

IAS Factsheet

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Alcohol as a problem

The following results were published in an NOP research survey on alcohol carried out for IAS in 2000⁵:

Britain would be a healthier and better place to live if we reduced the amount of alcohol

Base: All adults aged 15+ - January 2000

	TOTAL	SEX		AGE					
		MALE	FEMALE	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Total	1895	836	1059	241	352	403	268	246	385
	100%	44%	56%	13%	19%	21%	14%	13%	20%
Agree	1333	620	713	181	242	226	218	172	293
	71%	67%	75%	66%	64%	69%	71%	75%	80%
Disagree	400	235	165	72	104	81	62	37	45
	21%	25%	17%	26%	27%	25%	20%	16%	12%
Don't know	149	71	78	22	32	21	26	22	27
	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	6%	9%	9%	7%

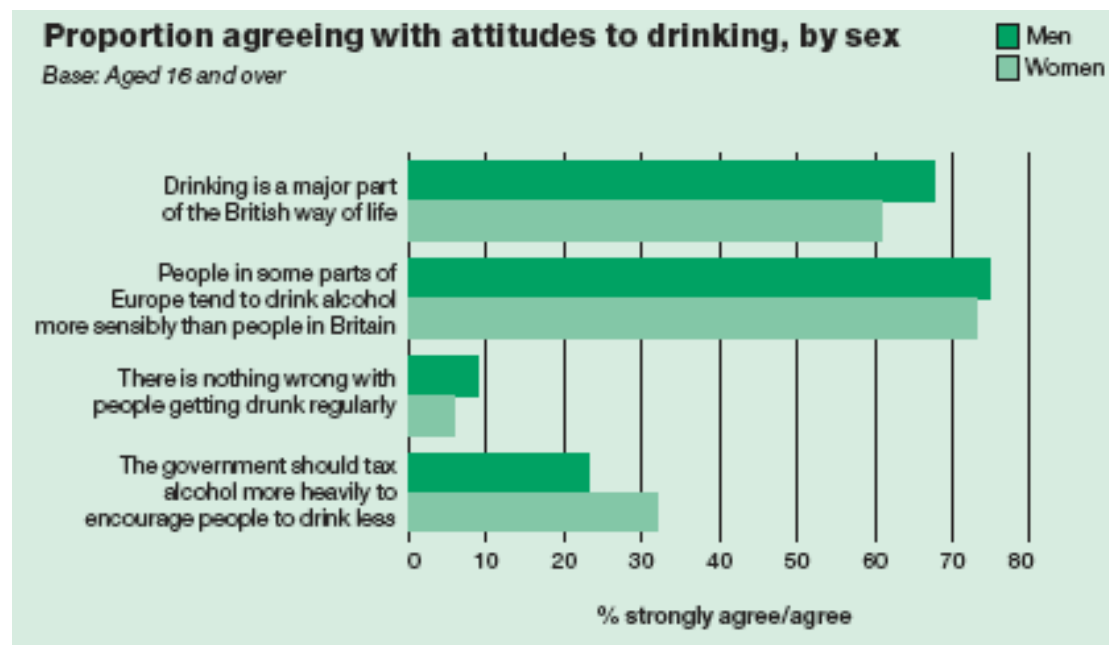
Britain would be a healthier and better place to live if we reduced the amount of alcohol we drink⁵

		Men	Women
Agree	71%	67%	75%
Disagree	21%	25%	17%
Don't know	8%	8%	8%

As a nation, do you think we drink⁵

Too little	2%
About the right amount	24%
Too much	46%
Far too much	22%
Don't know	6%

The NHS Health Survey for England 2007 conducted for the NHS Information Centre obtained the following responses:¹



Percentage of respondents with concerns about alcohol use in the community, by age² (2008)

