

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

Findings from face to face and digital engagement with parents and carers using social norm approaches in a variety of settings across England



Can we change parental perceptions around teenagers and alcohol?

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Parents/carers of 13 and 14 year-olds erroneously believe the majority of this age group are drinking alcohol. Although the average age of first whole drink is at this age, 9 out of 10 of year 9s (13 and 14 year-olds) never or rarely drink alcohol.¹

- Young people often form their own drinking habits based on perceived drinking patterns among peers, however the behaviour, house rules and advice of parents/carers is a key driver
- Many parents/carers lack the knowledge and confidence to talk to or support their children around alcohol, often leading to approaches that are too lenient or too strict.

Purpose of the Alcohol Education Trust parent and carer outreach

The Alcohol Education Trust is a charity working with over 1500 schools and 700 organisations across the UK, conservatively supporting 500,000 11–18 year-olds each year to stay safe around alcohol. The AET's parent outreach aims is to equip parents/carers with the tools and motivation to change how they might influence the age of first whole drink and the amount and location of drinking among their children.

Importantly the parent intervention improves knowledge around the law and the social and physical effects of underage drinking as well as providing practical and positive parenting techniques that help avoid risky drinking situations occurring. In addition to a face to face one hour information session, parents are supported with a dedicated parent website, and a bi-monthly newsletter which is sent directly to 1260 parent subscribers and indirectly via 10,200 partners and shared online by schools, clubs, police forces, regional PSHE and parent groups and other charities across the UK.

The AET's Parent outreach aims to deliver two high impact outcomes that can better help parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities around alcohol.

- Firstly, to help to remove or change some of the parent/carers misperceptions in relation to teenage drinking. By doing this, it is contesting the idea that most teenagers of the same age and their peers drink frequently and or to excess.
- Secondly, the one hour face to face sessions equip parents/carers with the tools and knowledge needed to nudge them into becoming better role models and feel more confident in achieving a 'tough love' stance on boundary setting and supporting their children through their teenage years.

Data collection

- During 2016/2017, data on parents and carers were collected via 23 organisations or schools who hosted 'talking to kids about alcohol' sessions with 323 parents/carers attendees providing feedback via electronic handset or paper questionnaire. An additional 98 individuals completed the online questionnaire via the parent area of the www.alcoholeducationtrust.org website.

The key findings were:

- 78% *underestimated* the number of 11–15 years olds that *haven't even tried* alcohol, thus a large percentage of parents/carers found their assumptions were incorrect.

Correct norm: 62% of 11–15 year-olds have never drunk alcohol (up from 40% in 2000). Just 10% of both 15 year-old boys and girls drink weekly – and 2% of 13 year-olds. It's important to let your son or daughter know that choosing not to drink at their age is 'normal'. (Health Behaviours of School Children 2014 WHO collaborative study and NatCen Survey of Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England 2014 Fuller E).

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- Of those young people drinking, parents thought that 49% were getting alcohol from peers, 6% themselves and 43% from parents/family.

Correct norm: 32% of 11–15 year-olds say they get alcohol from their parents or carers. The other main source is from friends or other people at 25%. Only 5% had tried to buy alcohol themselves. It's very difficult for them to get it without an adult. (ONS 2012)

- 22% parents/carers underestimated the average age of a first whole drink.

Correct norm: Latest Alcohol Education Trust findings put the average first parent/carers supervised drink at age 13 ½ and the first unsupervised drink (parties/public settings) at age 14 ½.

- 97 % assume that drinking to drunkenness at the age of 16–24 is normal and accepted. 43% of parents/ carers thought that half 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly – a massive overestimation that affects their attitude to their children at parties, when going to University or to College.

Correct norm: The proportion of young adults (aged 16 to 24) that report binge drinking in the previous week has fallen by more than a third since 2005, from 29 per cent to 18 per cent.

An encouraging 86% of parents said that the presentation/session was informative and useful, 38% were more confident about delaying their children's drinking and 18% now realized that parents are key.

Lessons Learnt

Out of 47 sessions held across England in 2016/ 2017, it was only possible to collect data at 23, either due to the school/organization not permitting data collection or only school secure computers being allowed with presentations emailed in advance. This means interactive Q and A's cannot take place.

Therefore, a more multifaceted communications strategy using mobile phones and paper based Q and A's would be used in future to aid the collection of results.

Conclusion

The data collated from over 300 parents through the face to face intervention with over 1000 parents across England during 2016/ 2017 show that parents are broadly aware of the current norm that the average age of a first whole drink (overwhelmingly in a family setting) is currently just age 13 and a half in England, they wrongly estimated that friends and peers are the key suppliers of alcohol to underage drinkers.

The AET intervention challenges these norms that are in the control of parents and provides parents and carers with the knowledge and tools as to why the current norms are unacceptable. Part of the reasoning behind parental supply of alcohol to teens and the provision of whole drinks at such a young age, is a perception by parents that most teenagers drink and that 16–24 year-olds regularly drink to excess.

These parental conceptions of the norm vastly overestimate the number of 11–15 year-olds who drink regularly as well as the number of older teenagers who get drunk. By correcting these norms, we help parents realise their role as gate keepers as to the age and the amount that their teenagers choose to drink.

The representative sample of parents and carers with children living in different geographical settings and from varying economic backgrounds of differing academic ability suggests we can positively affect future parental behaviour and attitudes through a simple and engaging one hour intervention.

Most encouraging of all is that 86% of parents/carers found the session informative and useful and 56% said they will now change the way they talk to their children about alcohol. Crucially, equipping parents and guardians with the knowledge, confidence, and tools to set boundaries and talk about alcohol in the here and now, should lead to significant positive impacts for their teenage sons and daughters in their futures.

1.1 OVERVIEW

In England in 2015, only 4% of 11–15 year-olds drink at least weekly (down from 20% in 2003) – So around 96% don't drink regularly, and 65% not at all. <1% of 11 year-olds drink rising to 13% of 15 year-olds). 62% of 11–15 year-olds have never drunk alcohol (up from 40% in 2000). The proportion of pupils who have had an alcoholic drink increases from 8% of 11 year-olds to 69% of 15 year-olds.

The proportion of 11–15 year-olds who think it is ok for someone of their age to drink alcohol has also fallen in recent years. In 2013, 24% of pupils thought that it was ok for someone of their age to drink once a week, compared to 46% in 2003.

For 16–24 year-olds, 21% of deaths in males and 9% of deaths in females have been attributed to alcohol consumption. 4% of 16–24 year-old men drink more than 50 units a week and 4% of women aged 16–24 drink more than 35 units a week putting themselves at risk of alcohol dependency, mental and behavioural problems and long term health risks such as liver disease. Among 16–24 year-olds. 28% of men and 16% of women reported drinking more than twice the guidelines in 2013. That means an overwhelming majority of young adults (72% of men and 84% of women) go out to enjoy themselves and socialise, not to get drunk.

Furthermore, national UK data collated on 20,000 students surveyed by social norms specialist Social Sense, found that 9 out of 10 of year 9s (13 and 14 year-olds) never or rarely drink alcohol,¹ with non-drinking rates increasing year on year. However, teenagers who do drink are drinking more, and more teenage girls are presenting at A and E due to alcohol than boys. Hospital admissions for young people under 18 in the 3 year period 2011/12–2013/14 were 13,725 so issues regarding underage consumption should not be underestimated even if trends are improving.

When parents/guardians are invited to estimate alcohol consumption levels among teenagers and young adults, perceptions are markedly different to the reality – outlining that they believe the majority of this age group are drinking alcohol and to excess.

When probed, many of these perceptions are formed by what they hear in the media, and often in real cases reported closer to home. Rather like smokers, adolescent drinkers are of course more visible, especially when alcohol consumption leads to negative behaviour.

The AET's evaluated schools programme 'Talk about alcohol'^{2,3,4} has successfully been shown to change the opinions peers have of each other in relation to expectations around alcohol consumption and other risk taking behaviours. In turn this reduces the pressure for young people to conform and helps to delay the onset of drinking.

