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Alcohol: through our eyes (ISBN 9781907349058)
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Citation Details

Citation for the version of the work held in 'OpenAIR@RGU':

HACKETT, C., SEAMAN, P. and EDGAR, F., 2012. Alcohol: through our eyes; young people's representations of drinking in Scotland. Available from <i>OpenAIR@RGU</i>. [online]. Available from: http://openair.rgu.ac.uk

Citation for the publisher's version:

HACKETT, C., SEAMAN, P. and EDGAR, F., 2012. Alcohol: through our eyes; young people's representations of drinking in Scotland. Glasgow: Glasgow Centre for Population Health.

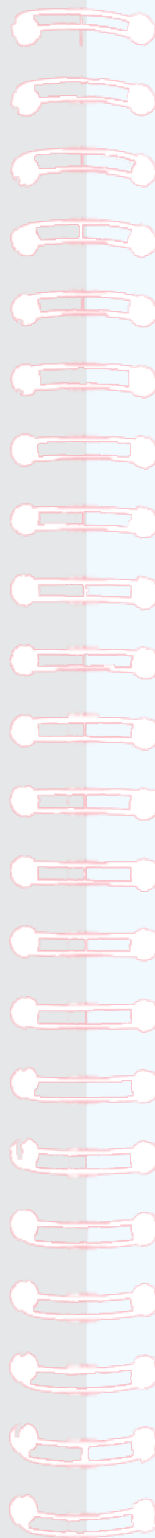
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ALCOHOL: THROUGH OUR EYES

Young people's
representations of
drinking in Scotland



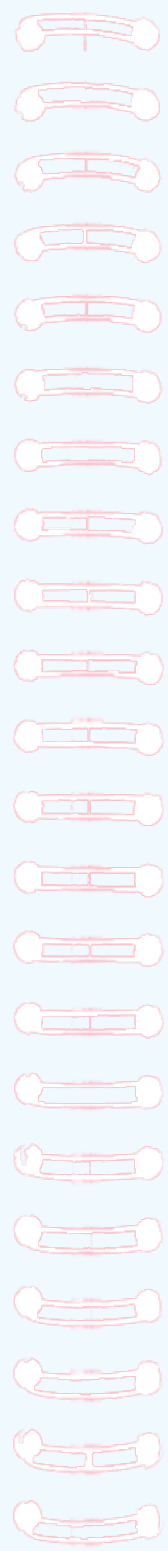
Alcohol: Through our eyes

Young people's
representations of
drinking in Scotland

Charlie Hackett, Pete Seaman
and Fiona Edgar

Companion to the report

Creating better stories: Alcohol and gender in transitions to adulthood



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Summary

This book is based on a research project that explored how young men and women use alcohol as they move from their mid teens through to their late twenties. This period of life is sometimes referred to as ‘the transition to adulthood’. We wanted to find out more about young people’s experiences of drinking during this time in their lives. To explore this in a dynamic way, we conducted eight activity based focus groups with young adults aged between 16–30.

During the activities, participants drew and created visual materials in the form of t-shirts, comic strips and speech bubbles. These materials provide a rich insight into young adults’ alcohol use. They are raw and authentic because they come directly from the young adults themselves. We believe these representations are powerful in a way that is difficult to capture in words alone. Because of this, we decided to put together this book to showcase the young men and women’s representations of alcohol, through their eyes.

More information about the research is available in the companion report, *Creating better stories: Alcohol and gender in transitions to adulthood*. A briefing paper or a shortened version of the report is also available from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health website.

