



Please find detailed below the responses of the North East Lincolnshire Alcohol Forum to the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Consultation Document. Responses are numbered as per the Consultation Document.

National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Consultation responses

The principles that should underpin the strategy

- 1 It's a National issue and it's necessary to balance the benefits (taxation) against the deficits (cost to National Health). Since the latter has never been fully quantified, it may be that it exceeds the benefits currently gained.
- 2 The Government has the same duty to intervene with alcohol as it does with road traffic control. Alcohol kills, just the same as a speeding car.
- 4 In all cases, assume responsibility for actions.
- 5 Misuse isn't funny, clever or beneficial to anyone (except the seller).

The cultural and behavioural issues around alcohol use and misuse

- 6 Alcohol use becomes misuse where it becomes harmful to the self or others.
- 7 Patterns are slow to change. The government should concentrate its efforts on ALL age groups – there's no point just blaming young people, they pick up their attitude toward alcohol from adults.
- 8 It would be very difficult to prove a causal link.
- 9 What is meant here by 'young people'? Percentage wise, I suspect the highest consumer group is aged 20-30. What do the statistics say?
- 10 My personal reaction is – none! The only loser would be the manufacturer, and it's no good arguing that getting rid of the industry would mean loss of jobs, that hasn't stopped the government closing down other industries.
- 11 As a Londoner working in the north, I would say there are definite regional differences.

Health: prevention, treatment and the impact on the NHS

- 14 Alcohol use becomes misuse where it becomes harmful to the self or others.
- 15 There is insufficient evidence here. Hospital A&E departments are reluctant to make a causal link between alcohol consumption and in-patient status, and who can blame them? It's hard to judge whether the inebriation of a person has caused them to have an accident. Considerable more research needs to be done here, but not at the expense of or as an excuse not to take action.
- 17 Understanding and support. In some cases there is a genuine illness here.
- 21 Discourage drinking to excess? Warnings on bottles and adverts, like cigarettes?

Crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour: the effects on our surroundings and community

- 23 Research is again required here. Because currently funding focuses on drugs and there is none for alcohol, frequently the Criminal Justice System is asked to supply statistics for the former and not asked about alcohol as a cause. I prepare statistics for a Youth Offending Team and we have just as many young people who commit crime because they are 'in drink' as do it because they need income for drugs. Other organisations have told me they collect statistics on alcohol misuse but nobody seems to want them.
- 24 There is a definite link between alcohol and crimes of violence and harassment, criminal damage and to some extent acquisitive crime – stealing to fund drinking. Many of these might be described as 'one off' occasions. That doesn't mean we can ignore them!
- 25 Our young people frequently cite alcohol misuse as the cause of their offending.
- 26 This question implies that because alcohol is only one cause of crime in city centres it should be ignored. Yes, there are others. But alcohol is one of the most prevalent and pernicious.
- 28 We need to tackle the issue, not try to hide it.
- 29 Tackling alcohol problems is currently being prevented by government refusal to acknowledge that alcohol is a problem! Because substance misuse funding is all ring-fenced for drugs, alcohol work is being phased down or out by agencies who would like to be doing more. There is also a tension between combining alcohol and drug work, since whilst in a percentage of cases both are a problem, those who suffer only from alcohol problems seem reluctant to be 'labelled' as a drug user by self-reporting to agencies which deal with both drugs and alcohol.
- 30 No, not where alcohol is concerned. Those who drink when they're young go on doing it, sometimes because they find they can't stop. The older drinker is often far more dangerous to themselves and others than the teenager experimenting with the substance. We have a culture where parents are giving young children alcohol because they think it's better for them to drink than to take drugs.
- 31 Make it "uncool" to be "legless".
- 33 A right is only a right when it doesn't counter someone else's right. There are no absolutes. More focus on responsibilities would be nice.
- 34 Nobody wants to die?!

The implications for vulnerable groups

- 36 Those with parents or peer groups who abuse it.
- 37 It is a substance that transcends social boundaries and normal risk factors.
- 38 Homeless drinkers often form 'social units' within which their behaviour is/they are acceptable.

Education and communication

- 41 I vote for changing behaviour.
- 43 I don't believe it is. Few understand what a unit of alcohol looks like, or comprehend that whilst they may feel perfectly normal, their reflexes HAVE been affected. In the light of recent changes to the size of spirit measures in many pubs and clubs from 25ml to 35ml, the safe drinking levels and the guide to units of alcohol should be re-visited and altered to bring them up to date. This information should feature on the front of every bottle containing alcohol-based products, it should be large and relate to the size of the bottle and the ABV indication. It should not be on the back.
- 45 Absolutely, 100% definitely!

- 46 Decision making skills – it's no good giving someone evidence without giving them the ability to judge what's sound and make a reasoned choice.
- 47 The media could be encouraged to stop showing being "legless" as something to aspire to.
- 48 The Government could usefully insist on warnings on bottles. A warning as on tobacco products "GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING - ALCOHOL KILLS". This applies especially to sweet alcohol type drinks that are designed to appeal to the "younger drinker".
- 50 Yes! All advertising is pro; let's have a balance and see some of the anti! All advertising should carry a Government Health Warning in large print, as on tobacco advertising.

The shape of the market and market-based solutions

- 51 The alcohol industry must understand that it can't go on expanding at the cost of human lives. Perhaps it's time it started to diversify into more non-alcoholic or low alcohol alternatives? The number of pubs has reduced and is likely to go on doing so if they don't start broadening their appeal.
- 53 Research needs to establish the full extent of the problem – currently nobody will admit the rest of the iceberg exists. At the same time, we need to stop talking and do something!
- 54 How about using the government's relationship with the tobacco industry as an example?
- 55 Profit on sales of alcohol in restaurants should be discouraged.

The economic costs and benefits of alcohol

- 56 Not clear. I personally believe proper research will demonstrate that the cost to society in NHS costs, loss of work hours etc. outweighs the tax benefits considerably.
- 57 NHS figures.
- 60 Limited use of marijuana is just as beneficial in terms of reducing stress and tension as alcohol. As for the suggestion that alcohol 'facilitates networking in the workplace', that's decidedly pathetic - ! A definite misperception and a very lazy approach to people management.