1. R U Different? Baseline Survey Results 2014
2. The talk about alcohol programme was evaluated by NFER among 4000 pupils in 34 schools across England over 2 years (2011–2013) and a smaller group (900) 2015. Significant delay in onset of age of drinking which strengthened over time – 15% difference between control and intervention schools – 64% had had a whole drink versus 79% in control schools. <http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NFERfinal.pdf> or via https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/AETE01/AETE01_home.cfm <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14635240.2014.915759> follow up in 2015 either via <http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TAA-nfer-full-report.pdf> <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/AETX01/>
3. Selected by The European Platform for Investment in Children as promising practice http://europa.eu/epic/practices-that-work/evidence-based-practices/practices/talk-about-alcohol_en.htm
4. The Department for Education appointed CAYT has awarded our programme 3 out of 3 for effectiveness and 5/6 for quality of evaluation http://cayt.mentor-adepris.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Talk_about_alcohol.pdf A PSHE Association Quality Assured programme and one of the top 50 most effective early intervention programmes according to The Early Intervention Foundation. guidebook.eif.org.uk

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

The Alcohol Education Trust 'talk about alcohol' programme, has three pillars to its work which significantly and consistently delays the onset of drinking.

- Engaging 11–18 year-olds with non-preachy bottom up engaging resources, in print, film and interactively online
- Training teachers and youth leaders in effective and evidence methods of alcohol education which focus on building resilience, life skills, and positive approaches that engage young people in informed decision making and responsible choices.
- Engaging parents and carers both face to face and on line with non judgemental 'tough love approaches that reduce all risk taking.

Changing peer perception, however, is only part of a story, since the research shows that at this age many young people are forming their drinking habits. These are largely based on the behaviour of parents and the house rules parents set them.

Often the problem for parents/carers is the lack of knowledge of where to set boundaries, or even how to begin those important conversations with their children. Many take their baseline judgement from 'what we were doing at that age', when in fact cultures and behaviours have quietly (but significantly) changed over the past 20 years, during which time rates of underage drinking have halved.

Sadly, the result is that parents/carers can adopt an approach that is either too lenient (evidence shows that of those drinking, most get alcohol consensually from parents/carers), or they chose to take a more autocratic style to enforcing rules or setting disproportionate punishments that can result in unsupervised risky drinking without parental knowledge or consent.

These approaches, combined with potentially a parent/carer's own excessive drinking behaviour, may only serve

to compound the problem and bring habitual drinking forward more quickly than would otherwise have happened.

The AET parent outreach aims to deliver two high impact outcomes that can better help parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities around alcohol.

Firstly, to help to remove or change some of the parent/carers' misperceptions in relation to teenage drinking. By doing this, it is contesting the idea that most teenagers of the same age, and at the same school, as their son/daughter are drunk frequently.

Secondly, the sessions equip parents/carers with the tools and knowledge needed to nudge them into becoming better role models and feel more confident in achieving a 'tough love' stance on boundary setting and supporting their children through their teenage years.



2.0 THE APPROACH

2.1 APPROACH TAKEN

This section outlines the approaches taken by The Alcohol Education Trust to work specifically with parents (see Appendix for map), to change parental perceptions around alcohol. Research shows that unless parents/carers are good role models, set boundaries and know where their children are and who they are with, any efforts by schools to reduce risk taking, including underage drinking are limited. Parents/carers are also the key supplier of alcohol to those under the age of 18. The AET have three dedicated coordinators who engage parents and carers via school and the community plus dedicated online communication support and guidance. The Trust manages a dedicated web area for parents (www.alcoholeducationtrust.org) which enjoyed over 80,000 page views, together with a bi-termly newsletter with a direct distribution of 10,800 to encourage engagement with parents across the UK, plus a Facebook page and twitter account. Over 68,000 parents were reached via schools and organisations with the 'Talking to Kids about Alcohol' information guide during the academic year. 36 dedicated parent sessions in schools are held as a minimum each year, 47 were achieved in a variety of settings.

2.2 ENGAGING PARENTS

Whereas the Alcohol Education Trust trains teachers and community leaders to use the talk about alcohol resources with young people themselves, the Trust engages parents and carers directly with its specialist regional staff.

Parents and carers are wary of talking about their concerns and issues about alcohol with teachers or those who work with their children. Therefore, the AET parent coordinators, who are parents themselves, are trained to take a non-judgemental supportive approach with parents/carers to support them in developing consistent and firm 'tough love' parenting approaches that are known to reduce risk taking. By offering information on the law, units and guidelines and facts and figures on the norms of youth drinking, the coordinators explain the detrimental effects of underage drinking, especially on a regular or excessive basis and how most young people choose not to drink. The coordinators give parents tips and guidance on how to delay the onset of drinking in a positive non-confrontational way with their children.

Following the 40 minute to one hour intervention, suitable for a variety of settings from schools, to drop in centres, parents and carers continue to be supported with bi-monthly newsletters of tips and advice, a confidential email response facility and a dedicated web area via www.alcoholeducationtrust.org.

[Here is the link for the parent guide 'Talking to kids about alcohol'.](#)

2.3 E-NEWSLETTER

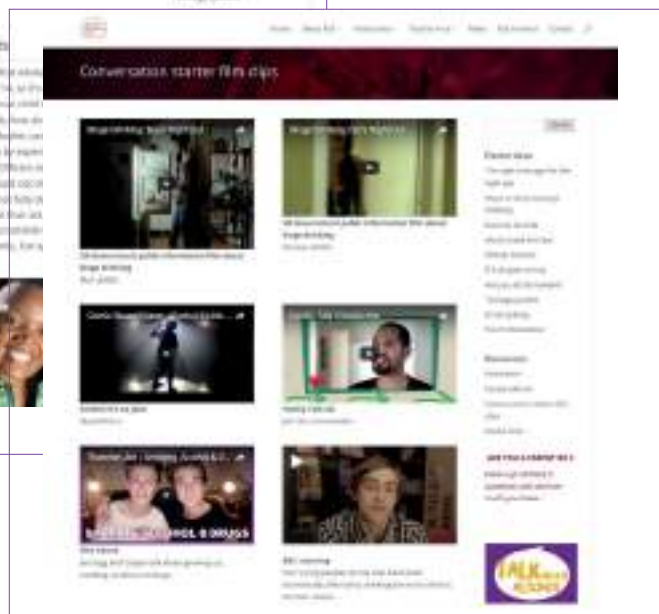
There are 1260 direct parent newsletter subscribers at present and 6 newsletters have been sent to parents (they are sent bi-monthly). The parent newsletter is also distributed to our database of 10,000 partners and shared on line by schools, clubs, police forces, regional PSHE and parent groups and other charities across the UK.

[Here is the link to the parent newsletter subscription page, that also has the archived and current newsletters.](#)

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?



Parent area of website



Parent presentation

Parent newsletters

The Alcohol Education Trust

A national charity that works with schools, parents, carers, health workers, youth outreach teams, and pupils aged 11-18 to prevent underage drinking, reduce drunkenness and its associated harms and help keep young people safe around alcohol

<https://www.facebook.com/talkaboutalcohol/>
 Twitter: @talkalcohol
www.alcoholeducationtrust.org
www.talkaboutalcohol.com







The Alcohol Education Trust - Parent Newsletter

Summer Term, June 2017, Ed 26

Three of us with older children can breathe a sigh of relief as GCSEs, and A levels are nearly over! But at the same time longer challenges too, with year seven parties, long light evenings, festivals, holidays in the sun and days spent in the park or on the beach - it's especially hard to get our children to listen to us as they get older, so this edition is largely dedicated to older teenagers!

We have a special focus on festivals as we've asked so many questions around them at our parent talks. Don't forget to contact us if you'd like to organise a talk via school, a club or as a Governor or PTA, email Kate via kate@alcoholeducationtrust.org

For younger ones

For those of you with younger ones, trying to fit the long summer holidays with interesting things to prevent boredom can be challenging.

One of the key reasons that youngsters give for drinking or taking risks is hanging around with nothing to do, so check out your leisure centre, sports clubs, school and youth clubs for holiday clubs and activities. Try and link up with other parents and carers to plan things with each other's kids - it spares your bank, too. Giving your children a bit of structure with a holiday job or volunteering can be really helpful - it can be dog walking or gardening for friends or relatives for you, if you're brave enough! Take a look at our website alcoholeducationtrust.org/parent-answ/ for more ideas and tips.

