

A commitment from  
The Children's Plan

# Youth Alcohol Action Plan



department for  
children, schools and families

Home Office

**DH** Department  
of Health





Department for Children,  
Schools and Families,  
The Home Office,  
Department of Health

# Youth Alcohol Action Plan

Presented to Parliament by  
the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families,  
the Secretary of State for The Home Office,  
Secretary of State for Department of Health  
by Command of Her Majesty

June 2008

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# Ministerial foreword

There is growing public concern about how much alcohol young people are drinking in their teenage years. The evidence set out in this Action Plan, which we committed to produce in last year's Children's Plan, shows that there is reason to be concerned.

The proportion of teenagers who drink regularly is falling. But those who do drink are drinking a lot more – and many young people start drinking from a very young age. Young people who drink too much not only put their own health at risk, but are more likely to get involved in anti-social behaviour and contribute to insecurity on our streets.

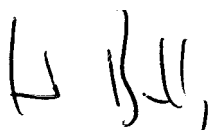
These issues are not just about young people illegally buying alcohol – though that is an important dimension – but more broadly about access to alcohol and its use by young people. We therefore need to take determined action to tackle these problems, working closely with parents, schools, health services and the police.

This Action Plan sets out what the Government will do to address drinking by young people in three main ways.

First, we need to be clear that unsupervised drinking by young people under 18 in public places – which has the closest links to crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as putting young people at risk in other ways – is unacceptable. This Action Plan sets out how we will work with the police and the courts to stop it.

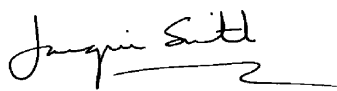
Second, drinking by young people in the home is clearly the responsibility of parents and families, not the Government. But there are things we want to change. We believe there is a need for clearer health information for parents and young people about how consumption of alcohol – particularly at an early age – can affect children and young people. That is why we have asked the Chief Medical Officer to produce clear guidelines on the issue. We will also ensure that parents who fail to take their responsibility seriously will be made to do so.

Finally, we need industry to play more of a part, not just in refusing to sell alcohol to young people under the age of 18, but also more generally in marketing and promoting alcohol in a more responsible way. So we will work with the industry to strengthen the standards that currently govern these issues with a view to making them mandatory.



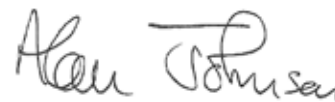
**Ed Balls**

Secretary of State for Department  
for Children, Schools and Families



**Jacqui Smith**

Home Secretary



**Alan Johnson**

Secretary of State for  
Department of Health

# 1. Introduction

1. The Government made a commitment in the Children's Plan, published in December 2007, to look at what more might be done to reduce excessive drinking by children and young people under the age of 18. This document sets out the Government's conclusions and the action we will take.

2. For many people in Britain, drinking alcohol is an important part of life and culture. The majority of adults drink alcohol to some extent. This may be in connection with special occasions, to celebrate, to relax or simply as part of their everyday activities. Learning how to drink sensibly is, for most people, part of growing up.

3. While the majority of people do not drink in a way that puts themselves or others at serious risk, it has long been recognised that the excessive consumption of alcohol can be damaging. It can cause accidents and injuries, as well as serious or even fatal illnesses. Drinking too much can also contribute to behaviour that impacts on wider society – through drink-driving, anti-social or unacceptable behaviour, or alcohol-related violence, including domestic violence.

4. For all these reasons, the Government has for centuries regulated the sale and consumption of alcohol. It has also sought to influence drinking behaviour in other ways, through public information and education campaigns for

example, and through enforcement campaigns to reduce under-age sales.

5. Government regulation and other activity has been driven in particular by concerns – which are widely shared by the public and by parents – about the negative consequences of excessive drinking by children and young people. These can be more serious than for adults, because young people are physically and emotionally less able to cope with the effects of drinking alcohol; and because their level of maturity means they are more likely to engage in risky or unacceptable behaviour as a result of drinking.

6. There are a number of particular risks which may arise when young people drink too much:

- Alcohol can contribute to unacceptable behaviour by young people that can be a significant problem for the rest of the community, for example through anti-social behaviour or crime.
- Drinking at an early age can cause serious health problems, both in the short and the long-term. There is also new evidence that drinking too much alcohol can impair adolescent brain development.
- Drinking too much alcohol is strongly associated with a wide range of other problems which adversely affect the welfare of teenagers, for example, unprotected sex,



teenage pregnancy, failing at school and the use of illicit drugs.

**7.** The proportion of 11–15-year-olds who drink regularly is *falling* (from 28 per cent in 2001 to 21 per cent in 2006). While that is good news, at the same time, the average weekly consumption among young people who *do* drink has increased very sharply. The number of units consumed by young people in that age group has doubled between 1990 and 2000 and has remained at the same level since. In addition, there have been a number of worrying changes in where and how young people drink alcohol, which are set out in more detail in Chapter 3. Despite some progress in tackling under-age sales, many young people continue to be successful in illegally purchasing alcohol. And most alcohol consumed by young people is obtained from their own home, with or without the consent of their parents.

**8.** The Government's view is that there is a compelling case for more action to reduce drinking by young people and to tackle the associated problems. We need an approach which distinguishes sharply between what is acceptable and what is not. Our view is that unsupervised drinking by young people in public places like parks, and illegal purchases of alcohol, are unacceptable, and we will take tough action to stop them. Drinking by young people in the home is for families and parents to decide, not the Government. But our view is that there is a need for better and clearer information for both young people and parents about the risks associated with drinking alcohol.

**9.** This Action Plan sets out how the Government will address these problems, through a strong partnership with parents, industry, criminal justice and law enforcement agencies and communities.

## 2. Government policy on alcohol to date

**10.** Over the past decade, the Government has introduced a number of measures in response to drinking by young people from education to enforcement.

**11.** The main features of the Government's approach to young people and alcohol to date have been:

- A prohibition on the *purchase* of alcohol by under-18s, backed by tough enforcement to identify and take action against retailers who are selling to under-18s, as well as enforcing laws around adults purchasing on behalf of others who are under-age.
- The exercise of *confiscation and dispersal powers* to stop children and young people from drinking in public places.
- *Alcohol education in schools* – as part of wider drugs education – begins in the primary phase, well before patterns of regular drinking become established.

