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Alcohol Concern's Quarterly **Information and Research Bulletin**

Alcohol and crime

Introduction

The role of alcohol in crime and public disorder is currently a high profile topic for public debate. Personnel in criminal justice agencies and emergency services are confronted daily with the results of alcohol-related crime, particularly violent crime. The many victims of this type of crime include those involved in street fights, victims of muggings, domestic violence and sexual assault. The severity of alcohol-related crime can vary widely from relatively low level offences such as rowdy drunkenness to violent assault. At the lower end of the scale alcohol-related disorder is intimidating but more serious forms of alcohol related violence have long-term effects on people's lives. In addition, whole communities suffer as a result of rising fear of alcohol-fuelled disorder.

Research shows that alcohol is a factor in criminal behaviour. In 2003 in the UK nearly two-thirds of sentenced male prisoners (63%) and four-fifths of female sentenced prisoners (39%) admitted to hazardous drinking prior to imprisonment. (¹ Singleton, 1999). Offending is more prevalent in heavy drinkers (² Fergusson, 1996) and population studies show that, as alcohol consumption increases, so does violent offending (³ Norström, 1998).

This article looks at the scale of the problem, examines the link between alcohol and offending, and risk factors that trigger alcohol-related crime, and considers the implications for prevention and interventions to reduce harm. (Note the issue of drink-driving is covered in the factsheet entitled "Drink-drive accidents")

The scale of the problem

Findings from the Government's "Interim analytical Report" in 2003 showed that the level of alcohol-related crime and public disorder in the UK is immense. It is estimated that alcohol related crime costs the UK £7.3 billion per annum in terms of policing, prevention services, processing offenders through the criminal justice system and human costs incurred by the victims of crime. Overall alcohol-related harm costs the UK around £20 billion per year with alcohol-related crime accounting for the single largest area of expenditure. (⁴ Cabinet Office Strategy Unit Alcohol Project, 2003).



Statistics on actual levels of alcohol-related crime are difficult to obtain. It's estimated that 60% of violent incidents are not reported to the police (⁵ Cabinet Office Strategy Unit Alcohol Project, 2003) and individual police forces have different practices when it comes to categorising crime as being alcohol-related unless the crime is alcohol-specific (see Figure 1 for legislation covering the sale and use/misuse of alcohol). However, figures from national surveys such as the British Crime Survey and from individual research studies do help to build a picture of how far alcohol contributes to crime and fear of crime:

- In 1999 there were an estimated 1.2 million incidents of alcohol-related violence - approximately 23,000 per week (⁶ Richardson, A. and Budd, T., 2003)
- One in five violent crimes takes place in or around pubs and clubs, 70% of these incidents took place on weekend evenings (⁷ Richardson, A. and Budd, T., 2003)
- In the period 2001/02 47% of all victims of violence described their assailant as being under the influence of alcohol at the time. (⁸ Flood-Page, C. and Taylor, J. 2003).
- Around 50% of people arrested for breach of the peace, 45% arrested for criminal damage, 45% arrested for assault and 30% of those arrested for burglary tested positive for alcohol at the time of arrest (⁹ New English and Welsh Drug Abuse Monitoring, 1999-2001, 2003)
- Approximately one third of incidents of partner violence occurred when the perpetrator had been

Figure 1 a functional model explaining the alcohol crime relationship

A functional model explaining the alcohol crime relationship	
Category	Example
Offences which specifically mention Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking and driving • Being incapable or disorderly in a public place having consumed alcohol • Being in contravention of occupational regulatory law eg railway staff.
Offences against the licensing laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving under-age drinkers • Selling alcohol to underage drinkers • Serving people who are already intoxicated
Offences committed under the disinhibiting effects of alcohol where alcohol has affected the person's self control or judgement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where alcohol is used as 'dutch courage'
Offences resulting from an alcohol problem where alcohol need not have been consumed immediately prior to the offence being committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To obtain money or goods where income has been spent on Alcohol • Stealing alcohol to consume • Stealing goods to sell to buy alcohol
Offences where alcohol is used as excuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An account given in court to explain away criminal behaviour.