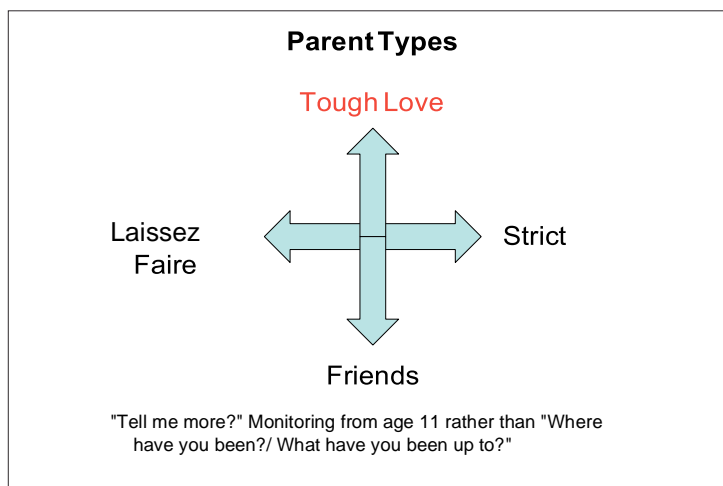
First Festival?

The number of Festivals that have sprung up over the UK is extraordinary - and naturally many teenagers are keen to go.

Often the first festival will be a 'family friendly' one like Bestival and you may be taking your own children, or allowing them to go with parents or friends.







2.4 PARENT PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The aim of the presentations and digital questionnaire is to achieve a more direct and instant level of engagement than some of the traditional methods of communication. [The full presentation can be seen here.](#)

By inviting parents/carers to complete the quiz on handsets, they are assured of anonymity and the results are transmitted and saved automatically during the session – avoiding the need for forms and allowing parents to answer the questions at a pace that suits them.

Attendees were asked key knowledge questions on the age of first drink for young people, who are the key suppliers of alcohol to under 18's and what proportion of 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly at the beginning of the evening, with a selection of multiple choice answers to choose from.



Following the 40 minute to one hour information session, parents/carers were given the correct answers and then asked two feedback questions to gauge any change in attitude or perceptions as a result of the intervention.

2.41 SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES USING THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Where there were more than 30 parents attending, we were limited by the number of handsets. More parents attended the sessions than the sample data suggests.

In some schools, we were unable to use the software due to internet and Wi-Fi restrictions and data had to be collected via paper questionnaires.

We were limited to 6 questions otherwise the questionnaire would have taken too long.



Face to face opportunities yield better results – this is evident in the online questionnaire where only 98 out of 438 hits completed the questions.

2.5 THE QUESTIONS

Parental perceptions around alcohol:

- How many 11–15 year-olds haven't even tried alcohol?
 - A 71%
 - B 62%
 - C 43%
 - D 34%
 - E 26%

Both parents and young people think that many more young people drink than actually do! Just 10% of both 15 year-old boys and girls drink weekly – and 2% of 13 year-olds. It's important to let your son or daughter know that choosing not to drink at their age is 'normal'. (Health Behaviours of School Children 2014 WHO collaborative study and NatCen Survey of Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England 2014 Fuller E)

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

- Of those who do drink, where did students (age 11–15) say they got alcohol from?

A Peers and friends
B Parents and family
C Shops and pubs

32% of 11–15 year-olds say they get alcohol from their parents or carers. The other main source is from friends or other people at 25%. Only 5% had tried to buy alcohol themselves. It's very difficult for them to get it without an adult. (ONS 2012)

- What age do you think the average age of a first whole glass of wine/beer/spirits/cider is?

A 16
B 15
C 14
D 13
E 12

National data suggests that the current average age of a first whole alcoholic drink is age 13 and a half (in a supervised setting) and 14 and a half (in unsupervised setting.)

** The Chief Medical Officer's Guidelines suggest an alcohol free childhood before the age of 15 is best. The first whole glass is usually in a family setting too. Young people's livers and brains can't cope with more than small amounts of alcohol at this age so try and put them off until they are older. (AET/NFER research among 4,400 pupils and Drinkaware)*

- How many 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly? (in the last week)

A 50%
B 42%
C 36%
D 24%
E 18%

The proportion of young adults (aged 16 to 24) that report binge drinking in the previous week has fallen by more than a third since 2005, from 29 per cent to 18 per cent.

From what we see in the headlines, you'd think most students were out getting drunk on a Friday and Saturday night, and it's what younger teenagers think too – as they're the ones you notice! Most young adults go out to have a good time, but not to get drunk. It's important to let youngsters know this! (Statistics on alcohol England 2014)

Participant feedback:

Use your handset to answer the following questions:

- Did you find the presentation useful and informative?
A yes
B a little bit
C no
- After today's session, will you change how you talk about alcohol to your kids?
A No
B Yes, I feel more confident in delaying their drinking
C Yes, I realise that parents are key now

** Latest Alcohol Education Trust findings put the average first parent/carers supervised drink at age 13 ½ and the first unsupervised drink (parties/public settings) at age 14 ½.*

2.6 ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

438 people commenced the quiz, then 340 backed out without completing a question. Of the 98 who completed the survey:

- How many 11–15 year-olds say they haven't tried alcohol? (i.e. consumed a whole alcoholic drink) 22% Correct, **78% incorrect**
- Of those who do drink, where did students (aged 11–15) say they got alcohol from? 60% correct, **40% incorrect**
- What do you think is the average age for drinking a first whole glass of wine/ beer/ cider? 33% correct, **67% incorrect**
- How many 16 – 24 year-olds get drunk regularly? (i.e. have been drunk in the last week) 22% correct, **78% incorrect.**

For those that left feedback:

- After answering these questions will you change how you talk about alcohol to your kids?
 - 14% said 'no'
 - 44% said Yes, I feel more confident in delaying their drinking.
 - 42% said Yes, I realise that parents are key now.

“Very informative and very relevant for ourselves.”
– Fostering Outcomes

“Many thanks for your informative presentation yesterday evening. My colleagues were very impressed and we received many complimentary comments from parents.”
– Alderman Knight School

“Really enjoyed the talk and got loads of information.”
– Jesmond Garden School



THE RESULTS

3.1 THE REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

Parents/carers from 23 schools/settings, completed the Parent Feedback Survey, included are:

Name	Type of School/Setting	Number of Parents
Alderman Knight	Special School	12
B&NES Children in Care	Foster Parents	18
Blenheim High School	Mainstream	8
Brine Leas	Academy	22
Cheltenham Ladies' College	Independent	9
Forrest Hill School	Mainstream	15
Fostering Care	Foster Parents	5
Grange Primary	Primary	17
Jarrow	Mainstream	27
Jesmond Gardens	Mainstream primary	14
Neston High School	Mainstream	25
Newport Primary	Primary	4
North Shore	Academy	19
Park View	Primary	3
Safe and Sound	Parenting Programme (x2)	15
Sherborne	Independent	23
St Anthonys	Mainstream	25
St Bedes	Mainstream	2
St Chads	Mainstream	24
St Josephs	Mainstream	2
St Roberts	Mainstream	8
West Craven	Mainstream (x2)	22