Age	Avoid town at night	Action needed in area	Drunken behaviour of others	Crime in area	Litter in area	Children drinking	Home fire risk	Total (100%)
18-24	25.4	40.2	59.5	46.8	26.8	59.7	17.4	3019
25-34	35.8	48.6	67.5	54	38.1	71.9	14.1	5953
35-44	45.7	51.9	72.7	56.6	45.1	79.2	16	6633
45-54	50.1	54.2	76.8	59.1	50.5	79.1	20.3	6156
55-64	56.2	54.4	80.2	61	58.6	81.5	22.8	3771
65-74	60.7	49.4	75.5	55.3	59	78.3	24.2	1452
75+	59	42.2	69.4	48.8	51.3	69.7	23.3	695

Alcohol compared with other drugs

From what you know, which one of the following causes most harm to the largest number of people and their families? (%)³ (2006)

	General public	Drug users
Consumption of alcohol	45	66
Smoking of tobacco	22	26
Taking illegal drugs	27	6
Don't know	5	2

A MORI research study 'Alcohol and Society' carried out in 2000 on behalf of the Portman Group found that women and over 65s are least likely to regard alcohol as very risky, as are the middle classes (38% ABC1s, 53% DEs). Similarly, frequent drinkers feel drinking is less likely to be very risky (27%), compared with those who rarely or never drink (62%). When asked which are the riskiest of a list of substances, women are more likely to mention cannabis (39% -v- 30%), men cigarettes (56% -v- 43%). Young adults (under 34s) are least likely to cite cannabis (29%), compared with 47% of the over 65s. The oldest group are, however, least likely to feel alcohol is one of the most dangerous (just 18% do). Social class is also a factor – the middle classes are more likely to mention cigarettes (62% -v- 38% DEs), DEs cannabis (41% -v- 27% ABs).

Which causes most harm to largest number of people?⁴ (2006)

	General public	Drug users
Alcohol	45%	66%
Smoking	22%	26%
Illegal drugs	27%	6%
Don't know	5%	2%

Which causes the most harm?

Alcohol	33%	26%
Smoking	38%	47%
Illegal drugs	28%	24%
Don't know	1%	3%

The role of Government

The NOP survey on alcohol (2000) obtained the following views on the Government's role:

The Government should do more to reduce the level of alcohol abuse in society, do you agree or disagree?⁵

Base: All adults aged 15+ - January 2000

	TOTAL	SEX		AGE					
		MALE	FEMALE	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Total	1895	836	1059	241	352	403	268	246	385
	100%	44%	56%	13%	19%	21%	14%	13%	20%
	100%	49%	51%	15%	20%	17%	16%	12%	19%
Agree	1484	707	777	231	300	252	240	179	282
	79%	76%	81%	84%	79%	77%	79%	78%	77%
Disagree	278	172	106	25	60	55	43	38	56
	15%	19%	11%	9%	16%	17%	14%	17%	15%
Don't know	119	48	72	19	18	20	23	13	27
	6%	5%	8%	7%	5%	6%	7%	6%	7%

Support for restrictive drug policies, by sex and age, Scotland 2007, Britain 2007, England 2007 and 2008¹¹

	% who think smoking in pubs & bars should be banned		% who think cannabis should remain illegal	% who agree with increasing price of alcohol***	
	Scotland 2007*	England 2008	Britain 2007	Scotland 2007*	England 2007**
All	58	46	58	33	27
Sex					
Men	57	46	53	26	23
Women	60	46	64	38	31
Age					
18-29	52	40	56	24	21
30-39	63	49	43	33	26
40-64	60	47	58	32	26
65+	56	48	73	42	36

*Source: Scottish Social Attitudes

**Source: Health Survey for England

*** In Scotland, the statement read "The price of alcohol should be put up to encourage people to drink less". In England the wording was "The government should tax alcohol more heavily to encourage people to drink less".