drinking (¹⁰ Cabinet Office Strategy Unit Alcohol Project, 2003)

- One UK study showed that 58% of those imprisoned for rape had been drinking in the six hours before the rape. In general, alcohol-related rapes tend to occur between people who do not know each other well and in many cases both the offender and the victim have been drinking. It is estimated that less than one in 5 incidents of female victimisation are reported to the police (¹¹ Cabinet Office Strategy Unit Alcohol Project, 2003)

Views and perceptions on alcohol-related crime

Public opinion polls and polls of police and A&E staff show how seriously the issue is taken:

- In a 2003 MORI poll 78% of respondents said they were concerned about binge-drinking, drunkenness and disorderly behaviour and only 25% of respondents aged 35 to 54 visited their town centres in the evening once or more than once a week.
- In a separate poll, 80% of police officers thought that alcohol was a factor in 3 out of 5 incidents on Friday and Saturday nights.
- 50% of medical staff in A&E departments thought that alcohol misuse accounted for " a very significant" proportion of the illness and injuries they treated, with 55% thinking that 3 out of 5 patients treated on Friday and Saturday nights were there as a result of alcohol misuse.

(¹² Alcohol Harm Reduction Group, 2003)

- A review of local Crime and Disorder Partnership strategy documents showed that 94% had a key priority that mentioned alcohol. Although only 5% had alcohol as a stand-alone priority, 30% of strategies had alcohol mentioned under a violence key priority and 25% had it mentioned under a disorder or anti-social behaviour key priority. (¹³ Richardson, Nicholls and Finney, 2004)

The link between alcohol and crime

Excess drinking is associated with numerous different types of crime. In one group are the alcohol-specific crimes listed in Figure 1 - drunkenness etc. Alcohol-related crime is far from homogenous and alcohol contributes in different ways to different types of crime such as criminal damage, sexual offences acquisitive and assault.

There has been a considerable amount of research done on the nature of the link between alcohol and crime and it is generally acknowledged to be complex. Alcohol is not always a causal factor in crime. The relationship can be divided into 3 broad areas:

- Causal relationship
- Contributory relationship
- Co-existence

Figure 1 provides a functional model to illustrate the alcohol crime relationship (¹⁴Deehan, 1999).

Alcohol and violence or anti-social behaviour

To date research into the link between alcohol and crime has focussed on alcohol intoxication, aggression and violent offending. This is partly because intoxication tends to lead to assault rather than acquisitive crime and partly because of the serious implications of this type of crime both for the individual and for the wider community.

Findings indicate that other co-factors play a significant role in alcohol-related aggression. These risk factors can usefully be divided into 2 groups:

- Factors relating to the background and personality of the individual offender
- Factors relating to the environment or context where the violence occurs

1. Risk factors for the individual offender

McMurrin in a recent research review on this subject explains that the relationship between alcohol misuse and violent crime is related to shared risk factors such as social disadvantage (¹⁵ McMurrin, 2002). Research also suggests that even after controlling for confounding variables there is actually a causal link between alcohol misuse and violent offending. Some of the key risk factors McMurrin identifies include:

- Family history. Several factors are common to problem drinking and delinquency including poorer, larger families, family disharmony and poor family management practices such as lax supervision, harsh punishment and lack of reward for good behaviour. (¹⁶ Farrington, 1995) Children who see their parents behaving violently or aggressively when drunk are more likely to become aggressive in adulthood. (¹⁷ Milner and Dopke 1997). Inherited behavioural traits can

be a predisposing factor to drinking and aggression. (¹⁸ Tarter, 1988) In particular impulsivity is linked to a variety of impulse control problems including aggression and alcoholism (¹⁹ Moffitt et al 1998)

