



Young People and Risk: Understanding Attitudes, Perceptions and Behaviours

Staffordshire Alcohol, Smoking and
Drugs Survey Report

Insight, Planning & Performance Team

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Title	Young People and Risk: Understanding Attitudes, Perceptions and Behaviours Staffordshire Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Survey Report
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Description	<p>This report aims to provide an insight into the views and experiences of drinking amongst young people in Staffordshire. The results of this report will identify factors associated with 'risk-taking' behaviour and provide evidence to support transformations in the delivery of alcohol, smoking and drug education in Staffordshire.</p> <p>This report is presented alongside the presentation entitled 'Drinking, Smoking and Drug Use in Young People in Staffordshire'.</p>
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HEADLINE FINDINGS

- 62% of young people in Staffordshire have tried alcohol.
 - This has decreased by 16% between 2013 and 2015 from 73% to 57%.
- A young person's home status influences their drinking habits.
 - 9 out of 10 young people living in a children's home (92%) said they had tried alcohol. These young people are also more likely to drink more on average and more often.
 - Less than two-thirds of young people (59%) who live with both parents have tried alcohol.
- Young people's views and habits are mostly influenced by their parents' attitudes.
 - Less than 40% of young people have had a discussion with their parents where parents have made their rules and expectations clear.
 - 3% of young people do not have any limits applied by their parents.
- Young people that have drunk alcohol appear to be more likely to undertake additional 'risk-taking' behaviour.
 - 12% of young people indicated that they drink at least once a week.
 - From 2014 to 2015, the proportion of young people that drink between 5 and 10 drinks on any single occasion increased from 14% to 19%.
 - 5% of young people have drunk alcohol, smoked and taken illegal drugs¹.
 - Young people are more likely to take an illegal drug than a legal high¹.
 - Young people have reported feeling ill or hungover, falling over or hurting themselves, forgetting what happened, losing something and falling out with someone as a result of drinking alcohol.

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the UK, drinking, smoking and drug use has been identified as an issue for young people and it has been estimated that by the age of 15, 83% have tried at least one.

Over the last three years, Staffordshire has gathered information on the prevalence of drinking and additional 'risk-taking' behaviour amongst young people. As part of this, Staffordshire County Council and delivery partners from the Behaviour Health and Wellbeing Team in Entrust conducted the School Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Survey. This survey aimed to provide organisations with an understanding of young people's attitudes and experiences towards alcohol, smoking and drugs. This was part of a wider commissioned project delivered by the Behaviour Health and Wellbeing Team to review the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum, resources for schools, staff training and work with external agencies, district partners as well as parents and carers.

Using information gathered over the last three years, this report examines information on the prevalence of drinking, smoking and drug use amongst young people in Staffordshire¹. In addition, changes in consumption and views of alcohol will be assessed alongside the factors associated with 'risk-taking' behaviour.

¹ Smoking and drug use results based on 2015 data only

2. STAFFORDSHIRE SCHOOL ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND DRUGS SURVEY

The Staffordshire School Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Survey "Have Your Say" is conducted annually between February and March. Focusing on collecting the views and habits of young people aged between 11 and 17 years old, all middle and high schools in Staffordshire are invited to take part. In order to encourage as many responses as possible, Teacher Consultants from the Behaviour Health and Wellbeing Team worked with schools to support the survey process and advocate the aim of the survey as well as targeting any districts with low response rates.

In total there were 18,095 respondents between 2013 and 2015 (2013 – 5,231, 2014 – 4,208, 2015 – 8,656). This equates to 12% of the total population of 11-17 years olds in schools in Staffordshire. In statistical terms, the 99% confidence level has been applied to the survey results, meaning that if the survey was conducted again, in 99 of 100 cases, the same response would be achieved.

In order to obtain the most representative information, young people were initially asked to indicate whether they had ever had an alcoholic drink. This question, in particular, specified that an alcoholic drink meant a whole alcoholic drink rather than a sip. Where appropriate, the results were then updated to reflect only those young people that indicated that they had had an alcoholic drink. Further questions were then asked about:

- ⇒ Their experience of alcohol;
- ⇒ Their view of drinking alcohol;
- ⇒ Their perception of other young people's drinking habits; and,
- ⇒ Their parents' view of them drinking.