Support for restrictive drug policies, by class, education and income, Scotland 2007, Britain 2007, England 2007 and 2008¹¹

Support for restrictive drug policies, by class, education and income, Scotland 2007, Britain 2007, England 2007 and 2008

	% who think smoking in pubs & bars should be banned		% say cannabis should remain illegal	% who agree with increasing price of alcohol***	
	Scotland 2007*	England 2008	Britain 2007	Scotland 2007*	England 2007**
Class					
Routine/Semi-routine	44	40	65	36	28
Employers/managers & professionals	70	52	55	35	25
Education					
No qualifications	44	38	68	34	35
Higher education/degree	72	56	49	34	25
Income					
Bottom quartile	41	43	66	37	37
Top quartile	74	56	53	30	22

* Source: Scottish Social Attitudes

** Source: Health Survey for England. For Health Survey for England data top and bottom income quintiles shown

*** In Scotland, the statement read "The price of alcohol should be put up to encourage people to drink less". In England the working was "The government should tax alcohol more heavily to encourage people to drink less".

In 2007, the Health Survey for England asked the following question to gauge how supportive people would be of a more restrictive policy on alcohol pricing:

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statements... The government should tax alcohol more heavily to encourage people to drink less

A higher tax on alcohol was supported by just over a quarter (27%) of people in England, while nearly twice as many (50%) disagreed. A substantial minority (23%) neither agreed nor disagreed. In the same year, the Scottish Social Attitudes survey asked a similar question on attitudes towards alcohol pricing. However, they removed the references to 'government' and 'tax' in the question text to see whether people supported the general principle of a

restrictive policy on alcohol. Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed that:

The price of alcohol should be put up to encourage people to drink less

Despite the difference in question wording, support for an alcohol price increase in Scotland was similar to that found in England. A third (33%) agreed that prices should be increased, while nearly half (46%) disagreed.

In both cases the question referred to general, unspecified price increases rather than the minimum pricing approach advocated by the Department of Health consultation paper and proposed by the Scottish government. Moreover, these data were collected in 2007, since when there has been further political debate about the issue, which may in turn have had an impact on public views. However, the findings do give us an indication of the potential challenges ahead in convincing the public of the merits of using the price of alcohol to discourage excessive drinking.¹¹

Advertising and Sponsorship

Do you think the amount of alcohol advertising should be reduced, or do you think the amount of advertising is acceptable?⁵

Base: All adults aged 15+ - January 2000

	TOTAL	SEX		AGE					
		MALE	FEMALE	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Total	1895	836	1059	241	352	403	268	246	385
	100%	44%	56%	13%	19%	21%	14%	13%	20%
	100%	49%	51%	15%	20%	17%	16%	12%	19%
Agree	565	260	305	72	85	88	96	78	146
	30%	28%	32%	26%	22%	27%	31%	34%	40%
Disagree	1219	628	592	193	272	228	198	140	189
	65%	68%	62%	70%	72%	69%	65%	61%	52%
Don't know	96	38	57	10	21	12	12	13	28
	5%	4%	6%	4%	6%	4%	4%	6%	8%

Do you think alcohol companies should be allowed to have their names and logos on football shirts or not?⁵

Base: All adults aged 15+ - January 2000

	TOTAL	SEX		AGE					
		MALE	FEMALE	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Unweighted total	1895	836	1059	241	352	403	268	246	385
	100%	44%	56%	13%	19%	21%	14%	13%	20%
Weighted total	1882	926	955	275	378	328	306	231	364
	100%	49%	51%	15%	20%	17%	16%	12%	19%
Alcohol companies should be allowed to sponsor sport teams and events	1107	621	486	175	230	200	196	134	172
	59%	67%	51%	64%	61%	61%	64%	58%	47%
	649	263	386	81	121	112	97	84	155
	34%	28%	40%	30%	32%	34%	32%	36%	42%
Don't know	126	42	84	19	28	17	13	13	38
	7%	5%	9%	7%	7%	5%	4%	5%	10%