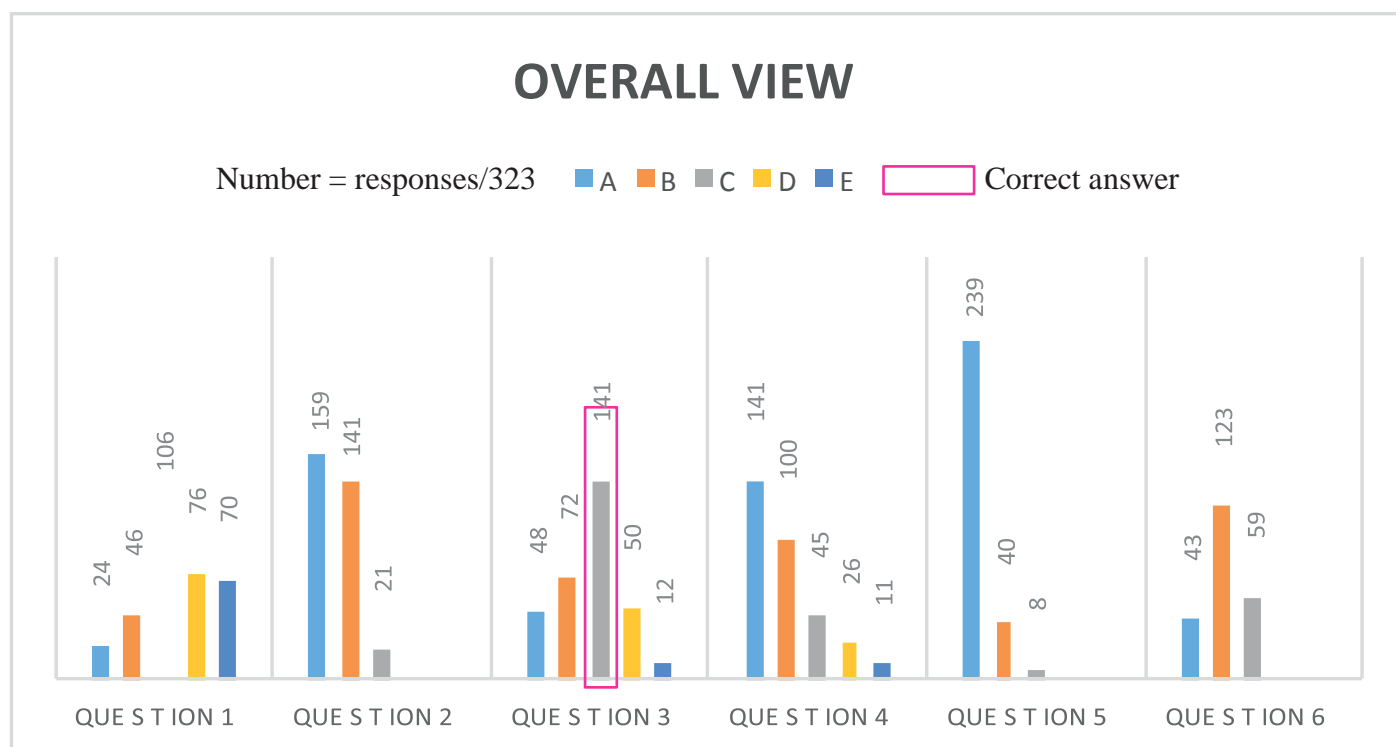
A total of 323 parents/carers answered questions on their perception of the drinking habits of students in their son/daughter's year group, and a variety of other alcohol related questions. These questions linked to parent/carer's knowledge around alcohol, and the actions they would take in future regarding their child's drinking habits. It is felt that the response rates can be significantly increased in the future if the lessons learnt, described in detail in section 5.0, are acted upon without delay. Activity needs to commence at the very beginning of the academic year (September).

Online:

98 parents/carers completed the online questionnaire (see opposite), a high proportion of incorrect answers, indicating misconceptions around alcohol were recorded.

Parent and Carer Outreach Sessions – perceptions around alcohol

The overall findings are illustrated graphically below.



Question 1

- How many 11–15 year-olds haven't even tried alcohol? A 71% B 62% C 43% D 34% E 26%

Just 46/323 – or 14 % of respondents selected the correct answer (B) that 62% of 11–15 year-olds haven't tried alcohol. This illustrates the exaggerated perception amongst parents/carers that most teenagers drink alcohol and that it is a 'normal' rite of passage. By correcting this norm, we can arm parents with the facts to challenge teenagers who claim that all their peers are drinking and that it is standard to provide them with alcohol and to allow them to drink at social events when underage.

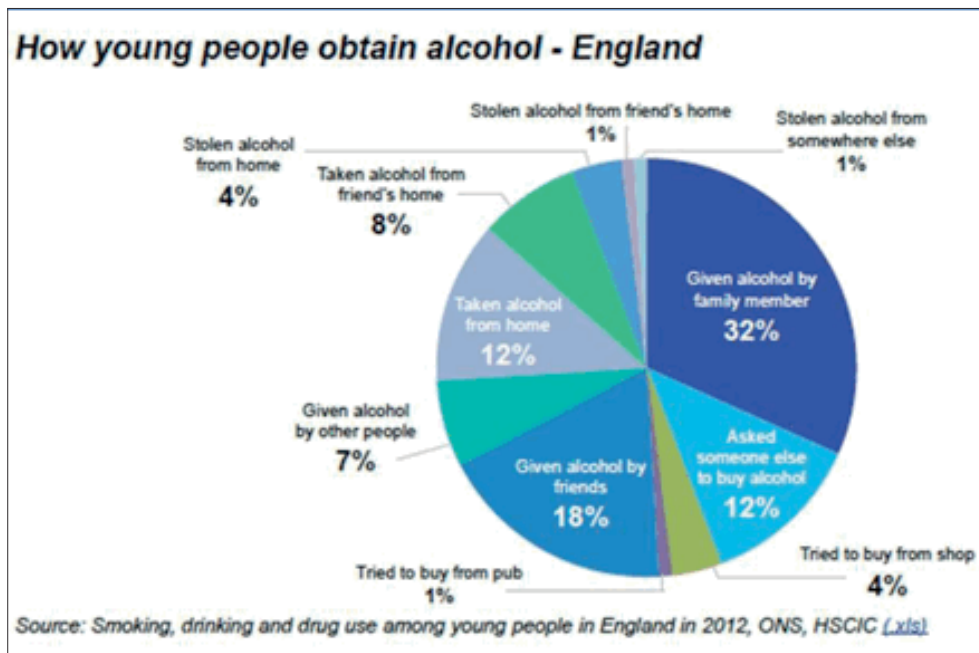
252/323 – 78% **underestimated** the number of 11–15 years olds that **haven't even tried** alcohol, thus a large percentage found their assumptions were incorrect.

Question 2

- Of those who do drink, where did students (age 11–15) say they got alcohol from?
A Peers and friends B Parents and family C Shops and pubs

141/323 – 43 % selected the correct answer that parents and carers are the key suppliers of alcohol to underage drinkers. Some surveys suggest parental supply is as high as 60%, but the ONS findings in 2012 suggest at least 32% of alcohol is supplied by parents, a level higher than supply from friends and peers. However, 49 % (almost half the sample) of parents/carers assumed that Peers and friends were the main source of alcohol. Fear that peers will supply alcohol to their children is often used as an excuse by parents for considering it safer to provide alcohol themselves 6% thought that children obtained alcohol themselves (from shops and pubs) indicating that parents are aware that alcohol is hard to obtain without adult supply. At this point in the presentation parents and carers are made aware of the law around buying by proxy by older friends and peers and the importance of their role in conveying this message to their children.

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?



Question 3

- What age do you think the average age of a first whole glass of wine/beer/spirits/cider is?
A 16 B 15 **C 14** D 13 E 12

141/323 – 43% were correct in their understanding of the average age of a first whole drink. 120/323 – 37% of respondents thought the average age was higher than 14.

72/323 – 22% underestimated the average age of a first whole drink. Again, parental understanding of the average age of a whole alcoholic drink in the UK was broadly accurate. Our role here is to communicate why 13 is too young and the CMO guidance that an alcohol-free childhood is advised until at least the age of 15. The difference between sips on special occasions versus whole drinks is further explained as is the fact that the more permissive they are around drinking in the home the more likely their teenager is to drink outside of the home. Our goal here is to try and raise the current norm of when it is acceptable to have a whole alcoholic drink.

Question 4

- How many 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly? (in the last week)
A 50% B 42% C 36% D 24% **E 18%**

11/323 – a mere 3% answered this question correctly – illustrating how the vast majority of parents (97%) assume that drinking to drunkenness at the age of 16–24 is normal and accepted. 43% of parents/carers thought that half 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly – a massive overestimation that affects their attitude to their children at parties, when going to University or to College. At this stage, we equip parents/carers with tips to support their teenagers as they get older to pace themselves, eat before going out, to alternate with soft drinks, to plan how to get home before they go out and to always let a trusted friend know where they are going. You need to make this point much more strongly in the executive summary and make an infographic/ strong visual of the scale of misconception around levels of older teenage drinking.