In addition, the 2015 survey asked young people about their experience of smoking (including E-Cigarettes) and taking drugs. Questions in relation to a young person's smoking habits, in particular, were aligned to the HSCIC (Health and Social Care Information Centre) Young People's Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Survey.

3. HOW STAFFORDSHIRE COMPARES WITH NATIONAL FIGURES

Similar to the national results², the proportion of young people (11-15 years) in Staffordshire who have ever tried alcohol is decreasing. Despite this, the proportion of young people who indicated that they have tried alcohol in Staffordshire is higher than national figures. Based on 2014 survey results³, 55% of young people in Staffordshire indicated that they had tried alcohol compared to just 38% at a national level. The addition of smoking and drugs in 2015⁴, in contrast, shows that 2.3% fewer young people (aged 11-15 years) in Staffordshire have smoked at least once, 5.2% fewer indicated that they have tried E-Cigarettes and 11.4% fewer young people have taken an illegal drug.

² Where appropriate, the results of the Staffordshire Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Survey (11-17 year olds) have been updated to reflect the age range of the national HSCIC Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People Survey (11-15 year olds).

³ The HSCIC Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People Survey was not conducted in 2015.

⁴ Comparisons of the 2015 Staffordshire Smoking and Drugs questions are compared to national figures from the 2014 survey.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ALCOHOL

From 2013 to 2015, the number of young people that said they had tried alcohol has decreased by 16% from 73% to 57%. The largest decrease in the number of young people that had tried alcohol occurred between 2013 and 2014 where the proportion of young people that had tried alcohol decreased by 15%.

When compared to the average (62%) for Staffordshire⁵, 7% more young people in Cannock Chase indicated that they had tried alcohol while East Staffordshire had the lowest proportion of young people that had tried alcohol with 56% indicating that they have had a whole alcoholic drink.

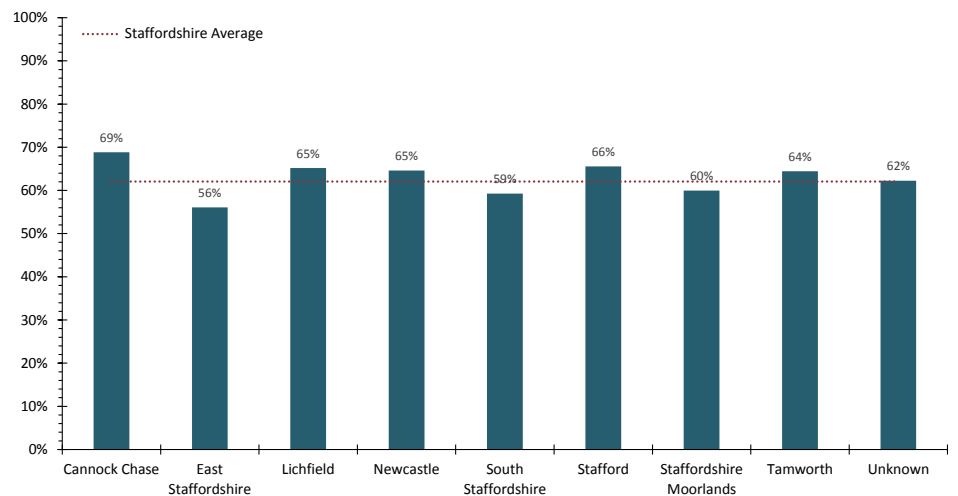


Figure 1 - Proportion of young people who have tried alcohol within Staffordshire⁵.

Despite these trends, a higher proportion of young people in Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Newcastle Borough and Tamworth had their first drink at the age of 12 whereas the age for young people in Stafford Borough, Staffordshire Moorlands and South Staffordshire is lower, 10 years or under. In addition, young people in Tamworth are more likely to drink at least once a week and more on average.

As expected the proportion of young people who have tried alcohol increases with age and by the age of 15, 54% of young people have tried alcohol. In addition, 93% had their first drink by the age of 14, 22% had their first drink before the age of 10 and more males have tried alcohol than females (64% compared to 60%).