www.gcph.co.uk/genderandalcohol

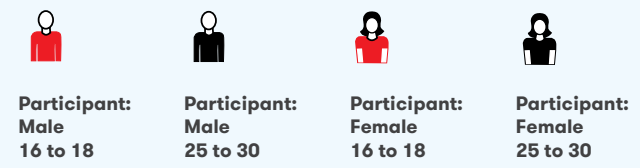
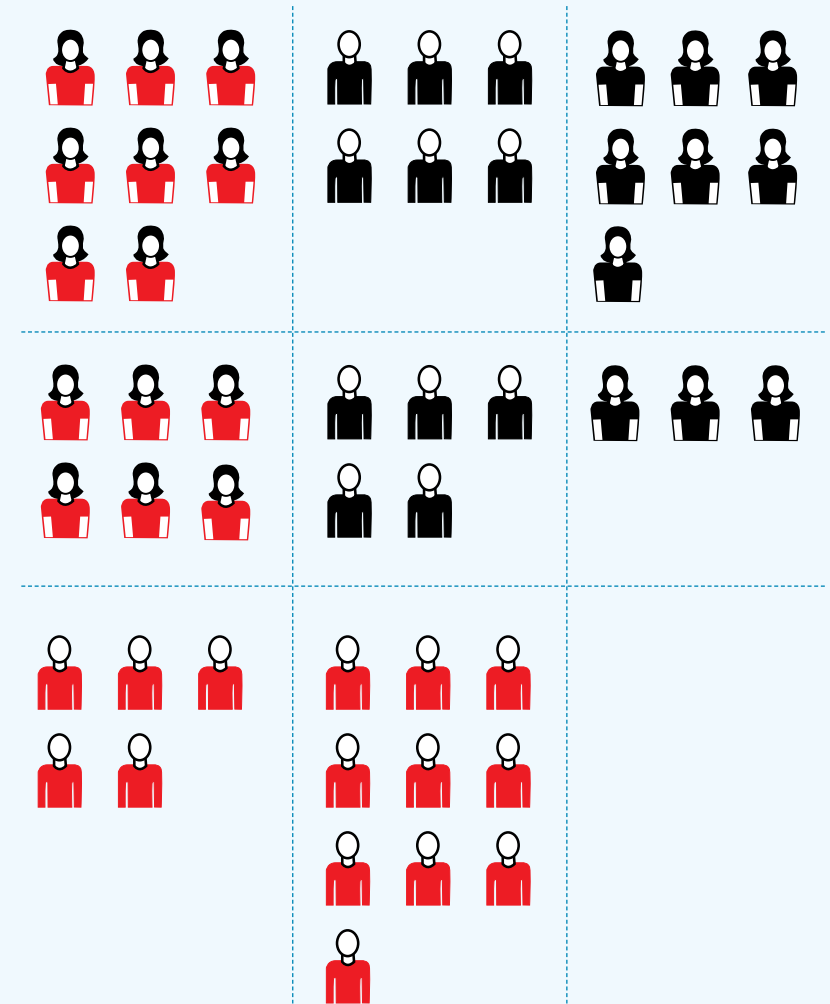
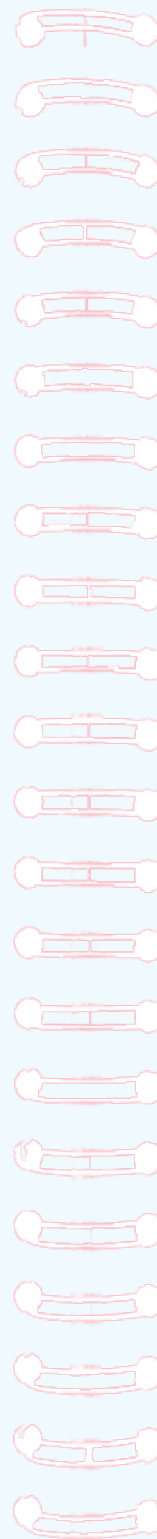
Introduction

Who is this book for?

Alcohol through our eyes is about young adults’ alcohol use. The materials featured here were created by young adults. We hope that other young adults will be able to relate to this book and use it to open up space for reflection and discussion about their own experiences of alcohol. It may also be useful for those who work with young people and those involved in making decisions about young people and their alcohol use.

Who took part?

Fifty young adults took part in the focus groups, made up of 24 women and 26 men. So that we could compare young men and women's views and experiences, we had separate groups for males and females. In total, we conducted eight focus groups. People were put into a group with other men/women of a similar age and social background. We focused on two age ranges: 16–18 and 25–30. We did this so that we would hear from people at different points in their transitions to adulthood.



Focus group activities

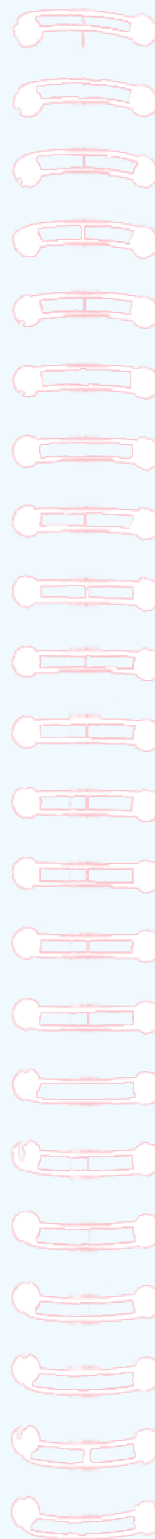
The focus groups were based around two activities.

Activity 1 – The t-shirt

Participants worked in pairs to design a t-shirt. They were given a life-sized t-shirt and lots of different coloured pens. On the front of the t-shirt, we asked them to draw or write positive things about alcohol. On the back, we asked them to draw or write negative things about alcohol. Then on the sleeves, we asked them to identify things that might make young people drink less alcohol. This led to an open group discussion about what they liked and disliked about alcohol, as well as their thoughts on how young people’s drinking could be reduced.

Activity 2 – The comic strip

Participants created comic strips and/or speech bubbles based on their views and experiences of alcohol during the transition to adulthood. They were asked to do one comic strip drawing to represent their drinking experiences as a 16–18 year old, and one to represent drinking as a 25–30 year old. We then asked participants to talk through their drawings with the rest of the group. This opened up space for more discussion amongst participants. They asked each other questions and talked about their experiences in greater depth and detail. This allowed us to pick up on different thoughts and viewpoints within the group, as well as identify experiences they had in common.

