



Alcohol Overprovision – Highland

Survey results

Developed by Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership, and Directorate of Public Health and Policy

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List of Contributors

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this report. It hasn't been possible to name everyone but all contributions have been highly valued. A particular thank you to colleagues from the Third and Independent Sector and locality based Alcohol and Drug Partnerships who took part in collecting the survey data.

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1. Introduction

Alcohol Overprovision – survey monkey

This survey was developed on behalf of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) and the Directorate of Public Health and Policy. During the development stage views were sought from the eight Highland Alcohol and Drugs partnerships and from other national ADPs. The questionnaire developed by Aberdeen ADP and the Aberdeen Local Licensing Forum was used as a starting point and many of the questions appeared in the final Highland questionnaire¹.

It was used to inform reports presented to the Alcohol Forum and Licensing Board about possible overprovision of alcohol in Highland.

Off-sales account for approximately two-thirds of all alcohol sales across Scotland and throughout this Highland this pattern will be repeated. In term of understanding more about the local situation this questionnaire was developed to capture the public's views about the sale and provision of alcohol.

The questionnaire was posted February and March 2013 on the Highland NHS website and facebook and on the Council's website. It was also sent out to the Highland ADP and partners.

2. The questions

1. Where do you buy alcohol most frequently?
2. Why are you more likely to buy alcohol from there?
3. How often do you buy alcohol?
4. How do you generally travel to the place you buy alcohol most frequently?
5. On average, how long does it take to get there?
6. If you wanted to buy off-sales alcohol roughly how many places could you potentially make a purchase from within a 5 MINUTE WALK of your home?
7. Do you think there are enough places selling alcohol in the area where you live?
8. Do you think the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted?
9. If you think the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted, which of the following should **NOT** be permitted to sell alcohol?
10. Do you think there should be time restrictions on the sale of alcohol?
11. Do you think the **TYPE/BRAND** of alcohol you buy is influenced by in- store alcohol promotions and offers?
12. Do you think the **AMOUNT** of alcohol you buy is influenced by in store alcohol promotions and offers?
13. What do you think are the main factors that influence people to drink alcohol in the home rather than at a licensed premise?
14. If you have had a few drinks at home or at a friend's house before going out to a pub, bar, restaurant or club over the last 12 month, what is the major reason that you do this?
15. Is there anything you think that would minimise exposure to alcohol for children

Most questions had multiple choice responses; question responses were either a single response or multiple response. In the report the answers may not tally to exactly 100% because of multiple responses and/or rounding up to one decimal place. A number of questions asked for both a checkbox response and free text; Q15 was the exception because it was entirely free text.

In addition to these questions demographic information for each resident was collected including age, sex and postcode.

3. Key Findings

The survey shows:

76% (316) of off-sales alcohol was purchased most frequently from the supermarket displaying a regular pattern of purchasing alongside shopping for other items.

More females reported purchasing of alcohol from supermarkets and males reported purchasing alcohol from a wider variety of off-sales and also on a weekly basis.

The most common reported frequency of buying alcohol was 1-3 times per month.

Car/van/motorbike was the most common mode of travel 77.2% (321) used to purchase alcohol.

82% (256) of travelled less than 30 minutes to purchase alcohol and of these 62% (256) travelled for less than 15 minutes.

Within a five minute walk from the home 54.6% (223) respondents were able to buy alcohol from between 1 and 5 locations.

Three quarters 75% (299) respondents agreed there were either 'about right' or 'too many' places selling alcohol in the area they lived.

46% (187) respondents thought the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted.

Overwhelmingly, when asked to select which premises should not be selling alcohol, respondents selected 'garages/petrol stations' 93% (256). Supermarkets were selected by 11% (27) of the respondents.

Views about time restrictions were split but more respondents 50% (234) selected the option for restricting the sale of alcohol each day of the week rather than week days only.

64% of respondents reported that they were influenced by alcohol type/brand promotions and offers 64% (256). Furthermore 37% (146) reported that the amount of alcohol they purchased was influenced by promotions and offers.

Comfort/relaxation/socialising 80% (319) followed by price 62% (249) were reported to be the main reason why people drank at home rather than a licensed premise.

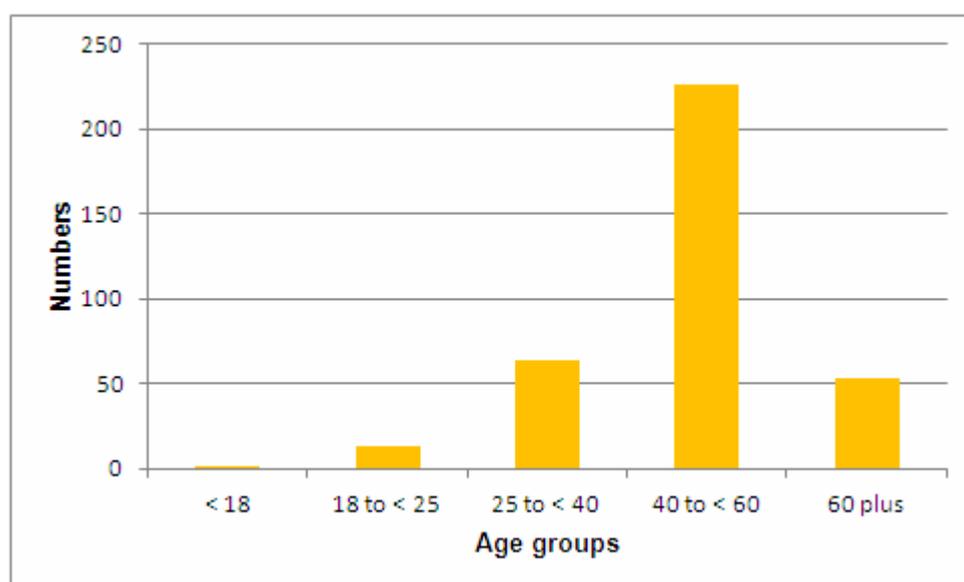
Socialising and price were reported to be the two main reasons by respondents who drank at home before going out to a pub, bar, restaurant or club.

In relation to children and about their relationship with alcohol a range of opinions and views were expressed. Key issues such as the normalisation of alcohol alongside everyday products were raised and the importance or role modelling and parenting were raised. The respondents also expressed views about the protection of children from an alcohol environment and advertising.

4. Demographics

In total there were 420 responses. 31.3% (121) males responded and 68.7% (265) females responded. 34 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 1: Respondents by age group (n= 378)



Ethnic Background

Most respondents categorised themselves as 'White Scottish' 77.9% (299); 20.2% (78) categorised themselves as 'Other White British'; 1% (4) of respondents were 'White Irish' and 1% (4) were 'Other White' and 0.5% (2) preferred not to answer.