**12.** Voluntary and mandatory agreements on the marketing and advertising of alcohol have also been negotiated with industry, specifically to address its potential appeal to young people. This includes:

- **Social Responsibility Standards** for the *Production and Sale of Alcoholic Drinks in the UK* apply to all alcoholic drinks produced and sold

within the UK. The standards are intended to provide a comprehensive statement of the rules, regulations and additional commitments that the various parts of the alcohol industry have agreed to adhere to. The standards are based around a set of social responsibility principles (see text box opposite) that should apply to all activities relating to the production, distribution, marketing and retailing of alcoholic drinks. Some of the principles relate specifically to young people.

- **Product labels and packaging.** The Portman Group, a self-regulatory body funded by the alcohol beverage industry, has developed a voluntary code of practice on the naming, packaging and merchandising of alcoholic drinks.
- **Non-broadcast advertising.** This is controlled through industry self-regulation, which is policed by the independent Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ASA enforces the Committee for Advertising Practice non-broadcast advertising codes through complaints-based action and, increasingly, through proactive monitoring.

- **Broadcast advertising.** The statutory Ofcom/ASA broadcast advertising codes stipulate that televised alcohol adverts should not be directed at people under 18 and should not be of 'particular appeal' to them.
  - renewing efforts to reduce under-age sales by better targeting of irresponsible retailers who sell to under-18s;
  - setting up an 'Expert Panel' of medical experts to consider the latest UK and international evidence on the effects of alcohol consumption on young people's health and development. The conclusions of this work will
13. *Safe. Sensible. Social.* The Government's updated Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, which was published in June 2007, set out proposals to build

### Alcohol Social Responsibility Principles

Member companies agree:

1. To promote responsible drinking and the 'Sensible Drinking Message'.
2. To avoid any actions that encourage or condone illegal, irresponsible or immoderate drinking such as drunkenness, drink driving or drinking in inappropriate circumstances.
3. To take all reasonable precautions to ensure people under the legal purchase age cannot buy or obtain alcoholic drinks.
4. To avoid any forms of marketing or promotion which have particular appeal to young people under the age of 18 in both content and context.
5. To avoid any association with violent, aggressive, dangerous, illegal or anti-social behaviour
6. To make the alcoholic nature of their products clear and avoid confusion with non-alcoholic drinks.
7. To avoid any suggestion that drinking alcohol can enhance social, sexual, physical, mental, financial or sporting performance, or conversely that a decision not to drink may have the reverse effect.
8. To ensure their staff and those of companies acting on their behalf are fully aware of these Standards and are trained in their application in their own areas of responsibility.
9. To ensure that all company policies work to support these standards.

on these activities. For the first time, this strategy identified under-18s as a priority group for Government action on alcohol as well as setting out the reduction of drinking by young people as a Government objective. It also committed the Government to specific actions relating to young people's alcohol consumption, these are:

- be used as a basis for developing guidance for young people and their parents; and
- developing a social marketing campaign, aimed at changing young people's attitudes towards alcohol consumption.

**14.** More recently, the Government has formalised its commitment to tackling alcohol-related problems among young people in a new Public Service Agreement to ‘increase the numbers of children and young people on the path to success’. For the first time, this introduced a national indicator on reducing young people’s use of alcohol and drugs that will be measured in all local authority areas. This was followed by a new ten-year Drugs Strategy, published in February 2008. This prioritises prevention of harm from substance misuse – including alcohol – through early intervention with vulnerable young people and families at risk or where a parent misuses substances.

**15.** The Government’s approach to date has had an impact on young people’s drinking in two main ways:

- tougher enforcement means it has become harder for young people under the age of 18 to buy alcohol. Several alcohol misuse enforcement campaigns have been conducted in recent years, which have reduced the test purchase failure rate – that is, the number of retailers that sold alcohol to a child or young person under 18 years – from around 50 per cent to about 20 per cent. The latest campaign, in July 2007, reduced it yet further to around 15 per cent. However, it remains the case that under-18s overwhelmingly say that they are able to purchase alcohol from outlets which *will* sell to them; and
- the overall proportion of young people regularly drinking alcohol is falling. Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion of 11–15-year-olds who say they *never* drink rose from 38 per cent to 46 per cent<sup>1</sup>.

**16.** In addition, we know that young people are exposed to fewer alcohol advertisements on television (a decline of 31.1 per cent and 39.0 per cent in 16–24 and 10–15-year-olds respectively between 2002–06<sup>2</sup>) and young people are now less likely to describe the adverts as being aimed at them. However, at the same time, evidence suggests that young people *are* more likely to say that adverts make alcohol look appealing and that they *will* encourage young people to drink.

**17.** Despite some positive changes, a number of serious and worrying problems remain, with indications that some are getting worse. The case for change is covered in the next chapter.

1 Fuller, E. (ed) (2006): *Drug use, Smoking and Drinking Among Young People in England in 2005*. Leeds: the Information Centre.

2 Based on research conducted by ASA and Ofcom in November 2007.

# 3. Young people and alcohol – the case for change

18. The Government believes there are five key reasons why we should take more action on young people and alcohol:

- there have been significant changes in recent years in how much young people are drinking, where and how they drink, and where they obtain alcohol;
- there is compelling evidence about the negative impact of drinking by young people, not only on their own short- and long-term health, but it is also known to be a major contributory factor, and in some cases the sole motivation for much of the crime and anti-social behaviour carried out by young people;
- there is growing public and parental concern about teenage drinking, both in itself and because of the wider problems to which it can contribute;
- beyond the current law on the age at which alcohol can be purchased, there is a lack of clarity – and consensus – about the age at which young people can start drinking, how much it is sensible for them to drink, and under what circumstances; and
- while there has been a strong focus in government on tackling under-age sales of alcohol, some retailers continue not to comply

with the law. Additionally, there has been much less emphasis on measures which seek to address why young people drink, and to support them and their parents to make more informed decisions about alcohol. In short, to date we do not have a single, co-ordinated government approach to addressing young people's alcohol consumption – tackling wider forms of unacceptable drinking as well as considering *why* young people drink and the role their *parents* can play.

## (i) How and why young people drink

19. Whilst some adults and young people do not drink alcohol at all – for religious, cultural or other reasons – drinking alcohol is a normal activity for many adults in Britain. And young people drink for much the same reasons as everyone else does – to have fun, to relax, to socialise and to feel more outgoing<sup>3</sup>. Evidence also suggests that young people's exposure to alcohol advertising is linked to an increased propensity for them to drink.

20. There have been a number of notable changes in recent years in how young people drink alcohol and how *much* they drink. First, while there has been an overall fall in the proportion of young people drinking, there has been a sharp increase in the alcohol consumption of young people who

3 Hibell, B; Andersson, B; Bjarnason, T; Ahlström, S; Balakireva, O; Kokkevi, A. & Morgan, M. (2004): *The ESPAD Report 2003: Alcohol and Other Drug Use Among Students in 35 European Countries*. Stockholm: Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

do drink (see graph below). The average weekly consumption of alcohol for 11–15-year-olds increased from 5 units in 1990 to more than 11 units in 2006. There are differences in patterns of consumption between girls and boys. In a recent study, 47 per cent of 15-year-old girls had been drunk at least once in the past four weeks compared with 37 per cent of boys of the same age<sup>4</sup>.