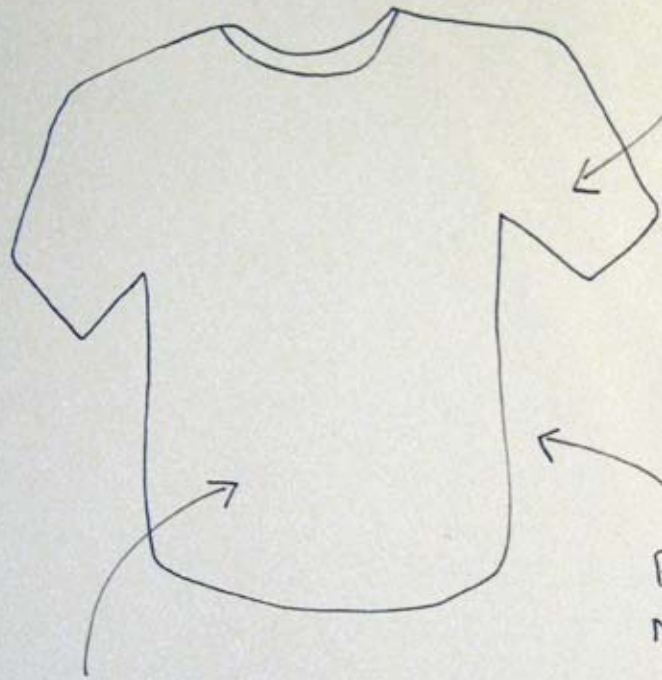


All of the focus group discussions were audio recorded and then transcribed. This was important so that we had an accurate record of what the participants had said during the t-shirt and comic strip activities. With the transcripts, we were able to capture the participants’ own voices and the language they used to talk about alcohol.

The next couple of sections of this book are dedicated to examples of participants’ visual materials: their t-shirts and comic strips. Parts of the transcripts are also included, to give a flavour of what participants themselves said during the focus group discussions. To protect the identities of our participants, names and other identifying features have been changed or removed.

The t-shirt

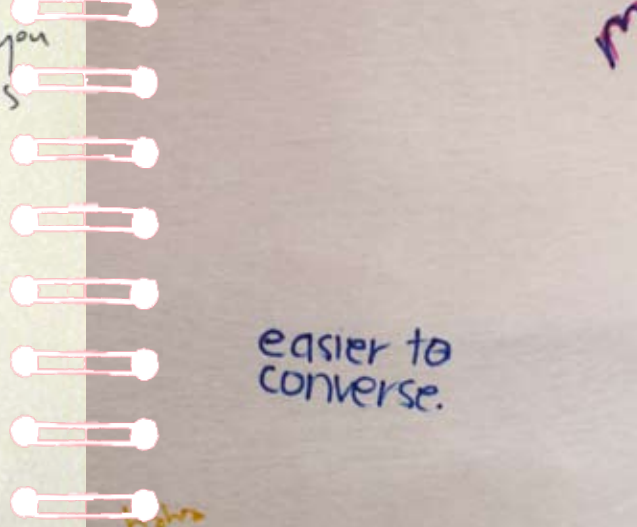
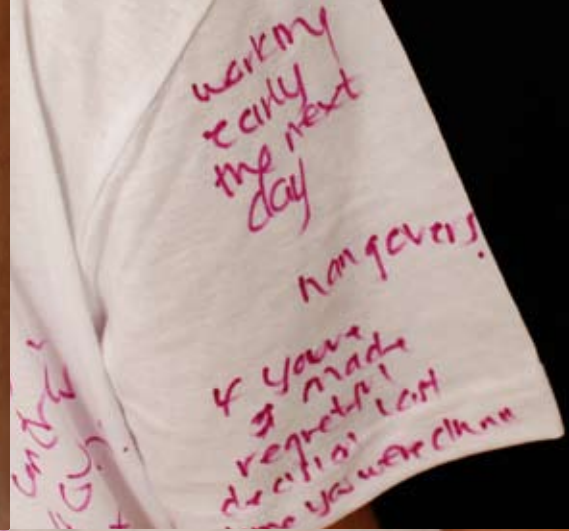
HERE ARE SOME OF THE T-SHIRTS PARTICIPANTS MADE