Public opinion on requiring the makers of alcoholic drinks to print clear information about the numbers of calories and units of alcohol on all bottles and cans:⁷

Support	82	85	82	84	80	84	83	80	83	84	80	78	80	85	84	81
Oppose	8	8	9	6	10	6	6	10	8	9	7	10	9	6	8	10
Don't know	10	7	9	10	10	10	11	10	8	7	13	12	11	9	8	9

See IAS factsheet – Alcohol and Advertising

Do you think amount of alcohol advertising should be reduced?⁵ (2000)

	Total	Men	Women
Yes	30%	28%	32%
No	65%	68%	62%
Don't know	5%		

Should TV Advertising of alcohol be banned?⁵

	Total	Men	Women
Yes	22%	20%	25%
No	73%	77%	69%
Don't know	5%	3%	6%

In response to the TNS survey carried out in 2005 for Bupa ('Whose health is it anyway?')⁹ on improving the health of the nation, 73% of respondents felt that the Government should 'play a greater part in advertising/media regulation to ensure only healthy lifestyles and products are portrayed.

The Government should do more...⁵

		Men	Women
Agree	79%	76%	81%
Disagree	18%	19%	11%
Don't know	6%	5%	8%

Alcohol advertising encourages people to drink⁵

Agree	51%
Disagree	48%
Don't know	1%

Alcohol advertising should be banned⁵

Agree	19%
Disagree	79%
Don't know	2%

Alcohol Sports Sponsorship

Over half (55%) feel alcohol sponsorship of sporting events has an influence on the amount the British drink, 42% do not. Two-thirds (63%) think drinks sponsorship of sporting events has an influence on the amount under 18s drink, while 33% do not. In contrast, the vast majority (88%) do not feel that alcohol sponsorship has an influence on their own alcohol consumption, with just 10% feeling that it does. Age is a key factor here as well, with 1 in 4 18-24 year olds saying they feel that they are influenced by drinks sponsorship.⁶

Licensing/availability

In general, do you think it would be a good or a bad thing to extend drinking hours at night?⁵

Base: All adults aged 15+ living in England and Wales – January 2000

	TOTAL	SEX		AGE					
		MALE	FEMALE	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Total	1736	760	976	212	322	372	248	227	355
	100%	44%	56%	12%	19%	21%	14%	13%	20%
	100%	49%	51%	14%	20%	18%	16%	12%	19%
Good thing	711	456	256	126	171	152	122	76	65
	41%	54%	29%	52%	49%	50%	44%	36%	19%
Bad thing	1009	385	623	115	177	152	156	138	270
	59%	46%	71%	48%	51%	50%	56%	64%	81%

Public opinion on raising the minimum age at which people can buy alcohol or tobacco from 18 to 21:⁷

Support	57	64	54	49	54	59	49	55	64	55	58	51	57	57	58	57
Oppose	35	29	39	41	39	31	38	37	30	37	32	36	34	35	35	34
Don't know	9	6	7	10	7	10	13	8	6	8	10	13	9	8	7	9

Public opinion on banning supermarket offers on alcohol, such as 'buy one get one free' and 'three for the price of two':⁷