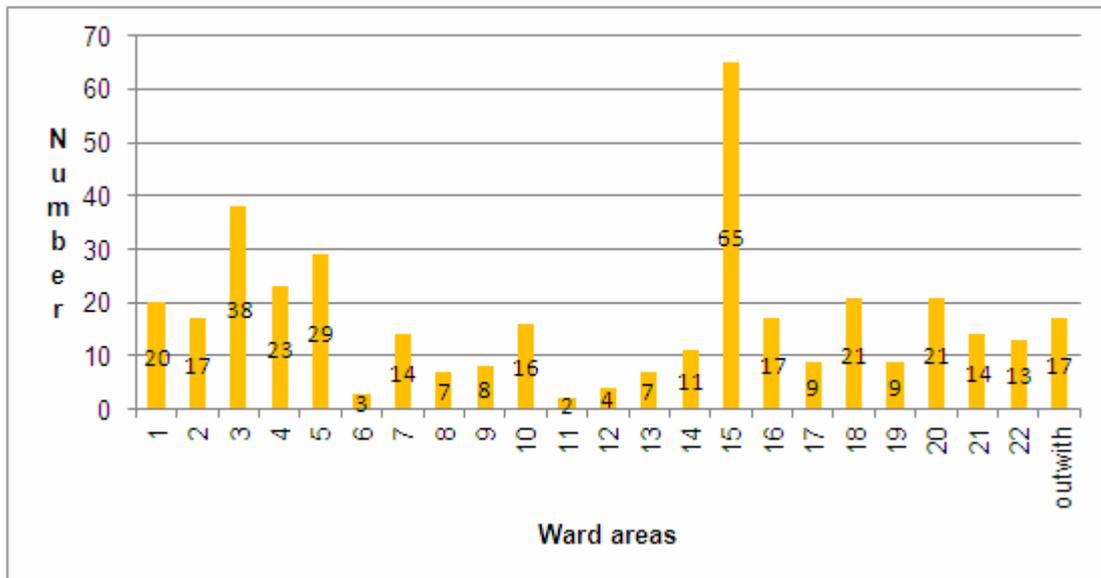
Respondents with a registered disability

Of those who responded 98.4% (373) categorised themselves as not being disabled and 1.6% (6) people replied they were disabled. There were 41 no responses.

Multi-member Wards

All twenty two ward areas were represented although some areas had few responses. Most responses were from Inverness Central (15), followed by Wick (3) and then East Sutherland (5). Wards with the least responses were Caol and Mallaig (12), Western Ross, Stretcheffer and Lochalse (6) and Eilean a Cheo (11). See appendix 1 for list of the Ward areas.

Figure 2: Number of questionnaires returned by ward



5. Results - questions

Q1: Where do you buy alcohol most frequently?

Respondents were asked where they bought alcohol most frequently and directed to tick one box only. This does not mean that they did not purchase alcohol elsewhere.

76% (316) of respondents said they purchased alcohol most frequently from the supermarket. 70% of supermarket shoppers were female and 30% were male – see figure 3. The category of pub/club/hotel/restaurant/take-away scored second. It is of note that only 1 person purchased alcohol most frequently from a petrol station,

Figure 3: Where do you buy alcohol most frequently? (n =420)

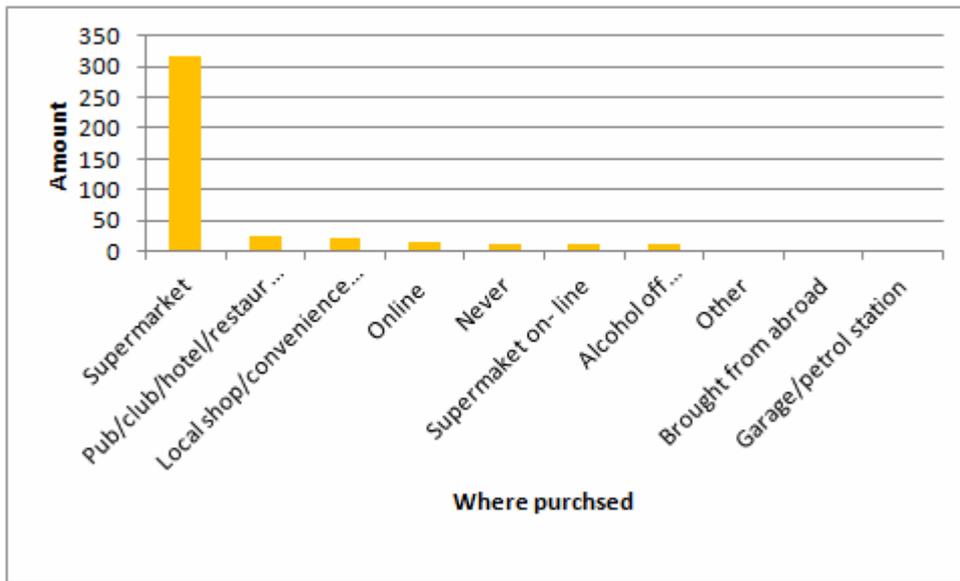
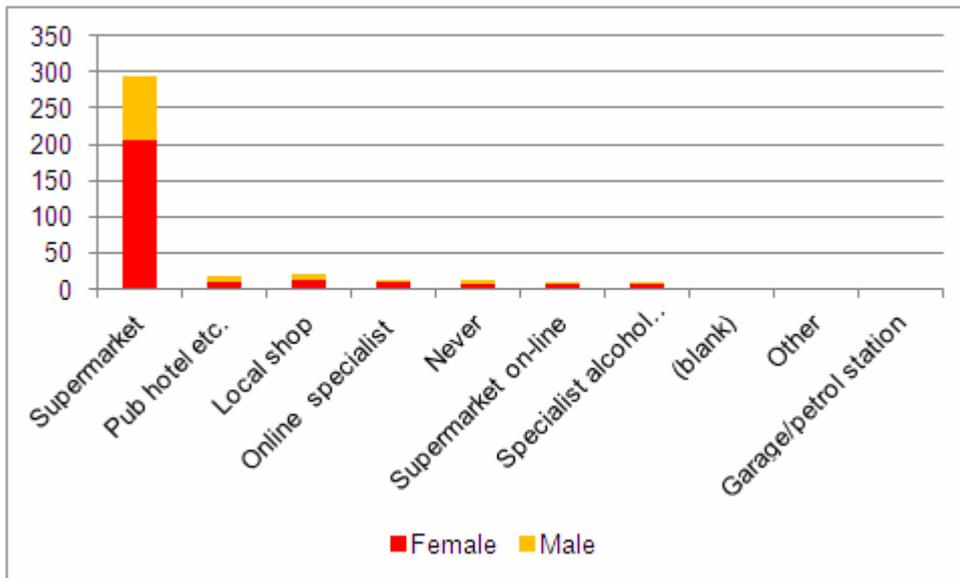