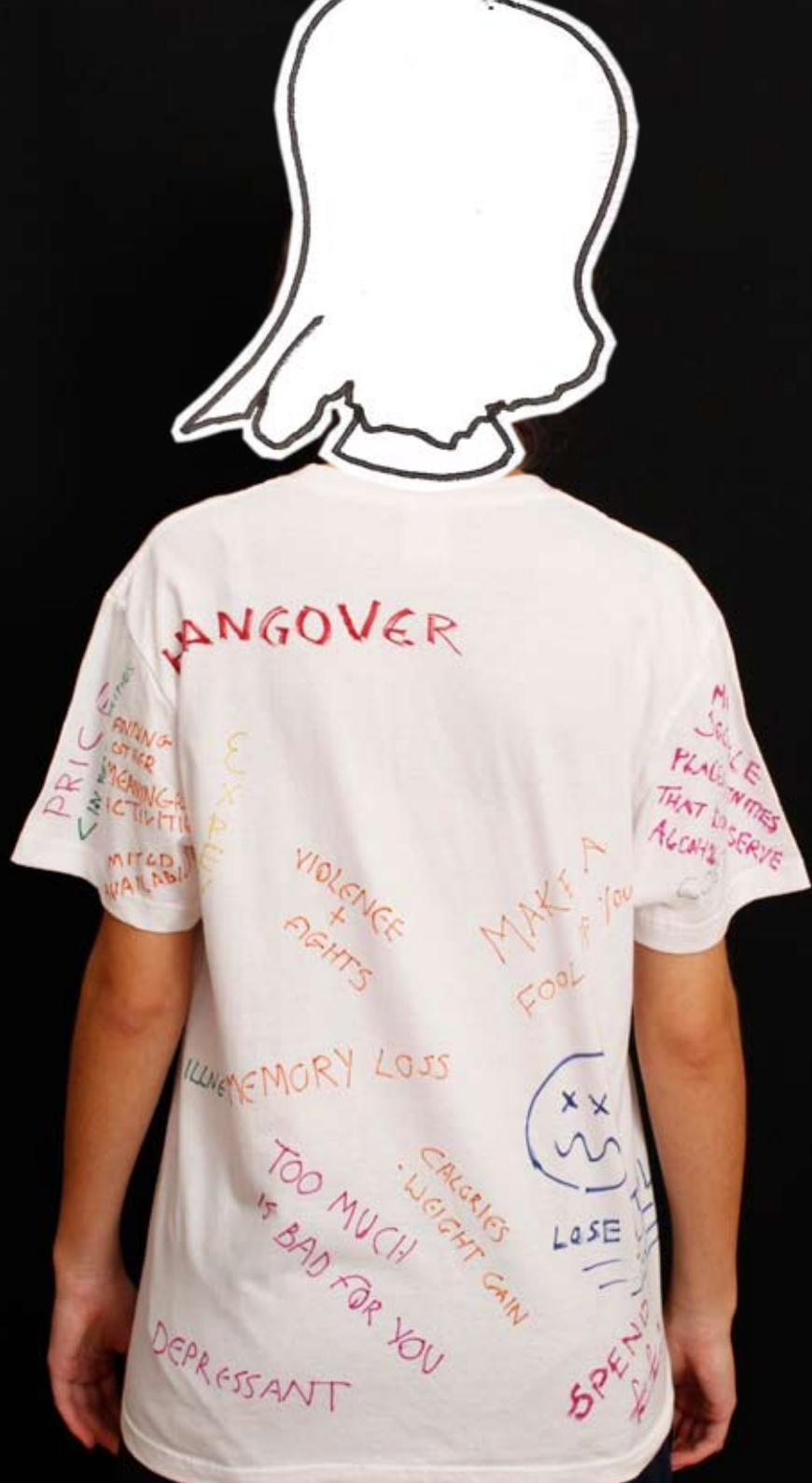
front =
positives

Sleeves = ways
to make you
drink less

Back =
negatives





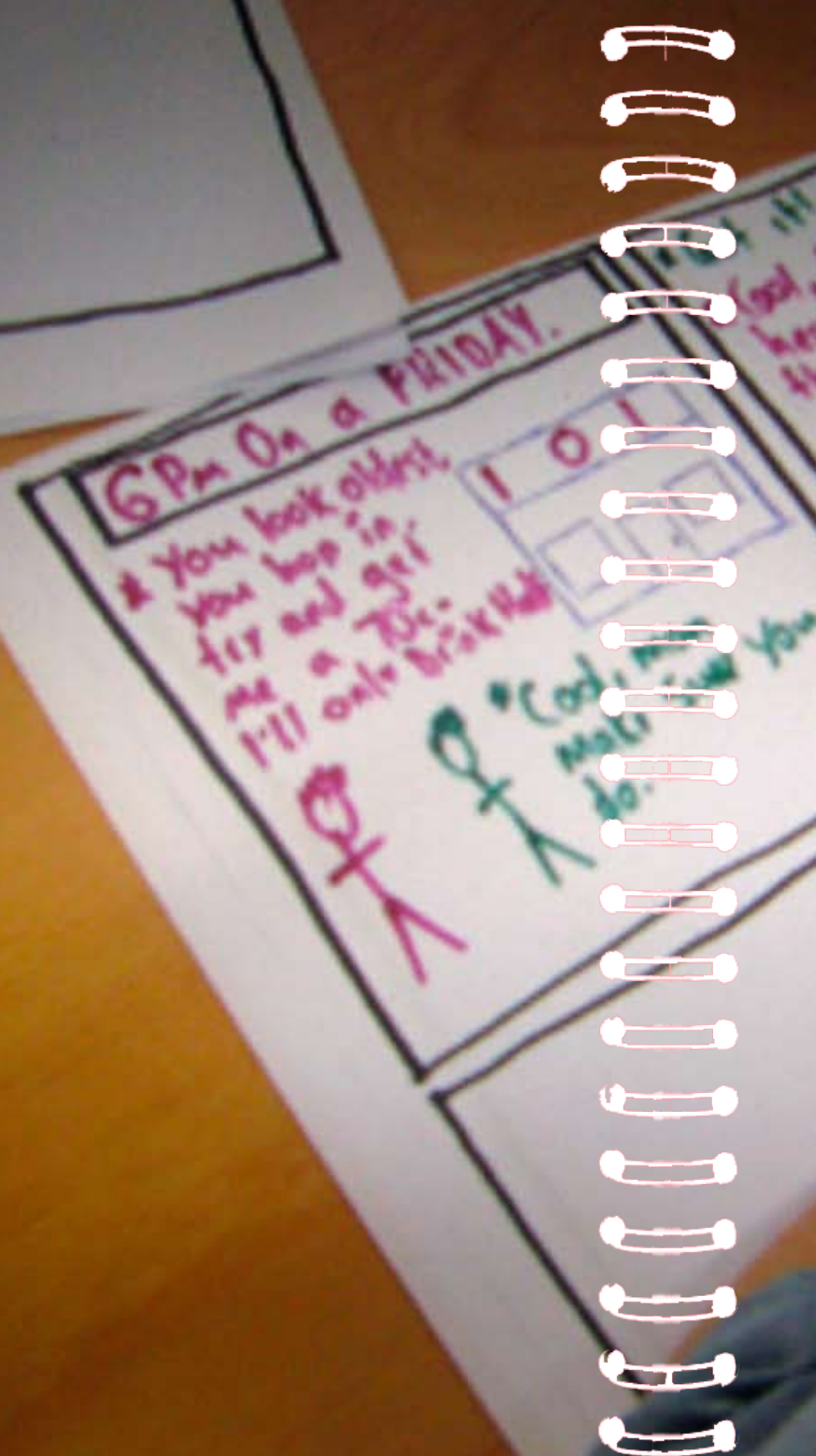


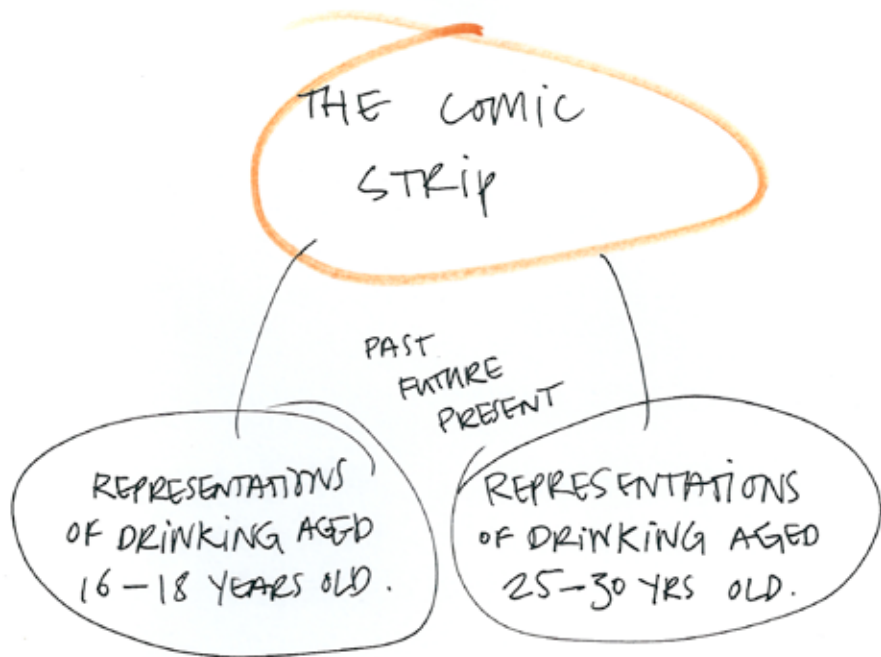
Toolkit

We provided refreshments to create an informal and open environment.



The comic strip





VIEWS THOUGHTS
EXPERIENCES
DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS.

CONFIDENCE ●
FRIENDSHIP ●
GENDER ●
NIGHTS OUT ●
HEALTH ●
PARENTS ●
RISKS ●
SCOTTISH CULTURE ●
GETTING OLDER ●

Confidence

Confidence

“Also the socialising aspect of it, it gives you confidence to open up maybe. You know you’re a bit shy at that age and like if you’re drinking it kind of gives you confidence.”

“If I was sober in a nightclub trying to dance I would feel like a big fat flump.”

“Your confidence might shine through a wee bit more, like if you’ve had a drink obviously maybe you can let loose a bit more, you can show parts of your personality you wouldn’t normally see shining through as much on day to day, they will maybe come out a bit more when you’ve been drinking.”