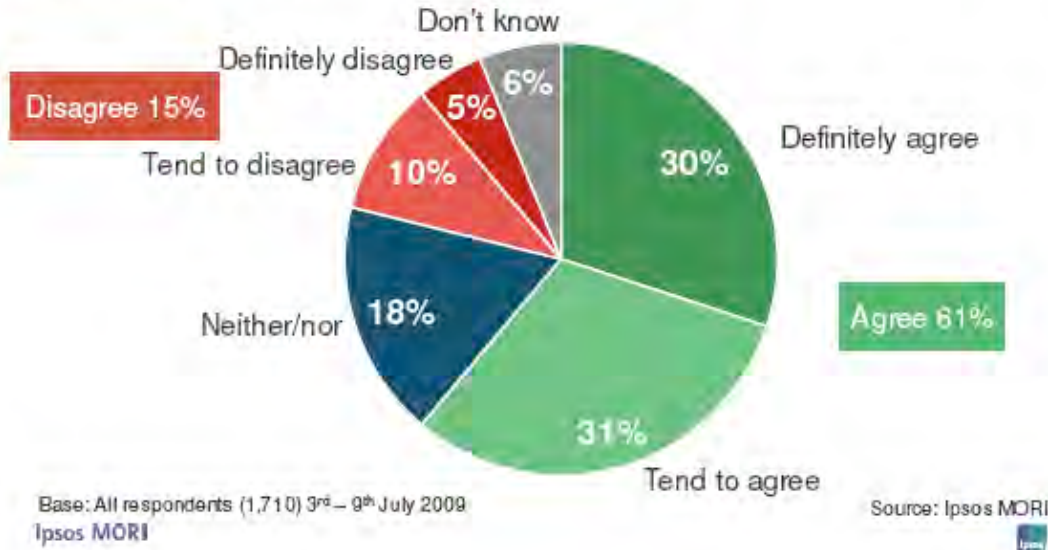
Support	41	46	41	41	42	40	25	39	55	41	40	34	42	41	41	44
Oppose	51	46	53	54	53	49	63	52	39	51	51	53	50	49	53	51
Don't know	8	8	6	6	5	11	11	9	5	8	9	13	8	10	6	5

Do you agree with the proposal that pubs should be allowed to open 24 hours a day?⁵

Yes 50%
 No 46%
 Don't know 4%

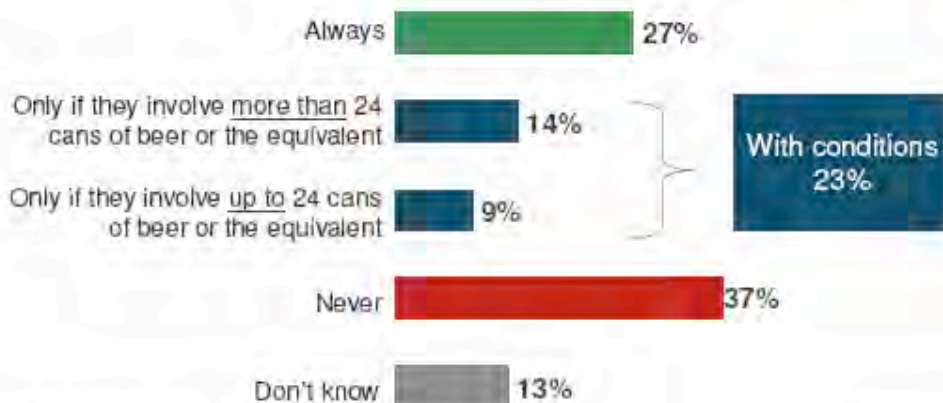
The impact drinks promotions in licensed premises have on drinking⁸ (2009)

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that drinks promotions in pubs, bars, clubs, hotels and restaurants CAUSE people to drink more than they would if there was no such promotion?



Banning drinks promotions in shops and supermarkets in areas where crime and disorder is a problem⁸ (2009)

Q. Which of the following statements best describes YOUR view on drinks promotions in shops and supermarkets in areas that have problems with alcohol-related crime and disorder? 'Drinks promotions of this type in areas with alcohol-related crime and disorder should be banned...'



Base: All respondents (1,710) 3rd – 9th July 2009
Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI

Licensing

In Scotland, most licensed premises are open between the standard permitted hours of 11.00 am to 11.00 pm Mondays to Saturdays, and between 12.30 pm and 2.30 pm and 6.30 pm and 11.00 pm on Sundays. Do you think that these opening hours should be further restricted, extended or are they about right?