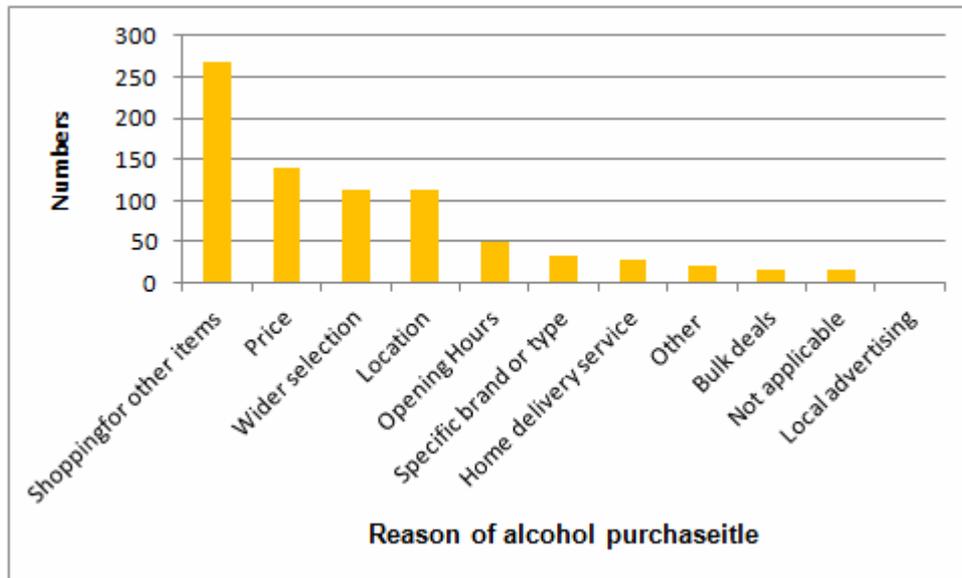
Figure 4: Where do you buy alcohol most frequently (by gender)?(n = 420)



Q2: Why are you more likely to buy alcohol from there?

Respondents were asked to tick all that applied and these results are the collation of all responses. 64% (268) respondents said they were shopping for other items; 33.4 (140) respondents said that price was important and the third most frequent category selected was 'wider selection'.

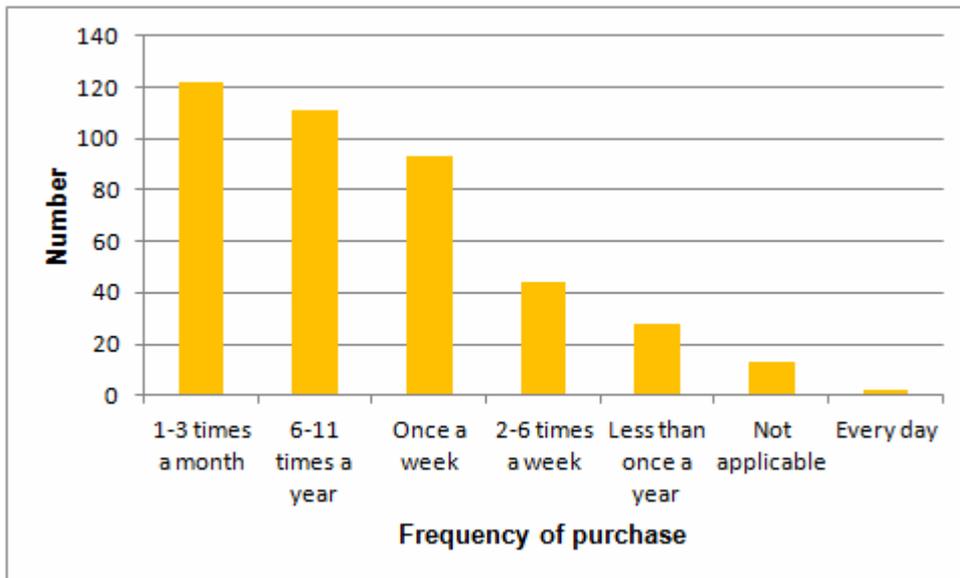
Figure 5: Why are you more likely to buy alcohol from there? (n=419)



Q3: How often do you buy alcohol?

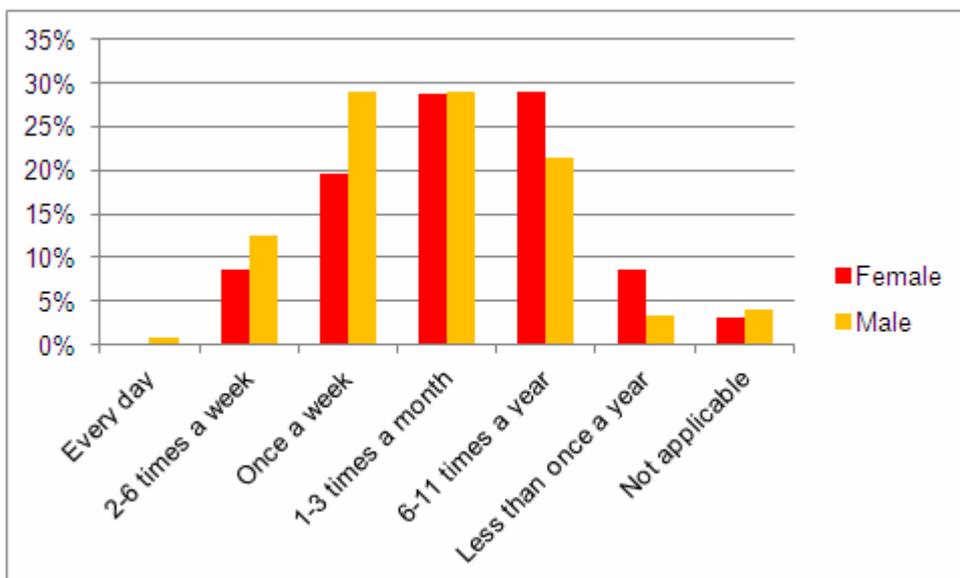
Respondents were asked how often they purchased alcohol and 1-3 times per month or 29.6% (122) was the most common reported frequency. The second most common frequency was 6-11 times per year or 26.9% (111) followed by once a week or 22.5% (44). Together these three total 79%, this amounts to over three quarters of all respondents. This question does not take into account volume purchased.

Figure 6: How often do you buy alcohol?



In Figure 7 males and females show different shopping habits. Most notably more males (29%) purchase alcohol on a weekly basis than females (20%).

Figure 7: How often do you buy alcohol? (Gender)

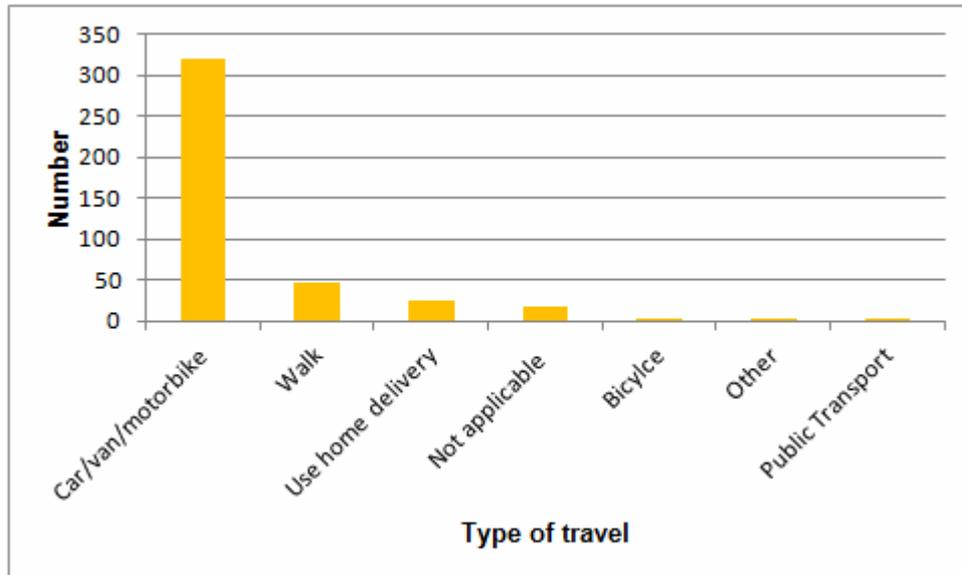


Q4: How do you generally travel to the place you buy alcohol most frequently?