“I don’t like going out sober because I’m not very confident. So, it just kind of gives me that wee confidence boost to go out dressed the way I am and stuff and kind of go out dancing basically.”

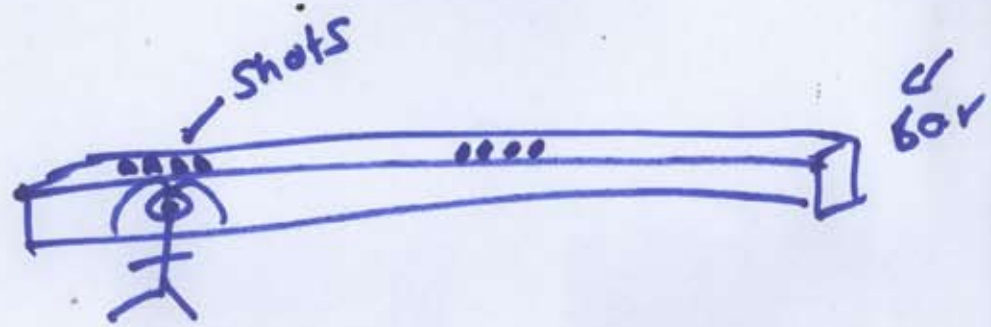
“You get confidence, you open up, you, I don’t know, talk to each other more I guess. When you’re young you find that difficult I guess, a little bit so maybe drinking kind of eases the atmosphere a little bit.”

“Just when you’re out and, well I don’t really go to the dancing, but if you’re in the pub with your friends and stuff and I’m not very chatty to people I don’t really know, I kind of stick to my friends. But if I’m having a drink I would be more inclined to talk to people I didn’t know, but I’m not, I wouldn’t go deliberately out my way to get drunk to be confident. But when I do drink I do feel more confident, it’s not why I drink though.”