**21.** At the same time, there is evidence of an associated increase in ‘drinking to get drunk’ – the latest evidence on drinking by 11–15-year-olds suggests that 35 per cent of those who had drunk alcohol in the previous four weeks had done so deliberately to get drunk. Heavy episodes of drinking where five or more drinks are consumed on a single occasion<sup>5</sup> is common amongst young people and is a rising trend. 56 per cent of 15–16-year-olds report having drunk heavily in the last 30 days and 30 per cent report having done this three or more times in the past 30 days.

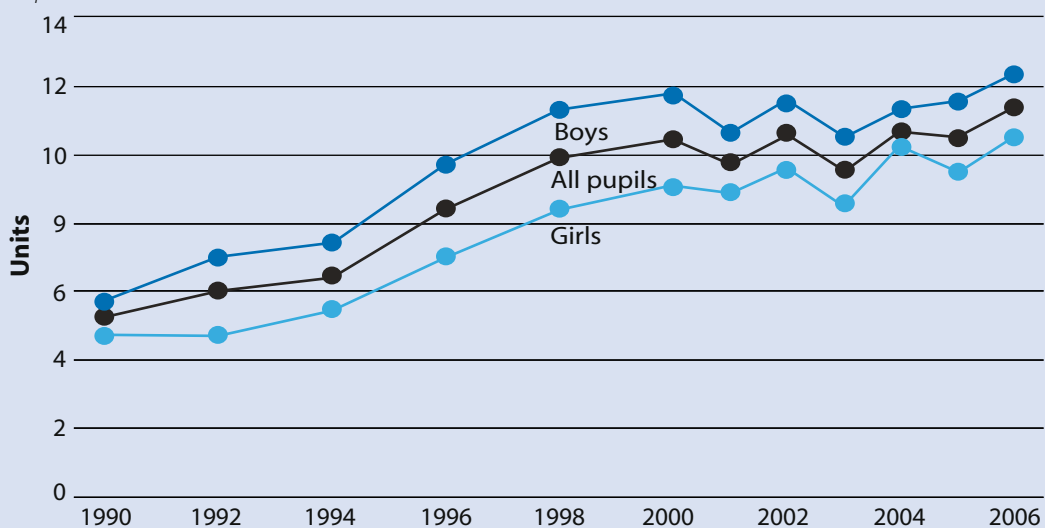
**22.** Second, there is evidence that young people increasingly favour higher strength alcoholic drinks – stronger brands of beer, cider and lager, as well as spirits.

**23.** Third, over the past six years it has been younger teenagers who have been drinking more. While levels of alcohol consumption by older adolescents who drink have remained consistent, younger adolescents’ consumption has steadily increased. A recent study describes 11–13-year-olds as less likely to have had a drink in the previous week (14 per cent in 2001 to 9 per cent in 2006), but of those who were drinking, their level of consumption had risen from 5.6 units a week in 2001 to 10.1 in 2006<sup>6</sup>.

**24.** Fourth, there is evidence of a trend towards increased unsupervised drinking by young people in open-air public places – in parks, at bus stops, and in shopping areas, for example. The proportion of 11–15-year-olds who drink on the street, in a park or somewhere else outside has

**Mean alcohol consumption (units) by 11–15 year olds in last week, by gender: 1990-2006**

*Pupils who drank alcohol in the last week*



4 Fuller, E. (2006): *Smoking Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England in 2006*. London: NCSR and NFER.

5 British Medical Association (2008): *Alcohol misuse: tackling the UK epidemic*. London: BMA.

6 Fuller, E. (2006): *Smoking Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England in 2006*. London: NCSR and NFER.

increased from 21 per cent in 1999 to 31 per cent in 2006<sup>7</sup>. Drinking by young people in public places is the form most likely to be of concern to the public – over half the people who said they had witnessed drunken or rowdy behaviour claimed it was due to young people drinking in public places<sup>8</sup>. This can turn parts of our town centres and public spaces into intimidating or unpleasant places, and can lead to anti-social behaviour and crime, including violence. In addition, drinking in public places is the kind of drinking that is most likely to put young people at risk of being victims of crime. A recent study in the North West suggests that 40 per cent of young people who drank outside in public had experienced alcohol-fuelled violence either as victims or perpetrators<sup>9</sup>.

**25.** Finally, alcohol consumed by young people is increasingly likely to be obtained from the home. Of the 11–15-year-olds who drank 14 or more units in the previous week, 48 per cent claim to have been given alcohol directly by their parents whilst 42 per cent claim to have taken it without their parents consent<sup>10</sup>. Much of the alcohol obtained from the home by young people is also consumed there, under the supervision of parents, but a good deal is not<sup>11</sup>. Increased consumption of alcohol in the home is consistent with some broader developments among adults. More alcohol is being consumed at home by them too, partly because it is available there in greater quantities – a development possibly linked to the low-price of alcohol from retailers offering substantial discounts and cross-channel shopping.

## (ii) The consequences of drinking for young people

**26.** It is widely understood that drinking to excess can lead to a range of health problems in adulthood, yet it is less clear exactly how much drinking significantly increases the risk of these problems and at what ages. The Expert Panel recently set up by the Department for Children, Schools and Families is overseeing a review of the evidence base to make a judgement on harms associated with alcohol consumption and how they relate to young people.

**27.** However, there are strong reasons to believe that there are particular risks for young people who consume alcohol and those who drink heavily in particular. For example, based on medical and other evidence, the Australian Government recently concluded that there is no amount of alcohol that can be said to be safe and that young people under the age of 18 should not drink to become intoxicated. There is disturbing evidence from the UK of:

- a sharp increase in liver cirrhosis among people in their 20s – almost certainly linked to heavy alcohol consumption in the teenage years;
- a strong association between alcohol consumption and accidents involving young people. This is particularly the case for road traffic accidents – but also related to accidents and injuries more generally. Thirteen children a day are admitted to hospital as a result of drinking alcohol<sup>12</sup>; and
- rising deaths among young people linked to alcohol – there has been a 57 per cent

7 Fuller, E. (2006): *Smoking Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England in 2006*. London: NCSR and NFER.