Car/van/motorbike was the most common mode of transport used to travel to the place the respondents purchased alcohol most frequently 77.2% (321). The second most frequent

mode of travel was walking 11.1% (46) and third 5.8% (24) people used a home delivery service.

Figure 8: How do you generally travel to the place you buy alcohol most frequently? (n=416)

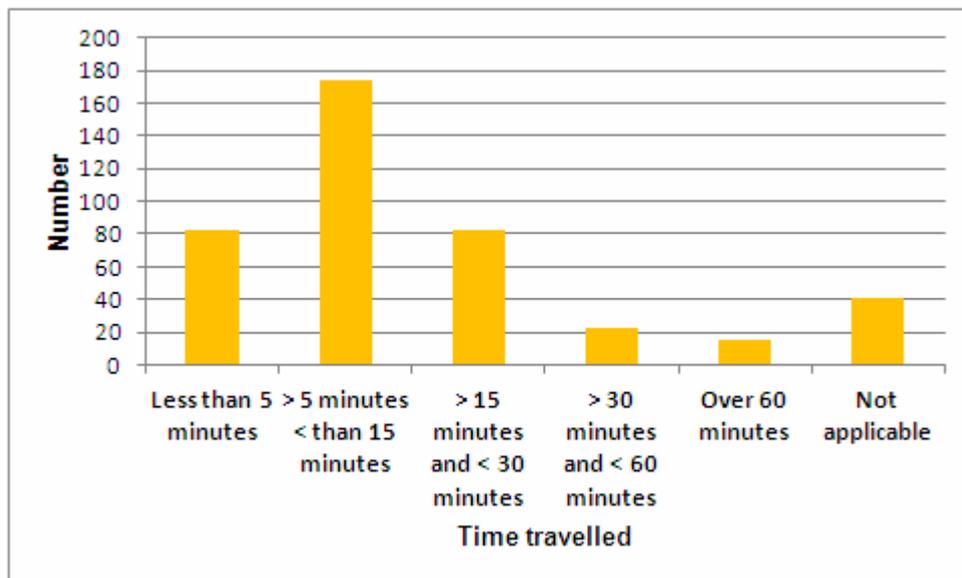


Q5: On average, how long does it take to get there?

Respondents were asked how long it would take to on average to get to the place they most frequently bought alcohol. They were asked to make one selection only.

The most common reported frequency was greater than 5 minutes and less than 15 minutes 41% (174). Less than 5 minutes, and greater than 5 minutes and less than 30 minutes, were the second most frequency reported at 20% (82) respondents. 82% (338) respondents travel less than 30 minutes to purchase alcohol and of these 62% (256) travel for less than 15 minutes.

Figure 9: Time taken to reach the place where alcohol is purchased most frequently (n = 417)



Q6: If you wanted to buy off-sales alcohol roughly how many places could you potentially make a purchase from within a 5 minute walk of your home?

Respondents were asked how many places they could buy alcohol within a five minute walk of their home. 27.9% (114) respondents recorded they were able to purchase alcohol from one place and 26.7% (109) respondents recorded between 2 to 5 places. 40% (163) respondents were not able to buy alcohol within a five minute walk of their home.

Figure 10: If you wanted to buy off-sales alcohol roughly how many places could you potentially make a purchase from within a 5 minute WALK of your home?



Q7: Do you think there are enough places selling alcohol in the area where you live?

Respondents were asked to indicate if they thought there were enough places selling alcohol in the area they lived. 71% (280) people selected the 'about right' category and 21.9% (88) respondents selected the 'too many' category. 2.7% (11) selected the 'too few' category. Figure 12 shows the same information but by gender breakdown and expressed as a percentage. More males selected the 'about right' category (76% vs 70%) and more women (22% vs 19%) selected 'too many'. In summary, three quarters 75% (299) of respondents agreed that there were either 'about right' or too many places selling alcohol in the area they lived.

Figure 11: Do you think there are enough places selling alcohol in the area where you live? (n= 407)

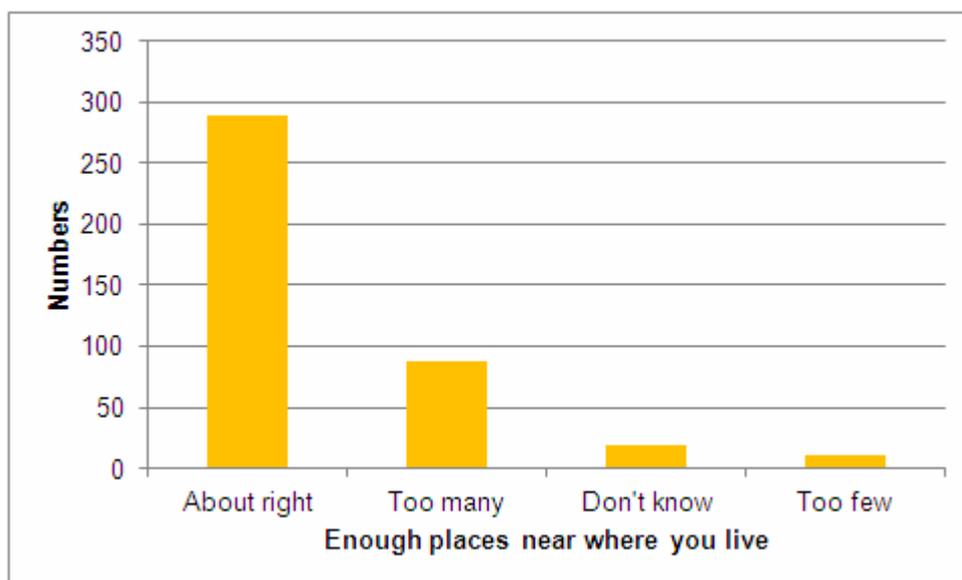
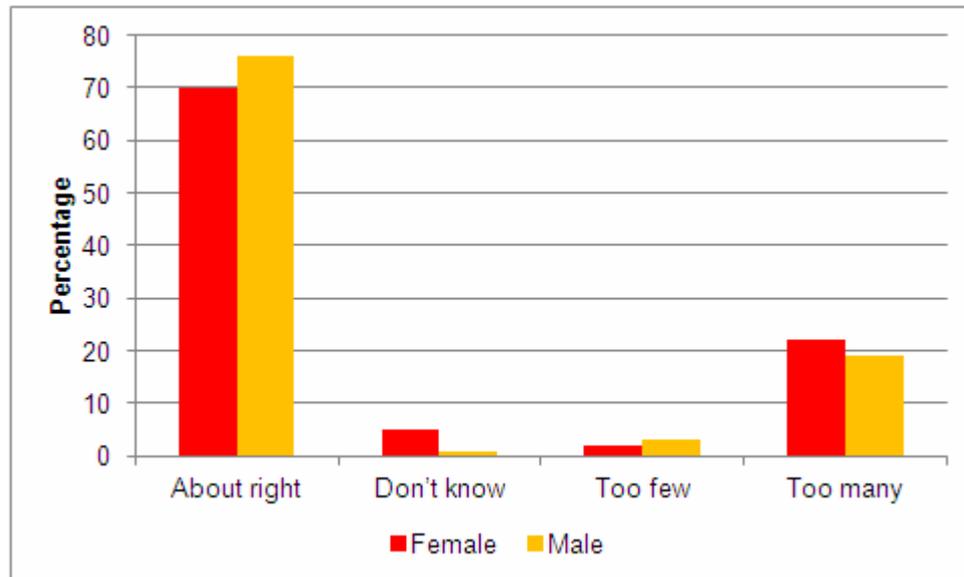


