



## Youth Alcohol Use/Binge Drinking December 2008

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**The proportion of teenagers who drink regularly is falling. But those who do drink are drinking a lot more – and many young people start drinking from a very young age:**

- While there has been an overall fall in the proportion of young people drinking, there has been a **sharp increase in the alcohol consumption of young people who do drink**. The average weekly consumption of alcohol for 11–15 year-olds increased from 5 units in 1990 to more than 11 units in 2006.
- There is evidence of **an associated increase in “drinking to get drunk”**. The latest evidence on drinking by 11–15 year olds suggests that 35% of those who had drunk alcohol in the previous four weeks had done so deliberately to get drunk. Heavy episodes of drinking where five or more drinks are consumed on a single occasion is common amongst young people and is a rising trend.
- **56% of 15–16 year-olds report having drunk heavily in the last 30 days and 30% report having done this three or more times in the past 30 days.**
- **Over the past six years it has been younger teenagers who have been drinking more.** A recent study describes 11–13 year-olds as less likely to have had a drink in the previous week (14% in 2001 to 9% in 2006), but of those who were drinking, their level of consumption had risen from 5.6 units a week in 2001 to 10.1 in 2006.

Youth Alcohol Action Plan; Department for Children, Schools and Families; Home Office; Department of Health; June 2008.

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- **In 2006, 15% of pupils thought it was okay to get drunk at least once a week.** This figure varied largely depending on age; at 3% for 11 year old pupils and 30% for 15 year old pupils.
- **Weekends were the most popular times for drinking alcohol.** In 2006, of all pupils who had drunk in the week prior to interview, 62% did so on a Saturday, 51% on a Friday and 27% on a Sunday. Drinking on other days of the week was much lower.
- **Among those who had drunk in the week prior to interview, the proportion that had drunk on Fridays increased with age, from 35% of 11 - 12 year olds to 56% of 15 year olds.**

Statistics on Alcohol: England, 2008, NHS/The Information Centre/National Statistics, 2008.

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**Every three days a child under 10 is treated in hospital for the effects of alcohol.** 648 children under 10 have been treated in accident and emergency wards for alcohol-related illness in the past five years. They were among 24,000 under 16s who drank so much that they needed hospital help.

- **More than 500,000 children aged 10 - 17 drink in bars while 13% buy alcohol openly in shops.**
- **The number of youth under the age of 18 admitted to hospital because they have drunk too much has jumped by 80% over the past five years.**

Home Office, November 2008.

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- **Over 40% more young people aged 25 - 29 have been killed by liver disease than in the previous year.** (*Linked with heavier drinking in younger children*).

Office for National Statistics, November 2008.

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