Summary of key findings

- 78% **underestimated** the number of 11–15 years olds that **haven't even tried** alcohol, thus a large percentage of parents/carers found their assumptions were incorrect.
- Of those young people drinking, parents thought that 49% were getting alcohol from peers, 6% themselves and 43% from parents/family.
- 22% parents/carers underestimated the average age of a first whole drink.
- 97 % assume that drinking to drunkenness at the age of 16–24 is normal and accepted. 43% of parents/ carers thought that half 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly – a massive overestimation that affects their attitude to their children at parties, when going to University or to College.
- An encouraging 86% of parents said that the presentation/session was informative and useful, 38% were more confident about delaying their children's drinking and 18% now realized that parents are key.

Feedback from the participants

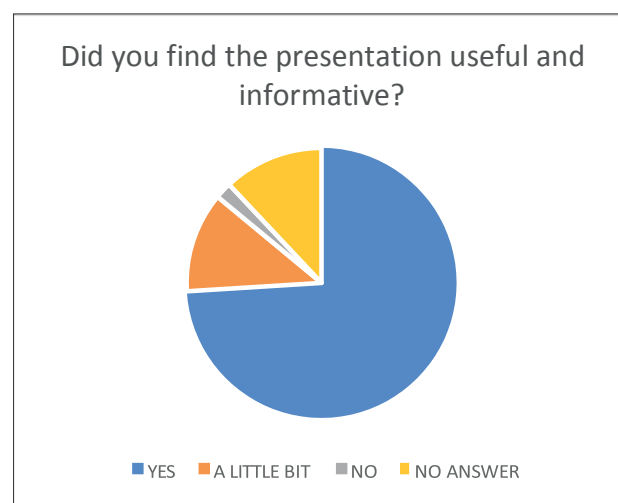
Use your handset to answer the following questions:

Question 5

Did you find the presentation useful and informative?

- A yes
- B a little bit
- C no

279/323 – 86 % parents/carers found the presentations informative and useful.



Question 6

After today's session, will you change how you talk about alcohol to your

- A No
- B Yes, I feel more confident in delaying their drinking
- C Yes, I realise that parents are key now

123/323 – 38 % felt more confident in delaying their kid's drinking.

59/323 – 18% felt that parents are key in talking about alcohol with children.

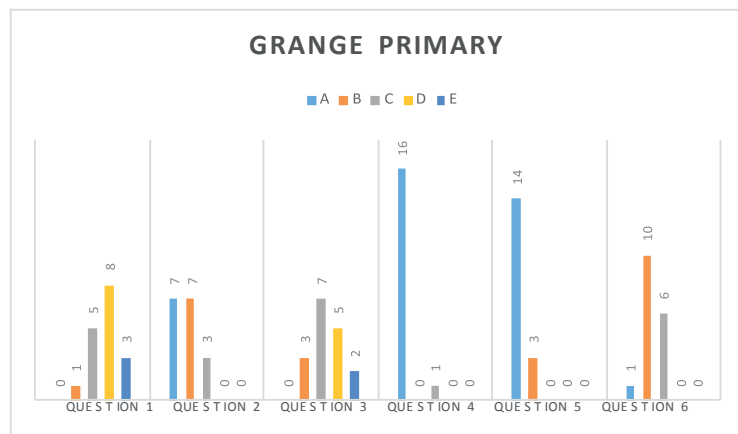


3.2 THE DETAILED RESULTS

PRIMARY

Grange Primary in Hartlepool on 21/6/16

Community primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years.

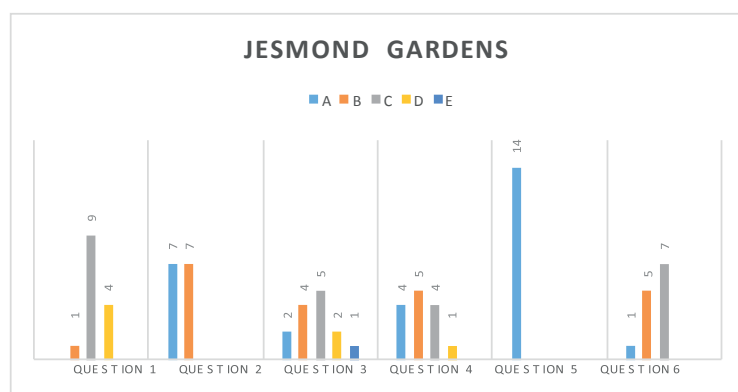


Q4

94 % parents/carers assumed that more than 50% of 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly

Jesmond Gardens in Hartlepool on 1/7/16

Community primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years.

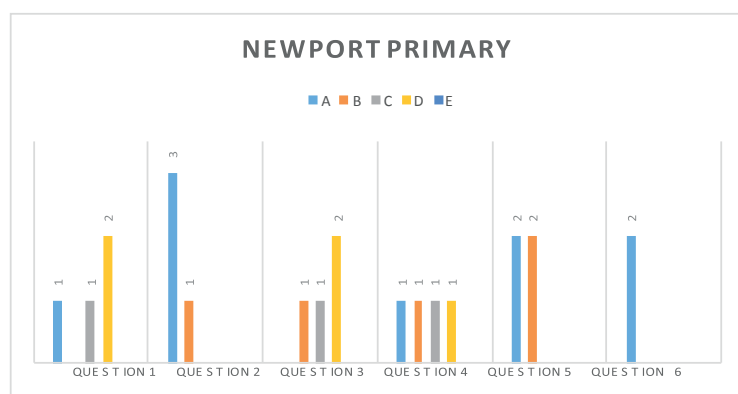


Q5

100% parents/carers found the presentation informative and useful

Newport Primary in Middlesbrough on 17/7/16

A mainstream state school for pupils aged from 3 to 11.



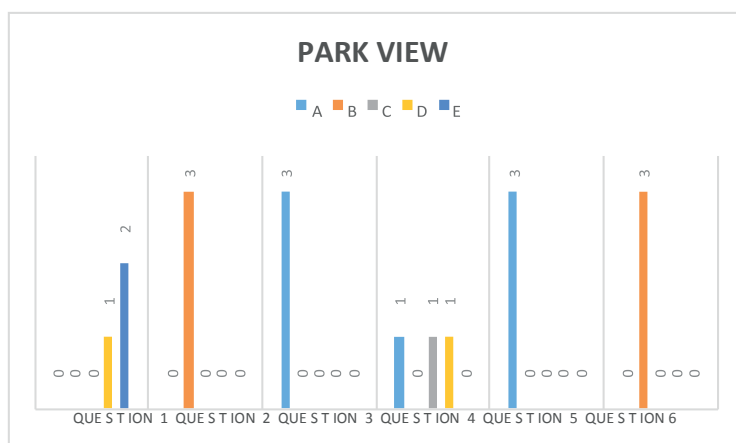
Q2

75% parents/carers assumed that children get alcohol from peers and friends

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

Park View Community Primary School in Manchester

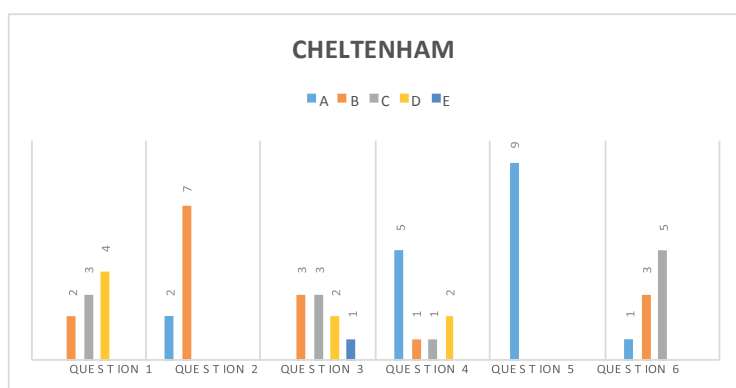
Community School located in the North West Region in the local authority of Manchester.



INDEPENDENT

Cheltenham Ladies College

Cheltenham Ladies' College is an independent boarding and day school for girls aged 11 to 18 in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England. In the Financial Times' secondary school ranking, Cheltenham Ladies College was placed at no. 34 in 2011.



