinking patterns and trends in Scotland?*

Focus on the wider cultural and social context

3. What messages do children and young people get from:

- friends and peers?
- family and adults around them?
- advertising, the media and society generally?
- from health education?

Links to Scottish Executive consultation question 3:

*Are children and young people a priority group or should resources be directed elsewhere?*

Focus on the way forward and solutions

4. What ideas do children and young people have about which initiatives work and which do not work in reducing alcohol misuse in Scotland? How can children and young people be part of the solution?

Links to Scottish Executive consultation question 4:

*What real action can be taken to reduce alcohol misuse and promote sensible drinking? What action can be taken to change the ways individuals and groups in society, including children and young people, perceive the use and misuse of alcohol?*

And to question 5:

*Do children and young people think that changing the laws on drinking would reduce or increase the level of drinking amongst young people?*

And to question 7:

*What gaps can be identified in action currently being taken? For example:*

- *To influence, educate or inform individuals or specific groups?*
- *To affect patterns of drinking?*
- *To enforce the law?*
- *To improve services?*

1.31 The consultation findings are set out according to each of the 4 key research questions described above:

- Young people's<sup>1</sup> views on alcohol
- Young people's experiences of alcohol use
- Young people and the influence of friends, family, advertising and the media, the wider cultural and social context, health education
- Young people's ideas and solutions for reducing alcohol misuse in Scotland

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of use, the term 'young people' is used from now on to represent all those who took part in the consultation. Age distinctions are used throughout the text where appropriate e.g. 'younger children' or 'older young people'.

## CHAPTER TWO: YOUNG PEOPLE’S VIEWS ON ALCOHOL

2.1 This chapter reports on a number of exercises which were designed to explore young people’s views on alcohol.

### GENERAL VIEWS

2.2 Young people expressed a wide range of different views about alcohol, reflecting a sophisticated and often pragmatic knowledge of the subject. Some of their views were contradictory, but none were simplistic. Young people recognised that the use and misuse of alcohol is a complex subject and that there are no easy answers as to how the problems of alcohol misuse by young people and by adults should be tackled.

2.3 The first exercise was designed to gather some general information about alcohol in terms of its consumption and the effect that it can have on people. Participants were asked to indicate if they agreed, disagreed or were unsure about a list of statements that were read out.

2.4 Depending on the age of the young people, this exercise was carried out as either a written task or an action task. The latter required participants to select an area within the room, which represented one of the three options. The figures in the box below represent the tally for votes on each option, but within the written exercise some young people may have selected more than one option. In addition, some may not have indicated their selection for this particular exercise and therefore the total responses for each does not correspond with the total number of participants overall. These issues should be taken into account when interpreting the figures.

2.5 The range of information provided by this exercise is used at different points throughout the report.

**Table 2.1 Number of participants who agreed, disagreed or were unsure**

| Statement  | Agree n (%) | Disagree n (%) | Unsure n (%) | Total Responses |
|--|-------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. All alcohol is bad  | 15(17%)     | 59 (67%)       | 14 (16%)     | 88              |
| 2. Alcohol can make you do stupid things   | 83 (90%)    | 8 (9%)         | 1 (1%)       | 92              |
| 3. Alcohol can make you feel better  | 48 (53%)    | 28 (31%)       | 14 (16 %)    | 90              |
| 4. The law about when you can drink in a pub should be changed from 18 to 16             | 50 (54%)    | 36 (39%)       | 6 (7%)       | 92              |
| 5. Experimenting with alcohol is a normal part of growing up                             | 66 (73%)    | 17 (19%)       | 8 (9%)       | 91              |
| 6. Young people drink alcohol because they see their friends drink                       | 45 (49%)    | 34 (37%)       | 12 (13%)     | 91              |
| 7. Young people drink more alcohol as they get older                                     | 49 (54%)    | 22 (24%)       | 20 (22%)     | 91              |
| 8. Young people drink alcohol because there is nothing to do                             | 31 (34%)    | 41 (45%)       | 19 (21%)     | 92              |
| 9. Too much attention is put on young people when the real problem is adults drinking    | 40 (53%)    | 17 (22%)       | 19 (25%)     | 76              |
| 10. Adults have got a cheek telling young people not to drink when they do it themselves | 62 (69%)    | 17 (19%)       | 11 (12%)     | 90              |

<sup>1</sup> Total number of responses to questions do not correspond with total number of participants as some did not complete all the statements. In addition a minority chose more than one option <sup>2</sup> Percentages do not all add up to 100% due to rounding

2.6 Two thirds (67%) of those who selected an option for the first statement (59 out of 88) disagreed that all alcohol is bad. Twenty-three of these young people lived in a rural area. Some of the comments discussed around this issue included:

*"It's how much you drink, not what you drink"*

*"Because it's all right in moderation - it's a sociable thing. Alcohol is more addictive than other drugs"*

*"Alcohol is like having fun. When I'm older I'll drink"*

*"Drinking in moderation is ok"*

2.7 Of those that thought alcohol was bad, one third (5 out of 15) indicated that it was bad because of the impact it could have on others:

*"Because it could hurt other people".*

2.8 Those that were unsure added that it depended on the strength of the drink (5 young people) or that it was all right in moderation (4 young people) if you wanted to be sociable.

2.9 Young people also agreed that alcohol can make you feel better (statement 3), particularly as a way of relieving stress:

*"Sometimes nice to sit and have a drink with friends"*

*"When you have a stupid day, you have a beer or glass of wine and watch TV"*

*"Sometimes it makes you feel better"*

2.10 However, there was also a clear recognition that alcohol as a stress reliever is only a temporary measure:

*"At the time it makes you feel better, but it doesn't take the pain away"*

*"Maybe at the time but not when you sober up"*

2.11 Young people were in overwhelming agreement that alcohol can make you do stupid things (statement 2). They were able to put together an impressive list, reflecting a strong awareness and knowledge of some of the negative effects of drinking alcohol. These things included:

- Vandalism
- Rape
- Getting drunk and disorderly
- Getting lifted by the police
- Abusing people and fighting

- Being sick on the buses
- Fighting and swearing
- Thinking you are invincible
- Losing control
- One night stands
- Getting pregnant
- Exaggerating personalities

2.12 Despite a good knowledge of some of the dangers of drinking, the majority of young people (73%) agreed with the statement that experimenting with alcohol is a normal part of growing up (statement 5). Interestingly, younger children in the 9-12 age range tended to disagree with this statement and did not see experimentation as normal.

2.13 Drinking alcohol during adolescence is clearly seen as a typical experience for many young people, one that is recognised as being tacitly accepted by society as a whole as some respondents suggested:

*“drinking is socially acceptable”*

*“In today’s society, under age drinking is/has been made more acceptable”*

2.14 This reflects the view that drinking and getting drunk is in fact an act of conformity, not rebellion:

*“Experimenting with anything is a normal part of growing up”*

2.15 However, one young person raised the interesting question *“Some people don’t experiment – why is that?”* Some older young people, did not buy into the inevitability of drinking, viewing it very much as a matter of individual choice, depending on the person, how they have been brought up and who their friends are.

2.16 Participants were divided on whether or not the law about the age when you can drink in a pub should be changed from 18 years to 16 years (statement 4). Just over half of those completing this (54%) were in support of a change compared to 39% who disagreed and a small minority (7%) that were unsure.

2.17 Those who agreed cited the following reasons:

*“If you have no ID you might as well change it to 16”*

*“You can get married at 16”*

*“Most people do it when they’re younger – women especially think they are more grown up”*

2.18 And those who disagreed:

*“Because you can’t control how much alcohol you drink”*

## **PUSH AND PULL FACTORS**

(see Annex 3 for push or pull exercise)

2.19 In this exercise young people were given cards with pre-prepared statements about alcohol written on them. Using a large sheet of paper they were asked to discuss each statement and decide whether or not they felt the statement would make them more inclined to try alcohol (pull factor) or put them off trying alcohol (push factor).

2.20 They were then asked to place the statements on the paper at either the 'push' or 'pull' end of the line.

Statements on cards were the following:

*Having identity cards*  
*Having good leisure facilities*  
*Having friends who don't drink*  
*The dangers of drinking to your health*  
*Parents or other adults disapproving about drinking*  
*Parents/other adults around you drinking alcohol*  
*Health education about the effects of alcohol*  
*Drinking alcohol can put me in danger*  
*Taking other drugs*  
*No transport to go anywhere*  
*Having friends or older brothers or sisters who drink*  
*Alcohol advertising on TV and in magazines*  
*Not being allowed in pubs until age 18*  
*Characters on TV glamourising alcohol*  
*Scottish culture of drinking*  
*Smoking*  
*Having nothing to do*

2.21 Young people displayed a high level of understanding about the dangers of drinking to themselves on both a personal and social level. Young people agreed that alcohol can make you do stupid things, can put you in danger and is dangerous to health:

*“Alcohol damages your health and you won't live a very healthy life and may die at an early age”*

2.22 Young people were very aware that all these push factors should put them off drinking alcohol. However, a gap seems to exist between knowledge and action with the pull factors or incentives towards drinking proving much stronger. Many young people are making an active and often informed choice to drink alcohol.