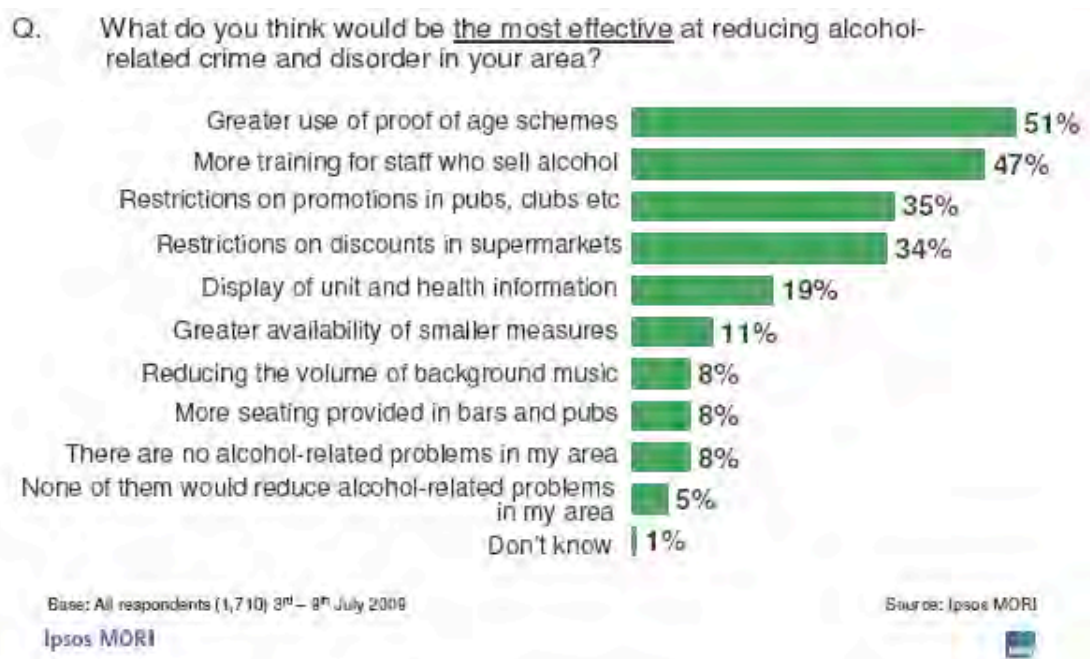
Base	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
1003	18	100	166	187	174	163	195	214	248	222	319	462	541
132 13%	1 6%	10 10%	12 7%	12 6%	22 13%	26 16%	49 25%	17 8%	30 12%	26 12%	59 18%	43 9%	89 16%
208 21%	10 56%	43 43%	61 37%	37 20%	23 13%	17 10%	17 9%	66 31%	53 21%	37 17%	52 16%	137 30%	71 13%
625 62%	7 39%	46 46%	93 56%	133 71%	122 70%	110 67%	114 58%	127 59%	158 64%	150 68%	190 60%	266 58%	359 66%
38 4%	- -	1 1%	- -	5 3%	7 4%	10 6%	15 8%	4 2%	7 3%	9 4%	18 6%	16 3%	22 4%

Crime & Criminal Justice
Omnibus Survey for Scottish Executive 2003
Testing Public Opinion on Licensing Laws and Alcohol Consumption

Legal purchase age⁵ (2000)

		Men	Women
Kept as it is (Age 18)	78%	76%	80%
Lowered to 16	5%	7%	3%
Raised to 21	9%	9%	9%

Reducing alcohol related crime and disorder⁸ (2009)



Results of ASDA Customer Survey (2008)

This survey consisted of 10,109 face-to-face interviews conducted with ASDA shoppers in 30 stores throughout Scotland. All interviews were conducted between 15 and 29 August 2008. The research was conducted by Market Research Society-trained interviewers from the Ace Fieldwork market research agency.

