

REPORT TO: Cabinet Member – Environmental
Cabinet Member – Communities

DATE: 21st October 2009
4th November 2009

SUBJECT: **SEFTON TRADING STANDARDS ALCOHOL SURVEY OF YOUNG PEOPLE – AUGUST 2009**

WARDS AFFECTED: All

REPORT OF: W T Milburn
Environmental Protection Director

CONTACT OFFICER: Andrew Naisbitt
Trading Standards Section Manager
0151 934 4014

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To inform the Cabinet Member – Environmental of the alcohol survey of young people carried out by the Trading Standards Service

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To advise the Cabinet Member – Environmental of the results of the alcohol survey and to request reconsideration of the alcohol sales enforcement strategy by the Public Health Partnership in the light of the findings.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Cabinet-Member – Environmental

- a) Notes the content of this report;
- b) Requests the Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Sub Group reconsider its enforcement strategy in consideration of the findings of the research.
- c) Agrees that in light of their interest in this subject this report be copied to the Cabinet Member – Communities for information.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: N/A

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Immediately following the expiry of the “call-in” period for this meeting.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

Enforcement of underage sale legislation is a statutory duty.

Additional resources could be diverted to this area of enforcement, however this would risk distorting the balanced work programme of the Trading Standards service.

IMPLICATIONS:**Budget/Policy Framework:**

The cost of the survey has been met from existing Trading Standards budgets and a contribution from the Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Sub Group

Financial:

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: N/A

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Sub Group

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Sefton MBC / TSNW Alcohol Survey of Young People - CI Research

Background

1. In 2005 and 2007, Trading Standards North West (TSNW) commissioned Ci Research (Ci) to conduct a survey of young people and alcohol use. The findings of these surveys were used to help inform a strategy for dealing with the sale of alcohol to young people who are underage. In early 2009 TSNW commissioned Ci to conduct a similar survey to monitor any changes in behaviour and to provide further insight into the sale of alcohol and tobacco. The primary objective of the research was to identify how and where youngsters obtain alcohol in order to effectively plan intelligence led campaigns.
2. The Sefton Alcohol Survey of Young People is attached as Annex 1.
3. The survey involved issuing questionnaires to schools across the NW to be completed by pupils in year 10 and 11 (14-17 years old). A total of 13,902 questionnaires were returned from 21 of the 22 NW Trading Standards authorities. In total 678 questionnaires were completed and returned in Sefton. Ci assumed responsibility for collating and verifying all the data to produce a final report.

The Report

4. The report is divided into six areas:
 - Sample Profile
 - Alcohol Consumption
 - Purchasing alcohol
 - General attitudes and behaviour
 - Understanding of legislation
 - *Smoking Behaviour (subject of a separate report).*
5. Alcohol Consumption (Key points)
 - Since 2005 there has been a steady decline in the percentage of 14-17 year olds in Sefton claiming to drink alcohol once a week or more. The proportion claiming never to drink alcohol has steadily increased, from 5% in 2005 to 12% in 2009. This figure remains lower than for the North West overall (18%).
 - Analysing the results for Sefton at a more detailed level reveals that the percentage of 14-17 year olds who drink at least once a week has fallen by 15% since 2005, although less significantly since 2007.
 - Results for Sefton are broadly in line with those for the North West as a whole. However, only three other local authority areas (Cumbria, Halton and the Wirral) have a lower proportion of young people claiming never to drink alcohol.
 - The likelihood to never drink alcohol in Sefton is notably more pronounced amongst males than females.
 - The proportion of 14-17 year olds in Sefton identified as regular binge drinkers is similar to 2007. However the percentage of occasional binge drinkers has fallen, corresponding to an increase in the percentage who never binge drink.

- The proportion claiming to engage in binge drinking twice a week or more has increased by 4%, whereas the percentage who never drink or binge drink has also increased by 7%.
- Analysing the results by local authority reveals that Sefton has the second lowest percentage of 14-17 year olds claiming to never binge drink (22% compared to 20% in Cumbria).
- Within Sefton, results show that young females are more likely to binge drink than young males.
- 5% of young people in Sefton claim to drink when alone, (9% amongst young males).
- The proportion of 14-17 year olds in Sefton drinking alcohol outside has fallen from 33% in 2007 to 25%; however this is still higher than in 2005 (16%).
- The percentage claiming to drink alcohol in pubs or clubs in Sefton has risen slightly, from 33% in 2007 to 36% in 2009, but this is not as high as in 2005 (41%).
- The proportion of respondents from Sefton who stated that they drink in pubs or clubs is 8% above the average for the North West as a whole, whereas drinking outdoors is 5% below North West average.
- The figures for Sefton show a fall in drinking outdoors in groups of more than 10 (24% compared with 33% in 2007). This figure is lower than for the North West region overall (37%).
- Amongst those 14-17 year olds that drink alcohol in Sefton, a slightly higher percentage (10%) than in 2007 (7%) claim to consume more than 30 units of alcohol per week, although this figure is lower than for the North West overall (15%).
- The popularity of Smirnoff, Strongbow and Jack Daniels has increased since 2007, whilst WKD, Fosters and Stella have experienced a notable fall in popularity amongst young people in Sefton.