2.23 Having fun was seen as a definite and very important pull factor towards drinking. Many young people said they drank simply because they wanted to and the aim of drinking for many was to get intoxicated and get a buzz.

2.24 Another significant pull factor was having friends or older brothers and sisters who drink. Conversely, having friends who do not drink was seen as a definite push factor away from alcohol use. The influence of family and peers is complex and not easy to disentangle in a consultation of this kind. More detailed investigation of this area would be useful.

#### *Age differences*

2.25 There were some notable and discernible age differences between the 9-12/13 age group and older young people. For many in the 9-12/13 age group, drinking alcohol under the age of 18 was strongly associated with breaking the law and being 18 was seen as very important because *“that’s when you’re allowed to drink”*. This age group viewed the law and age restrictions as an important push factor. This compares to older young people for whom the illegality of alcohol is not seen as important. On the contrary, breaking the law was often seen as a pull factor. Seven young people said that not being allowed in pubs until age 18 pulled them towards drinking:

*“Crime/violence doesn’t put you off, lots of wallipers/dafties around anyway”*

2.26 The taste and smell also put younger children off drinking.

2.27 The issues raised in this chapter are explored in more detail throughout the report.

## CHAPTER THREE: YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE OF ALCOHOL USE

3.1 This chapter reports on a number of exercises which were used to explore young people's experiences of alcohol use. These experiences reflected the personal views outlined above; that drinking is a typical and integral element in the transition to adulthood, tacitly supported by society in general.

### ALCOHOL USE

3.2 An exercise called 'Do you drink alcohol?' was introduced by the facilitator who then conducted a quick straw poll to determine how many young people drink alcohol in their area.

3.3 The young people were asked "Is underage drinking a problem in your area? Yes or No"?

3.4 Participants then completed two further exercises. The first one involved a worksheet which asked a number of questions on young people's drinking generally (See Annex 7). These were completed individually or in groups of 2 or 3. The answers to the questions and any other comments that were relevant were written on the worksheets.

3.5 The second exercise required the young people to each complete a questionnaire about their own use of and attitudes towards alcohol (Annex 6).

3.6 Eighty-nine young people completed these exercises which were then used to analyse young people's experience of alcohol use. It is the second exercise (questionnaire) on young people's experience of alcohol which is reported next.

**Table 3.1** 'Do you drink alcohol?'

| Number of completed questionnaires |                 |                 | 89 (91% of total consulted) |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Do you drink alcohol?              | YES             | NO              | SOMETIMES                   | Total     |
| Females                            | 30 (34%)        | 15 (17%)        | 4 (4%)                      | 49 (55%)  |
| Males                              | 28 (31%)        | 11 (12%)        | 1 (1%)                      | 40 (45%)  |
| <b>Totals</b>                      | <b>58 (65%)</b> | <b>26 (29%)</b> | <b>5 (6%)</b>               | <b>89</b> |

Percentages do not all add up to 100% due to rounding

3.7 Two thirds (65%) of those who answered the question reported 'yes' to drinking alcohol.

### *Age differences*

3.8 In this question the average age of 'yes' respondents was 17 while the average age of 'no' respondents was 12. The average age of those who answered sometimes was 13. This age demarcation suggests that we could usefully focus on the key ages of 9-13, a time when drinking habits are far less established. Older young people, for whom experimentation is seen as the norm, may require a different approach.

### *Gender differences*

3.9 As shown in the table, there were no notable gender differences between those who said they drank alcohol and those who did not, with very similar numbers of females and males answering 'yes', 'no' and 'sometimes'.

### *Ethnicity*

3.10 Examining ethnicity as a variable, young people from Black African origin all said 'no' to drinking alcohol, but this may be a reflection of a younger age group (7 to 13 years) rather than ethnicity.

## **WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK?**

**Table 3.2** 'Drinks of choice'

| <b>Drink of choice</b>  | <b>No. of mentions<br/>(n=58)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Vodka   | 45                                | 78%               |
| Alcopops  | 35                                | 60%               |
| Beer  | 30                                | 52%               |
| Cider   | 27                                | 46%               |
| Lager   | 27                                | 46%               |
| Wine  | 26                                | 45%               |
| Other   | 22                                | 38%               |
| 'Other' included  |                                   |                   |
| Whisky and spirits  | 6                                 |                   |
| Aftershock  | 4                                 |                   |
| Peach Schnapps  | 3                                 |                   |
| Buckfast, Cocktails and<br>Southern Comfort   | 2 mentions each                   |                   |
| Babycham, Bacardi Breezers,<br>MD20/20, Goldschlager, Red<br>Bull, Red Square and Tequila | 1 mention each                    |                   |

3.11 Vodka was very much the drink of choice for the young people of both sexes who responded 'yes' to the question '*do you drink alcohol?*'

3.12 About two thirds of participants said they drank vodka were under the age of 18. For those young people who cannot drink in pubs by virtue of not being or looking old enough, vodka is potent, easy to disguise and consumed by mixing it with other drinks and putting it into ordinary bottles like coke and lemonade bottles.

### WHEN DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK?

3.13 Although the numbers of young people who said they drink alcohol is high (65% of completed questionnaires) the frequency with which they drink alcohol is much lower. None of the young people said they drank on a daily basis and over one third answered ‘hardly ever’. However, an almost equal number answered ‘every week’ mainly at weekends, during school holidays and on special occasions.

Table 3.3 ‘When do young people drink?’

| How often do you drink alcohol?     | No of Mentions (n=61) | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Every day                           | 0                     | 0%         |
| Every week (mainly at weekends)     | 18                    | 30%        |
| Every month                         | 9                     | 15%        |
| Hardly ever                         | 22                    | 36%        |
| Never                               | 0                     | 0%         |
| Other                               | 12                    | 20%        |
| ‘Other’ included                    |                       |            |
| Every 2/3 days                      |                       |            |
| Special occasions and family events |                       |            |
| Every other week                    |                       |            |

Percentages do not all add up to 100% due to rounding

### WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK?

3.14 Reasons why young people say they drink are complex and multifarious. Advertising, peer pressure, individual choice, the example of adults and characters on TV, all play a role to lesser or greater degrees.

3.15 Young people gave a number of varied responses about why they drank and when answering they frequently referred to young people generally. The following reasons were given as the most popular:

- The influence of others, mainly older brothers and sisters and friends
  - “Because friends do it”
  - “Peer pressure”
  - “So that they can look smart in front of their friends”
  - “Being influenced by others – see older people doing it”
- Feeling good, getting a buzz, showing off and looking cool
  - “Because it’s fun”

*“To feel good”*

*“To show off”*

*“Get buzz”*

*“Look cool; have fun with their mates”*

*“They might want people to think they’re cool and not chicken”*

*“To make their selves more confident”*

- Choosing to drink, either because individuals want to or through natural experimentation

*“You get drunk to become sociable and make new mates...it’s a kind of tradition for young people to drink at weekends”*

*“They don’t want to take drugs but still don’t want to be sober”*

- As a way of solving problems

*“Don’t care enough about life and want to forget about problems”*

*“Stress e.g. exams, parents”*

*“To forget their problems at home or at school (if they are getting bullied)”*

- Having nothing else to do.

The issue of leisure was explored and a range of views were expressed without any real consensus. However the following highlights some of the points the young people made.

They disagreed with the suggestion that young people drink simply because they have nothing else to do, believing it to be a simplistic explanation for why young people drink. Although young people recognised that having good leisure facilities and other social outlets should prevent alcohol misuse they realised that this didn’t necessarily follow. A number of reasons were given for this, for example, the fatalist view was expressed that *“they would drink anyway”*. Others stated that there were things to do if you wanted to do them whilst others mentioned the barriers of cost and access. Some simply said that it came down to a matter of choice - not everyone wants to make use of existing leisure facilities and would rather go to the park and drink with their mates.

- Lack of transport

Lack of transport was not seen as a particularly significant factor in encouraging or discouraging drinking, although some young people (5) did mention that not having access to transport would push them towards drinking.

*“Buses are not when you want them to be”*

*“It costs too much”*

- Other drug use

Young people did not identify any significant correlation between the use of alcohol and taking other drugs. Some older young people highlighted that taking ecstasy would mean that young people were less likely to drink alcohol in favour of water.

