



Registered Charity 1138775

# Newsletter



for Parents

February 2014 Ed5

Dear Parent

After the excesses of Christmas and the New Year, apparently one in four of us will have attempted to have a 'Dry January' - either to lose weight, save money or give the liver a rest. It's a good test of will power, and certainly saves a few pennies, but the best advice is to try and avoid the excess in the first place and stick to the daily guidelines if you can of two to three units for women (a glass of wine) and 3 to 4 for men (a pint and a half), then you won't need to punish yourself in January, which is depressing enough as it is! Take a look at our [Parent Pages](#) for guidance on units, how to be a 'perfect' parent and get useful facts to be able to 'talk to kids about alcohol' with confidence.

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## A Story of Two Extremes

WARNING - watch out for a new Facebook drinking game called **Necknominate**. If you hear your kids talking about this, it is a site which encourages users to post videos of them-selves drinking alcohol in unusual or risky situations. The craze started in Australia and is now over here.

If kids are tempted to post a video, it could haunt them later in life, not to mention the immediate danger they could be facing, for example a YouTube clip from England shows 10 units (a bottle of wine) being downed in 4 seconds – that's more than twice the daily guidelines....'Neck your drink. Nominate another. Don't break the chain, don't be a d\*\*k,' says one of many Facebook pages set up to promote the game. Happily, this is not the norm, as the BBC aired on January 9th in a feature: **UK teenagers might have a reputation for binge drinking, but in reality the number of young people consuming alcohol has declined sharply. Why?**

"There is nothing that says you can't go out and have fun without a drink," says Liam Brooks, 18. Since November he's been old enough to buy alcohol legally in pubs, but he's never touched a drop. "It's the mind-set the media has that every 18 year-old goes out and gets drunk. Maybe people in the previous generation did. But nowadays, most people would go out to hang out."



Anyone familiar with regular newspaper stories about young people creating drunken havoc in British town centres would be forgiven for finding Liam's words surprising. He is reflecting a trend of young people starting to drink when they are older, if at all - just 12% of 11 to 15-year olds said they had drunk alcohol in the previous week in 2011 - down from 26% a decade earlier, 57% hadn't even tasted alcohol in 2012. Among older teenagers and young adults, the pattern is the same. In 1998 71% of 16 to 26 year-olds said they'd had an alcoholic drink that week. By 2010 only 48% did so, and two in ten claim not

to drink at all. It's a trend that defies many people's expectations of young people, and a whole variety of theories are offered by experts to explain it.



One factor may be that alcohol is becoming more difficult for young people to get hold of. Pubs and clubs are also getting better at challenging under-age drinking. Retailers have more of an incentive to check IDs after the government doubled the fines for those caught selling alcohol to young people to £20,000. Parents are increasingly being challenged too if buying alcohol if they have teenagers with them under the 'buying by proxy' law.

Also, for students, with the rise of tuition fees, young people going to university want to get more out of their experience to make sure they are competitive in the labour markets and so may be less excessive; student union bars have also tightened up on drinking games and irresponsible promotions by clubs and societies.

Britons from a Muslim background are less likely to drink for religious and cultural reasons, and Muslims now make up 8% of the population under 16 in England and Wales - up from 5% in 2001. Research has also found (as well as our own research which followed 4,000 kids over 18 months) that pupils who go to more ethnically diverse schools are less likely to drink, whatever background they come from.

It's thought that the growth of technology and social media since 2005 might be having an effect too, as kids can socialise and keep themselves entertained on line.

However, It's not just alcohol use that has fallen, young Britons are more abstemious in general than in previous generations. NHS statistics show that in 2011, 17% of pupils had ever taken drugs, compared with 29% in 2001. Tobacco use has also dropped.

Despite these positive trends, it's not all good news - in international terms, young Britons are still drinking more than most of their neighbours; we don't drink more often, but drink more when we do, according to the recent European School Survey project on Alcohol and Drugs. Rosanna O'Connor, director of drugs and alcohol at Public Health England says "The young people who are drinking are drinking more than their European counterparts," She says the drops in overall consumption represent "good news but a partial picture".

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### Help raise charitable funds whilst shopping online

At the Alcohol Education Trust we want all our resources and support to be free of charge to everyone - but we still need money to be able to do this! We have therefore joined over 6,000 charities and schools on the sales commission website TheGivingMachine.co.uk. Sign up as a Giver, choose up to 4



beneficiaries (AET and your children's school?) who you would like to receive a proportion of the sales commission the hundreds of retailers give the site for directing shoppers to their online shops. It's so easy! Click [here](http://TheGivingMachine.co.uk) to sign up and start shopping and donating – just remember to have TheGivingMachine.co.uk as your favourite website and always start shopping from their site! Thank you in advance for your support.

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## Picking on Parents?

A survey of 1,000 mothers found a quarter had been drunk within the last month and one in six have, at some point in the past, been too hung-over to be a good parent.



The poll, commissioned by ITV's This Morning, also found that 28 per cent of mothers with under-18s have been drunk in front of their children. 36 per cent say they do so to alleviate work-related stress, while just under a third say they turn to the bottle to help them deal with the stress of looking after their children. A quarter regularly drank more than the government guidelines of two alcoholic drinks in one night.

Perhaps more worrying though was the report from ChildLine showing a surge in children scared by their parents' drinking and ringing their helpline: 3,930 youngsters contacted the charity last year upset about their parents' alcohol intake. What we do know is that kids copy their mothers example more than their fathers when it comes to drinking and getting drunk, so how you behave in front of your kids does make a difference, so do be aware when you have friends over or on family occasions for example.

Take a look at our ['Perfect Parents?'](#) page for guidance.

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## Fake ID's

As an alternative to taking their provisional/driving licence, or even their passport, out with them to prove their age – think about encouraging your teenager to apply for a PASS card.

A PASS accredited card offers nationally recognised proof of age. It is also the only scheme that is backed by the Government and the enforcement authorities such as the Police and Trading Standards.



There are various cards to apply for which are accepted nationally and/or regionally – have a look at the PASS Scheme website for further details [here](#), several schemes offers discounts and benefits to cardholders as well as proof of age.

Take a look at our Parent Pages for information on [Alcohol and the Law](#) and for further useful facts and information go to [Drinking&You.com](#)

\* We've been warned about a site offering 'high quality' FAKE ID's called [FakedKing.com](#) \*

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## Any questions?



Part of our job is to answer any worries you may have – please either email in confidence to [jane@alcoholeducationtrust.org](mailto:jane@alcoholeducationtrust.org) or share your experience, frustrations and also good news stories, by [tweeting](#) Sandra or go to our online forums at [Facebook](#) and [FamilyTalkUK](#). There are also some great chats on YouTube via [YouTube.com/FamilyTalkUK](#)

For further information on any of the above please contact

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