PRE-DRINKS!

TO A BAR!

BETWEEN 8pm - 10pm.



Phone Taxi - 10.30-11.

- SHOTS
- DANCE
- MORE SHOTS

- DRINKING
RANDOM
DRINKS

16-25 Photocard



This Photocard is valid for use only by the person to whom it is issued and whose photograph appears hereon and with a Railcard bearing the same number

04749431



Date of birth: 6-12-1992

Name: MR A.

PETRIC - GRAY

SOBER-TIPSY

9-11pm Streets

"I'm getting wretched tonight!"
"Me too, can't wait!"

John AND HIS MATES DRINK AND CHAT IN HIS PARTNER'S HOUSE IN REVEREND

TIPSY - DRINK

John FAILS ID WORKS A TREAT AND AND HIS MATES ENJOY THE HARD HOUSE TUNES AND THE DANCE AS WELL AS TRY TO PULL

BAR IKON BAR

can I get you

3 VRBS and a pint glass please

11.30pm

11.30-3am

"Haha, having a good night"

3-4am

WHAT A NIGHT!

MONDAY AT SCHOOL

FC4

Male 25-30

The Storyline: The Past 16-18. 'I am getting wrecked tonight', and others saying 'me too, I can't wait.' So we went out with the full intention of getting wrecked.

Ok. So this comic strip represents a typical Saturday night during the ages of sixteen to eighteen, always a Saturday because on a Friday I didn't drink because I played football on a Saturday and I still do so it kind of affects my weekend drinking. On a Saturday night my mum and dad were married but they didn't live together, so my mum would go and stay with my dad on a Saturday night which was thumbs up from me and my brothers because it meant we had the house to ourselves for the whole night. So typically everyone would head round to mine about nine o'clock with their carry outs, and we would sit and drink for a couple of hours, have a laugh, play music, get ready for the big night ahead that we always looked forward to during the week. And the big night out was The Vault ashamedly. We would go there typically clench our fists because we got in with our fake ID's. And then order three Vodka Red Bulls and a pint glass to put them in, so we were walking about with a pint of Vodka Red Bull. And then we would listen to the music, quite often it was all about the music for me a lot of it still is. So we would dance and try and chat up girls, and try and pull and do that for a few of hours. And then get a taxi up the road stopping at a garage for some munchies usually, with no girl. On a Monday at school at that time we would all talk about it and say what a good laugh we had and reminisce over the weekend that we just had.

Friendship

Friendship

“It helps you relax, it’s a good chance to catch up with friends and socialise. It makes you more confident. It can make some people more friendly and more sociable.”

“It’s how we show our love, getting absolutely steaming and then looking after each other. It’s how we show our appreciation for each other.”

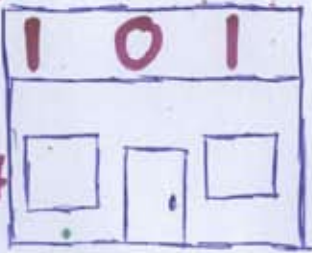
“If my friends were going out and I would, say I have got work the next day. And they are like, ‘just come out, just come out’ and you go, ‘ah, I’ll just forget about working, I’ll just deal with it tomorrow.’”

“I don’t see my friends as often as I did before because of the life changes and things, and my group of friends has sort of split up. But if I hadn’t seen a friend in ages we’d maybe meet up for drinks, maybe go to a wine bar or go out for lunch or go out for drinks at night. That’s sort of what we do if we’re going to catch up, well rather than go for a coffee or go shopping, you know, it’ll be, ‘lets go to the pub.’ Not to get drunk but just to chill out, usually with wine.”

“By the end of high school I knew everyone and was mates with everyone, but like second or third year, I barely knew anybody. So alcohol really does become a social aspect and you really start knowing people more because of that. And that is when all the shy people come out of their shells because they’ve had a wee bit alcohol, a wee bit of drink.”

6 Pm On a FRIDAY.

* You look oldest,
you hop in,
try and get
me a 70c.
I'll only drink half

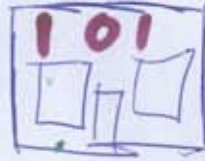


* Cool, man
make sure you
do.

* 2 17 year olds
attend a party

* Got it!

* Cool, let's
head to
the party!



SUCCESS!

7:30, AT THE PARTY

* I thought you were
only having half...

* Sure, but the
only parties
just started!



* I feel Horrible
Man!

* Well, I told
you not to
have the whole
thing

* Yeah, but
it was sittin
there - so why not



xx
HA HA!
WHITEY!

9:00 At the Party

THE END

No 10 B Male 16-18 Present

Male 16-18.

Storyline The Present Buying a seventy, heading to the party.....being sick.

That's like the first page that's like two seventeen year olds, the purple guy is the main character and the wee green's his best pal. And it's six o'clock so purple guy says you look older will you just pop in and get me a Seventy which is a bit much for him around about that point, but he's like I'm only drink half of it. His pal's like cool make sure you do because like don't want you being sick. So he walks in. Fifteen minutes later walks in and gets it and cool lets head to the party, they get there at half seven and the party's just starting. These are like there's a lot of people at the party obviously, I'm not like a sad person, they represent a mass, so then they are sitting there and the green guy walks over and his pal is like half way down his Seventy and he's like I thought you were only having half of it. It is more the case that it's been sitting there, I've had half of it and I'm drunk but it's lying there and I'm drunk so I'm going to have more of this, there is that and then its nine o'clock and he's had all his Seventy which was a bad idea because now he's being sick and the green pal's kind of consoling him but also being like ah yeah I told you so, get to and the mass, they're there going wahay and that's the end.