## **WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK?**

3.16 Young people drink mainly in the streets and in parks and away from parental control:

*“Anywhere they won’t get caught – away from security cameras”*

3.17 Woods, buses, bus shelters, by canals, in the common stair of tenement flats, on school grounds were all mentioned. For older young people, it was easier to drink in pubs.

## **WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK?**

3.18 Young people made little differentiation between those who drank and those who did not. They said that girls and boys of all ages drank, seeing no discernible difference between those who live in rural or urban areas.

3.19 Interestingly, a high proportion of young people saw other groups of young people drinking as a significant problem:

*“It is quite scary when you go outside and have to pass gangs at night”*

3.20 Of the 67 young people who responded to the question ‘*Is underage drinking a problem in your area?*’ 54 young people (81%) answered yes and only 13 (19%) responded no:

*“My friend is scared of going under the underpass because of drunk gangs - now that's scary”*

## **WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE GET DRINK FROM?**

3.21 Young people have a range of strategies for obtaining alcohol despite being under the legal age for purchasing alcohol. Using older young people or family members to buy it for them was the most popular method. Corner shops and off licences were the most frequently used outlets for young people to obtain alcohol themselves.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE’S THOUGHTS, WORRIES AND CONCERNS ABOUT DRINKING**

3.22 In this exercise young people were asked either individually or in 2’s or 3’s, to write down on post-it notes, 3 thoughts about young people drinking and any concerns or worries they may have. The table below indicates the number of times particular concerns were mentioned.

3.23 At the end of the exercise young people were asked to vote on the 4 most important concerns about young people drinking.

3.24 This exercise was then repeated in relation to the concerns young people have about adults drinking (see chapter four)

**Table 3.4 ‘Thoughts, worries and concerns about young people drinking’**

(A full list of comments is shown in Annex 4)

| Thoughts, worries and concerns about young people drinking | No. of mentions | % of total mentions |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| Health risks   | 24              | 17%                 |
| Crime  | 13              | 9%                  |
| Peer pressure  | 13              | 9%                  |
| Loss of awareness/control                                  | 9               | 6%                  |
| Aggression   | 8               | 6%                  |
| OK in moderation   | 8               | 6%                  |
| Victim of aggression                                       | 7               | 5%                  |
| Should not drink at all                                    | 7               | 5%                  |
| Availability - ease of                                     | 6               | 4%                  |
| Family Problems  | 6               | 4%                  |
| Restrictions on age & access to alcohol                    | 5               | 4%                  |
| Sexual activity  | 4               | 3%                  |
| Introducing alcohol gradually                              | 4               | 3%                  |
| Parental disapproval                                       | 3               | 2%                  |
| Miscellaneous (see below)                                  | 25              | 18%                 |

Percentages do not all add up to 100% due to rounding

3.25 The following outlines young people’s specific concerns about the areas identified in the exercise:

- Health risks

A significant number of young people expressed concern about the health risks associated with drinking alcohol. They mentioned both short and long term consequences such as: collapsing; choking on vomit; liver damage; becoming an alcoholic; brain damage; and binge drinking leading to health problems later in life. Other comments included:

*“Unable to handle it and become very ill”*

*“Damage baby if pregnant”*

*“It may damage your health and you could die”*

*“Young people drink too much alcohol and don't seem to stop and think about their health”*

Concerns related to the immediate damage young people could sustain if they drank too much and also the longer-term damage to health. Their concerns appeared to be about young people in general and the potential damage that could be incurred if they drank too much.

Although the majority of young people recognised the dangers to health as ones which should push them away from alcohol, their personal experiences and patterns of drinking reflect a different reality. Being aware of the health risks does not appear to be enough to prevent young people drinking.

- Crime

Young people expressed concern about crime as a consequence of drinking, mentioning wrecking or stealing cars, having a criminal record affecting future careers, lighting fires, getting lifted by the police and stealing to get drunk. Some young people also raised concern not just about perpetrating offences but about being the victims of aggression. One group was particularly concerned that alcohol “*causes people to get raped – male and female*”.

- Miscellaneous comments

A range of comments were given which did not fall into the above categories. This reflects the diversity of views and experiences amongst young people:

*“Alcohol is bad but I don't think anything will change about young people drinking”*

*“Drinking may not combine with your education”*

*“If you get into a routine of drinking it is hard to get out of it once you grow older”*

*“Invent a cheap drink which gets you bladdered in 1 bottle cause then you wouldn't need any more bottles thus causing them to drink less”*

3.26 These comments show that young people have a keen awareness of a number of risk factors associated with alcohol consumption.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS, FAMILY, ADVERTISING AND THE MEDIA, THE WIDER CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT, HEALTH EDUCATION**

4.1 The information contained in this chapter is drawn from both discussions and notes from a number of different exercises which explored perceptions of key influencing factors on drinking.

### **THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS**

4.2 In the 'push and pull' exercise reported earlier and during a number of other discussions, the majority of young people agreed that having friends or older brothers or sisters who drank was a very definite pull factor towards drinking. Similarly, having friends who do not drink was seen as a strong push factor away from drinking.

4.3 Young people do not tend to drink alone or in isolation, they drink when they are with their friends. Peer pressure is always a strong contributing factor as some comments demonstrated:

*“If you don't drink, you won't have friends. A friend might be in a gang and you want to get into it”*

*“If you want to be popular like your friends, you might think that you take it once and you wouldn't want to fall out with your friends”*

4.4 But it is important not to overplay the influence of peers. Young people do not necessarily drink because they see their friends drink. A range of other factors are involved in the decision to drink or not to drink. For many young people, there was a clear individual choice to be made with regard to drinking or not drinking with comments such as:

*“Depends on who friends are - also to do with will power”*

*“Depends how easily influenced you are by friends”*

### **THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY AND OTHER ADULTS**

4.5 It is interesting that in the 'thoughts, worries and concerns about young people drinking' exercise, parental disapproval ranked lowest amongst the worries and concerns young people have about drinking. This was confirmed in the 'push and pull' exercise when the majority of young people reported that parental disapproval about drinking would be a definite pull factor towards drinking.

4.6 However, young people were undecided about whether parents or other adults drinking around them would push or pull them towards drinking. Many young people made a distinction between those adults who drank sensibly, who had a more liberal

attitude towards drinking and were more open about the subject, than those adults for whom alcohol was a problem. They considered it a push factor if an adult was thought to have a clear problem with alcohol or if:

*“Someone you know is dependent”*

4.7 However, young people were undecided about whether parents with a more liberal attitude towards drinking would push or pull them towards drinking:

*“Could be both push and pull – depends on how well you get on with your parents”*

4.8 Young people clearly recognised the disparities and differences between adults’ drinking and young people's drinking. Young people identified the hypocrisy inherent in adult warnings of health dangers whilst they themselves indulged in the very thing they are warning against:

*“If they don’t want you to do it, they shouldn’t do it”*

4.9 Many young people believed that their drinking is perceived by adults to be a problem and something which has to be curbed, whilst adult drinking is not seen as a problem by society as a whole but as socially acceptable. The police in particular were seen to focus more on young people drinking than on adults. Overall, there was support for the view that too much attention was put on young people when the real problem was adults drinking:

*“Don’t focus on ‘alcies’ enough”*

*“Started drinking when Mum and Dad were drinking – they solved their problems that way so I followed what they did”*

*“Usually because you start drinking when you see your parents drinking - you won't be afraid they'll tell you off”*

## **YOUNG PEOPLE’S THOUGHTS, WORRIES AND CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS DRINKING**

4.10 In the previous chapter an exercise was reported on participant’s concerns about young people drinking. The second half of this exercise involved identifying concerns about adults drinking, and these are reported next.