Young people that had their first drink before the age of 10 are 2.5 times more likely to drink at least once a week and 1.4 times more likely to drink at least 5 drinks on any single occasion

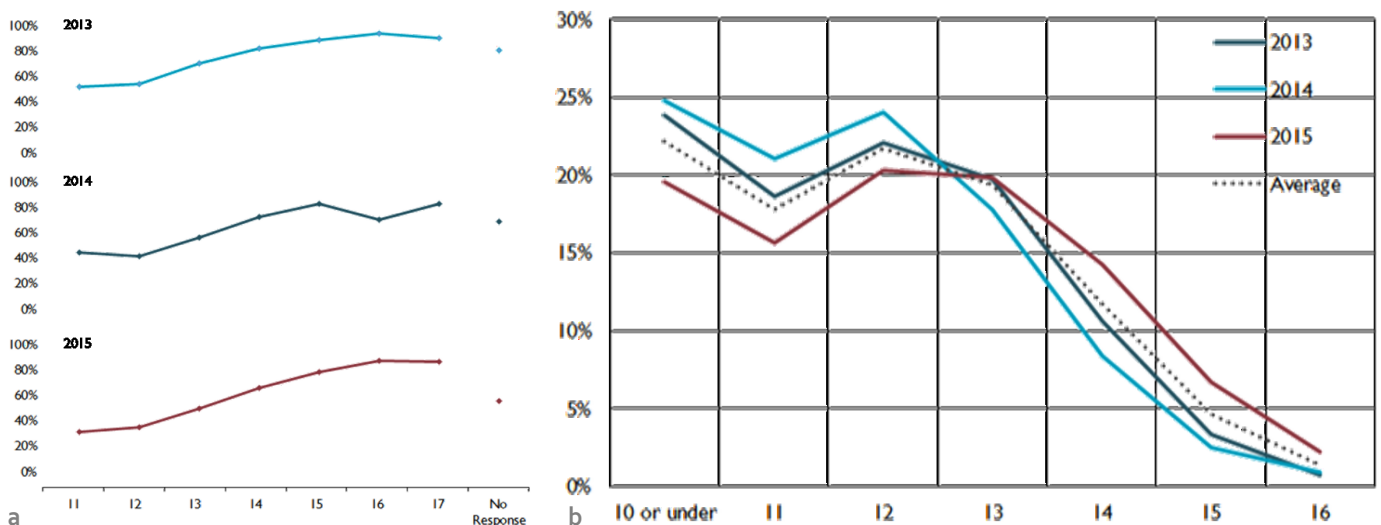


Figure 2 - Proportion of young people in Staffordshire who have tried alcohol, (a) ever had a drink classified by age and (b) age of first drink including the 2013-2015 average.

⁵ The number of respondents per district is presented in Appendix 1.

5. YOUNG PEOPLE'S DRINKING HABITS

Positively, when asked about their drinking habits, 48% of young people indicated that they drink alcohol less than once every 6 months. There is, however, a small proportion (12%) of young people that drink at least once a week. Of those that said they have drunk alcohol, 63% also indicated that on occasions when they do drink alcohol they only drink 1-2 drinks. However, since 2014 the number of young people that normally consume between 5 and 10 drinks on any single occasion has increased by 5% (from 2.98% to 8.24%).

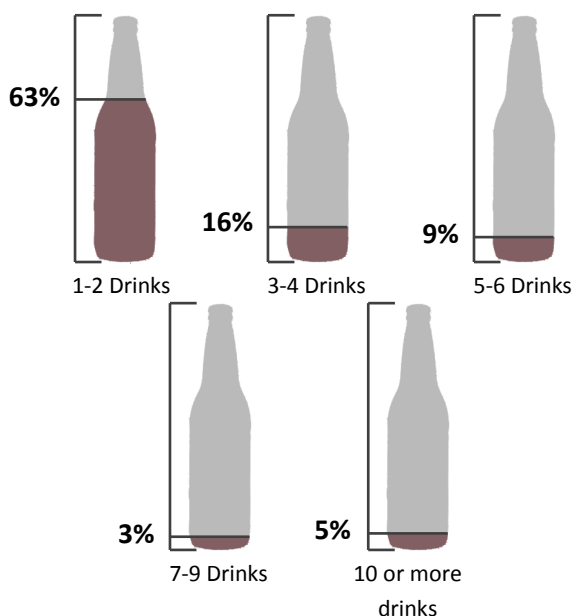


Figure 3 - Amount young people drink on a single occasion.