Male 25-30

The Storyline: The Past 16-18. Not drinking that much but smoking a lot of cannabis.....

16-18, so just around the time of leaving school, secondary school. I didn't actually drink that much, I was smoking a lot of cannabis at the time with my friends and certainly the younger part of 16s would just be at each other's house or parents' house whatever, smoking some weed, relaxing and giggling, playing computer games, watching TV, play fighting, just being kids really. And towards the later end of the years discovered the rave scene, the alternative nightclub, that turned into the more heavy drugs and loved to go out and dance. Normally kept to about once a month or something, but it got messy, you know, you could easily be gone the whole weekend. You know, when it did come on, you'd stay out for the whole weekend. Indoor, outdoor, wherever, that's as far as I got. But there was still a lot of fishing and other activities taking place in that as well.

Did you prefer to go out and take drugs to drinking alcohol?

Yeah. I'd mix the 2 in hand but I think when I was high, there wasn't really much of a need to drink or much really to smoke at the same time. It was, that was enough for me. And actually at some point I did actually knock it all on the head and just go out to the same scene where everybody was still constantly taking drugs and I just drank, or majority stayed sober.

Gender

Gender

“If I was in a relationship and with my partner, yeah, I wouldn’t want to be drunk in front of him or be out of control or anything. I wouldn’t want to embarrass him by my behaviour by being drunk or anything like that, whereas I don’t think men would care. They would expect you to pick them up at the end of the night and make sure they got home ok.”

“Aye, men can’t express to their friends the way they’re feeling or anything. But I think the thing is as well, take my brother for example, if he has a drink at night and he’s rough the next day he knows his wife’s there to get up with the kids, he doesn’t have to deal with it. She has a drink and she’s rough, she has got to get up with the kids so she would think well I don’t really want to do that.”

“The girls I know they will drink more than the guys right now, because they’re still like on the kind of easing off if you know what I mean, where the guys have eased off drink.”

“Like some of them are still drinking as much as they were when they were seventeen because they can get away with it, because they’re girls and girls will get looked after more than guys. If I saw a young girl I would try to make sure she’s alright.”

“See the thing again about don’t leave your drink down, see if it’s a house party and stuff if a guy’s like ‘Oh I will go and get you a drink’, make sure you see the drink being made, even though you can see the bar staff doing it or if you are in some room of a house party. If you went back to someone’s house after a night out just make sure you can see him pour the drink or see someone pour the drink, so you know that they’re not putting something more into it or putting a lot more alcohol into it than you want.”

"THE EMPTY" OF GRUMPY OLD MEN '55

by Gary

SET THE SCENE:
KILMARNOCK,
FRIDAY, c.2009

HERE, YOU GOING
TO SAVE DAVE'S PARTY
ON SATURDAY?

Gary

Steve

ME, I'M PRETTY
EXCITED FOR
IT! HOPE
TAMSON DOESN'T
KICK OFF
AGAIN
BUT...

Gary

AGED 25

Steve

AGED 25



HOWS
THE
WEANS?

LATER THAT
DAY...
IT'S OFFY

YOU GOT
THE DRINK
AYE?

AYE WE'RE
SORTED!



EVEN LATER...
WHAT DID YE
GET?
IS LAUS 2 LITRE
OF VODKA, BE
OR SOME AND
SOME GN.

JEEZ



GID.

THE
WIFE?

10.30pm
APPROX.

TIFFAL ANGRY
DRUNK

THAT ALL
WENT A BIT
MAD...

AYE, AYE
IT DID.

BORED.

AYE,
GID.

BORED

AYE,
GID.



BLANK SPACE.

Male 16 -18

The storyline: The Present. The night begins with buying a bottle of vodka and a bottle of Sours + some Gin from the office...s...

Right. I'll start with the sixteen seventeen year old one. Here's me and my pal walking home from school and I'm saying to him 'here, are you going to Save Dave's on Saturday. And he's saying 'aye I'm pretty excited for it, I hope Steve doesn't kick off again but'. And then we go to later that day because you just miss stuff out when you are doing a **Comic strip**. 'You got the drink, aye?' and he goes 'aye we'll sort it when we're out the office'. Then even later we are walking there, these are street lights, and I'm saying to him 'so what did you get?' and he says 'fifteen can, two litre of Vodka, bottle of Sours and some Gin' and I say 'jeese'. And then about ten thirty that night it's all went a bit wrong because Steve has kicked off, he's smashing windows and stuff just typical angry drunk and you thought the Hulk just got invited. And I'm saying 'that all went a bit mad' and he is saying 'aye, it did' because we've got black eyes and cuts and stuff.

The Future age 25-30. (How's the weans.....)

And here's us when we're twenty five and life's went wrong for us sitting at a pub. And I'm going, no I'm not saying nothing, I'm saying there's Gary age twenty five, there's Steve age twenty five and I'm saying 'how's the weans?' he says 'good', and I go 'the wife', he goes 'aye good' and I go 'aye good' because that's all that happens when you are twenty five you just sit in the pub and talk.