Q4

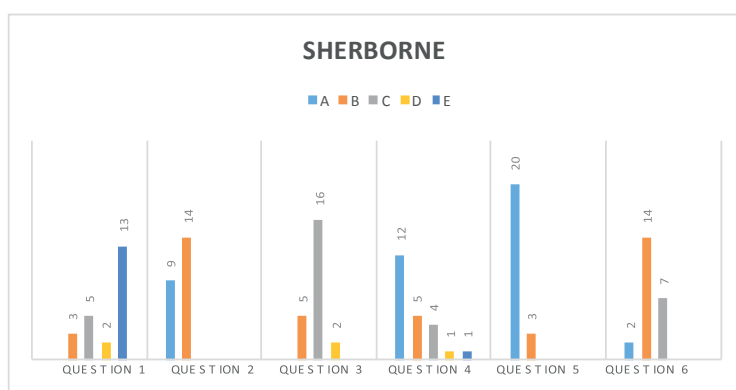
55% parents/carers assumed that more than 50% of 16–24 year-olds get drunk regularly

Q5

100% parents/carers found the presentation informative and useful

Sherborne School

Sherborne School is a British independent boys' school, located in the town of Sherborne in north-west Dorset, England. It is one of the original member schools of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference.



Q1

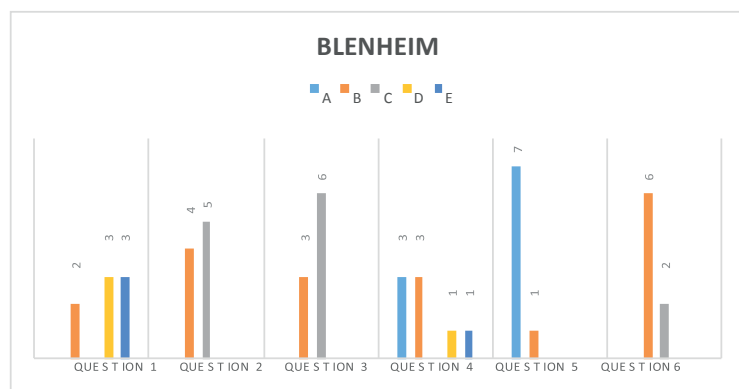
56% parents/carers thought that only 23% of children aged 11–15 would not have tried alcohol

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

SECONDARY

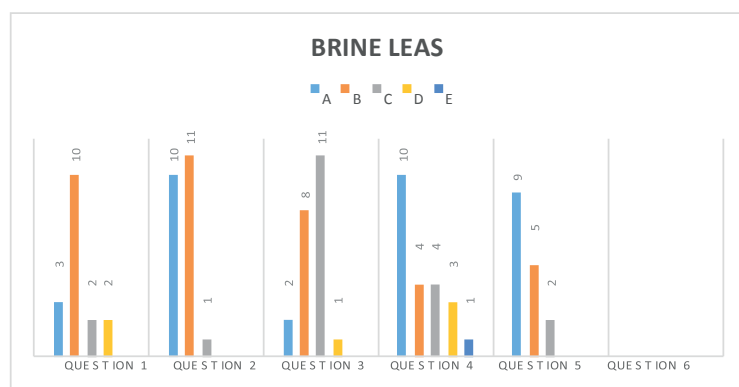
Blenheim School

Blenheim High School is a secondary school with academy status located in Epsom, Surrey, England, that opened in 1997. It is a coeducational, publicly funded academy that educates children from ages 11–18, with 1,350 students on roll.



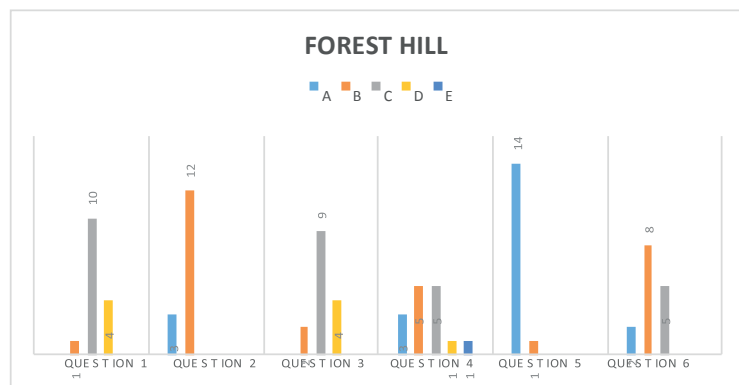
Brine Leas

Brine Leas School is an academy school in Nantwich, Cheshire, UK. The school has 1,287 pupils enrolled, and has technology and language, status. The school opened in 1977 as a comprehensive co-educational establishment.



Forest Hill School

Forest Hill School is a comprehensive boys school located on Dacres Road, Forest Hill, in the London Borough of Lewisham. It opened in 1956. The school has very close ties with the girls' secondary, Sydenham School, which is located close by.

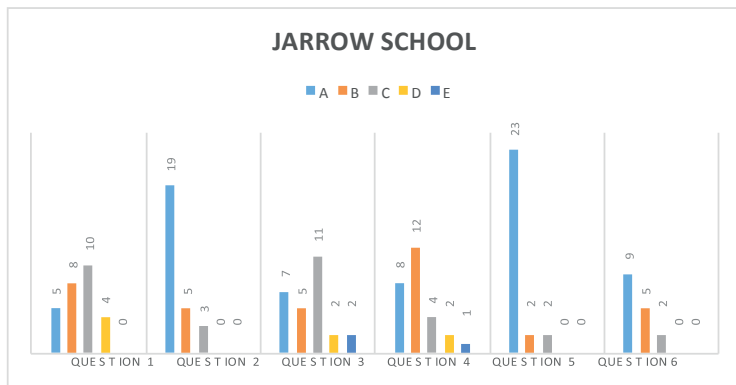


What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

Jarrow

7/7/16 – Y8 parents evening as part of LEAF project

Jarrow School is a coeducational secondary school located in Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, England admitting pupils aged 11 to 16.

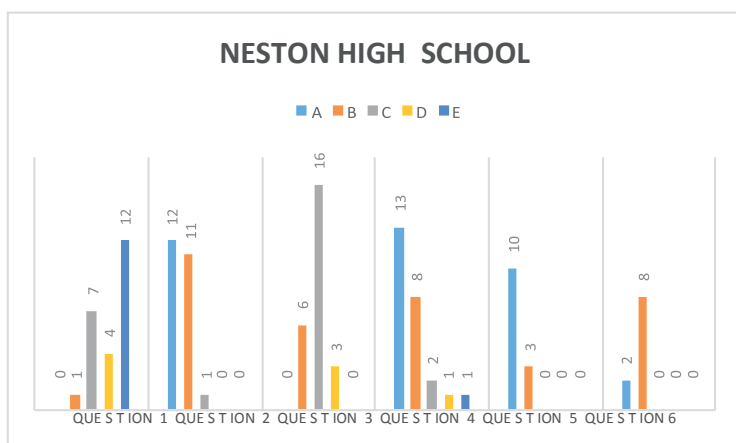


Q2

70% parents/carers assumed that children get alcohol from peers and friends

Neston High School

Coeducational secondary school and sixth form with academy status located in Neston, Cheshire.



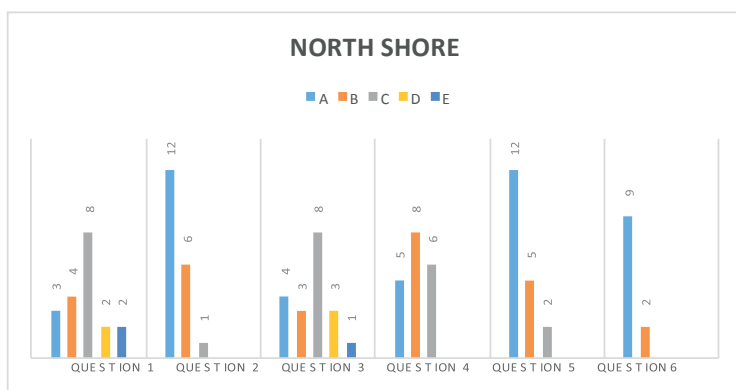
Q1

48% parents/carers thought that only 23% of children aged 11–15 would not have tried alcohol

North Shore Academy

2/7/16 – Parent/Community Health & Wellbeing event

The North Shore Academy is a secondary school in Stockton-on-Tees, North East England. The school was opened in 2010, and replaced Blakeston School and Norton Comprehensive School.