- Childhood disorders. Childhood psychiatric disorders such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) place children at greater risk of aggression offending and substance misuse, particularly if it develops into conduct disorder (²⁰ Maughan, 1993.)
- Cognitive functioning. Impulsivity can impede the development of thinking and reasoning skills in childhood/adolescence and in turn impaired cognitive functioning is often linked to aggressiveness, violent offending and anti-social personality disorder (²¹ Giancola et al. 1996) Low intelligence is also a predictor of offending, particularly violent offending (²² Farrington 2001).
- Personality. Laboratory studies show that people who have drunk alcohol are more like to react aggressively when provoked than people who have not drunk alcohol or drunk a placebo. The aggression is greater among those of an aggressive disposition. (²³ Chermack and Giancola, 1997)
- Mental health illness. Research suggests that in the majority of mentally ill people, substance misuse is the "potent" risk factor for violence and although mental illness can itself constitute risk, generally, it is not a causal factor. However, there has been limited research so far into the role of alcohol misuse in recidivism among offenders with mental health problems. (²⁴ McMurrin, 2002)
- Lifestyle. A lifestyle of crime and substance misuse can lead individuals into social contexts that result in further crime and reduce the opportunities for change. So this lifestyle becomes an accepted norm for that person. (²⁴ McMurrin, 2002)

Environmental risk factors for crime or anti-social behaviour

The context

Studies of drinking and anti-social behaviour show that violent incidents are more likely to occur in certain bars, pubs and clubs than in others. There are several common environmental factors that contribute to frustration and aggression. Some of these relate to physical environment, such as:

- Poor layout and restricted access to the bar
- Poorly maintained, unclean premises
- Insufficient seating
- Loud music

(²⁵ Deehan 1999)

The social environment in bars and clubs is also a predictive factor. A permissive environment that allows swearing, sexual activity and drugs has been shown to be linked with frequency and severity of aggressive incidents (²⁶ Homel and Clarke,

1994). Aggression in customers was also linked to irresponsible serving practices or lack of control by bar staff (²⁷ Deehan, 1999). Cheap drinks promotions lead to greater consumption and contribute to increased aggression (²⁸ Homel and Clarke, 1994)

Studies from the early 1990s suggested that many problems were caused by the sudden increase of numbers of people exiting onto the streets at the same time, with 47% of incidents of violence and disorder taking place between 11pm and midnight. The study suggested that closing times should be less restrictive and staggered so people would leave in small groups over a longer period.

Social norms and expectations

- Studies show that patterns of social behaviour around public drinking include set expectations of the effects of alcohol consumption eg expectations of aggressive alcohol-related behaviour is higher among young males and/or heavy drinkers. There is a tendency for young male drinkers to interpret the behaviours of others as threatening and so they react more aggressively as a result. (²⁹ Gibbs, 1986). In addition intoxicated people develop a form 'alcohol myopia' that impairs their attention to the surrounding situation and reduces their ability to analyse situations and deal with problems (³⁰ Josephs and Steel, 1990).

Perpetrators and victims

Although there is very little demographic data on who are the perpetrators and victims of alcohol-related crime, the Government's "Interim analytical report" (³¹ Cabinet Office Strategy Unit Alcohol Project, 2003) found that the profile of both perpetrators and victims of alcohol-related violence was very similar with many shared risk factors, eg:

- being male aged 16 to 29,
- being single
- visiting pubs or clubs frequently
- drinking on average 3-4 times a week
- drinking more than 10 units on a typical day

These factors are largely accounted for by "exposure to risk" such as social situations where large numbers have been drinking. Inevitably young people are most at risk.

Young people

It's estimated one in two people aged 18-24 years are regular visitors to pubs and clubs and many middle-sized towns in the UK attract 50-70 thousand over a weekend (³² Parker, H. 2003). However, the people who get involved in alcohol-related incidents are not necessarily the delinquent 'yob' so dear to the tabloid press. A recent study of alcohol-related violence in Cardiff found that more than half those