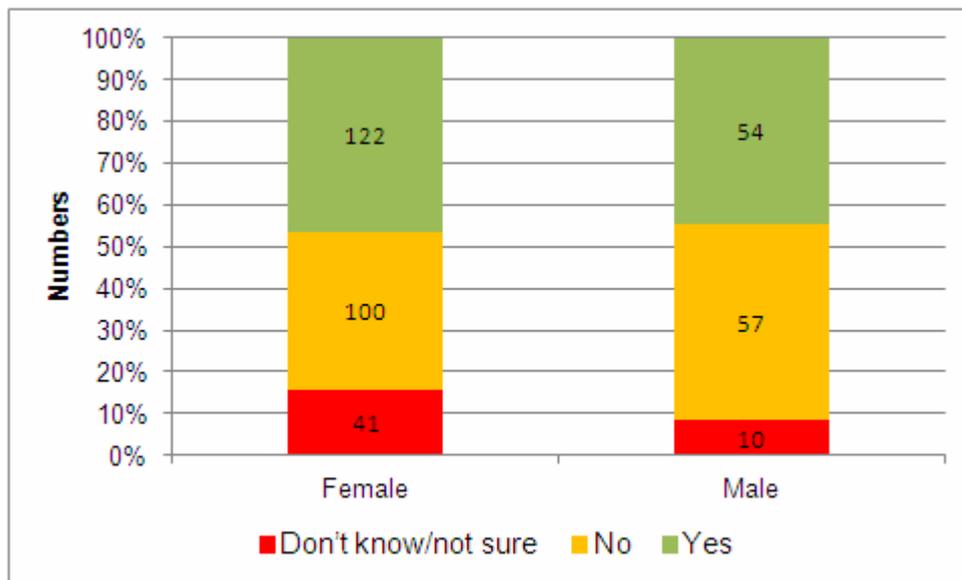
Figure 12: Do you think there are enough places selling alcohol in the area where you live? By Gender (n= 394)



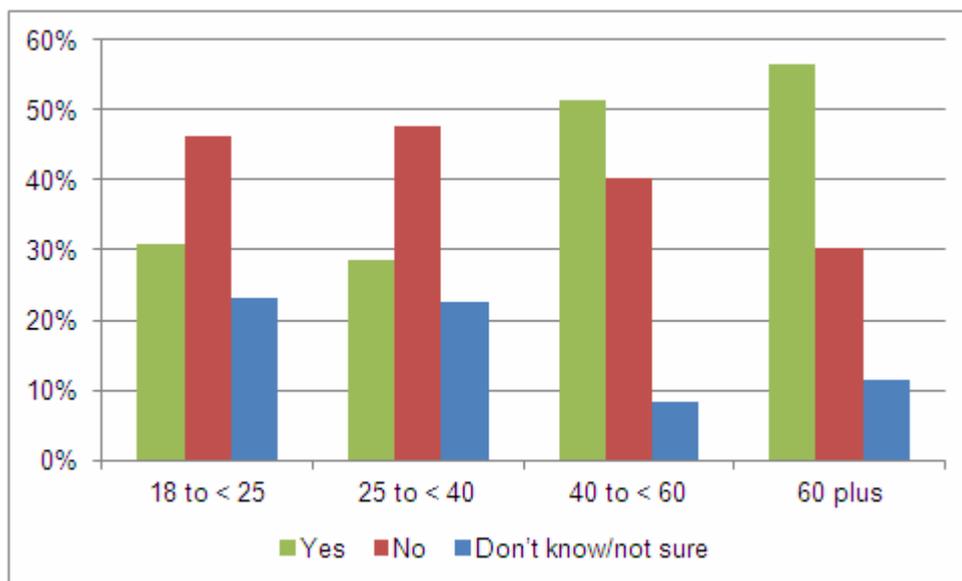
Q8: Do you think the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted?

Respondents were asked if the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted. In total there were 420 responses; 46% (187) selected 'yes'; 40% (163) selected 'no'; 14% (57) selected 'don't know'. Figure 13 shows that more females (263) than males (101) responded to this question. As a stacked percentage more females than males responded 'don't know/not sure' whereas more males responded 'no' to this question. Figure 14 is the same question but broken down by age. Excluding the 18 to under 25 age group, as respondents get older they are more likely to answer 'yes' to this question.

**Figure 13: Do you think the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted?
By gender.**



**Figure 14: Do you think the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted?
By age.**

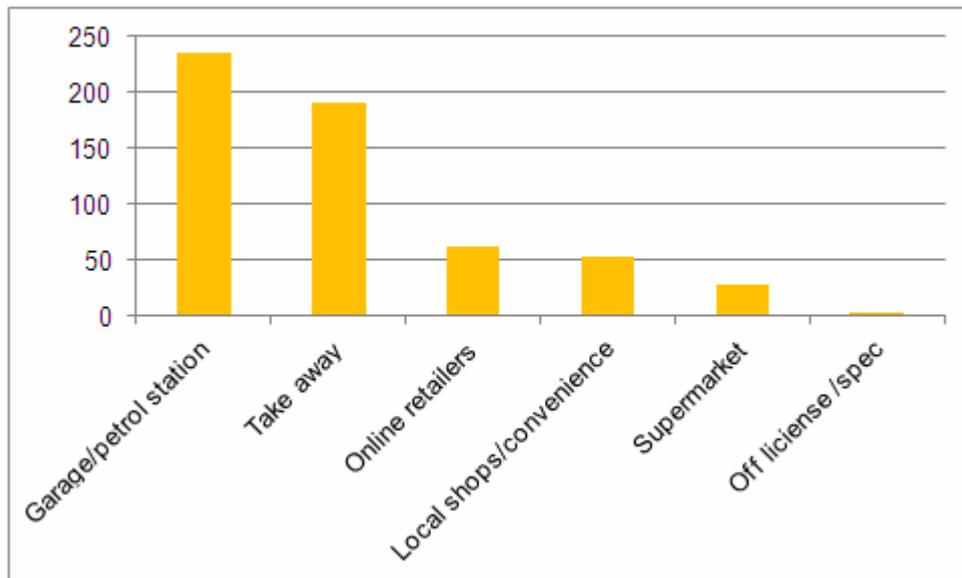


Q9: If you think the range of premises selling alcohol should be restricted, which of the following should NOT be permitted to sell alcohol?