Question 2. *The Government is also proposing to ban multi-product promotions (eg “3 for 2” and “Buy one Get one Free”) to reduce the amount people drink. What do you think of this proposal, do you agree or disagree with it?*

1. Agree 2,978 29.5%
2. Disagree 6,818 67.4%
3. Don't Know 309 3.1%
4. No answer 4 0.0%

Tax/Price

In response to a TNS survey carried out in 2005 for Bupa⁹, 47% of respondents thought that the Government should increase the tax on alcohol and cigarettes.

A YouGov poll for the Sunday People, carried out between 24 and 25 April 2009, obtained the following questionnaire results:

'Mr Darling announced increases in the duties on tobacco and alcohol, partly on health grounds, and on petrol, partly on environmental grounds. Assuming that if he did not announce THESE increases, the Chancellor would have had to increase OTHER taxes, do you think he was right or wrong to raise these taxes?

Increases in tobacco duties	Right	82%
	Wrong	14%
	Don't know	4%
Increases in alcohol duties	Right	66%
	Wrong	29%
	Don't know	5%
Increases in petrol duties	Right	20%
	Wrong	75%
	Don't know	5%

The following questionnaire results were obtained from an ASDA customer survey conducted in 30 Scottish stores between 15 and 29 August 2008¹⁰:

- 1 The Scottish Government is concerned that alcohol is currently too cheap. The Government wants to set a fixed minimum price for alcohol to reduce the amount people drink. What do you think of this proposal, do you agree or disagree with it?

1	Agree	3,385	33.5%
2	Disagree	6,170	61%
3	Don't know	549	5.4%
4	No answer	5	0.0%

- 3 Of the two proposals outlined above (minimum pricing and the banning of promotions), which do you think would be most effective in reducing alcohol consumption?

1	Minimum pricing	1,772	17.5%
2	Banning promotions	1,997	19.8%
3	Neither	6,017	59.5%
4	Other	284	2.8%
5	Both	27	0.3%
6	No answer	12	0.1%

Support for increasing price of alcohol, by frequency of drinking alcohol, Scotland and England, 2007¹¹

	% who agree with increasing price of alcohol***	
	Scotland 2007*	England 2007**
All	33	27
Frequency of drinking		
Everyday/five or six days a week	25	14
Three or four days a week	24	13
Once or twice a week	26	23
Once or twice a month/every two months	35	33
Once or twice a year or less	46	43
Does not drink	55	57

*Source: Scottish Social Attitudes

** Source: Health Survey for England

*** In Scotland, the statement read "The price of alcohol should be put up to encourage people to drink less". In England the wording was "The government should tax alcohol more heavily to encourage people to drink less".

Public opinion on setting a minimum price for alcoholic drinks sold in supermarkets by setting a minimum price for each unit of alcohol:⁷

Support	45	47	43	49	44	45	38	45	50	46	43	36	47	48	42	47
Oppose	44	44	49	41	48	41	48	45	41	44	45	47	43	42	48	44
Don't know	11	9	8	10	8	14	15	10	9	10	12	17	11	10	11	9

The Government should tax drink to prevent it becoming too cheap so that it would reduce excessive drinking⁵

Base: All adults aged 15+ - January 2000

	TOTAL	SEX		AGE					
		MALE	FEMALE	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Total	1895	836	1059	241	352	403	268	246	385
	100%	44%	56%	13%	19%	21%	14%	13%	20%
	100%	49%	51%	15%	20%	17%	16%	12%	19%
Agree	492	182	310	74	93	75	71	57	122
	26%	20%	32%	27%	25%	23%	23%	25%	34%
Disagree	1251	691	560	188	254	234	220	159	196
	66%	75%	59%	68%	67%	71%	72%	69%	54%
Don't know	139	54	85	13	30	20	15	15	46
	7%	6%	9%	5%	8%	6%	5%	6%	13%

Many pubs, clubs and licensed premises now run 'Happy hours' or special drinks promotions, such as '2 for 1'. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the idea of running 'Happy hours' and drinks promotions in pubs and clubs? By Demographics