Frequency of Drinking	Number of Young People	Proportion of Young People
5 or more times a week	296	3 %
3 or 4 times a week	135	1 %
1 or 2 times a week	913	8 %
Once a fortnight	1,126	10 %
Once a month	1,930	17 %
Rarely (no more than once every 6 months)	5,347	48 %
Never	1,400	12 %
No Response	80	1 %

Figure 4 - Frequency that young people drink.

83% (247 out of a total of 296 respondents) of those who drink at least 5 times a week indicated that they drink 10 or more drinks on any single occasion

6. YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO ALCOHOL

Across all survey years, more young people find it easy to access alcohol and this number is increasing. In addition, the number of young people who find it very difficult to access alcohol has declined by 5% and the number of young people who find it fairly easy to access alcohol has increased by 6%.

36% of young people who find it very easy to access alcohol drink at least once a week - they are also more likely to buy it themselves

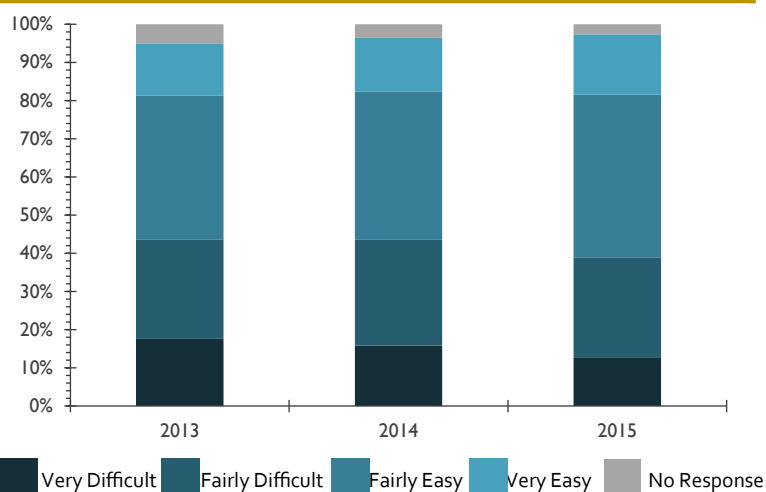


Figure 5 - Young people's ease of access to alcohol.

In all survey years, the main source of alcohol for young people was parents with their permission (67%). All other sources of alcohol represent less than 11% each – friends (11%), someone older buys it for them from a local shop or off-license (6%) or other relatives (4%). Encouragingly, only 1% of young people indicated that they buy alcohol themselves.

Survey respondents were also asked the location where they would normally drink more than a few drinks. In 2015, young people were asked the location where they had several drinks and in 2013 and 2014, young people were asked the location where they had 6 or more drinks. For those that drank 6 or more drinks, young people indicated that they drank at a party, whereas for those that had several drinks, young people aged between 11 and 14 years indicated that they drank at home with family and young people aged between 15 and 17 years said they drank at a party.

7. YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DRINKING

There are clear differences in the views of young people who have had an alcoholic drink and those who have not. 56% of young people that have drunk alcohol think that 'Drinking sometimes at my age is ok as long as it doesn't affect my health or school work' whereas 53% of young people that have never drunk think that 'Drinking is ok for adults but not for people of my age'.