Respondents were asked to select which premises should not sell alcohol and were able to make more than one selection. Garages/petrol stations had a response of 236 or 93% followed by take-aways 190 or 75%. Only 11% (27) selected supermarkets. Of note the

analysis of question one shows that only 1 respondent reported that they bought alcohol from a garage most frequently whereas 76% of respondents cited supermarkets.

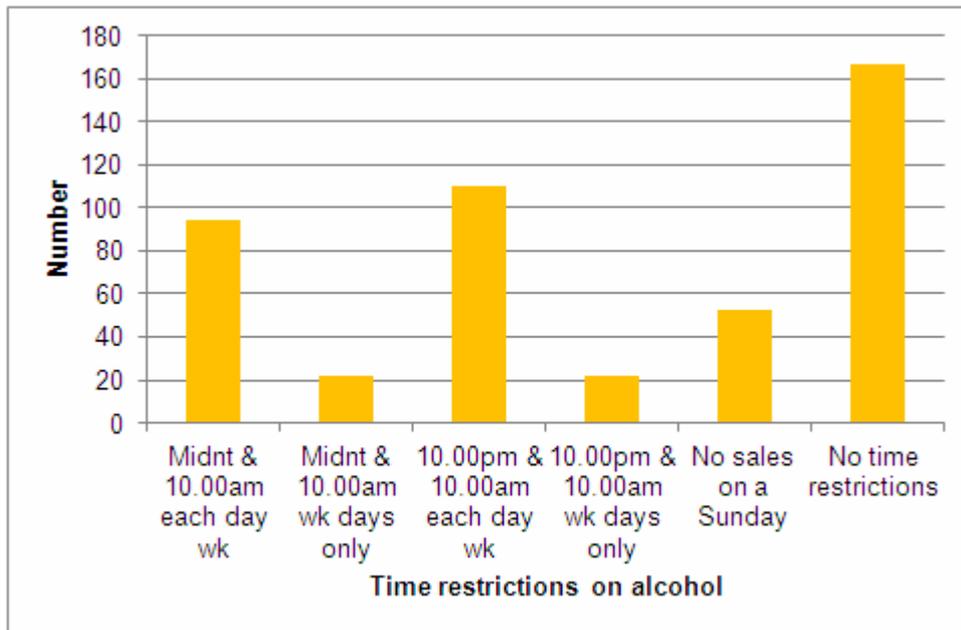
Figure 15: Public view of which premises should not be permitted to sell alcohol?



Q10: Do you think there should be time restrictions on the sale of alcohol?

Respondents were asked to select from 6 options the time restrictions they would impose on the sale of alcohol. The responses were split across all questions but some points can be made. More respondents 50% (234) selected options restricting the sale of alcohol for 'each day of the week' rather than 'week days only'. 42% (167) of respondents selected the option for 'no time restriction' and in contrast 13.2% (53) of people thought there should be no sales on a Sunday.

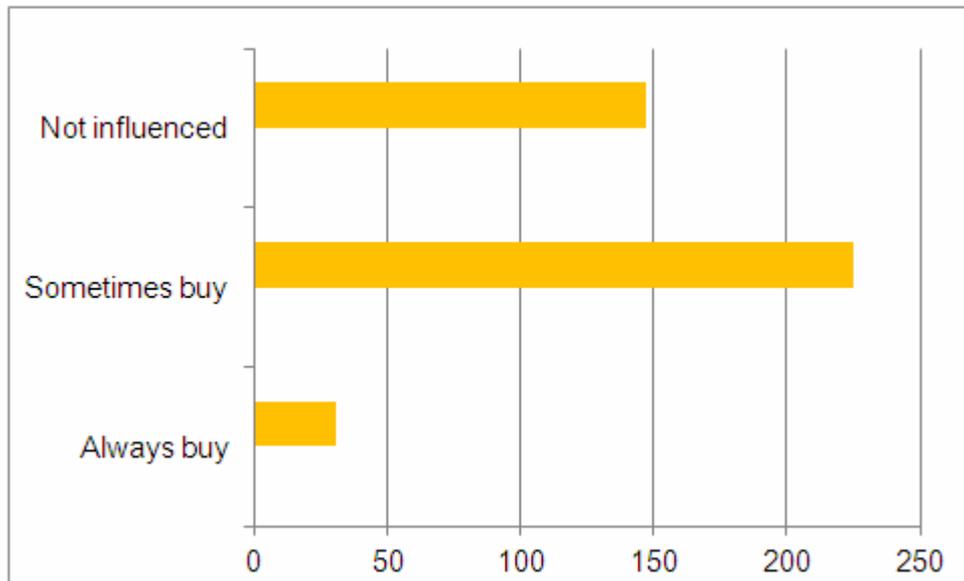
Figure 16: Time restrictions on the sale of alcohol



Q11 Do you think the TYPE/BRAND of alcohol you buy is influenced by in store alcohol promotions and offers?

The purpose of this question was to ascertain if the respondents think the type/brand of alcohol is influenced by in store promotions and offers. 36% (147) respondents reported that they were not influenced by alcohol promotions and offers whereas those who reported that they 'sometimes buy' or 'always buy' totalled 64% (256).

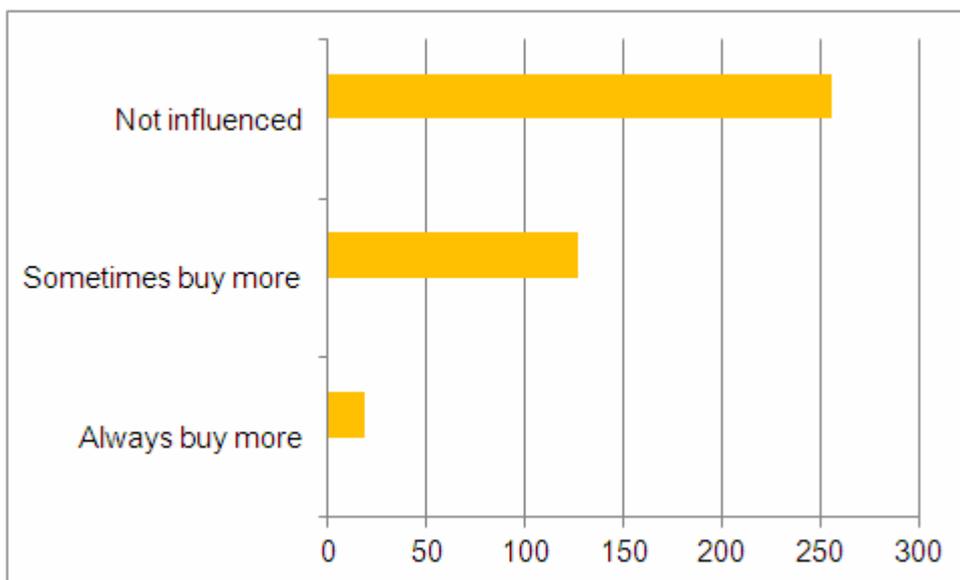
Figure 17: Do you think the type/brand of alcohol you buy is influenced by in store alcohol promotions/offers?