4.11 The table below indicates the number of times particular concerns were mentioned.

**Table 4.1** ‘Thoughts, worries and concerns about adults drinking’

(A full list of comments is shown in Annex 5)

| Thoughts, worries and concerns about adults drinking | No. of Mentions (n=122) | % of total mentions |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Setting an example                                   | 29                      | 24%                 |
| Health risks   | 22                      | 18%                 |
| Aggression   | 21                      | 17%                 |
| Miscellaneous  | 18                      | 15%                 |
| Loss of awareness/control                            | 11                      | 9%                  |
| Drink driving  | 9                       | 7%                  |
| Hypocritical   | 7                       | 6%                  |
| Crime  | 3                       | 2%                  |
| Victim of aggression                                 | 2                       | 2%                  |

Percentages do not all add up to 100% due to rounding

4.11 There follows a discussion of the comments which young people made in relation to the concerns identified in this exercise:

- Setting an example

Young people were very clear that their main worry and concern about adults drinking was that they were setting a bad example. Young people wanted adults to lead by example:

*“The adults should show a good example and not drink excessively and get drunk in front of younger people”*

Consequently, young people feel that adults have a 'cheek' telling young people what to do when they themselves often drink to excess:

*(Adults...) “should be promoting social drinking and not over consumption of drinking”*

*“As soon as children drink they always get into trouble but when adults drink they think it is a laugh!”*

Not all young people agreed with this and countered it with possible reasons why adults should intervene, for example:

*“Parents feel stupid about it and would quit if they could – they don’t want you to end up like them”*

*“They should tell you because they’ve been though it - difference between lecturing & constructively giving facts”*

- Health risks

Young people expressed concern about the health risks connected to adults drinking. This reflected in numbers of responses similar to the concerns they expressed for

young people drinking reported in chapter 3. Health risks mentioned included, becoming ill e.g. cancer and liver damage, choking on vomit, collapsing, increasing the bad points of existing illnesses e.g. epilepsy, depression. Other comments included:

*“Turn into alcoholics”*

*“Damage baby if pregnant”*

*“Drinking can KILL”*

*“Alcoholism can be hereditary”*

- Aggression and violence

Young people cited aggression as a key worry they have about adults drinking, mentioning fighting, violence, abusiveness, hitting children. Comments included:

*“Adults are a lot worse than children and get very aggressive or upset”*

*“They tend to become a bit violent when they have had a lot to drink”*

*“If adults have been drinking they could scare ME!”*

*“They could change their personalities when drinking”*

*“They can batter their wives”*

Worries were also expressed about adults losing control:

*“They might have an accident at home when they are drinking, falling down stairs, fires, committing suicide or die”*

## ADVERTISING AND THE MEDIA

4.12 In the questionnaire, young people were asked if advertising of alcohol on TV and in magazines encourages young people to drink, and the following responses were given:

**Table 4.2** 'Influence of advertising'

| Do you think that the advertising of alcohol on TV and in magazines encourages young people to drink? | No. of mentions (n=89) | % of completed questionnaires |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Strongly agree  | 18                     | 20%                           |
| Agree   | 36                     | 41%                           |
| Unsure  | 22                     | 25%                           |
| Disagree  | 10                     | 11%                           |
| Strongly disagree   | 3                      | 3%                            |

4.13 Nearly two-thirds (61%) of young people either strongly agreed or agreed that alcohol advertising does encourage young people to drink and expressed a developed awareness of the power of advertising:

*“...but not just with alcohol, with lots of brands. That's what advertising's for”*

4.14 Earlier, advertising was cited as a key pull factor towards drinking. In the discussions on advertising, it was clear that young people were able to identify with some current advertisements. For instance, several different groups mentioned the Budweiser advert. One group of 7 - 13 year olds were all aware of the Budweiser advert 'Wassup' and could mimic phrases from the advert. There was also some support for the view that characters on well known TV programmes did play a role in glamourising and normalising the use of alcohol, particularly with so many scenes set in pubs.

4.15 Whilst recognising advertising as a definite pull factor, young people expressed the view that advertising on its own was too simple an explanation for why young people drink. There was some consensus that advertising perhaps affected the choice of drink and the willingness to try new drinks more than the initial decision to drink. This was particularly true for older young people with more money who used pubs or clubs.

## **WIDER SOCIAL/CULTURAL INFLUENCES**

4.16 Young people recognised that a pervasive acceptance of the Scottish/British culture of drinking normalises young people's (and adults') use of alcohol. This perhaps ties in with the perception that for many young people, changes in the law would not make much of a difference because of the prevalent attitude that if young people want to drink, they will and there is not much society does to stop it:

*“Why can adults complain when we drink? They sell us alcohol or give us it”*

*“Why's there a law about alcohol?”*

## **HEALTH EDUCATION AND SERVICES**

4.17 In the questionnaire, young people were asked whether they were given enough information about the effects of drinking alcohol with the following responses given:

**Table 4.3            ‘Is there enough health information?’**

| <b>Do you think that young people are given enough information about the effects of drinking alcohol?</b> | <b>No. of mentions (n=89)</b> | <b>% of completed questionnaires</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Yes   | 37                            | 42%                                  |
| No  | 41                            | 46%                                  |
| Unsure  | 10                            | 11%                                  |
| No response   | 1                             | 1%                                   |

4.18 Young people were fairly evenly split with regard to whether young people were given enough health information about the effects of alcohol:

*“Depends where it is from, e.g. schools are crap. Some groups are good. Parents – depends on the relationship. Also being given info and being given quality info is different”*

4.19 Many young people said they were overloaded with too much information, not just about alcohol but about drugs, sexual health and all sorts of other health risks. Perhaps it is the *quality* of health information rather than *quantity* which is the most important factor.

4.20 In terms of services, young people from all the groups consulted showed very little awareness of what help is available for those with alcohol problems, apart from Alcoholics Anonymous.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: YOUNG PEOPLE’S IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR REDUCING ALCOHOL MISUSE IN SCOTLAND**

5.1 This chapter reports on young people’s ideas for reducing harm associated with alcohol misuse in Scotland. Throughout the consultation, it was clear that young people did not regard alcohol use as a neat and discrete type of behaviour. Instead they focussed on alcohol as one aspect which cannot be separated or seen in isolation from the rest of their lives. Their ideas and solutions for reducing alcohol misuse in Scotland must also be viewed within the wider context of the young people’s lives.

5.2 The ideas expressed for reducing alcohol use amongst young people are underpinned by ideas about greater social inclusion and greater participation in society generally. Young people’s ideas do not present easy short-term solutions but are long term and strategic in nature, reflecting a holistic approach. They also reflect the diversity of age, lifestyles and experience of those consulted. No clear single solution will fit all – different ideas and solutions must take into account the diversity amongst young people with particular attention paid to age differences.

### **GOOD AND BAD IDEAS FOR REDUCING ALCOHOL USE IN SCOTLAND**

5.3 Young people were given cards with pre-prepared statements and asked what they thought were the good and bad ideas for reducing alcohol misuse in Scotland. Discussions were held around the statements from this exercise, however, participants were also asked to express their own ideas for reducing alcohol misuse amongst young people.

#### **‘Good’ ideas (in order of preference)**

##### *1. Alternatives to drinking*

5.4 The view was strongly expressed that more young people should be encouraged to become involved in developing healthier alternatives to drinking, including sport. However, it was recognised that not everyone likes sport, and therefore there was a call for more emphasis to be put on looking at different ways of solving problems, for example, more discussion through schools about different ways to handle problems which do not involve alcohol. It was felt that this should be made fun, with younger ages in particular becoming involved in things like mental health awareness and relaxation:

*“not just concentrating on bad things like drugs, alcohol and sex - a more holistic approach”*

5.5 One group also called for more concentration on opportunities, on travelling and on careers.

5.6 Young people wanted to see a range of alternatives in order to allow them to make informed choices about how they spend their leisure time:

*“Getting a buzz from going to places instead of drugs and alcohol”*

*“Make the things to do cheaper than the drink so that people have to make a choice”*

5.7 Suggestions for alternatives included:

- Making sure young people are aware of community activities
- Drama and activity groups
- Cost free activities, more drop in places like The Corner Health and Information Project in Dundee or the Drydock alcohol free café in Eyemouth
- More alcohol free cafes / youth cafes
- Places to hang out which are out of the rain
- Sports clubs

5.8 Young people wanted a wide range of people involved in looking at alternatives - young people themselves, youth workers, parents, teachers, as well as people in local and national government. One group also suggested that local businesses be encouraged to give sponsorship.

5.9 The quality of what is on offer was an important factor. One group suggested that it was important to move away from stereotyping and *“not having a stupid wee youth club”*. How much input young people have in the inception, design, delivery and management of services is also crucial - young people wanted services provided with their contribution and not just for them. Cost and access must also be accounted for as they are often viewed as drawbacks:

*“Make the things to do cheaper than the drinks so that people have to make a choice. I think it's £2.50 to go for a swim whereas it's £1.25 for 2 litres of cider. So what do you do?”*

## 2. Greater participation

5.10 Directly linked to young people's call for better alternatives to drinking was the call for greater involvement in their communities and more opportunities to have their say about what they would like to see happen. Suggestions included:

*“Spending more money on asking young people what they want”*

*“Young people should go and speak to the Council to suggest ideas”*

### 3. *Better health education*

5.11 Young people suggested better, not necessarily more, health education about the effects of alcohol:

*“Depends on who does it and how they approach the subject”*

5.12 This can also be directly linked to the call for greater participation in society which young people identified as one way of reducing alcohol misuse. Combining the two approaches of greater participation and health education, young people felt that they could be more involved in helping set the health agenda and in the design and promotion of health messages.

5.13 Given the evidence that children between 9-13 are far less likely to drink, health promotion might usefully be focused at this age range. A different approach is likely to be needed for older young people whose drinking habits are more established and for whom experimentation is the norm.