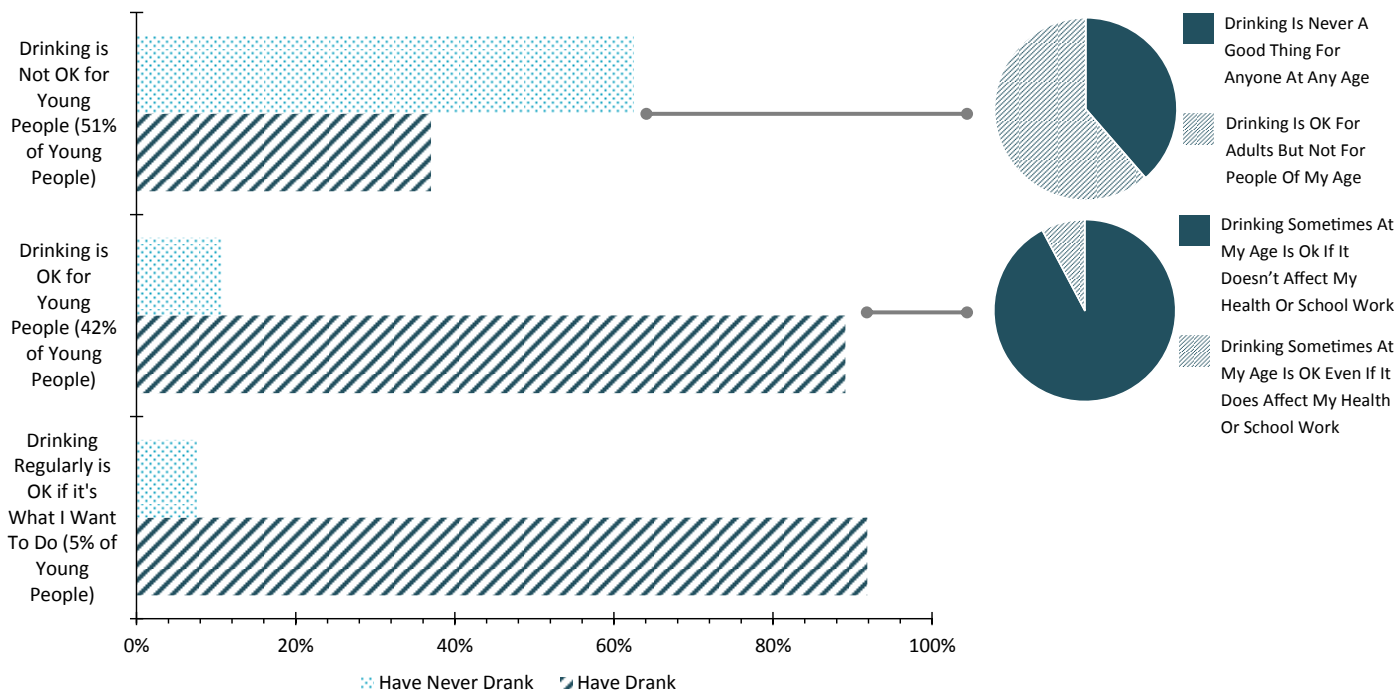


Figure 6 - Young people's views of drinking alcohol.

In addition to the difference in views based on whether a young person has ever had an alcoholic drink, young people's views also vary with age. The majority of 11-12 year olds, for example, believe that drinking is never a good thing or only ok for adults whilst 16-17 year olds think that drinking is ok for people their age as long as it doesn't affect their health or school work.

When asked about their perceptions of other young people's views and habits, it is clear that survey respondents think that other young people's views and habits reflect their own. There are, however, some differences. Primarily, young people think that a higher proportion of other young people drink more frequently and more on average. Whereas, based on survey responses, it is apparent that the majority of individuals drink less than once every 6 month and only drink 1-2 drinks.

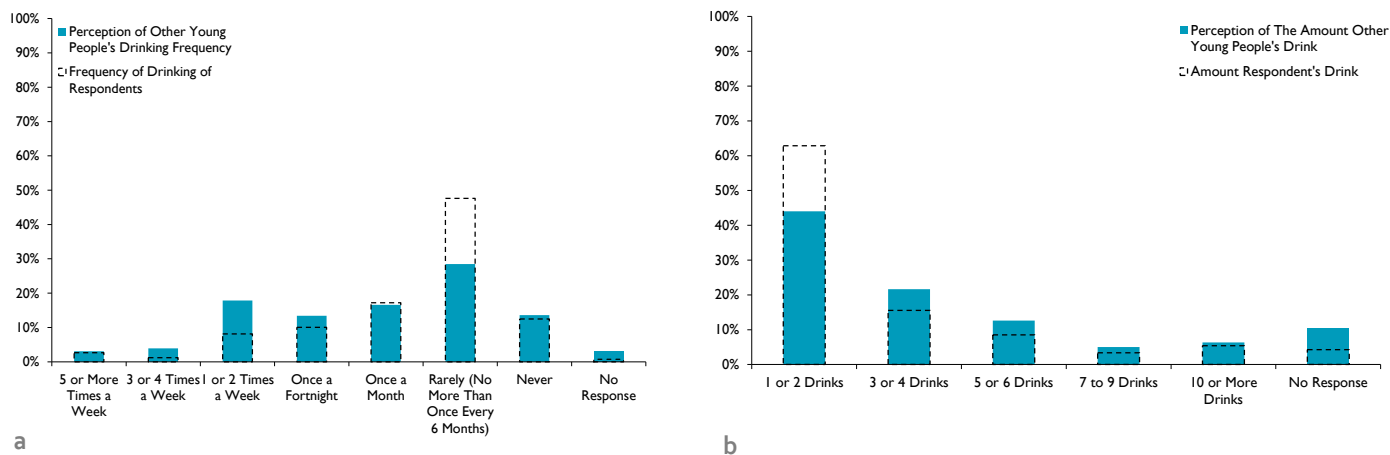


Figure 7 - Young people's perceptions to other young people's drinking habits (a) frequency and (b) amount.