Q12: Do you think the amount of alcohol you buy is influenced by in store alcohol promotions and offers?

The purpose of this question was to ascertain if the respondents think the amount of alcohol is influenced by in store promotions and offers. 63% (256) respondents reported that they were not influenced by alcohol promotions and offers whereas those who reported that they 'sometimes buy' or 'always buy' totalled 37% (146).

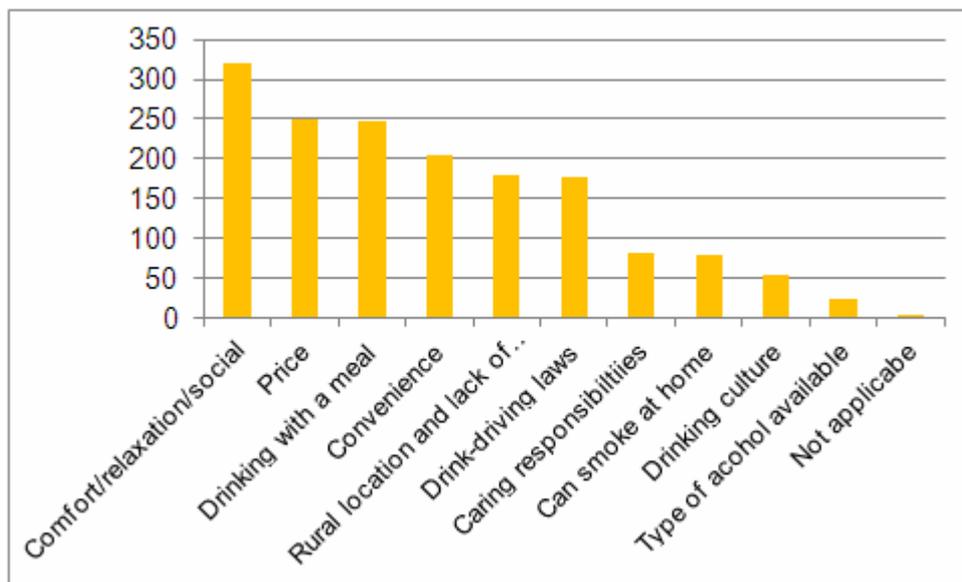
Figure 18: Do you think the amount of alcohol you buy is influenced by in store alcohol promotions/offers?



Q13: What do you think are the main factors that influence people to drink alcohol in the home rather than at a licensed premise?

For this question respondents were asked to tick up to 5 boxes. The top two scoring responses are linked and reflect the trend of buying more alcohol off sales and less on sales. These are 'comfort/relaxation/socialising' 80% (319) and price 62% (249). Not unsurprisingly living in a rural location and lack of facilities was the fifth most popular score 45% (180).. Of note 'smoking at home' was selected by 20% (79) people.

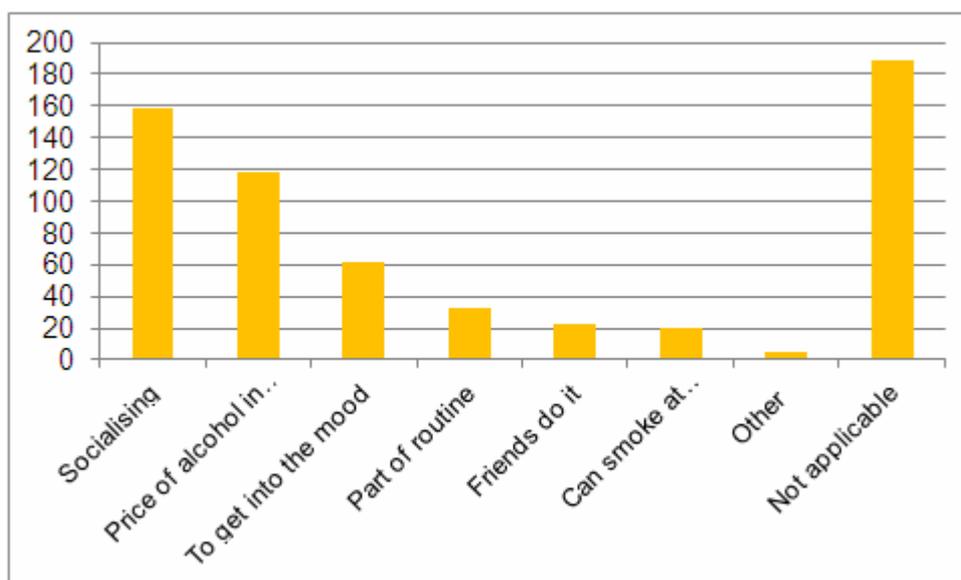
Figure 19: The main factors that influence people to drink alcohol in the home rather than at a licensed premise?



Q14: If you had a few drinks at home or at a friend's house before going out to a pub, bar, restaurant or club over the last 12 months, what is the major reason that you do this?

Respondents could select up to five boxes. 'Not applicable' was the most frequent selected box 47% (189) because the majority of respondents were over the age of 40 and this activity is mainly carried out by those under 40 years of age. 'Socialising' 40% (159), 'price' 30% (118) and 'to get into the mood' 16% (62) were selected as the top three. Being able to smoke at home accounted for 5% (20) responses.

Figure 20: Drinks at home or at a friend's house before going out



Q15: Is there anything you think that would minimise the exposure to alcohol for children (less than 16 years of age)?

Question 15 was an open ended question seeking the views of the respondents. Many of those who had responded had clearly given this question a lot of thought. The following has set out to capture the main themes and issues and to use the words of the respondent. It has not been possible to include all comments because of space limitations – this information is available upon request.

Inevitably, asking this type of question has resulted in a range of views some of which are polarised. Given the complexities behind Highland's drinking culture this comes as no surprise and if there was one answer or an easy answer it would have been found!