8 Hughes, S; Bellis, M.A; Hughes, K; Tocque, K; Morleo, M; Hennessey, M. & Smallthwaite, L. (2008): *Risky drinking in North West school children and its consequences: A study of fifteen and sixteen year olds*.

9 *Safe. Sensible. Social*. The next steps in the National Alcohol Strategy for England (2007).

10 Fuller, E. (2006): *Smoking Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England in 2006*. London: NCSR and NFER.

11 Valentine, G; Holloway, S.L; Jayne, M. & Knell, C. (2007): *Drinking places: where people drink and why*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

12 Rogers Review (2007): National enforcement priorities for local authority regulatory services.

increase in alcohol-related deaths amongst young people aged 15–34 between 1991 and 2006.

**28.** In addition to individual health harms, teenage consumption of alcohol is linked with wider and serious problems that impact on society more generally. In particular:

- alcohol consumption is one of the key factors associated with young people committing offences. Evidence suggests that 10–15-year-olds who have been drunk once a month or more in the past year were over twice as likely to commit an offence than those who had not<sup>13</sup>;
- more specifically, drinking by young people is associated with violence. In a recent study, only 15 per cent of respondents aged 10–17 drank once a week or more; yet they were responsible for 34 per cent of all violent offences committed by this age group;
- young people who drink are significantly more likely also to take drugs of all kinds than young people who do not drink. Among 15-year-olds who first drank alcohol at 10 years or younger, 17 per cent had taken Class A drugs at the age of 14, compared with 2 per cent of those who first drank when they were 14 years old<sup>14</sup>;
- young people who drink are more likely to be absent from school. Young people who had been excluded from school in the past 12 months were more likely to have had an alcoholic drink in the last week (45 per cent) than those who had never been excluded (21 per cent)<sup>15</sup>; and

- teenagers are significantly less likely to use contraception when drunk and, therefore, risk pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. They are also much more likely to regret having sex in the first place.

### (iii) Public reaction to young people drinking

**29.** Drinking by young people is a significant and growing concern for the public, with some polling evidence showing that:

- many adults think alcohol misuse is a bigger problem than illicit drug use;
- 75 per cent of adults think young people drink more than they did when they were younger; and
- most adults think drinking in the street and in other public places by young people is strongly associated with anti-social behaviour.

**30.** Most parents think it is an important part of their responsibility – and not that of the authorities – to introduce their teenage children to alcohol and to help them learn how to drink responsibly. Many parents will themselves have drunk alcohol during their teenage years, often at home in a family setting but also sometimes in pubs and restaurants. But parents tell us they are concerned not that teenagers sometimes drink but about *how much and how they drink*. They sense that something has changed in the culture of teenage drinking and that this is linked to a wide range of other teenage problems.

**31.** The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the patterns of teenage drinking are, indeed, changing and that parents and the public are right to be concerned.

13 Wilson, D., Sharp C. & Patterson, A. (2005): *Young People and Crime: Findings from the 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey*. London: Home Office Statistical Bulletin 17/06.

14 Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs: *Pathways to Problems* (2006).

15 Youth Justice Board (2002): *Youth Survey 2002*.



#### (iv) Views about how much young people should drink – and at what age

**32.** Patterns of alcohol consumption by young people differ significantly by age.

- At age 11 the majority of young people do not drink and those who do tend to drink at home with their parents.
- At age 13, just over half of young people have had a drink while nearly a third drink once a month or more. Young people are usually aged 13 or 14 when they had their first alcoholic drink without their parents' knowledge.
- At age 15, almost 90 per cent have tried alcohol while over a third drink once a week or more. The overwhelming majority of 15-year-olds usually drink with their friends. The most common drinking location is still at home or someone else's home but drinking in unsupervised outdoor locations, which is closely linked with harms, peaks in this age group.
- Amongst 16–17-year-olds, about half drink at least once a week and the most popular drinking location is in pubs.

**33.** There is strong public support for the current law on the age at which alcohol can be purchased from pubs and off-licences. A recent poll suggested that 82 per cent of people thought it was right, with only limited support for raising – or lowering – the age of purchase.

**34.** Although most people agree that those under the age of 18 should not legally be able to *buy* alcohol, there is much less agreement about the extent to which young people should be able to *consume* it. The current law allows anyone over

the age of 5 to consume alcohol and in practice this is a matter for parents to decide.

**35.** We know that the great majority of alcohol consumed by young people is obtained in the home. Nevertheless, practices in different families – the 'house rules' governing when and how much young people can drink – appear to vary greatly.

**36.** Of course, some families – for religious, cultural or other reasons – do not drink alcohol at all. But even amongst families who do, there are very different practices. Some parents believe drinking by their teenage children should be restricted to special occasions and in all cases to family settings, yet others think that young people under the age of 18 should not drink at all. Some feel that young people should only be allowed to drink at home from a certain age – 16 years old, for example. And others attempt to introduce their children gradually to alcohol by helping them learn to manage their drinking, often with the expectation that it is consumed with food (often referred to as a 'continental model' of drinking). However, police evidence and recent research<sup>16</sup>, also tells us that some parents provide significant quantities of alcohol to their teenage children – either for consumption at home or outside it, for example at parties, in parks and in the street.

16 Valentine, G; Holloway, S.L; Jayne, M. & Knell, C. (2007): *Drinking places: where people drink and why*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

## **(v) How the Government has tackled young people's drinking**

**37.** Government policy to date has focused heavily on stronger enforcement of the existing law on sales of alcohol to young people, on confiscation, and on tackling alcohol-related disorder and crime. But, it is clear that more needs to be done. Firstly, there is evidence that, whilst there has been progress in tackling under-age sales, some retailers continue to act in a way that is in breach of the law. Secondly, existing enforcement efforts need to be complemented with further powers and actions that take into account the changes in young people's drinking habits and the public's concern – namely the rise in young people drinking, unsupervised, in public places.

**38.** In addition, however, there has been little focus on how to influence the decisions young people and parents make about alcohol and drinking in the home. While alcohol education in schools and general information campaigns have aimed to influence young people's attitudes, there has been no specific social awareness campaign aimed at younger teenagers (11–15 years old) and no specific advice about low risk drinking by young people. The Department of Health's guidance about sensible levels of 'alcohol unit' consumption was designed with adults in mind.

**39.** In part, this approach has reflected the view that, beyond the existing law on consumption, decisions about drinking alcohol, as opposed to buying it, are a private matter for young people and parents where the Government should not normally intervene. Additionally, alcohol has historically been seen as less worrying or risky than illegal drugs. Yet, as this chapter demonstrates, of all substances, the use of alcohol has shown the greatest growth and causes the most widespread problems among young people<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2006): Pathways to Problems Report.