### 4. *Proof of age cards*

5.14 At the moment, proof of age cards are seen to be ineffective because of lack of national implementation and enforcement and because they are too easy to forge. However a number of young people felt that the idea itself was a good one, subject to better control and enforcement:

*"ID cards should be fully reinforced for youths"*

*"If people showed IDs it might reduce under age drinking"*

*"Using ID cards educates the shop owners that young people have them"*

### 5. *Banning certain types of alcohol*

5.14 There was some limited support for banning certain types of alcohol felt to be targeted at young people, for example, alcopops. However, young people were unsure about how this could be implemented.

### 6. *Police curfews*

5.15 Five out of 14 groups of young people thought that having police curfews was a good idea as they would keep young people off the streets at night. Only one of these groups thought that it could also be a bad idea.

## **‘Bad’ ideas**

5.16 Young people, perhaps not surprisingly, did not think that greater law enforcement measures and legal changes would solve the problem of alcohol misuse.

### *1. Making the laws stronger*

5.17 The majority of young people, with the exception of younger children (aged 9-12), did not see the law as it currently stands as a barrier to accessing alcohol. For many, it was a positive incitement to breaking the law:

*“If it's illegal, you'll do it more”*

5.18 Raising the legal age limit to 21 for example, was not seen as a realistic option, unless proof of age cards were much more rigorously enforced.

### *2. Fines for parents if their children are found to be drinking*

5.19 Only one group thought this was a good idea. Young people were generally clear that drinking was up to them and therefore their responsibility.

### *3. Police curfews*

5.20 Five groups thought that police curfews to make sure young people are not out on the streets was a good idea and 3 groups thought it was a bad idea.

### *4. Increasing cost of alcohol*

5.21 Increasing the cost of alcohol in pubs was not seen as prohibitive. Young people reported that they buy cheap drink before going to the pub.

## **‘Good’ and ‘bad’ ideas**

5.22 Young people were undecided about whether the following were good or bad ideas.

### *1. Changing the law from 18 to 16*

5.23 A slim majority of young people agreed with the suggestion that the law about drinking in a pub be changed from 18 to 16. A number of reasons were cited. For example it would stop young people from being out on the streets, the predominant place where young people go to drink:

*“Then teenagers would not drink in the streets. We would drink less - it's expensive to drink in a pub”*

5.24 Young people saw this as a safety issue. Pubs were seen as being a safer environment to drink in compared to on the streets because there would be other people (i.e. older adults) present.

5.25 For many young people, particularly those aged 13 and over, the law was seen almost as an irrelevance and breaking it part of the thrill of drinking,

*“If you're younger you get a buzz cos you're not allowed”*

*“If you drop the legal age it will take the thrill out of it and less people will drink excessively”*

5.26 Reducing the legal age to 16 was seen as one way of taking the thrill out of breaking the law, although other young people said that it didn't matter what the law said because if young people were going to drink, no law would stop them.

5.27 Young people also mentioned other age related discrepancies such as being able to get married at 16 but not drink legally in a pub:

*“You can get married at 16 - so does that mean you couldn't drink at your wedding?”*

## *2. Ban all alcohol advertising*

5.28 Young people were evenly split as to whether they thought alcohol advertising should be banned. Many believed that banning it would not make much difference because young people would still go ahead and drink if they wanted to. However, several suggested that alcohol advertising be banned on TV before the 9pm watershed so that younger children would less likely be influenced.

## *3. Stronger penalties for young people who drink*

5.29 This was thought to be a good idea in practice, but not in application. Some young people thought that stronger penalties would actively encourage young people to drink as an act of rebellion.

## *4. Stronger penalties for people who sell alcohol to underage drinkers*

5.30 There was some support for stiffer penalties for retailers selling alcohol to underage young people. Suggestions for how to do this included police surveillance, jail for those found guilty, taking alcohol licences away, spot checks and:

*“Giving people who sell alcohol bigger fines and put the money towards healthier alternatives”*

5.31 However, young people also saw a number of barriers to making some of these work, particularly the costs associated with police surveillance. There were disadvantages noted too. For instance, many outlets sell alcohol and older people would be penalised if alcohol licences were taken away. Importantly, while stronger penalties for retailers might deter some from selling to those underage, young people noted that the most popular method of obtaining alcohol was to ask older young people to obtain it for them.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The young people who took part in this consultation displayed wide-ranging and insightful awareness of the issues surrounding the use and misuse of alcohol in Scotland. Their diverse views do not point to any hard and fast conclusions, but present a mixed picture offering a range of different policy options.

6.2 Young people were very aware of the dangers of drinking to themselves, both on a personal and a social level and about the associated health risks. Young people also reported they were concerned with adults drinking. Specifically, they identified worries about the example set by adults; the risks to adults' health and adult aggression as a result of drinking.

6.3 While the consultation found a high level of knowledge about the consequences of drinking, a very clear gap existed between knowledge and action, with the majority of young people saying that the pull factors towards drinking were stronger than the push factors away from it. Drinking to get drunk is the norm and drinking amongst young people is seen to be tacitly supported by society in general. The reasons why young people drink are complex and multifarious, and include the influence of friends, advertising, the example of adults, having older brothers and sisters who drink and a perceived Scottish culture of drinking. In addition, many young people are making an active and often informed choice to drink.

6.4 Solutions to the problem of alcohol misuse must be contextualised within the day to day reality of young people's lives. For instance, health education should not be delivered in isolation from the rest of young people's lives. The great diversity of views, experiences, lifestyles and interests amongst children and young people must be taken into account in designing and delivering health messages. Age in particular is a very strong variable with regard to drinking. As this consultation and other research show, younger children have far more definite and negative views about drinking while drinking habits are more likely to be ingrained in older young people.

6.5 Young people's ideas for solving the problem of alcohol misuse are underpinned by ideas of their greater participation and involvement in what is going on around them. Young people are calling for more leisure alternatives to drinking to be set up, with their full and active involvement. Their active participation also extends to health education messages and delivery. In addition, young people recognise that alcohol misuse is not just their problem and that a range of different actors must contribute to tackling the problem, including local and national government, youth workers, teachers, parents, local business and of course young people themselves.

## **ANNEX ONE: LIST OF GROUPS CONSULTED**

Save the Children consulted with 98 children and young people in 14 groups from:

The Corner Young People's Health and Information Project, Dundee (Urban)

Dyce Academy, Aberdeen (Rural)

Castlemilk Youth Voice Group, Glasgow (Urban)

Article 12 in Scotland Edinburgh group (Urban)

Ormlie Community Partnership Project, Thurso (Rural)

Barnardo's Freagarrach Thru' Care Project, Stirling (Urban/Rural)

Fort William Community Partnership Project (Rural)

Victoria Street Youth Café, Edinburgh (Urban)

Wester Hailes Cultural Welfare Project, Edinburgh (Urban)

Ormlie Community Partnership Project, Thurso (*Group 2*) (Rural)

The Dry Dock, Alcohol Free Café, Eyemouth (Rural)

The Basement, Tayside Alcohol Focus Group, Dundee (Urban/Rural)

Angus Youth Congress, Forfar (Rural)

West Lothian Youth Action Project (Rural/Urban)

## **ANNEX TWO: FOCUS GROUP SESSION FORMAT**

The following is an outline of a typical focus group session which lasted around 90 minutes.

### **Explanations given to groups at the start of a session**

The Scottish Executive has asked Save the Children to speak to between 80 and 100 children and young people across Scotland about their views on alcohol. They have asked us to do this because your views are very important and because young people are likely to have different ideas and opinions to adults.

This consultation is about asking young people to share their views and ideas about alcohol. Save the Children will then put these views into a report and feed back directly the Scottish Executive. The Scottish Executive will then put the ideas from children and young people together with the ideas of other groups to put together a plan for tackling alcohol misuse throughout Scotland.

Save the Children is meeting with about 15 groups of children and young people to find out their views. This session, which should last about an hour and a half won't just be about talking, but should be as enjoyable as possible and there will be lots of different ways for you to express your views.

### *Anonymity and confidentiality*

No young people will be named in anything written – notes are private and won't be shown to group workers, or people in the government.

However, if you tell us anything that had happened to you which is dangerous or bad e.g. if someone has hurt you, then we may have to talk to another adult about it. But we would talk to you about that on your own first.