A number of respondents raised the issue of the so called 'normalisation of alcohol' and that it has become a product brought alongside daily household commodities such as bread, milk and tea. The following text was in response to bringing about changes to the availability of alcohol:

*"off licenses only selling it, no one under 21 allowed to buy, definitely not in supermarkets, garages, take-aways or corner shops STOP **normalising** alcohol"*

*Take alcohol away from places that **normalise** it. Open up separate alcohol stores"*

*."Take it out of the public's eye so that it does not appear as **normal** everyday commodity".*

The role of parents or those looking after children was commented on:

"I believe that good education is the main contributing factor. This should begin with the parents setting a good example to their children and not drinking to excess either at home or in a social setting"

"I think better education from parents that alcohol is okay in small quantities when older people and parents should be ensuring that they do not drink to excess when in children's company"

"Children need to be able to see adults treating alcohol responsibly to promote the idea that it is possible and indeed desirable to have a healthy relationship with alcohol that does not involve drinking too much on a regular basis"

Furthermore the 'home' as an important environment in minimising exposure to alcohol for children was commented on:

"Do not have a drinks cabinet at home or if you must then ensure it is not in full view of the children or easily accessible"

"Difficult to minimise exposure in the home as this is a parent issue"

"No excessive drinking in the home"

"Less advertising, less alcopops, less drinking in the home"

A number of respondents reported on the importance of education in general:

"Educating them in school and showing them what can happen through case studies, what is sensible drinking and what is dangerous"

"Involve alcohol education in schools at an early age and encourage funding in the Scottish Governments "Preventative Spend" budget to increase extracurricular activities"

There were some specific comments about the education of parents:

"Responsible parenting information given out in schools. Parents evening to include a play or information to bring the attention excessive use of alcohol and how it affects children"

Restrictions on alcohol advertising and promotion were seen as a means of minimising impact on children. A number of examples follow:

"No advertising for alcohol at all. Not on display and has to be asked for"

"Stop advertising on TV and in mags etc"

"Stop glamorising drink in advertisements"

There were many comments made about the sales of sweet of fruit flavoured alcoholic drinks (alcopops).

"The price of alcohol such as alcopops/cider/lager. The advertising/packaging looks too appealing

"Prevent the selling of alcoholic drinks that look like soft drinks and try to taste like soft drinks- e.g. alcopops, etc"

"Reduce advertising - ensure packaging cannot be interpreted as child friendly, ban alcopops!"

"Stop selling alcohol as colourful fruity drinks that look like juice"

Many respondents saw that the consumption of alcohol was an important part of Highland culture and that the role of parenting and the importance of the family was a key strategy for preventing future alcohol problems in younger people. However, there were differing views about how this should happen and included a move to a more European or liberal approach to alcohol and in contrast the introduction of a ban on alcohol being drunk in the home.

These are some comments about a 'European' approach to alcohol consumption:

"to be honest we have completely the wrong attitude to drinking in this country. Children in France and other European countries have lots of exposure to alcohol – but learn from a young age that it is something to be savoured and drunk with food. I don't know how we go about changing mindset in that way"

"we have to look at the models for other European countries where drinking is not such a big social problem and adults all know how to drink in moderation"

"I introduced my children to vastly diluted wine at 5 as they do in Italy. The children are now adults who have no issues with sensible drinking"

"Need a better integrated alcohol culture, more like France, Spain etc. Teach them how to be around alcohol responsibly, rather than banning them from it. Telling people including children that they can't have something just makes them more likely to want it and it is seen as a way of rebelling rather than something that is quite normal to be around"

In contrast to this liberal view about alcohol respondents wrote:

"parents and carers not drinking in the home".

"Make drinking alcohol at home illegal when children present-not likely to happen, but banning smoking indoors worked!"

"Social responsibility and the availability and use of alcohol in the parental home"

Finally, respondents gave numerous options in relation to further restrictions, regulations or sanctions:

“Hefty sentencing for those who purchase alcohol for children”

“Local shops need to be more monitored”

“No alcohol on open public transport, trains and aircraft”

“Off sales restricted to over 21s”

“Proof of age should be demanded and parents should be more watchful”

“Police should link once a year with every secondary school and ask pupils which off licences and which bars/hotels are too lax”

In conclusion those 417 who chose to respond to this survey clearly had strong views about the relationship between children and alcohol. There were numerous thoughtful comments about the role of parents and the importance of the family. For some questions the polarisation of views is to be expected given the complexity of Highland’s relationship with alcohol and supports a multi-faceted approach to control, education and prevention. However (and arguably a self selecting audience), more comments were made about the need for further control, education and prevention rather than less.

6. Limitations

There were a number of limitations associated with this method of collecting data. In this particular survey a number of internet sites were used to post the questionnaire resulting in essentially world wide access. In reality, because, the internet sites were NHS Highland and Highland Council most of the respondents were local. Furthermore controlling factors such as age, gender and location was not possible. Local networks such as Alcohol and Drug Partnerships were also sent the link but again controlling for any demographic factors was not feasible and it might be argued that people involved in such partnership will have particular views or biases.

Most questions were designed as multiple choice which is made it easier to analyse but can limit responses and miss key points. Where free text was used the respondent’s views were reported rather than using qualitative methods to determine themes and issues.

We would like to emphasise, however, that over 400 questionnaires were returned and is a very respectable number. We are grateful to all those who took the time to follow the links and complete the questionnaire.

7. Conclusion

There are a number of concluding comments that can be made about the culture associated with alcohol, availability and affordability.

In relation to culture it is clear that alcohol, by many, is viewed as an everyday product with participants reporting a regular pattern of purchasing alongside other items. For instance this survey found that 76% (316) of off-sales alcohol was purchased most frequently from supermarkets with participants reporting a regular pattern of purchasing alongside other items. Furthermore the polarisation of views about how to change the culture were varied suggesting that future policy will need to reflect these differences.

The respondents in this survey generally have ease of access to alcohol, for example, 62 % are within a 15 minute drive time of a venue selling alcohol, and cite price as a reason for purchasing alcohol in a supermarket and drinking in the home. Furthermore 71% of the respondents in relation to the sale of alcohol said there was 'about right' or 'too many' places selling alcohol in the area where they lived. Does this suggest that the public might be open to changes in how alcohol licenses are agreed?

The report has valuable information for those with a health improvement interest. There are a number of myths that still exist and need addressing such as the perception that a move towards the so called 'European' or 'more liberal' approach to alcohol will solve Highland's difficult relationship with alcohol. Another example is the call for 'more education' particularly associated with young people. Both views may have some merit but can be challenged because of the rise of alcohol problems on the continent and also alcohol harm is not just the prerogative of the young and is prevalent within all age groups. Smoking was cited as a reason for drinking in the home and might be of interest to those with a general lifestyle health improvement remit. Furthermore there were some clear age and gender differences that require further investigation. Responses to Question 15, about the impact of alcohol on children, were extremely thoughtful, if polarised, again suggesting the need for further investigations. Social marketing approaches might help with insight gathering and the targeting of interventions.

Those developing policy in relation to alcohol overprovision might find it useful to take cognisance of this survey, because it is, after all, the views of the public and suggests changes to the current situation might be welcomed.

Reference

Aberdeen ADP and Aberdeen City Local Licensing Forum. Aberdeen City off-sales consultation (2012)

http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/page/search?search_field=aberdeen

Appendix 8.1: Multi- Member Wards

Ward Number	Area
1	North, West & Central Sutherland
2	Thurso
3	Wick
4	Landward Caithness
5	East Sutherland & Edderton
6	Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh
7	Cromarty Firth
8	Tain & Easter Ross
9	Dingwall & Seaforth
10	Black Isle
11	Eilean a Cheo
12	Caol & Mallaig
13	Aird & Loch Ness
14	Inverness West
15	Inverness Central
16	Inverness Ness-side
17	Inverness Millburn
18	Culloden & Ardersier
19	Nairn
20	Inverness South
21	Badenoch & Strathspey
22	Fort William & Ardnamurchan

For further information contact Sarah Henderson on sarah.henderson6@nhs.net or Elisabeth Smart on Elisabeth.smart@nhs.net