# 4. What the Government will do

**40.** The Government considers the evidence set out in this Action Plan amounts to a clear case for further action. While not all drinking by young people should be of concern, some drinking by young people could put their health at risk and some is clearly unacceptable – particularly when they drink to get drunk and especially when this happens in public places. We will act to stop unacceptable drinking by young people under the age of 18 and expect action from industry in support of that objective.

**41.** We will focus on five priorities:

- i. Stepping up enforcement activity to address young people drinking in public places.
- ii. Taking action with industry on young people and alcohol.
- iii. Developing a national consensus on young people and drinking.
- iv. Establishing a new partnership with parents on teenage drinking.
- v. Supporting young people to make sensible decisions about alcohol.

## **(i) Young people drinking in public places**

**42.** It is already illegal for young people to attempt to purchase alcohol and for retailers to sell alcohol to those under 18. The Government's view is that, whether the alcohol is purchased by

them or not, it is also unacceptable for young people to drink unsupervised in public places, like parks and shopping centres. It is a key concern for the public, which the Government shares. It is the kind of drinking that is most likely to put young people at risk, as well as creating problems for others and possibly leading to crime. This is anti-social behaviour and must be dealt with appropriately.

**43.** We will therefore take strong enforcement action to tackle this behaviour. We particularly want to ensure that there are suitable penalties for young people who persistently drink in public places creating serious problems for their communities. In doing this we will build on current responses to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. We will therefore legislate, subject to the approval of Parliament, to make it an offence for under-18s to persistently possess alcohol in a public place and to ensure the police have the enforcement powers they need to tackle drinking by young people in public places.

**44.** The police already have some powers to tackle young people consuming alcohol in public places. But there is concern that these are insufficient in enabling the police to properly address this issue and do not give them the flexibility to respond appropriately to different types of public drinking behaviour by young people. We are proposing a tiered approach to

this issue, consistent with that currently used to tackle anti-social behaviour.

#### (a) For one-off instances of public drinking

45. The aim should be to prevent a recurrence of this behaviour, involving parents and the young people closely. Police officers already have confiscation and some dispersal powers, but Government wants to make it easier for officers to deal with one-off instances of public drinking. So the following changes will be brought into force:

- subject to the approval of Parliament, we will legislate to give police the powers **to disperse under-18s who are drinking and behaving anti-socially** from any location. This means that they will no longer need to designate an area, but can disperse these drinkers as a matter of course; and
- subject to the approval of Parliament, the law will be amended to **extend the Directions to Leave power to 10–15-year-olds** so that police officers can effectively deal with *any* young person who is drinking in public places.

#### (b) For repeat instances of public drinking, linked to anti-social behaviour

46. A different response is required if young people are *repeatedly* drinking in public, particularly if this is linked to anti-social behaviour. Interventions already exist, but some need to be extended to encourage wider take-up.

- As announced in conjunction with the publication of the Licensing Act Review, the use of **Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) will be extended to young people caught drinking in public**, in which the young person and their parents agree to attend a session with a trained worker.

- **Alcohol Arrest-Referral pilots will be extended** so that under-18s arrested for any alcohol-related offence may benefit from a brief intervention from a trained worker. We will look at how this will help us deal with young people drinking in public who are already involved in alcohol-related criminal activities.
- **Parenting Contracts should be used more widely with the parents of young people repeatedly caught drinking in public** as it is essential that parents take responsibility and learn better how to address it (see the later chapter on parents).

#### (c) For the most serious cases of public drinking by young people

47. The Government is clear that the response to young people who *persistently* drink in public places, creating serious problems for their communities, must be uncompromising and build on current responses to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. In these cases, it is essential that any intervention should involve not only the young people themselves, but should also address the behaviour of parents who are not taking their responsibilities seriously. Therefore we will:

- work with the police to ensure that the **current confiscation powers are as widely used as possible** and that parents are routinely notified of their child's behaviour and action taken to address it;
- encourage police officers and others to apply for **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders** if a young person's persistent drinking in public places is causing harassment, alarm and distress, and they have previously failed to abide by the conditions of an ABC; and

- **implement new legislation to make it an offence for under-18s to persistently possess alcohol in public places.** Prosecution will require evidence of continued confiscation and failure to abide by an ABC. The penalties applied will depend on the nature of the behaviour in question, whilst taking into account the young person's previous criminal record.

48. In addition to interventions focused on the young person, the behaviour of parents whose children persistently drink in public should also be specifically addressed to ensure they take their responsibilities seriously. The Government will **encourage the police and appropriate agencies to make greater use of Parenting Orders** for parents whose children persistently drink in public. Specific conditions would need to be met, such as compulsory attendance at parenting classes and/or strict monitoring of their child's drinking behaviour, for example (see the later chapter on parents).

49. In order to properly support this tiered approach, the Home Office will issue **guidance to the police, health and children's services to strengthen their approach to dealing with young people drinking in public places.** It will highlight the need to be proportionate in exercising the new and existing powers available to them.

50. While the Government is concerned generally about unsupervised drinking by young people in public places, we are clear that where this leads to crime and disorder, it is even more serious. We believe it is right that severe penalties are in place for this type of behaviour and we will continue to use them. The forthcoming Youth Crime Action Plan will detail further measures for tackling offending and re-offending by young people.

## (ii) Action with industry

51. The alcohol, advertising and retail industries are key partners if we are to reduce the numbers of young people drinking and the amount of alcohol consumed by those who do drink. To date, much of the commercial sector has demonstrated willingness to help address the problem of youth alcohol consumption. The work of the Drinkaware Trust is one example, as are actions by some large retailers to run their own test purchasing campaigns, operate Challenge 21 and other similar schemes, or remove certain high strength drinks they believe are likely to appeal to young people. However, there is continued evidence of some outlets breaking the law by selling alcohol to those under 18, as well as research suggesting that young people remain exposed to and influenced by alcohol advertising. We will therefore take further action to secure compliance with the law on under-age sales, as well as working with industry to ensure they contribute more to reducing excessive drinking by young people.

### (a) The alcohol industry

52. The Government announced in *Safe. Sensible. Social.* that it would commission a review into the Social Responsibility Standards outlined in Chapter 2. The Government feels strongly that it is right that all licensed premises not only comply with the law, but that they also operate to a set of standards that promote best practice. To this end, we will work with the alcohol industry to strengthen the standards, with a view to making them **mandatory**.

53. Alongside this, it is essential that the alcohol industry steps up its efforts to tackle under-age sales. Government has already announced in the Licensing Act Review that this can be strengthened in a number of ways, amounting

to a substantial set of actions which now need to be implemented.