### *Introduce graffiti wall*

- Objectives: open forum for young people to write any comments they want to not covered by the session or for reinforcing any messages they want to get across
- Recording: self recording on flip chart

### **Exercise 1**

#### **Ice breaker – 'Agree or disagree'**

- Ten statements were read out and young people asked whether they agreed, disagreed or were unsure about each one. Discussions followed on some of the points raised here.
- Objectives: introduction to some of the general issues relating to alcohol use in Scotland and getting young people to give initial thought to issues that will be looked at in more detail throughout the session
- Recording: voting and facilitator notes of discussion on flipchart

*Statements:*

1. All alcohol is bad
2. Alcohol can make you do stupid things
3. Alcohol can make you feel better
4. The law about when you can drink in a pub should be changed from 18 to 16
5. Experimenting with alcohol is a normal part of growing up
6. Young people drink alcohol because they see their friends drink
7. Young people drink more alcohol as they get older
8. Young people drink alcohol because there is nothing else to do
9. Too much attention is put on young people when the real problem is adults drinking
10. Adults have got a cheek telling young people not to drink when they do it themselves

**Exercise 2**

**'Push or Pull'**

- Young people were asked, using pre prepared cards, to indicate what would push them away from alcohol or put them off drinking and likewise what would attract them towards drinking
- Objectives: to examine the push and pull factors relating to young people's drinking, which can then be analysed in terms of key variables e.g. age, ethnicity, rural/urban and particular life experiences
- Recording: Post Its, flipcharts, prepared orange cards, ranking

*Prompts for push factors/negatives*

|                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Violence                  | Health risks            |
| Risks to safety/accidents | Domestic abuse          |
| Crime                     | Danger to sexual health |
| Cost                      | Availability of alcohol |

*Prompts for pull factors/positives*

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| To have fun  | To escape               |
| Unlike drug use, it is a legal activity for certain age groups | To relax                |
| To relieve stress or boredom                                   | To belong to peer group |

More details on young people's response to the 'push and pull' exercise can be found in Annex 3.

**Exercise 3a****'Drinking in your area'**

- A quick straw poll was conducted - Is underage drinking a problem in your area?  
Yes or No
- Young people asked to fill in worksheet asking: when, where, and why do young people drink; where do they get alcohol from; which young people drink
- Objectives: to examine alcohol use by young people. To focus on personal experience based on where young people live, what they see around them, their friends and other young people
- Recording: photocopied worksheet

*Prompts***When do young people drink?**

|                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| time of day                  | weekends more than weekdays |
| summer more than the winter? | when alone or in groups     |
| school holidays              | when their parents are out  |

**Where do young people drink?**

|          |                |
|----------|----------------|
| in parks | friends houses |
| own home | on the streets |
| in bars  | at parties     |

**Why do young people drink?**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| boredom  | experimentation  |
| because they like it                           | peer pressure and other social reasons such as bonding with peer group |
| older brothers/sisters                         | because they can   |
| coping with stress/relax/to hide real problems | sophisticated  |
| advertising                                    | normal part of British culture   |

**Where do young people get alcohol from?**

|                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| brothers/sisters | older friends |
| from home        | off licences  |
| shops            | supermarkets  |

**Which young people drink?**

|                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| gender                  | age                          |
| from poorer backgrounds | different ethnic backgrounds |
| rural or urban areas    |                              |

**Exercise 3b****‘Worries or concerns’**

- Respondents were their views about young people drinking – did they have any worries or concerns? The same question was then asked about adults
- Objectives: to explore any worries or concerns young people have about adults drinking and about young people’s drinking – are there any differences?
- Recording: flipchart and Post It notes

*Prompts for worries about young people drinking*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| loss of control may lead to accidents            | dangerous behaviour e.g. sexual activity    |
| effects on education                             | making a fool of yourself                   |
| may encourage younger children to copy behaviour | aggression, crime and anti social behaviour |
| can use alcohol to hide real problems            | health problems                             |
| making a nuisance                                |   |

*Prompts for worries about adults drinking*

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| encourage young people to drink | violence  |
| domestic abuse                  | loss of control                                 |
| neglect                         | drink driving                                   |
| accidents in the home           | children following their parents example        |
| health problems                 | may not be able to look after children properly |

More details on young peoples’ responses to the ‘worries and concerns’ exercise can be found in Annexes 4 and 5.

**Exercise 4****‘Solving the problem’**

Young people were asked, using pre prepared statement cards, what they thought were the good ideas and what they thought were the bad ideas for solving the problem of alcohol misuse in Scotland. They were also encouraged to brainstorm any other ideas they might have

- Objectives: identifying solutions to the problem. To examine what can be done by young people and by politicians to reduce drinking amongst young people
- To identify how can young people can be part of the solution and not just seen as part of the problem
- Recording: Post It notes and voting

**Exercise 5****Questionnaire – ‘Some quick questions about alcohol’**

Young people were asked to provide information on their experiences of and views on alcohol use

Objectives: to give quantitative information to back up qualitative data

Recording: self

More details on the questionnaire can be found in Annex 6

**Evaluation of session**

‘How was it for you?’

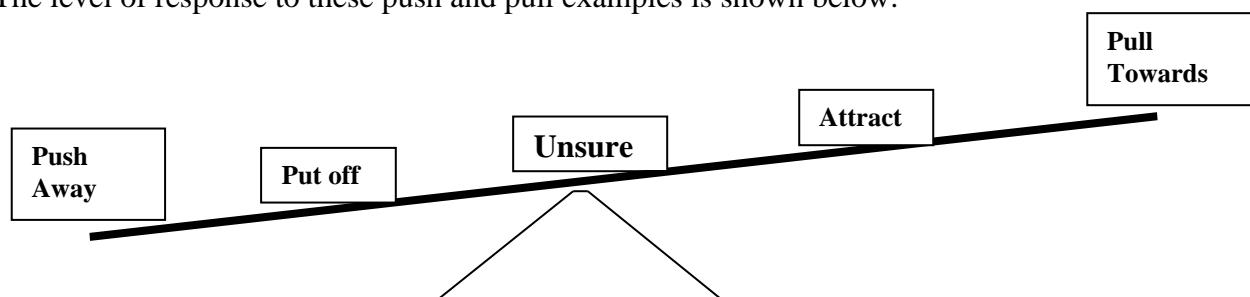
A short evaluation form was completed at the end of each session. This provided useful information on young peoples’ views of their experiences of the session and was used to inform subsequent focus groups.

## ANNEX THREE: PUSH OR PULL EXERCISE

NB. Not all groups did this exercise

Children and young people were asked, using pre-prepared cards, to indicate what would *push them away from or put them off drinking* and likewise what would *attract them or pull them towards alcohol*.

The level of response to these push and pull examples is shown below:



This see-saw effect produced the following:

| <b>PUSH AWAY FROM ALCOHOL</b>                         | <b>Push<br/>Away</b> | <b>Put<br/>off</b> | <b>Unsure<br/>Push</b> | <b>Unsure<br/>Pull</b> | <b>Attract</b> | <b>Pull<br/>Towards</b> | <b>PULL TOWARDS ALCOHOL</b>                          |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|--|
| Having ID cards                                       | 6                    | 0                  | 1                      | 1                      | 2              | 0                       | Having ID cards                                      |
| Having good leisure facilities                        | 6                    | 5                  | 1                      | 0                      | 0              | 0                       | Having good leisure facilities                       |
| Having friends who don't drink                        | 6                    | 2                  | 2                      | 0                      | 1              | 0                       | Having friends who don't drink                       |
| The dangers of drinking to your health                | 11                   | 3                  | 4                      | 0                      | 0              | 0                       | The dangers of drinking to you health                |
| Parents or other adults disapproving about drinking   | 4                    | 0                  | 0                      | 2                      | 3              | 3                       | Parents or other adult disapproving about drinking   |
| Parents/other adults around you drinking alcohol      | 2                    | 0                  | 3                      | 1                      | 2              | 2                       | Parents/other adults around yo drinking alcohol      |
| Health education about the effects of alcohol         | 4                    | 5                  | 3                      | 0                      | 1              | 0                       | Health education about th effects of alcohol         |
| Drinking alcohol can put me in danger                 | 7                    | 2                  | 1                      | 0                      | 1              | 0                       | Drinking alcohol can put me in danger                |
| Taking other drugs                                    | 0                    | 0                  | 2                      | 1                      | 2              | 2                       | Taking other drugs                                   |
| No transport to go anywhere                           | 1                    | 0                  | 4                      | 1                      | 2              | 3                       | No transport to go anywhere                          |
| Having friends or older brothers or sisters who drink | 1                    | 0                  | 1                      | 2                      | 7              | 3                       | Having friends or older brother or sisters who drink |
| Alcohol advertising on TV and in magazines            | 0                    | 0                  | 0                      | 2                      | 0              | 6                       | Alcohol advertising on TV and in magazines           |
| Not being allowed in pubs until age 18                | 0                    | 1                  | 1                      | 1                      | 3              | 4                       | Not being allowed in pubs unti age 18                |
| Characters on TV glamorising alcohol                  | 0                    | 1                  | 1                      | 1                      | 3              | 1                       | Characters on TV glamorisin alcohol                  |
| Scottish culture on drinking                          | 0                    | 0                  | 1                      | 2                      | 1              | 3                       | Scottish culture on drinking                         |
| Smoking   | 2                    | 1                  | 1                      | 1                      | 1              | 2                       | Smoking  |
| Having nothing to do                                  | 0                    | 0                  | 2                      | 0                      | 1              | 3                       | Having nothing to do                                 |
| Miscellaneous comments                                | 1                    | 5                  | 1                      | 1                      | 3              | 6                       | Miscellaneous comments                               |
| Smell/Taste   | 0                    | 0                  | 1                      | 1                      | 0              | 0                       | Smell/Taste  |
| Having Fun  | 0                    | 0                  | 0                      | 0                      | 4              | 8                       | Having Fun   |