6. Purchasing Alcohol (Key Points)

- In line with the North West results, most 14-17 year olds in Sefton claim to get alcohol from their friends and family.
- The percentage of 14-17 year olds in Sefton claiming to buy their own alcohol has increased by 6% since the 2007 survey, but is still lower than reported in 2005.
- In 2007 the proportion of 14-17 year olds purchasing their own alcohol in Sefton was in line with the regional average at 28%. In 2009 this figure has risen to 34%, 8% higher than the regional average. Across the North West, Sefton has the third highest incidence of 14-17 year olds purchasing their own alcohol.
- The findings suggest that young females are more likely to purchase their own alcohol than young males in Sefton. The proportion of 15 year olds claiming to

buy their own alcohol has increased by 6% since 2007, slightly higher than the rise amongst 16 year olds (3%).

- Of the 14-17 year olds surveyed in Sefton, over half (54%) state that have been asked for ID when buying alcohol themselves. This figure is slightly higher amongst young males (59%).
- 6% of 14-17 year olds in Sefton claim to have fake ID, almost a third of whom stated that they bought this on the internet, which is similar to the North West average. Amongst those that have fake ID, higher percentages claim to be using an older sibling's identification.

7. General Attitudes and Behaviour (Key Points)

- General attitudes and behaviour relating to alcohol have not changed considerably for Sefton since 2007. The only significant difference is that 8% more 14-17 years olds agree that they drink alcohol because their friends do. Some variation in attitudes and behaviour was apparent, particularly by gender.
- For Sefton, the percentages of 14-17 year olds claiming to have had sex, regretted having sex after drinking, and be violent or have a fight whilst drunk are lower than for the North West overall.

8. Understanding of the Law (Key Points)

- In Sefton, understanding of legislation with regards to alcohol was relatively consistent with the previous survey. A slightly higher percentage correctly identified that it is not a criminal offence for under 18s to drink alcohol at home, and slightly lower percentage that it is a criminal offence for under 18s to buy alcohol.
- Thinking specifically about understanding of legislation around under 18s purchasing alcohol, those 14-17 year olds surveyed in Sefton who claim to buy their own alcohol were less likely to be aware that this is an offence compared to others.

Analysis and Comment

9. The survey highlights a 'mixed bag' of outcomes:

- a) From an alcohol related crime/ASB perspective there are encouraging results indicating outside drinking has fallen whilst those who drink outside are doing so in smaller groups/gangs, for example:
 - The 9% fall in the respondents claiming to drink outside in groups of more than 10 correlates with a sustained period of increased promotional and enforcement activity, within the wider Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership. This has included Police Officers being deployed on a range of interventions to both 'test' (litmus testing) and confiscate alcohol in public areas. In addition the use of 'advisory letters' sent to parents of young people who have been stopped drinking, or are in groups of young people drinking, has also been a contributory factor.

- Self reported 'drinking alone' currently stands at 5% in 2009. This has been targeted by the 'Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Sub Group' (PHPASG) in the last year. Using the '*Don't Leave Your Mates*' Bluetooth messaging system as well as a wider resource pack developed by Young People, for Young People, the Partnership has been keen to address the possible health, as well as wider safety issues and risks, that may occur if young people drink alone.
 - Again the reduction in self reported drinking 'outside' represents a strong and increased awareness by young people that the Police will take immediate and swift action to remove alcohol from young people. Such activity is consistent with community's expectations as evidenced by the Safer and Stronger 'tracking survey' which suggests that 'underage drinking' is seen by many of our communities as a 'risk' and as a predictor of later anti-social behaviour. In this way the PHPASG can see that its action and activity is in line with community expectation, and it is addressing local concerns in accordance with the Local Area Agreement and National Indicators 17 (*Perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour*) and 21 (*Perceptions that the Council and the Police are addressing local communities concerns on crime and disorder*). For example, in 2007 11% of those drinking 'outside' said they drank in groups numbering more than 20; in 2009 this had decreased to 6%. These reductions clearly evidence that the young people seem to be recognising that if in larger groups they become more 'visible' to the community, and to the Police. Thus to avoid this risk they have chosen not to make themselves as 'visible' but have not gone as far as to drink alone, which in public areas may introduce a wider and more serious risk of harm.
 - The results however, highlight the worrying increase in the supply of alcohol and cigarettes by over 18's and parents / adults. At the same time the fact that 46% of 14-17 year olds report not being checked for ID and a further 6% use fake ID is a source for concern.
- b) From a health perspective the PHPASG can take encouragement from the decreasing number of teenagers who drink once a week or more and the 7% increase in the numbers who don't drink at all. At the same time lack of a shift in the incidence of binge drinking (particularly in relation to 14-17 year old girls) remains a challenge and an area the Council and PHPASG will need to focus on addressing, and
- c) Also encouraging is the fact that, when asked about their behaviour, 79% (2009) said that they did not engage in violence when drinking, with a further 89% saying that they would not drink alone. This reported behaviour minimises the possible and potential 'harm' (both criminal and health) associated with alcohol, as a gateway to possible victimisation or offending behaviour and as a gateway (when drinking alone, especially outside) to immediate health related harm because of the potential associated with acute alcohol toxicity. Again the '*Don't Leave Your Mates*' awareness programme seems to have communicated the message in relation to these risks effectively to the wider audience, especially young people.

Implications for Trading Standards.

10. The results demonstrate the need for continued investment in the underage enforcement programme operated by Trading Standards and the initiatives commissioned by the Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Subgroup.
11. The results also highlight the worrying increase in supply of alcohol' by over 18's and parents / adults and the use of 'fake' identification. However this can also be interpreted as a measure of the success of current proactive enforcement practices.
12. The Trading Standards Section, along with its partners on the Sefton Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Subgroup, will have to review enforcement strategies if it is to further diminish the level of underage sales. Options will be presented to the Cabinet member – Environmental in a future report for inclusion in the 2010/11 work programme.