8. PARENT'S ATTITUDE TO DRINKING ALCOHOL

The survey also asked if young people have had a discussion with their parents about drinking alcohol. For both those that have had an alcoholic drink and those that haven't, 37% indicated that they had a discussion with their parents and parents made their views and expectations clear whereas 27% had not had any discussion with their parents about alcohol.

Fewer young people that think 'Drinking regularly at my age is ok if that's what I want to do' have had a discussion with their parents about drinking alcohol

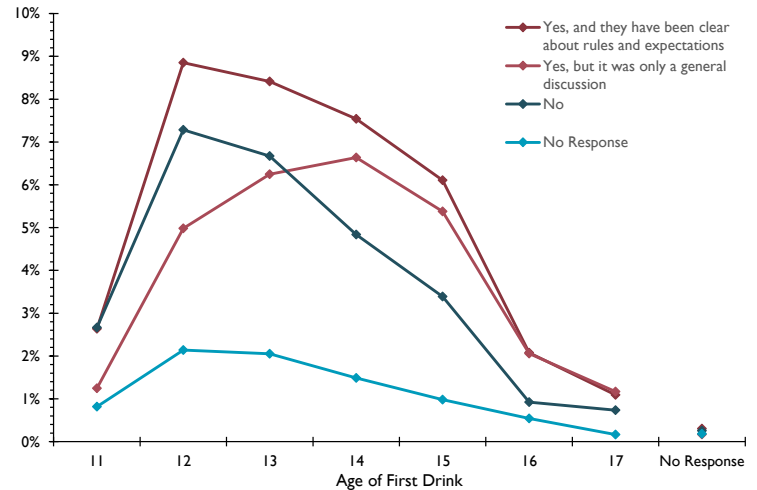


Figure 8 - Young people's discussion with parents compared to age.

Overall, parental consent is identified as an important factor that influences young people's experience of drinking alcohol. In particular, 79% of young people that have never drunk alcohol said they do not drink because they are not allowed to. In contrast, 42% of those who have tried alcohol stated that they were allowed to drink sometimes but only with a parent or relative present.

With the exception of a small number of young people who think that 'Drinking regularly at my age is ok if it's what I want to do', young people's views of drinking alcohol reflect their parents' views. For example, young people whose parents said they were not allowed to drink, tend to think that 'Drinking is ok for adults but not for people of my age' or 'Drinking is never a good thing for anyone at any age'. Whereas young people that are allowed to drink alcohol believe that 'Drinking sometimes at my age is ok as long as it doesn't affect my health or school work'. Of those whose parents impose no limits on drinking alcohol, 34% of young people that think 'Drinking regularly at my age is ok if it's what I want to do'. These young people are also more likely to drink more frequently as well as more on average.

A young person's discussion with their parents is extremely important in influencing their views and habits related to drinking alcohol