Q2

63% parents/carers assumed that children get alcohol from peers and friends

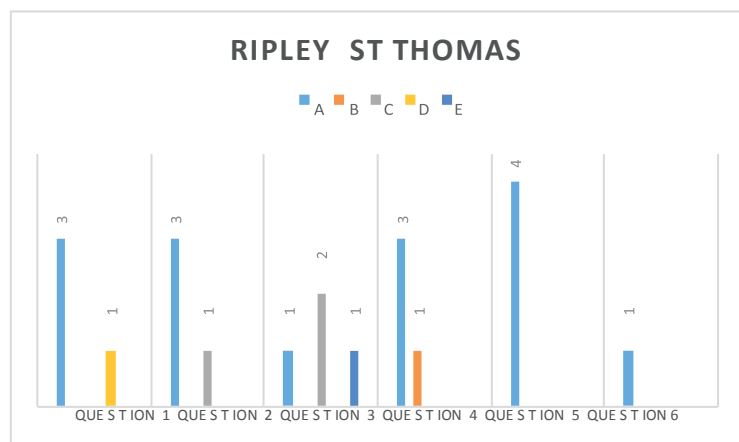
Q5

63% parents/carers found the presentation informative and useful

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

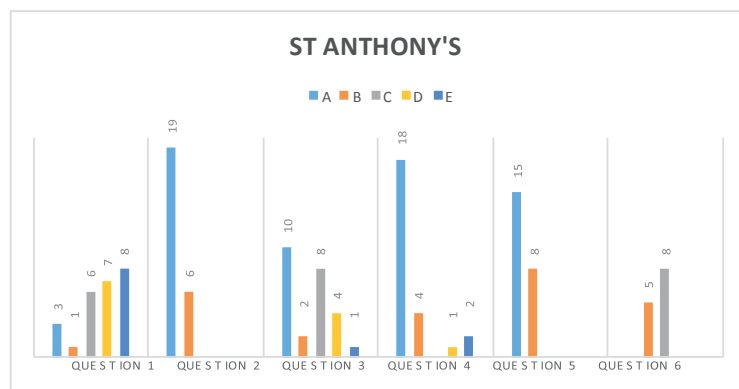
Ripley St Thomas

Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy is a mixed Church of England high school operating under academy status, in the city of Lancaster in the north-west of England.



St Anthony's in Sunderland on 5/12/16 – Y8 parent's evening

St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy is a secondary school and sixth form located in Sunderland.

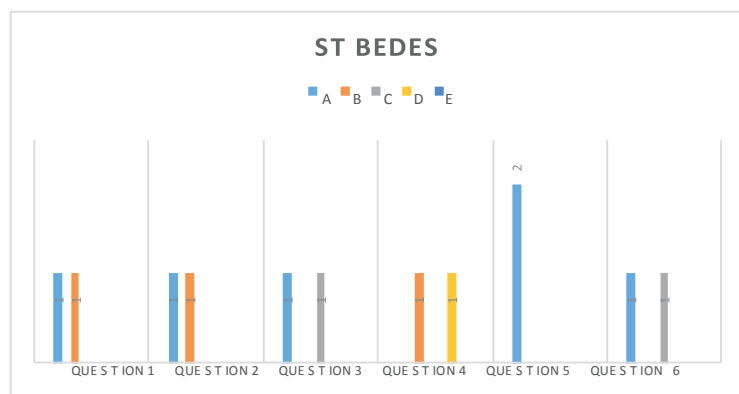


Q2

76% parents/carers assumed that children get alcohol from peers and friends

St Bede's in Lanchester on 20/4/16 – Y9 parent's evening very positively received

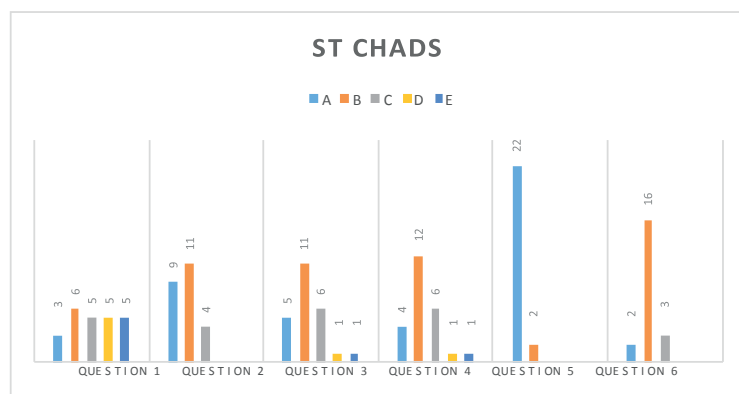
St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College is a coeducational secondary school and sixth form with academy status, located in Lanchester, County Durham.



What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School

School in Runcorn, England St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School is a coeducational secondary school and sixth form, located in Runcorn in the English county of Cheshire.

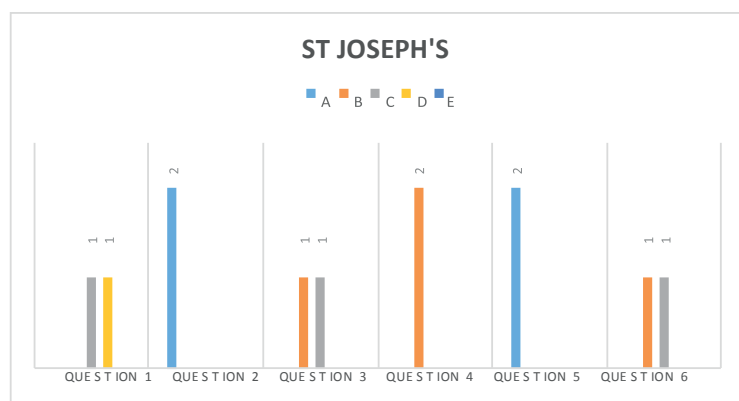


Q5

91% parents/carers found the presentation informative and useful

St Joseph's Catholic Academy

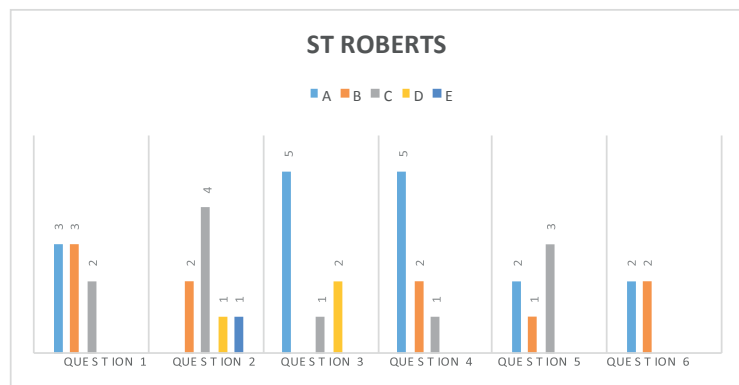
St Joseph's Catholic Academy is a coeducational Roman Catholic secondary school with academy status, located in Hebburn, Tyne and Wear.



St Roberts of Newminster

27/6/16 – Y8 parent's evening

St Robert of Newminster Catholic School is a coeducational secondary school and sixth form located in Washington in the City of Sunderland, Tyne and Wear.