Miscellaneous comments included:

Push away from alcohol: *“Costs not a factor, buy cheap drink before going to pub”*

*“Medical coverage of drink-driving, deaths & accidents etc on TV”*

Pull towards alcohol: *“Exam stress”*

*“Drink to forget problems”*

*“Depression”*

*“Crime/violence doesn't put you off”*

*“It's easy to get alcohol”*

*“Less consequences with alcohol”*

## ANNEX FOUR: EXERCISE ON THOUGHTS, WORRIES AND CONCERNS ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE DRINKING

### List of comments

| Comments from flip charts   |
|---|
| Drinking too much   |
| Drink more if their parents do not approve or know they are drinking  |
| Criminal records (could affect career in future)  |
| Influenced by other people  |
| Can stop them from going overboard when 18 if introduced gradually  |
| Stealing cars   |
| They get into fights  |
| Getting drink from the shop   |
| Can say stuff they don't mean which cause friction among friends  |
| Could get them into compromising situations which they can't handle   |
| Boys and girls have sex!  |
| Peer pressure, e.g. they may not like the idea but do 'cos their mates do it  |
| Can cause family problems   |
| Can kill them if they overdrink and don't get home, e.g. collapse   |
| Wrecking cars   |
| If boys and girls get drunk they might be stupid  |
| Choke on your vomit   |
| Lighting fires  |
| If they get too drunk they will maybe shout   |
| Cause people to get raped, male or female   |
| Wrecking cars   |
| Boys and girls might have sex   |
| I don't see much point of under age drinking  |
| They are in more danger and are easily drunk so it should be wiped out  |
| If young folk do drink they shouldn't get in a really bad state   |
| I think that young people drink because their friends do it. It is very dangerous and they could kill themselves                |
| Young people drink because their friends drink. They aren't so bad, girls get more upset about things though                    |
| Young people drink too much alcohol and don't seem to stop and think about their health   |
| It's easier to buy aerosol/sprays than it is to buy alcohol   |
| Young people should be able to drink from the age of 16   |
| ID cards should be fully reinforced for youths  |
| They get lifted by the police and taken to hospital   |
| Liver damage  |
| Damage baby if pregnant   |
| Suicide   |
| General health  |
| Becoming an alcoholic   |
| Abusive and aggressive  |
| Gang fights   |
| More crime  |
| Rape  |
| Choking on sick   |
| I think that young people should not drink because its bad enough adults drinking and they should not sell alcohol to under 18s |
| I think it is a load of stupid nonsense and should not happen   |

|   |
|---|
| Cool man!   |
| I think young people shouldn't drink  |
| I think you should be 21 before you can drink   |
| Stupid because you can damage your health   |
| Stupid  |
| Nonsense  |
| I think young people should not drink because when you are young you could get hurt   |
| Being drunk and doing stupid things   |
| It's because they think drinking will make them cooler  |
| If people showed ID's it might reduce under age drinking  |
| Unable to handle it and become very ill   |
| I don't think drinking is too bad so long as you don't drink too much   |
| They are stupid, idiotic  |
| Alcohol is bad but I don't think anything will change about young people drinking   |
| It is quite scary when you go outside and have to pass gangs at night   |
| It is terrible. You can die   |
| They drink because they are depressed   |
| To try and look smart   |
| I think that when young people are drunk at the age of 12 or 14 it is really appalling to the parents. Some people push their self to the limit |
| To show they are not chicken or afraid of drinking  |
| Children also drink to get into a cool gang   |
| My friend is scared of going under the underpass because of drunk gangs now that's scary  |
| Young people might drink so that they can forget about their worries and problems   |
| I think that young people drinking is bad because they might start fighting.  |
| It also might damage their health   |
| They can also be involved in many accidents   |
| Bad for your physical health  |
| It can KILL when you are only little  |
| Young people can get more aggressive  |
| They will steal to get drink. They will get other people to buy drink for them  |
| I don't think that if people drink it would make their friends drink  |
| It may damage your health and you could die   |
| It might damage your brain!!!   |
| I think that if wee people drink it may encourage their pals to do it as well'  |
| My auntie said that a few people in her class drank hooch and now they are MENTAL   |
| Young people drinking is much more serious than adults because adults R <u>supposed</u> to be a bit more sensible                               |
| They should they are too young  |
| It is all right to taste some alcohol as long as you don't take too much  |
| Drinking may not combine with you're education  |
| Young people might start fights for no reason   |
| If younger people start drinking their friends might start drinking too   |
| You might make a fool of yourself   |
| Young people might start drinking because their parents drink   |
| Young people might take some money of their mum's out of her purse etc  |
| They should drink sensibly and not over do it   |
| I think it is alright on weekends and on special occasions  |
| I think it is wrong to drink during EXAMS   |
| Go away - Sorry Dad   |
| Unaware of effects and consequences   |
| It is okay so long as they know their limit   |
| When young people start drinking they will get into lots of trouble   |

|  |
|--|
| It is more easy to get into trouble  |
| I think there is a bad side of young people drinking that if they take a hard blow in life, they may turn to alcohol as a comfort  |
| It's all right so long as they don't drink too much  |
| Peer pressure  |
| Drink has too much an effect on a lot of young people - results in them doing stupid things  |
| Can lead to stealing when they want alcohol and have no money  |
| Another bad thing about young people drinking is they do foolish things, from under age sex to trying other drugs  |
| If you get into a routine of drinking it is hard to get out of it once you grow older  |
| More CC TV   |
| OK in moderation   |
| Good idea having Dry Dock  |
| Rozzers (Police) should be more aware generally  |
| Brain damage   |
| Thins blood  |
| OK if you don't go over the top  |
| Do more circuits of the area (Police)  |
| It's brilliant fun and it doesn't suck   |
| OK   |
| The rozzers (Police) are fat and unhealthy and they need to be fitter cause they canny catch us  |
| Government doesn't do enough to stop it on the streets   |
| Raise the price of drink   |
| Make it legal  |
| Open another youth club which is open longer   |
| Invent a cheap drink which gets you bladdered in 1 bottle cause then you wouldn't need anymore bottles thus causing them 2 drink less  |
| It's become easier for young people to get hold of alcohol these days  |
| It will allow them to drink more as adults (can handle more as you get older)  |
| Some young people's drinking habits reflect those of their parents   |
| "Smoking the Ganja" - could worsen the effect of alcohol in the body   |
| OK to drink with meals, not going out and getting drunk  |
| Alcohol consumption becoming increasingly common for children at younger ages  |
| Peer pressure influences others to drink   |
| It's ok, if young people who are nearing their 18th birthday want to drink if they can handle it in an appropriate way (depends on the individual/especially at that age)        |
| It has become acceptable for young people to drink   |
| Becoming younger - as young as 9. In a rural areas a bit older (about 12) as there is more for kids (9-11) to do and people looking out for you, e.g. swimming on a Friday night |
| In some cases, aids the integration into social groups of some young people  |
| Shop owners are responsible for selling alcohol to young people  |
| In a pub would not drink as much (spirits/Morgans)   |
| In today's society, under age drinking is/has been made more acceptable  |
| People becoming very violent   |
| Public walking through sick and mess   |
| It happens more often and is an issue with the police, e.g. 'operation dry-up' in Carnoustie and Monifieth   |
| Gives you a slight buzz and makes you more sociable and accepted with young people   |
| If parents are more strict on alcohol, young people are more likely to abuse it  |
| If using ID cards educates the shop owners that young people have them   |
| Experiment a bit, e.g. After Shock, Goldschlager - goes straight into your system  |
| Not educated enough on effects   |
| Binge drinking may damage health later in life   |

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| Accidents that happen whilst drinking |
| Getting more confident                |
| Think it's more fun                   |
| Unwanted sexual experiences           |
| Violence                              |