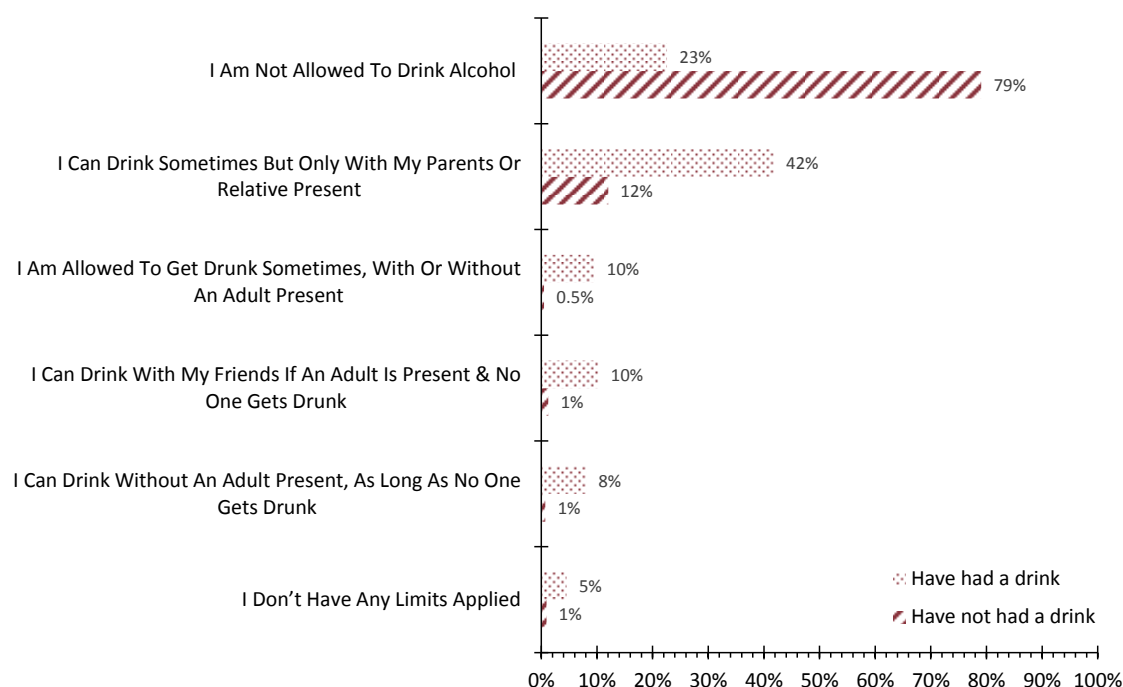


Figure 9 - Parents' view of young person drinking at home.

8. PARENT'S ATTITUDE TO DRINKING ALCOHOL (CONT.)

Alongside this, a young persons home status also appears to influence their drinking habits. For example, 92% (96 out of a total of 104) of young people living in a children's home indicated that they have tried alcohol compared to only 59% (6,755 out of a total of 11,536) of young people who live with both parents. Further to this, 84% of young people that live in a children's home had their first drink before the age of 10, 83% said they drink more than 10 drinks on any single occasion and 82% said they drink more than 5 times a week .

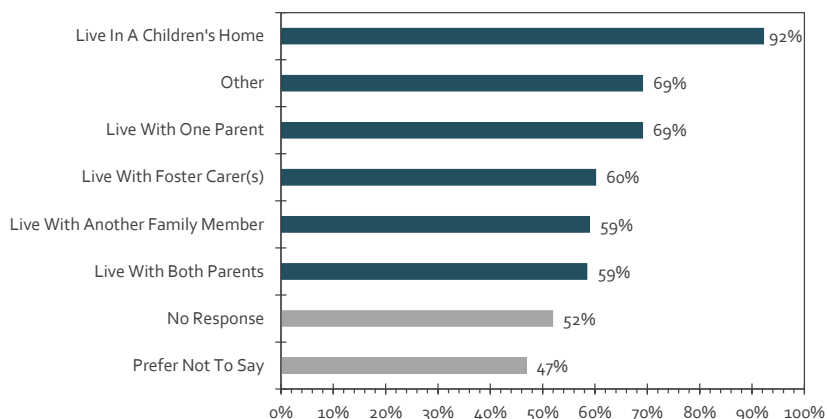


Figure 10 - Home status of young people who have tried alcohol.

9. INCIDENTS RELATED TO DRINKING ALCOHOL

As part of understanding the risks and consequences of drinking alcohol, young people were asked if anything had happened to them as a result of drinking alcohol in the last year. Positively, 71% of young people that only drink 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks have had no related incidents and the majority (75%) of young people who normally drink between 3 and 7 alcoholic drinks have had less than 4 related incidents. Those who drank the most, experienced the most number of incidents with 23% of young people who drink 10 or more alcoholic drinks on any single occasion indicating that they each had at least 18 separate incidents after drinking.

Overall as a result of drinking, the majority of young people reported feeling ill or hungover (60%), 44% fell over or hurt themselves, 37% forgot what happened, 26% lost a personal item and 24% fell out with someone.

Young people that drink at least 5 drinks on any single occasion are more likely to be taken to hospital, have sex, get into trouble with the police or take drugs

10. ALCOHOL IN SCHOOL

In order to understand where the issue of drinking alcohol is most prevalent, young people were asked about their experience of alcohol in school. While 88% of young people indicated that they themselves had not been offered alcohol, 5% stated that other young people had. Respondents also stated that 10% of other young people had bought alcohol into school and 9% of other young people had drunk alcohol in school.