Figure 2 Key legislation relating to alcohol

Legislation	Conditions
Inebriates Act 1898	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention of the sale of alcohol to habitual drunkards
Licensing Act 1872	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drunkenness Drunk in a public place Drunk in any highway or public place Drunk in charge of a carriage, cattle or steam engine Drunk in possession of a loaded firearm
Licensing Act 1902	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drunk in charge of a child
Licensing Act 1964* <i>(note that the provisions of this act are still in force up until the implementation of the Licensing Act in 2005 – see figure 2 for key conditions of the new Act.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justices Licences Permitted hours and extensions Sale to persons under 18 Sale of intoxicating liquor to a drunken person
Criminal Justice Act 1967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drunk and disorderly
Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duties payable on alcohol
Licensing (Occasional Permissions Act 1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional licences to sell alcohol not for the purpose of private gain
Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powers to arrest a person in order to prevent them injuring themselves or others. The conditions do not specify drunkenness but the police commonly use the act to protect drunk individuals.
Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc) 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibits drunkenness and possession of alcohol at specific sporting events and on public transport while travelling to and from these events
Weights and Measures Act 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Units of alcohol for use for trade
Road Traffic Act 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drunk in charge of a motor vehicle Riding a bicycle while unfit through alcohol Driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle after consuming a sufficient quantity of alcohol to exceed the prescribed limit Causing death by dangerous driving while under the influence of alcohol Breath tests and provision of specimens
Transport and Works Act 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offences involving drink or drugs on transport systems
Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power to confiscate alcohol from young people drinking on the street
Prisons (Alcohol Testing) Act 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powers to test prisoners for alcohol
Finance Act 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates of duty on alcohol
Licensing (Young Persons) Act 2000* <i>*This act closed the loophole by which responsibility for selling alcohol to under-18 year-olds rested solely with the licensee of a licensed premises,</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sale of alcohol to persons under 18 Purchase or attempt to purchase alcohol by persons under 18 Consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 in a bar in licensed premises Delivery of alcohol to a person under 18.
Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol consumption in designated public places Closure of certain licensed premises due to disorder or disturbance On the spot penalties for: being drunk in a public place or licensed premises buying or attempting to buy alcohol in a bar by a person under 18 Disorderly behaviour while drunk in a public place Consumption of alcohol in a public place

arrested for alcohol-related crime were first-time offenders but only around 20% were repeat offenders with four or more convictions (³³ Maguire, M. and Nettleton, H., 2003). Howard Parker's major longitudinal study of young people in the North West identified a "work hard, play hard" philosophy prevalent among people with around 22% drinking twice weekly recommended limits and 11% drinking three times or more. The majority of these were conventional young people who studied, trained or worked during the week and took time-out over the weekends. Occasionally they experienced problems on their nights out such as getting involved in a fight or an embarrassing incident but these were generally accepted as the flip side to many successful evenings with no long-term ill effects. However, it was clear that getting involved in fights/arguments or committing criminal damage was much more common among the heavier drinkers (³⁴ Egginton, R., Williams, L. and Parker, H., 2002).

These findings are confirmed in a Home Office youth life styles study. Respondents were asked whether they had been involved in a fight/argument, broken or damaged something or stolen goods during or after drinking in the last 12 months. The study found that:

- 69% of male binge-drinkers and 45% of female binge-drinkers reported at least one incident in the last year compared to 34% of regular male drinkers and 18% of regular female drinkers.
- A further analysis using logical regression found that even after controlling for other factors such as educational achievement, school exclusion etc. consumption of alcohol and frequency of drunkenness was strongly associated with offending and anti-social behaviour.

(³⁵ Richardson, A, and Budd, T., 2003)

However, in common with earlier research this study confirmed that cultural, social and environmental factors also influenced the link between alcohol-use and offending which had to be kept in mind when planning interventions to reduce alcohol-related crime and disorder.

The prison population

Of the estimated 60,000 sentenced prisoners in the UK, just over 40,000 are hazardous alcohol users. Almost half of these have severe alcohol problems (³⁶ Home Office 2004 and Singleton, 1999). In young offender institutions many young male offenders have alcohol problems, often related to binge drinking. For example at Castington YOI in Northumberland the Chief Inspector of Prisons found that 'the majority of young people entering Castington has used large quantities of alcohol'. A survey carried out in 2003 showed that of the nearly 300 prisoners 42 per cent of the 18 to 21 year olds in the prison and 30 per cent of the juveniles aged 16 to 18 said they had alcohol problems (³⁷ HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2003).