Base	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Male	Female
1003	18	100	166	187	174	163	195	214	248	222	319	462	541
136 14%	13 72%	33 33%	31 19%	25 13%	12 7%	14 9%	8 4%	33 15%	34 14%	30 14%	39 12%	76 16%	60 11%
227 23%	3 17%	29 29%	54 33%	45 24%	45 26%	25 15%	26 13%	51 24%	45 18%	62 28%	69 22%	108 23%	119 22%
173 17%	-	11 11%	32 19%	45 24%	25 14%	27 17%	33 17%	35 16%	47 19%	38 17%	53 17%	89 19%	84 16%
124 12%	1 6%	8 8%	19 11%	21 11%	33 19%	19 12%	23 12%	32 15%	28 11%	27 12%	37 12%	48 10%	76 14%
343 34%	1 6%	19 19%	30 18%	51 27%	59 34%	78 48%	105 54%	63 29%	94 38%	65 29%	121 38%	141 31%	202 37%

Crime and criminal justice
2003Omnibus survey for Scottish Executive
Testing public opinion on licensing laws and alcohol consumption

Drink Drive

In a MORI poll, Alcohol and Society, conducted for the Portman Group in 2000 the researchers found the following results:

Curbing Drink Driving –

Almost everyone (97%) surveyed supports heavier penalties for persistent offenders, with little sub-group variation.

Almost 9 in 10 (87%) support more public campaigns to curb drink-driving, 51% strongly support.

Support is strongest in Wales (96%), Northern Ireland and the South West (both 94%).

An even higher proportion (93%) support better enforcement of existing laws, 60% strongly, with little sub-group variation.

Over 4 in 5 (83%) support the introduction of random breath tests, 53% strongly support this.

Men are less likely to be in favour of random breath tests (76% men, 89% women) as are frequent drinkers (71% support).

Support for random breath tests is highest in Northern Ireland (98%).

4 in 5 support a stricter drink-drive limit, 55% strongly support this.

Again, women are more likely to support this measure than men (85% -v- 74%), as are the young (84% of under 34s, 76% of over 65s).

Frequent drinkers are least likely to support this, although 60% do.

Support is again highest in Northern Ireland (97%), followed by Scotland (85%).

If asked to choose, heavier penalties for persistent offenders is felt to be the top priority (47%), followed by making the drink-driving limit stricter (17%).

Fit to Drive? Green Flag Report on Safe Driving 2003-4 – a survey of more than 1,000 drivers and motorbike riders on the topics of alcohol, drugs and tiredness, carried out by Brake and Green Flag Motoring Assistance.

The UK's drink drive limit is higher than the level recommended by the European Union. This information was not given to respondents. Some may have known it anyway, but others may have not. Asked whether they thought the drink-drive limit should be reduced in Britain:

two-thirds of respondents – 63% - said they thought the UK's drink-drive limit should be reduced

21% said they thought the UK's drink-drive limit should not be reduced

13% said they didn't know

3% didn't answer

Nearly two-thirds – 63% - of those who were against lowering of the drink-drive limit admitted to drink-driving over the past year. By comparison, under half – 43% - of those who were in favour of a lowering the drink-drive limit admitted to drink-driving over the past year.

Institute of Alcohol Studies

12 October 2010

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- ³ 2006 Survey by RSA Commission on illegal drugs, communities and public policy
- ⁴ YouGov survey carried out for the RSA Commission on Illegal Drugs, Communities and Public Policy, 2006
- ⁵ NOP Solutions – public attitude survey carried out for the IAS, 2000
- ⁶ Alcohol & Society – Research study conducted by MORI for The Portman Group - 2000
- ⁷ You Gov/Faculty of Public Health Survey – 6th – 7th June 2010
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- ¹¹ Park, A; Curtice, J; Thomson, K; Phillips, M; Clery, E; Butt, S - British Social Attitudes – the 26th Report