When compared to the average for Staffordshire (3%), Stafford Borough had the highest proportion (5%) of young people who have been offered alcohol in school and East Staffordshire, South Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands had the lowest (2%).

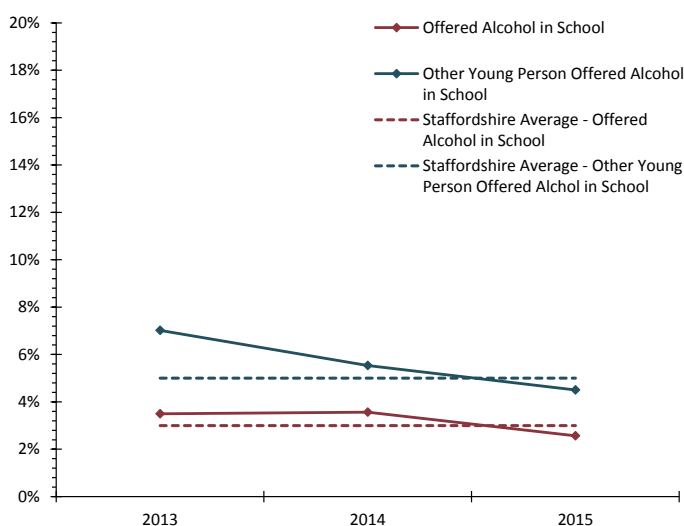


Figure 11 - Proportion of young people that have been offered alcohol in school.

11. 2015 ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND DRUGS SURVEY RESULTS⁴

In 2015, the School Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Survey incorporated questions to understand young people's experience of smoking and drugs. Overall, young people are more likely to drink alcohol (57%) than smoke (19%) or take an illegal drug (6%).

In terms of smoking, 36% of those who have tried smoking state that they smoke now and 70% of young people that had their first cigarette before the age of 10 smoke at least 6 cigarettes a week. When compared to Staffordshire as a whole, more young people in East Staffordshire and Tamworth indicated that they smoke than in any other district or borough.

When asked about their experience with drugs, a higher proportion of young people had taken an illegal drug (6%) than a legal high (4%). Of those who have taken an illegal drug, the largest proportion are young people aged between 14 and 17 years. In addition, 46% indicated that they had taken drugs on more than 10 occasions and cannabis was identified as the most common drug.

When considering 'risk-taking' behaviour, this research also examined how likely it was for a young person to do more than one of these things. In all cases, young people that have drunk alcohol appear to be more likely to undertake additional 'risk-taking' behaviour such as smoking or taking drugs whereas those young people that have never drunk alcohol are less likely. For example, a higher proportion of young people indicated that they have smoked while drinking alcohol. Alongside this, 6% of young people indicated that they took illegal drugs while drinking alcohol; 5% said that they drink, smoke and take illegal drugs and just 1% said that they smoke and take illegal drugs but do not drink alcohol.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that there is an increased focus on educating parents to help them understand their role and influence on young people's drinking habits.
- Formalise alcohol education within the school curriculum and explore options to lower the age of alcohol education in school to reflect the age when young people first try alcohol.
- Campaigns could be targeted to those young people that are more likely to drink alcohol, for example, young people living in a children's home.
- Emerging trends related to a young person's ethnicity and whether they are eligible for free schools meals need to be monitored to identify future challenges in the county.

APPENDIX 1 - TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS PER DISTRICT, 2013-2015

	Total Number of Respondents	Proportion of Total Survey Respondents	Number Who Have Tried Alcohol	Proportion Who Have Tried Alcohol
Cannock Chase	1,563	9%	1,076	69%
East Staffordshire	2,899	16%	1,625	56%
Lichfield	936	5%	610	65%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	588	3%	380	65%
South Staffordshire	2,415	13%	1,431	59%
Stafford	1,464	8%	960	66%
Staffordshire Moorlands	3,093	17%	1,855	60%
Tamworth	4,218	23%	2,718	64%
Unknown	919	5%	572	62%
Total	18,095	100%	11,227	62%

⁴ - Alcohol, Smoking and Drug Use results based on 2015 data only