It's not clear whether alcohol played a role in the actual offence they committed or whether the



substance misuse is a concurrent problem.

The ONS study also found that more than half of prisoners who have been hazardous drinkers have two or more mental disorders. Left untreated these combined substance misuse and mental health problems, pose a significant obstacle to rehabilitation once a sentence is completed.

To summarise this section, it is clear that alcohol plays a diverse role in crime and anti-social behaviour. It can be the cause of alcohol-specific crime eg drunkenness and it can contribute by altering people's mood making them more aggressive or less able to deal with threatening situations. Environmental factors such as crowded noisy surroundings can exacerbate the effects of excess drinking. Problem drinking also appears to be an additional risk factor in delinquent behaviour among offenders. Of necessity, measures to prevent or reduce alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour have to take account of the multi-faceted role of alcohol.

Combating alcohol-related harm

Incidents of alcohol-related crime can vary widely from relatively low level offences such as drunkenness or alcohol-inspired graffiti to violent assault. The response by government, police or local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships needs to take account of this continuum and the implications for different types of approach.

There are numerous initiatives being implemented across the UK at the national and the local level. Evidence from projects and studies in the UK and other countries suggest several main routes forward as follows:

Controlling the availability of alcohol through legislation

Legislation that bans the sale and consumption of alcohol in specified public places can prevent excess public drinking. Local by-laws that create alcohol-free zones or the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol) 1985 Act are examples of such legislation. The implementation of the Licensing Act 2003 in 2005 will have a major impact on alcohol-related disorder. One of the key objectives of the act is the prevention of crime and disorder. The act is wide-ranging but specific clauses to achieve this objective, include:

Making it an offence for:

- Licence holders and premise supervisors to allow disorderly conduct in their premises and or sell alcohol to a person who is drunk
- People to buy alcohol for a drunken person.
- Those who are already drunk and disorderly to fail to leave a premise when requested by a licence holder/premise supervisor or police officer.

Gives senior police officers power to:

- Temporarily close disorderly premises for 24 hours
- Apply for an extended closure of disorderly premises

Allows local authorities to:

- Review closures of disorderly premises
- Modify conditions and scope of licences
- Revoke licences.

(The Alcohol Concern factsheet "The role of alcohol in the night-time economy" looks at the wider context of how local authorities can plan the night-time economy in their own areas to reduce the potential for alcohol-related disorder)

Unfortunately the Act could prove as much a cause of alcohol-related disorder as its solution. Flexible licensing hours are intended to produce staggered closing and the gradual dispersal of crowds. They could just mean that disorder occurs later or over a longer period, making it more difficult to police.

Local authorities will need to plan and monitor the situation carefully to prevent this happening. It is unclear at this time as to whether local authorities have the powers and resources to do this effectively.

Controlling the drinking environment

Using the evidence of environmental factors that adversely affect public drinking behaviour it is

possible to 'design out' alcohol-related disorder. Some measures that have been shown to have effect include:

- Pub and Club Watch schemes banning trouble-makers from nightlife areas
- Door staff training and registration schemes
- Cutting back on irresponsible drinks promotions
- Employing staff with recognised qualifications such as the Bar Person's National Certificate in licensed premises
- Safety audits of licensed premises to improve the physical environment and award schemes to reward venues that maintain high standards for customer safety
- Use of toughened glass to prevent broken glasses or bottles being used as weapons
- Calming initiatives such as not serving alcohol in the hour before closing to reduce noise and levels of intoxication in customers at closing time.
- CCTV in and around late night venues
- Provision of late night transport
- Improved street lighting
- Help points for vulnerable people to seek assistance.