## ANNEX FIVE: EXERCISE ON THOUGHTS, WORRIES AND CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS DRINKING

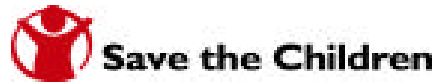
### List of comments

| Comments from flip charts   |
|---|
| If you are drinking you could get handcuffed and put in the van   |
| Become ill, e.g. cancer   |
| Turn into alcoholics  |
| People can become aggressive  |
| Could increase the bad points of any illness they have, e.g. epilepsy   |
| Can encourage children to drink, e.g. going into shops for drink for young people   |
| Whether they drink in front of their children   |
| Adults could collapse   |
| Under age driving   |
| They can choke on their vomit   |
| Amount they drink   |
| Being aware of what's happening around them   |
| Whether they allow their children to drink (hypocritical)   |
| They get into fights  |
| Drinking and driving  |
| They can batter their wives   |
| Getting lifted by the police  |
| Being in control of situation (looking after others)  |
| Setting example to children and young people  |
| They could change their personalities when drinking   |
| If adults are drinking they could tell children to take a shot  |
| If you are drinking you could hit your child and batter   |
| Adults drink so why shouldn't we  |
| The adults should show a good example and not drink excessively and get drink in front of younger people                                    |
| I think it is a bad influence on their children   |
| They could drink drive  |
| When they drink too much they get aggressive  |
| Why can adults complain when we drink - they let us get alcohol because they sell it to us or give us it                                    |
| They influence young people and tend to get violent   |
| They tend to become a bit violent when they have had a lot to drink   |
| Adults seem when they get drink to get more aggressive. My dad owns a shop and some of the people that come in are really scary and violent |
| I think it is unfair that adults should be able to drink in public places   |
| Adults are a lot worse than children and get very aggressive or upset   |
| Adults don't exactly set a good example to us   |
| If adults think we shouldn't be drinking they shouldn't be drinking themselves  |
| Hangovers   |
| Suicide   |
| Becoming an alcoholic   |
| More crime  |
| Liver damage  |
| Domestic abuse  |
| Drink driving   |
| Choking on sick   |
| Rape  |
| General health  |

|  |
|--|
| Abusive and aggressive   |
| Fights   |
| Losing their temper  |
| Going home with people you don't know  |
| Damage baby if pregnant  |
| Stupid man   |
| I think drinking is stupid and children copy   |
| I think adults should be able to drink   |
| Stupid man   |
| They are adults and responsible for their own actions but I still think it is wrong  |
| I think adults should take drinking more seriously   |
| Adults have a right to drink but should not when kids are around   |
| Insulting  |
| Drink is a pain in the bum   |
| They should try to stop! OK  |
| They should make an effort to kick the habit and should make (less) effort to smoke  |
| Adults should not encourage children   |
| Adults also drink when they are dumped by their girl friends and kill themselves   |
| Adults drink because they think it will relieve stress   |
| I think adults drinking is very shocking sometimes because they drink and they are driving they might get arrested                         |
| A few people in my school have been abused by drunk adults!  |
| I think that adults drink so that they can just enjoy themselves and also so that they forget about their worries                          |
| Adults sometimes drink so that they can kill themselves to forget about their worries  |
| Need to calm down  |
| Being drunk and hitting others   |
| They sometimes get drunk and they do crazy things  |
| Drink driving  |
| I'm worried that adults are weird and absolutely idiotic drinking because they are setting a bad example for their children and other kids |
| It is their own problem  |
| They might have an accident at home when they are drinking, falling down stairs, fires, committing suicide or die                          |
| Because they might get depressed   |
| Just in case if you're drunk and you fall off a cliff  |
| Drinking and driving may cause an accident!!!  |
| Yes, I think it does because younger people would like to know what it is like to drink  |
| They might hit their children when they are drunk  |
| Drinking can give you cancer   |
| Drinking can be very serious it may damage health!   |
| No I don't think it does make people want to drink   |
| Drinking can KILL  |
| If adults have been drinking they could scare ME!  |
| When you drink you could make a fire   |
| Adults may be abusive if they drunk  |
| Could give you diarrhoea permanently   |
| Not to take much because they can become violent   |
| They should not do it in front of small children   |
| If they have a little drink in the house that's fine   |
| If they drink too much too often, it is a bad example  |
| If an adult is an addict they may endanger their children or family/friends  |
| A bad thing about ADULTS drinking is it encourages younger people, and also they can become addicts  |

|   |
|---|
| & their lives are so stressed   |
| It's a bad example for children   |
| Drink driving   |
| It is ok if they don't preach to younger people about it  |
| Loss of control   |
| Setting bad example   |
| Have more money so can drink too much   |
| Drink driving   |
| They should be disallowed   |
| OK in moderation  |
| I think that adults should be able to drink because they are more responsible than younger ones |
| Adults should smoke cannabis because it's harmless compared to drugs and tobacco                |
| Alcohol is the worst drug   |
| Violence influence if youth see adults fighting   |
| Possible increase in young drinkers if adults buy them drink                                    |
| Should be promoting social drinking and not over consumption drinking                           |
| Adults should be more of an example to children and advise them on safe drinking                |
| It is widely accepted as a social activity  |
| Should be setting an example to peers   |
| Accepted in society for adults to drink socially  |
| Drink driving   |
| Can cause problems within the family  |
| Set the example for young people  |
| Adults should think more carefully about their children before they resort to heavy drinking    |
| Alcoholism can be hereditary  |
| Can have a positive effective, learn from their mistakes  |
| The influence they have on younger people   |
| If your parents make an arse of themselves around you! (or your friends)                        |
| Violence  |
| Health risks  |
| Unwanted sex  |

## ANNEX SIX: QUESTIONNAIRE



### "SOME QUICK QUESTIONS ABOUT ALCOHOL"

The Answers you give are all CONFIDENTIAL

|  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>How old are you?</i>                        | .....                    |                          |
| <i>Which village/town/city do you live in?</i> | .....                    |                          |
| <i>Are you male or female?</i>                 | M                        | F                        |
| <i>(Please tick a box)</i>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1. **Do you drink alcohol** YES NO  
*(Please circle)*

If YES, go to QUESTION 2

If NO, go to QUESTION 4 overleaf

2. **Please tell us which kinds of alcohol do you drink:**  
*(Please circle as many as appropriate)*

ALCOPOPS

BEER

LAGER

VODKA

OTHER .....

*Please state*

3. **How often do you drink alcohol?** *(Please circle or write in the space below)*

EVERY DAY

EVERY WEEK

EVERY MON

HARDLY EVER

NEVER

OTHER .....

*Please state*

4. **Do you think that the advertising of alcohol on TV and Magazines encourages young people to drink?**

*(Please circle ONE of the following):*

**STRONGLY AGREE**

**AGREE**

**UNSURE**

**DISAGREE**

**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

5. **Do you think that children and young people are given enough Information about the effects of drinking alcohol?**

*(Please circle ONE of the following):*

**YES**

**NO**

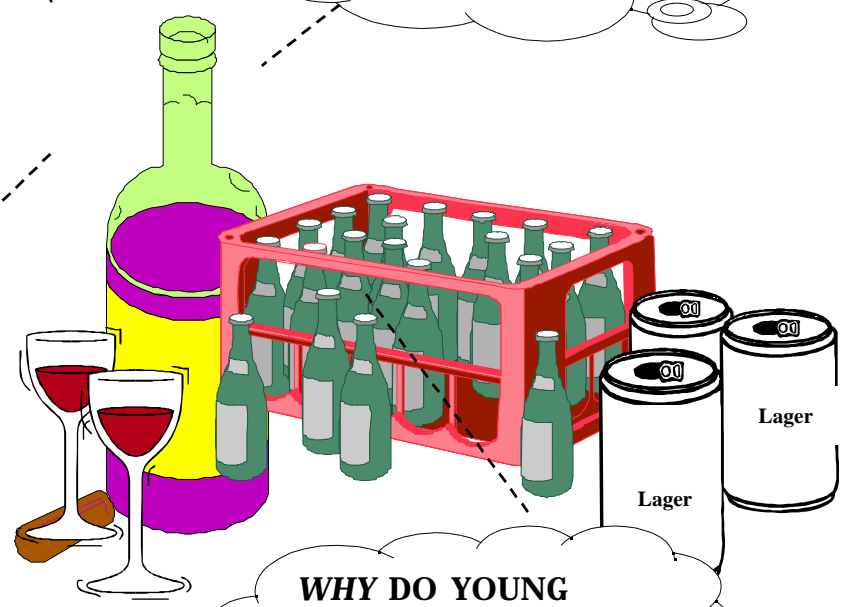
***Thank you for your co-operation***

# ANNEX SEVEN: EXERCISE ON DRINKING IN YOUR AREA

**WHEN DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK ALCOHOL?**

**WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK ALCOHOL?**

**WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK ALCOHOL?**  
eg  
Younger or Older  
Girls/Boys



**WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK ALCOHOL?**

**WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE GET ALCOHOL FROM?**

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