- Ensuring that **existing powers to identify problem retail premises selling alcohol are fully utilised**. It will become easier to review premises where local intelligence suggests there is a problem.
- Encouraging the imposition of **tougher sanctions on those found to be breaching their licensing conditions**.
- **Changing the offence of 'persistently selling alcohol to a person under 18' from 'three strikes' to 'two strikes' in three months**. This means that any seller who twice sells to under-age drinkers and is caught doing so will immediately face prosecution and a potential review, suspension or removal of their licence.
- Supporting the police, local authorities and communities to **identify problem hotspots** by ranking geographical areas and concentrations of premises on the basis of the risks they present to crime and disorder, public nuisance and children.
- Introducing a **new 'yellow card and red card' alert system for licensees**. A yellow card will put the problem premises on immediate probation together with tough and uncompromising sanctions. And when the circumstances are right, it will be an immediate red card leading to withdrawal of the licence.

54. In addition, the Government will:

- **centrally fund test purchase campaigns** and publish the results. The move towards locally funded campaigns, as recognised in the Rogers Review, will also be encouraged, through work with local authorities;

- encourage a **voluntary test purchasing scheme** under which companies agree to test purchase their own staff by, for example, making greater use of company 'mystery shoppers';
- encourage **prompt rollout of Challenge 21 nationally** to ensure that all outlets seek proof of age identification for those appearing to be under 21 on a no-proof-of-age-no-sale basis and support the **wider adoption of Cambridgeshire's award-winning 'Think 21' alcohol project** (run by Trading Standards, the police and local retailers) by issuing guidance for all areas to use;
- encourage **wider use of the Proof of Age Standard Schemes (PASS)**. The Home Office has made funding available to PASS to raise awareness of the scheme amongst retailers, young people and their parents; and
- encourage industry to ensure that **everyone selling alcohol is aware of national guidance and best practice in refusing under-age sales**.

#### (b) The advertising industry

55. Much has already been done to reduce children and young people's exposure to alcohol advertising. Evaluation evidence has shown that the current restrictions have gone a long way to address this, yet it also suggests that young people remain exposed to such adverts and find them appealing. The case for further action will be considered in the context of the current *Review of Price, Promotion and Harm*, which is concerned with adults as well as young people. Once this review has reported, the Government will carefully consider how excessive drinking by young people could be reduced through **further restrictions on alcohol advertising**.

### (iii) Develop a national consensus on young people and drinking

56. Drinking by young people in the home is for parents and families to decide. However, the Government believes there is a need for much clearer information about the effects of alcohol on children to inform parents' decisions about when and how much young people may drink. At the same time, while recognising that drinking in the home is for families to decide, we endorse the Chief Medical Officer's view that there should be clearer information for young people and parents about the risks of drinking alcohol.

57. For these reasons the Government has asked the Chief Medical Officer to conduct work which will form the basis of a new set of guidelines on young people and alcohol. These guidelines will address the consumption of alcohol by young people under the age of 18, with the aim of establishing – through extensive consultation – a new consensus between young people, parents and the public. The purpose of developing guidelines around young people's drinking is to:

- help shape young people's own choices about drinking;
- inform – but not determine – parents' decisions about their children's drinking;
- help parents to say "no" and set boundaries by establishing clearer expectations about what is sensible;
- provide a clearer rationale which enjoys public support for any further Government action on alcohol and young people; and
- stimulate public debate about how young people could lower their risk from drinking.

58. The guidelines will specifically address the following key issues:

- **the age at which children and young people could start to drink alcohol;**
- **how much is sensible for young people to drink; and**
- **how far young people's drinking should be supervised by parents or carers.**

59. The Government welcomes the Chief Medical Officer taking forward this work. The Department for Children, Schools and Families will support it by enabling the Chief Medical Officer's initial thinking to be informed by their Expert Panel on Young People and Alcohol, Parents' Panel and Children and Youth Board. In finalising the guidelines, we will also facilitate a consultation process across the country, involving a wide range of interested parties.

### (iv) Establish a new partnership with parents on teenage drinking

60. The Government wants to develop a new partnership with parents around children and young people's drinking. Parents' influence is important throughout childhood, into adolescence and beyond. Parents guide, encourage and teach their children, and children learn from the example set by their parents – this includes alcohol consumption.

61. It is critical that parents are involved in shaping the development of the proposals contained within this Action Plan. For this reason we will adopt a staged approach to consulting on the content. Initially, we will **call for views from parents and others on the content of the whole Action Plan**. This will involve working with organisations who represent parents' interests and the Department for Children, Schools and Families Parents' Panel as well as inviting wider views from parents via the Department for Children, Schools and Families website. Later in the year,

when the Chief Medical Officer and Expert Panel have completed preliminary work on the alcohol guidelines for young people, **we will involve parents in considering their conclusions.**

**62.** But the guidelines alone will not be enough. Parents have told us that they would welcome better and clearer information so that they can advise their children and set boundaries about drinking alcohol. Practical **advice for parents on young people and alcohol** will be published early in 2009. Whilst this will include a statement of the guidelines, it will also offer wider information, advice and guidance on young people and alcohol. It will cover health and social impacts of drinking at young ages, sources of help and support as well as outlining evidence-based approaches for parents to use with their children.

**63.** While the majority of parents take a responsible approach to their children's drinking, there are a small minority who do not, often because there are serious problems of alcohol misuse within the wider family. For these parents, we will:

- ensure that **Parenting Early Intervention Programmes (PEIPs)** include a focus on families where parents or children are misusing alcohol. PEIPs are already established in 18 areas and are being rolled out to a further 24. They provide a co-ordinated package of parenting support in families where 8–13-year-olds are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. This is also the age at which young people typically start to drink alcohol;
- **encourage wider use of Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders** amongst relevant agencies where parents are not taking their responsibilities seriously – for example, in relation to unacceptable drinking in public places and associated anti-social behaviour or

where young people's drinking has caused them to come to the attention of the police; and

- extend **Family Intervention Projects** to reach an additional 500 families with substance misuse issues, including alcohol problems. Family Intervention Projects have pioneered intensive whole-family working with the most challenging families and can play an important role in tackling alcohol problems, particularly where these are affecting both parents and children in the same family.

**64. These family-based interventions will be evaluated** to assess how far they are improving outcomes and reducing risks with those affected by alcohol misusing parents. If the evaluation indicates that more needs to be done, these approaches will be modified and strengthened.

#### **(v) Helping young people make sensible decisions about alcohol**

**65.** Young people themselves need to be supported and encouraged to make the right decisions about drinking alcohol. They need to receive accurate information about alcohol, its effects, potential harms and what constitutes low risk levels of drinking at different ages. We also need to work to create a culture where it is socially desirable for young people to moderate their drinking and 'not drink to get drunk'.