(³⁸ Hughes, K. and Bellis, M.A., 2003)

In practice, schemes such Manchester Citysafe use many of these methods in conjunction and it is the cumulative effect of these that has helped to create a safer night-time environment. It is estimated that in its first year, 2000-2001, the scheme reduced the rising trend of late night disorder by 8.5% with a further reduction of 12.3% in the following year. (³⁹ Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2004)

Law enforcement and targeted policing

Stronger law enforcement is a key strand in the Government's response to alcohol-related crime and disorder. Since 2000 it has implemented a range of legislation and initiatives to achieve this, including:

- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which placed a statutory duty on local authorities and police to conduct local crime audits and draw up strategies for tackling identified problems, including alcohol-related disorder (⁴⁰ ODPM, 2003)
- Alcohol bylaws making it possible for local authorities to ban drinking on the streets
- The Private Security Industry Act 2001 that required all door supervisors to be trained and registered and prevents the employment of people with criminal records for violent crime being employed in this capacity. With regulation from the new Security Industry Authority (⁴¹ Hughes and Bellis, 2003)
- The Penalty Notice for Disorder scheme introduced as part of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001. This scheme allows for penalties to be

imposed for low-level and anti-social behaviour and nuisance committed by over 18-year-olds with several of the penalties relating specifically to alcohol misuse and being drunk and disorderly. (⁴² ODPM, 2003)

- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 aims to ensure that the police have adequate powers to tackle anti-social behaviour in the community. This includes widening the use of Fixed Penalty notices to include 16-17-year-olds. It also increases powers to shut down noisy establishments and improves the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs.)
- The Police Reform Act (2002) gives chief police officers the power to appoint appropriate people as Community Support Officers (CSOs) under a community safety accreditation scheme. CSOs will have the power to issue fixed penalty notices and seize alcohol from young people on the street and detain people under certain conditions. In addition to their law enforcement powers, CSOs could play a significant role in reducing anti-social behaviour and public fear of crime. As a visible force on the streets at night they should be able to deter low-level disorder. (⁴³ ODPM 2003)

Enforcement

Legislation to control alcohol-related crime and disorder needs vigorous and sustained enforcement by police and related agencies if it is to be effective. Evidence from early projects in Torbay (⁴⁴ Jeff and Saunders, 1983) and Scotland (⁴⁵ Plant and Harrison 2003) demonstrated the value of this approach but these initiatives were not sustained.

A more recent project Tackling Alcohol-related Street Crime (TASC), started in Cardiff in 2000 under the Home Office Policing Initiative, confirms that targeted policing can work and demonstrated good practice. An evaluation of the project estimated that in the first 12 months, the project helped to reduce the expected level of violence by 8% (around 100 assaults). Despite a 49% increase in incidents of alcohol-related disorder in Cardiff during the life of the project, intensive policing over 2 eight week periods resulted in a reduction in the number of incidents by 41% and later 56% around two targeted clubs. The project highlighted the benefit of targeting specific locations rather than whole streets, the importance of building links with managers of licensed premises and the pressing need for local authorities to develop a "broader strategic approach" to the prevention of late-night violence and disorder" (⁴⁶ Maguire and Nettleton, 2003)

As part of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England (AHRSE) the Home Office Police Standards Unit will be producing a "good practice guide" in 2004 which will incorporate many of the lessons learnt from projects such as TASC. The AHRSE identifies key elements in managing night-time disorder including:

- The coordination of statutory authorities to manage the night-time infra-structure
- The drinks industry taking responsibility for minimising the harm caused by alcohol misuse and working with local agencies to tackle the consequences.

(⁴⁷ AHRSE, 2004)

A nationwide version of this type of targeted policing project is being run over the summer in 2004. The Home Office Police Standards Unit in collaboration with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is currently operating an intensive police operation in 77 areas across England and Wales to clamp down on alcohol-fuelled disorder and identify on and off licence retailers that sell to under-18 year-olds.

Under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 local authorities have a duty to prevent crime and disorder in their areas. As part of the implementation of the AHRSE the government will be issuing guidance to local authorities on managing the night-time economy. Also the Regional Co-ordination Unit will work with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to develop strategies for dealing with alcohol-related disorder in their areas.