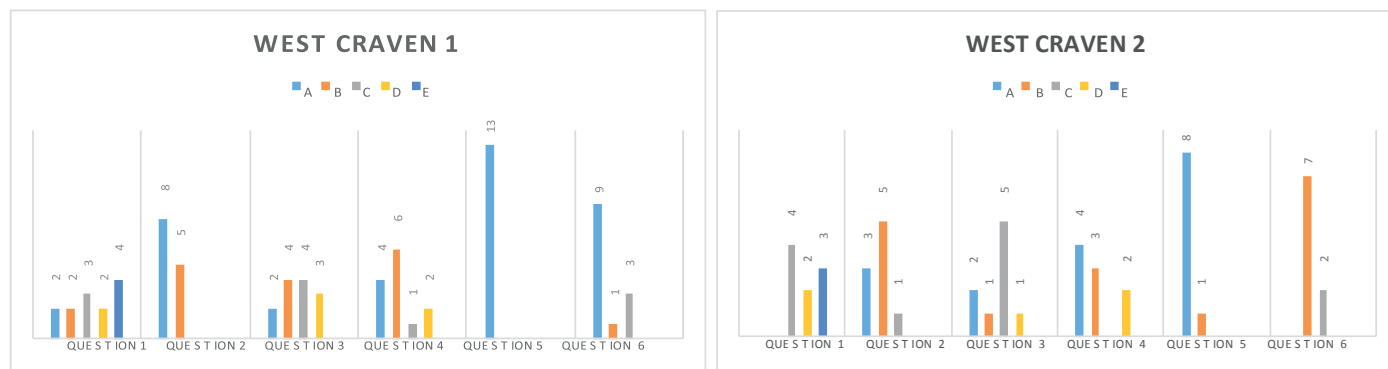
Q3

63% parents/carers assumed 16 was the age of a first full drink

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

West Craven

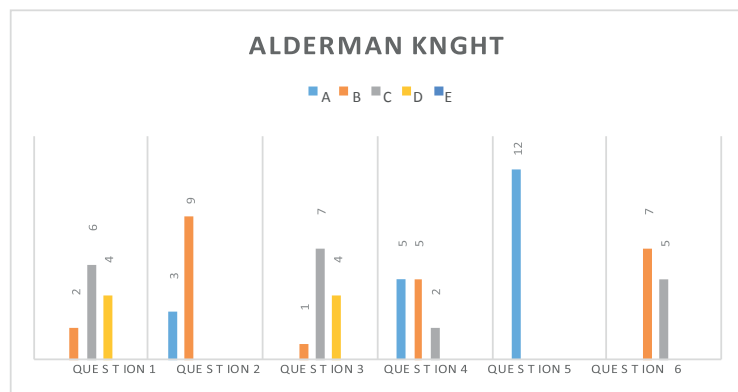
A mixed 11–16 comprehensive school in Barnoldswick



Foster carers and parents of children with learning difficulties

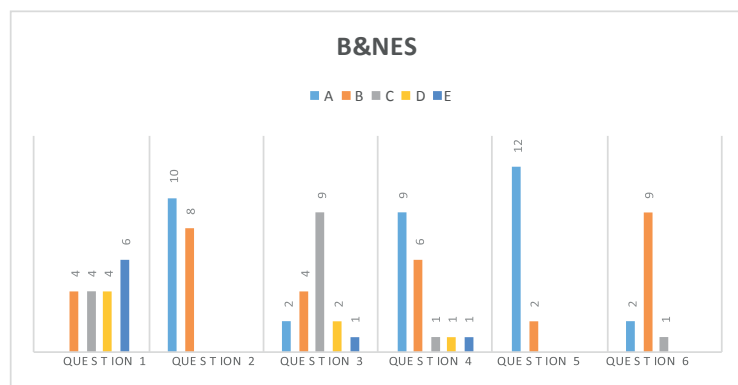
Alderman Knight Special School

Alderman Knight School is a mixed special school located in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.



B&NES Children in Care

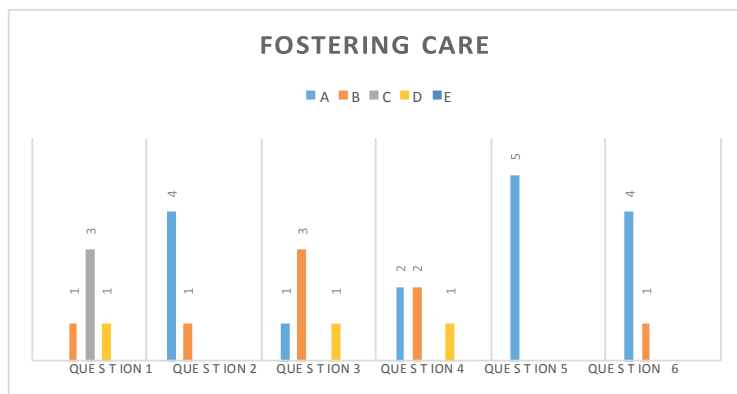
Foster carers across Bath and North East Somerset.



Q6
64% parents/carers felt more confident in delaying the childrens drinking

What are parental perceptions about teenagers and alcohol and can we influence them?

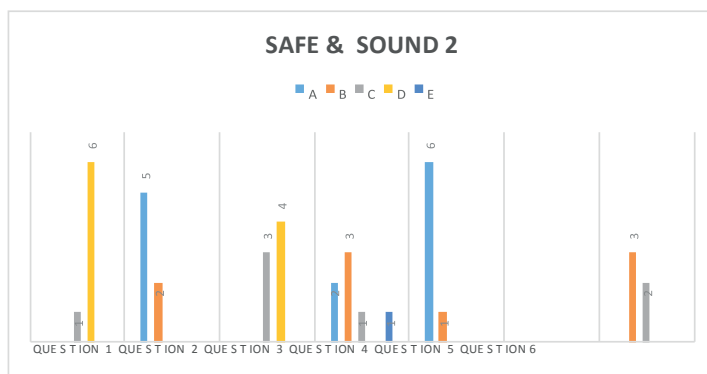
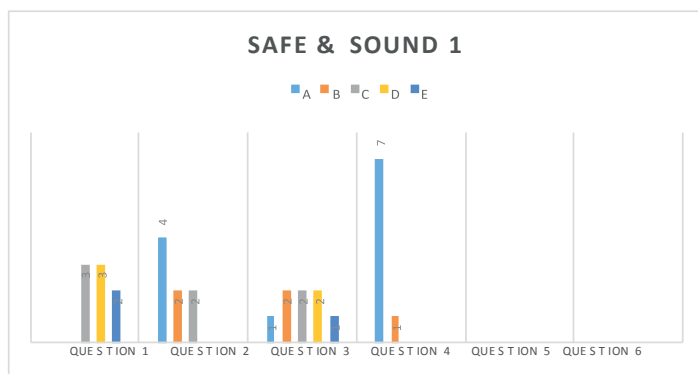
Fostering Care (Hartlepool LA) on 6/12/16



Q5
100% parents/carers found the presentation informative and useful

‘Safe & Sound’ parenting programme (Hartlepool) on 25/2/16 at Hindpool Centre, 29/9/16 at Rossmere Centre

This is a rolling 6-week programme of support for parents and AET provide one of the sessions.



4.0 CONCLUSION

The data collated from over 300 parents through the face to face intervention with over 1000 parents across England during 2017/17 show that parents are broadly aware of the current norm that the average age of a first whole drink (overwhelmingly in a family setting) is currently just age 13 and a half in England, but they estimate that friends and peers are the key suppliers of alcohol to underage drinkers.

The AET intervention challenges these norms that are in the control of parents and provides parents and carers with the knowledge and tools as to why the current norms are unacceptable. Part of the reasoning behind parental supply of alcohol to teens and the provision of whole drinks at such a young age, is a perception by parents that most teenagers drink and that 16–24 year-olds regularly drink to excess.

These parental conceptions of the norm vastly overestimate the number of 11–15 year-olds who drink regularly as well as the number of older teenagers who get drunk. By correcting these norms, we help parents realise their role as gate keepers as to the age and the amount that their teenagers choose to drink.

The representative sample of parents and carers with children living in different geographical settings and from varying economic backgrounds of differing academic ability suggests we can positively affect future parental behaviour and attitudes through a simple and engaging one hour intervention.

Most encouraging of all is that 86% of parents/carers found the session informative and useful and 56% said they will now change the way they talk to their children about alcohol. Crucially, equipping parents and carers with the knowledge, confidence, and tools to set boundaries and talk about alcohol in the here and now, should lead to significant positive impacts for their teenage sons and daughters in their futures.

Just 38% of 11–15 year-olds have tried alcohol. Prior to the parent session, 78% parents and carers thought 57% or more 11–15 year-olds would have tried alcohol.

Prior to the parent session 97% of parents overestimated the percentage of 16–24 year-olds who regularly get drunk. 43% parents estimated that 50% of 16–24 year-olds regularly get drunk, the real norm is 18%.

86% of parents and carers found the session informative and useful. 56% feel more confident about talking to their children about alcohol after the 'talking to kids about alcohol' intervention.

5.0 APPENDIX