**66.** The Department for Children, Schools and Families will **deliver a comprehensive communications campaign** about the risks of alcohol aimed at all young people and parents and particularly young people in the 11–15 age group when they are most likely to start drinking. It will aim to bring about culture change, delaying the age at which young people start drinking and for those who do choose to drink, doing so in a lower risk way is viewed as the right thing. The



Department for Children, Schools and Families has already commissioned detailed research to ensure that the campaign is run in a way most likely to influence children and young people's drinking behaviour. Findings from this research will be published in the summer and the campaign will be launched in early 2009.

**67. Alcohol education in schools** is crucial as it is designed to reach all children and young people of school age. Ofsted reports show that its delivery and quality could be improved. The current review of alcohol and drug education will report to Government shortly on how to improve the effectiveness of this education in schools. Amongst other things, the review will look at the guidance to schools on when and how to educate children and young people; how to identify young people at risk of alcohol misuse; and how best to support those already misusing alcohol – including when a young person should be dealt with in school and when it would be more appropriate to refer them to further targeted youth support. It will involve use of the Common Assessment Framework as well as improving the skills of the children's workforce in order that they have the capacity and knowledge to respond appropriately.

**68.** Young people sometimes say that they drink because there is nothing else for them to do in their spare time. Evidence shows that participating in **high quality, constructive out of school activities** has a preventative impact on alcohol use by young people. Through its ten-year strategy for positive activities, *Aiming High for Young People*, the Government is working with local authorities to tackle the root causes of problems which may lead to drinking. This approach ensures that activities are what young people want and that they are available for all young people at the times they need them. But this is not only about activities. One of the central

features of this strategy is to provide a powerful package of support and routes into other agencies.

**69.** These developments are complemented by the continued shift towards multi-agency work to support young people with a wide range of needs. This is driven by local **targeted youth support** services which ensure that the most vulnerable young people, including those with alcohol misuse problems or at risk of developing them, receive appropriate help from a range of agencies. In addition, Department for Children, Schools and Families is setting up projects to address the underlying causes of young people's anti-social behaviour – including alcohol misuse – and ensure that services are working effectively together to identify and tackle problems early. Through the Youth Taskforce, a pilot of 20 Intensive Intervention Projects, aimed at addressing the needs of 1,000 young people, has been set up as well as Challenge and Support Projects in 52 areas to reach 15,000 families each year.

**70.** There are a very small number of young people whose alcohol problems are extremely severe. For these young people, it is important that they are able to access appropriate and effective substance misuse treatment. The National Drug Treatment Monitoring System suggests that 35 per cent of under-18s entering drug and alcohol treatment in 2006/07 did so for a primary alcohol problem. To benefit these young people, **alcohol treatment will be improved**, in particular to address issues of access and quality. Department for Children, Schools and Families will continue to work with the National Treatment Agency to review all local area treatment plans in summer 2008, with a view to providing guidance to local commissioners and providers of treatment services later in the year.

# 5. Delivering the Action Plan and reviewing it

71. This document sets out action which will be taken forward to address the problems arising from young people's alcohol consumption. There are additional pieces of work in train – most notably the review into the relationship between alcohol price, promotion and harm and the review into alcohol industry's Social Responsibility Standards. The Government will look at the findings of these reviews, as well as carefully considering what we learn from the consultation exercises, and our approach will be refined in light of them.

# Annex A – Summary of actions

Objective	Priority actions	Timing	Lead department
<b>Stopping young people drinking in public places</b>	Legislate to give the police powers to disperse under-18s who are drinking and behaving anti-socially from any location.	Subject to Parliamentary timetable	HO
	Amend the law to extend the Directions to Leave power to include 10–15-year-olds.	Subject to Parliamentary timetable	HO
	Extend Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) to young people caught drinking and behaving anti-socially in public, requiring them and their parents to attend a session with a trained worker.	Ongoing	HO
	Extend alcohol arrest-referral pilots so that under-18s arrested for alcohol-related offences may benefit from a brief intervention from a trained worker.	Ongoing	HO
	Ensure Parenting Contracts are used with parents of young people repeatedly caught drinking in public.	Ongoing	HO
	Encourage the widest possible use of confiscation powers by the police.	Ongoing	HO
	Encourage police officers and others to apply for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders if a young person persistently drinks in public places and fails to abide by the conditions of an ABC.	Ongoing	HO
	Implement new legislation to make it an offence for under-18s to persistently possess alcohol in public places.	Subject to Parliamentary timetable	HO
	Encourage the police and appropriate agencies to make greater use of Parenting Orders.	Ongoing	HO
	Issue guidance to the police, health and children’s services to strengthen their approach to dealing with young people drinking in public places.	Subject to Parliamentary timetable	HO

Objective	Priority actions	Timing	Lead department
<b>Taking action with industry on young people and alcohol</b>	Work with local authorities to implement locally funded test purchase campaigns.	Ongoing	HO/DCMS
	Ensure that existing powers to identify problem retail premises selling alcohol are fully utilised.	June 2008	HO/DCMS
	Encourage the imposition of tougher sanctions on those found to be breaching licensing conditions.	June 2008	HO/DCMS
	Changing the offence of 'persistently selling alcohol to a person under 18' from 'three strikes' to 'two strikes' in three months.	Subject to Parliamentary timetable	HO
	Support the police, local authorities and communities to identify problem hotspots.	August 2008	HO
	Introduce a new yellow card and red card alert system for licensees.	June 2008	DCMS
	Encourage voluntary test purchasing schemes.	August 2008	HO
	Encourage prompt roll-out of Challenge 21 nationally to ensure that all outlets seek identification for those appearing to be under 21.	August 2008	HO
	Support the wider adoption of Cambridgeshire's award-winning 'Think 21' alcohol project.	August 2008	HO
	Encourage the wider use of Proof of Age Standard Schemes.	Ongoing	HO
	Encourage industry to ensure that everyone selling alcohol is aware of national guidance and best practice in refusing under-age sales.	Ongoing	HO
<b>Developing a national consensus on young people and drinking</b>	Develop guidelines on young people and alcohol.	Early 2009	DCSF (working with CMO)