In addition it is envisaged that retailers of alcohol, on and off-licences will be "strongly encouraged" to sign up to a code of good practice and accreditation which will include a commitment to measures such as:

- Not selling to under 18-year-olds
- Carrying out appropriate bar staff training
- Not selling alcohol at irresponsible low prices.

(⁴⁸ AHRSE, 2004)

Alcohol retailers may also be asked to make a financial contribution to the cost of tackling alcohol misuse. Funds would be managed by local authorities with local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships prioritising how the fund should be used, for example paying for additional Community Support Officers to tackle disorder. Initially the Government is expecting the drinks industry to voluntarily take part in schemes to reduce harm. However the Action Plan for the AHRSE makes it clear that if industry actions are not making any impact in reducing harm, the Government will take further steps, including introducing further legislation.

One important aspect of law enforcement is development of accurate statistics on alcohol-related crime, particularly at a local level where baseline figures on the scale and nature of the problem are vital in order to plan what needs to happen and judge the effectiveness of an intervention. The Home Office has issued a guidance paper on the collection and analysis of alcohol-related crime and disorder data for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (⁴⁹ Tierney and Hobbs, 2003.)

Interventions

The Government's alcohol strategy states that individuals have responsibility for the consequences of their drinking. However, a coherent strategy to achieve this has yet to be outlined. Interventions aimed at changing people's behaviour have to take account of the nature of the alcohol-related offence and the individual's offending behaviour ranging from the rowdy Saturday binge-drinker to the habitual violent offender, through to the alcohol-dependent inmate in prison. An intervention aimed at repeat offenders is not appropriate for an adolescent with behavioural problems. This section lists a selection of interventions in use in the UK and refers to other promising methods from the US and Canada. It focuses on three contexts for intervention:

- Community initiatives for adolescents with behavioural problems
- Criminal justice interventions for occasional and habitual offenders
- Prison based interventions for offenders.

Community initiatives for adolescents

McMurran's review of evidence on Alcohol and crime suggests that, as many risk factors for crime and heavy drinking are shared, particularly for adolescents, school and family based interventions might influence behaviour. Foxcroft in a review of psychosocial interventions for young people points to the Strengthening Families Program project in the US. This programme has had considerable success in preventing the early onset of drinking/drunkenness but it is also a useful family management programme that improves parent/child relationships and behaviour overall. The programme is currently being piloted in the UK. ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Foxcroft, 2003)

Targeted community initiatives in the US have also proved successful in reducing drink-drive accidents among young drivers by 10% across three communities and in the same trial reducing sales to under-age drinkers by 30%. ⁽⁵¹⁾ Foxcroft, 2003).

In the UK there is also a range of early interventions aimed at preventing low level crime among adolescents run by organisations such as Connexions which include counselling sessions looking at the problems a young person may be experiencing, including alcohol misuse. The Youth Justice Board and Home Office are developing schemes such as the Positive Futures programme and Positive Activities for Young People to provide diversionary sport and leisure activities. However, the level of provision varies widely and drinking may be the preferred activity.

For persistent offenders Fixed Penalty Notices for drunk and disorderly behaviour can now be given to 16 and 17 year olds. In addition Individual Support Orders will be introduced for 10 -17 year olds subject to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders that will require an individual to seek help for the causes

of their anti-social behaviour including alcohol misuse. ⁽⁵²⁾ AHRSE)

Criminal justice interventions for occasional and habitual offenders

Law enforcement and control of the public drinking environment can do much to prevent alcohol-related disorder. However, the drinking behaviour of those arrested for alcohol-related offences needs to be addressed if the individuals are not to continue their behaviour. The situation is complicated, with police encountering various behavioural patterns. For example a Home Office study of intoxicated arrestees identified varying patterns of drinking behaviour including occasional weekend binge, regular heavy drinking and habitual drunkenness ⁽⁵³⁾ Deehan, Marshall, and Saville, 2002). Also the TASC in Cardiff found that 20% of those arrested were persistent offenders with four or more convictions while around 50% were first time offenders ⁽⁵⁴⁾ Maguire and Nettleton, 2003), though they may have committed previous undetected offences. As the Government harm reduction strategy explains "mechanisms for identifying and referring them for help are haphazard". Interventions for offenders need to take account of both drinking and offending behaviour.

The most promising way forward is the development of arrest-referral schemes. There are currently 8 pilot schemes in operation and early results show this approach can reduce re-offending. One study of two schemes in operation in the West Midlands has encouraging findings:

- 70% of offenders referred as a condition of bail or voluntarily referring themselves attended the local alcohol service for 2 sessions of motivational interviewing.
- A follow-up study of 80 offenders found that 80% of those who completed the 2 sessions had changed their drinking behaviour - not necessarily cutting down but choosing to drink with different people at different pubs/bars.
- More than half of those who attended the session were violent offenders including 10% in one year being referred for domestic violence.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Sharp, 2004)

It's vital that sentencers are aware that treatment is being undertaken and that the sentence takes account of it, for example as part of a Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order. In future, treatment could be stipulated as part of the new Community Order and Suspended Sentence Order. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) could also be used to curtail the drinking behaviour of habitual offenders by prohibiting them from drinking in specified pubs or with specified people connected to their offence.

Prison based interventions

A high number of sentenced prisoners have drink-related problems. (around, 40,000 admit to hazardous

drinking - see above). Despite this level of need the Prison Service has yet to put an alcohol harm reduction strategy in place. Levels of treatment or other forms of intervention are uneven across UK prisons. In 2002-2003 6,400 received detoxification treatment and a further 7000 combined drug and alcohol detoxification under the CARAT's services (Co-ordinating, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare). Selected prisons run alcohol awareness courses and Alcoholics Anonymous run services in 50% of prisons. (⁵⁶ AHRSE). The Prison service is in the process drawing up an Alcohol Strategy for prisoners which should include routine screening of new prisoners, increased provision of treatment and follow-up care when offenders leave prison. As yet there is no information on the type of interventions that will be developed.

Recent research has found that programmes for offenders can reduce the likelihood of re-offending (⁶⁷ McCollister and French 2003). However, McMurran's review of evidence on interventions for alcohol-related crime made the point that most substance misuse interventions in UK prisons focus on illicit drugs and that none of the accredited courses specifically addresses alcohol-related crime. In general resources are focused on intensive programmes for high-risk offenders. She recommends investigating the value of brief interventions with low level offenders as these have proved useful with drink-drivers and points to integrated interventions for offenders whose crimes are related to substance misuse, that have been trialled in Canada (⁵⁸ Correctional Services of Canada, 1999). In addition interventions that address specific types of alcohol-related crime such as the Control of Violence for Angry Impulsive Drinkers (COVAID) in Cardiff need further development. (⁵⁹ McMurran 2002) Projects in the US looking at dual diagnosis in prisons (⁶⁰ Edens et al. 1997) are also relevant for the proposed Alcohol Strategy for Prisons currently being drawn up.

Moving forward

Alcohol's contribution to crime and disorder is well recognised. This paper has demonstrated the complex relationship between alcohol misuse and offending which in turn has major implications for strategies to reduce alcohol-related harm. The Government's national alcohol harm reduction strategy provides a good start point as it lays out essential elements required to tackle this multi-faceted problem.

However, it is clear that the strategy will require close co-operation between key players such as the police, local authorities and, not least, the drinks industry. Integrated community initiatives such Manchester Citysafe require major investment so local agencies need to be convinced of the long-term benefits of this approach. The drinks industry will also need to be convinced that responsible retail practice will improve business

overall, not just cut profits. Guidance on what works to cut alcohol-related crime is vital whether it comes from government, specialist alcohol bodies or other experienced local agencies. Lastly the Government itself will need to sustain the impetus for change making sure the police prioritise this area of work, investing in treatment interventions for offenders and pressurising the drinks industry to act responsibly, all of which it has laid out in its Action Plan for the Strategy.

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