Objective	Priority actions	Timing	Lead department
<b>Establishing a new partnership with parents</b>	Initial consultation with parents and others on the content of the whole Youth Alcohol Action Plan.	Summer 2008	DCSF
	Later consultation exercise with parents and others in finalising the guidelines on young people and alcohol.	Autumn 2008	DCSF
	Advice and guidance issued to parents re: young people and alcohol, which will include a statement of what the guidelines are (based on the work of the CMO and Expert Panel as well as consultation findings).	Early 2009	DCSF
	Evaluation of family-based interventions to assess if they are improving outcomes and reducing risks with those affected by alcohol-misusing parents.	2010	DCSF
	Extend Family Intervention Projects to include a focus on substance misuse.	Autumn 2008	DCSF
<b>Supporting young people to make sensible decisions</b>	Publish findings from the customer insight research, which will be used to underpin the planned communications campaign.	Summer 2008	DCSF
	Launch a comprehensive communications campaign about the risks of alcohol, aimed particularly at the 11–15-year-old age group.	Early 2009	DCSF
	Evaluate the impact of the communications campaign.	March 2010	DCSF
	Conduct a review into drug and alcohol education to include help for schools and colleges to identify and support young people at risk of alcohol harm arising from either their own use or that of parents.	June 2008	DCSF
	Implement actions arising from the review of drug and alcohol education.	Sept 2009	DCSF
	Review all local area young people's substance misuse treatment plans.	Summer 2008	DCSF (with NTA)
	Provide guidance to local commissioners and providers of young people's treatment services on the basis of the review.	Late 2008	DCSF (with NTA)

# Annex B – Types of drinking

## Lower risk drinking

Drinking at lower risk is drinking in a way that is unlikely to cause yourself or others significant risk of harm.

The Government advises:

- Adult women should not regularly drink more than 2–3 units of alcohol a day.
- Adult men should not regularly drink more than 3–4 units of alcohol a day.
- Pregnant women or women trying to conceive should avoid drinking alcohol. If they do choose to drink, to protect the baby, they should not drink more than 1–2 units of alcohol once or twice a week and should not get drunk.

The risk of harm from drinking above these levels increases the more alcohol that you drink, and the more often you drink over these levels.

Lower risk drinking within these limits does not avoid the need for personal assessment of the particular risks and responsibilities of drinking at the time, for example it is sensible not to drink when driving or when taking certain medications.

## Drinking at increasing risk

For those drinking above the limits for lower risk drinking but not regularly drinking at higher risk levels (see below), the risk of long-term health harms starts to increase progressively the more these limits are exceeded. Men and women who regularly drink above the recommended lower risk levels substantially increase their risk of harm now or in the future, and need to reduce their consumption to reduce this risk.

Problems reported in some of those drinking at these levels include health problems such as lack of energy, low mood or anxiety/stress, insomnia, impotence, injuries and high blood pressure, but many more serious problems can occur if drinking continues at these levels over time.

### **Drinking at higher risk**

Drinking at higher risk is drinking at levels that give the highest risk of significant harm to physical and mental health and at levels that maybe causing substantial harm to others. Examples include liver damage or cirrhosis, stroke, hypertension, coronary heart disease, dependence on alcohol and substantial stress or aggression in the family.

Women who regularly drink over 6 units a day (or over 35 units a week) and men who regularly drink over 8 units a day (or 50 units a week) are at highest risk of such alcohol-related harms.

Women who drink heavily during pregnancy do put their babies at particular risk of developing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. These disorders lead to lifelong intellectual and behavioural problems for their child.

### **Binge drinking**

Binge drinking is essentially drinking too much alcohol over a short period of time, for example over the course of an evening, and it is typically drinking to get drunk. It has immediate and short-term risks to the drinker and to those around them.

People who become drunk are much more likely to be involved in an accident or assault, to be charged for a criminal offence, contract a sexually transmitted disease and, for women, are more likely to have an unplanned pregnancy.

Trends in binge drinking are usually identified in surveys by measuring those drinking over 6 units a day for women or over 8 units a day for men. In practice, many binge drinkers are drinking substantially more than this level, or drink this amount or lower amounts rapidly, which leads to the harms linked to drunkenness.

After an episode of heavy drinking, it is advisable to refrain from drinking for 48 hours to allow tissues to recover.

# Annex C – Glossary of terms

## Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)

ABCs are written agreements between a young person, the local housing office or Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and the local police in which the person agrees not to carry out a series of identifiable behaviours which have been defined as anti-social. The contracts are primarily aimed at young people aged between 10 and 18.

## Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD)

The ACMD is an independent expert body that advises the Government on drug-related issues in the UK.

## Alcohol unit

In Britain a unit of alcohol is defined as 10 millilitres (or approximately 8 grams) of ethanol (ethyl alcohol). It is used as a basis for guidelines on consumption of alcoholic beverages; the number of units contained in a typical drink is publicised and marked on some bottles.

## Arrest referral pilots

Arrest referral is a crime reduction initiative that seeks to identify alcohol misusers at the point of arrest, encourage them to address their alcohol problem and obtain appropriate treatment or support.

## Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)

Is a civil order made against a person who has been shown to have engaged in anti-social behaviour.

## Binge drinking

Binge drinking is a term now usually used to refer to heavy drinking over an evening or similar time span – sometimes also referred to as heavy episodic drinking. Binge drinking is often linked to drinking with the intention of becoming intoxicated and, sometimes, with drinking in large groups. It is sometimes associated with physical or social harm.

## Brief intervention

Is a technique similar to motivational interviewing with a trained alcohol worker.



### Chief Medical Officer (CMO)

The CMO is the UK Government's principal medical adviser and the professional head of all medical staff in England. Each of the devolved regions within the UK has a CMO.

### Drinkaware Trust

The Drinkaware Trust is an independent UK-wide, public-facing body with the objective of positively changing public behaviour and the national drinking culture to help reduce alcohol misuse and minimise alcohol-related harm.

### European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD)

ESPAD is a collaborative effort of independent research teams in about 40 European countries and the largest cross-national research project on adolescent substance use in the world.

### Expert Panel

A panel of clinicians and academics set-up by the Government to review the latest available evidence on the effects of alcohol on young people's physical and psychological development.

### Licensing Act

The Licensing Act came into force on 24 November 2005. The Act establishes a single integrated scheme for licensing premises which are used for the supply of alcohol, to provide *regulated entertainment* or to provide *late night refreshment*.

### Parenting Contract/Parenting Order

A Parenting Contract is an agreement negotiated between a Youth Offending Team (YOT) worker and the parents of the child involved or likely to become involved in criminal conduct or anti-social behaviour. A Parenting Order is made in similar circumstances by a criminal court, family court or Magistrates' Court acting under civil jurisdiction.

### *Safe. Sensible. Social*

The next steps in the National Alcohol Strategy reviews progress since the publication of the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England* (2004) and outlines further national and local action to achieve long-term reductions in alcohol-related ill health and crime.







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