So less fun when you're that age then?

Aye there's just less excitement I think when you go on nights out and stuff.

IN THE CLUB!

12 am - 3 am.

- Go straight to bar.
- More Shots.



Female 16-18

No 30 H Female pre dr

Storyline: The Present. Pre drinks and you go straight to the bar when you get to the club.....

We said, like girls usually get together for Pre-drinks before we go out, just to get ready and the usually girly stuff.

So you've got pre drinks.

That's usually like we said we'd normally phone a taxi to go into town between half ten to eleven, and then we would head to a bar. If I go to a bar before I go out we usually get pitchers or shots we don't just sit and have drink after drink because we just don't because there is nothing to do in a bar, so we just do shots or pitchers just quickly to get more drunk and then we would go to the club. And we would go, as soon as we're in we would go straight to the bar to get more drunk and then once you're drunk enough you dance.

And I usually lose everybody then

And then by that time if you're drunk enough you chat up guys and stuff that you are not doing in the bar, because you are still trying to get drunk.

You're already drunk really before you go to the club, but you go and get more drunk when you get into the club.

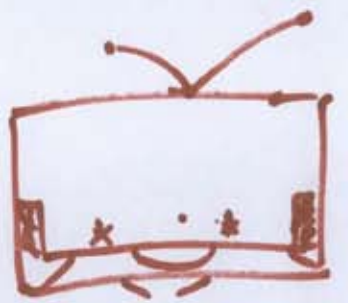
"To The PUB →"

"06/18"

Tha Club

11/12

• Casual Pint •



• fecky
• Pint

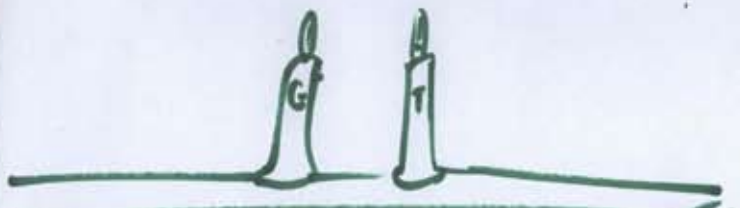
• Plan of the night

• "Pill poppin"

• Single + minglin

"Chattin to girls"

- Spirits
- few drinks at five
- break away from crowd



"Where We going?"



"Pull"



BOYS 16 - 18

Female 16-18 Drawing about Guys.

Storyline: Guys at 16-18. Guys don't pre-drink, they go to the pub later moving to the club ...

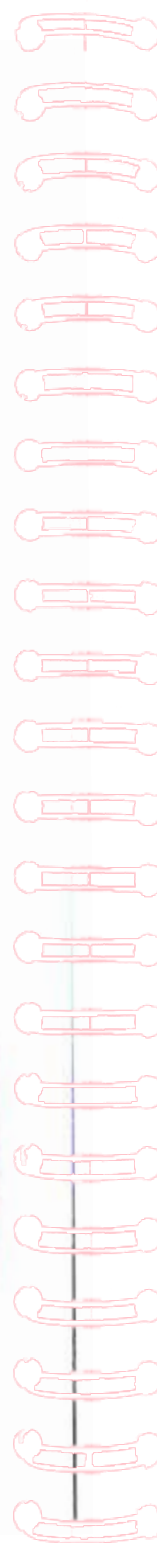
We are going to look at guys between the age of 16-18?

First of all we thought most guys don't usually meet for pre-drinks at each other's houses they go to the pub, because it's quite sociable for a guy to go to the pub as well because maybe they're watching football or the rugby. Whereas, I don't know, maybe a lot of girls are more inclined to go to each other's house and chat rather than go to the pub, we have a wee this is between six and eight o'clock at night it depends on how early or late, and this is our wee quote for this time of night and it's 'where are we going?'. And it is usually like when the football and they're trying to plan the night and it is casual right now, quite relaxed and they're usually drinking beers.

Move on to the club after that and it gets changed from drinking like a casual pint to onto spirits, thinking its more about trying to pull or, and guys are more like they kind of break away from one another, I think. This guy's alone at the minute trying to pull what looks like a Hoover [laughs].

Are they love hearts in his eyes there?

Yes they are. I don't think its love though [laughs]. And I think there's probably maybe some drug taking more likely to happen. Guys are a bit more fearless I think.



H33 Girls drawings on Guy getting chucked out

Female 16-18 Drawings about Guys.*

Storyline: Guys 16-18. Later in the evening. He is in the club and gets kicked out....

Our next one he is at the club he has been kicked out, this is an optional part of the night. He has been kicked out here, he's quite rowdy like he wants a fight and things like that. It is not always true of course, but, it's about 2:00am. He's been kicked out unfortunately

The next bit is he's been kicked out, he's alone, lost all his friends, he's been drinking and he is wanting a Kebab. He is having a wee munch alone, I would say that is probably about three, half past two three.

Then he's just getting a taxi home, but he's a wee bit chunder

But he's alone, he's still alone and what we thought was, through the whole night the most sociable night for a guy perhaps would be at the pub beforehand. And from then on it's, you're kind of single and ready to mingle

You watch groups of guys going about if you are out and you kinda see like the patterns like watch them. And you see guys trying to like, that are in a club just

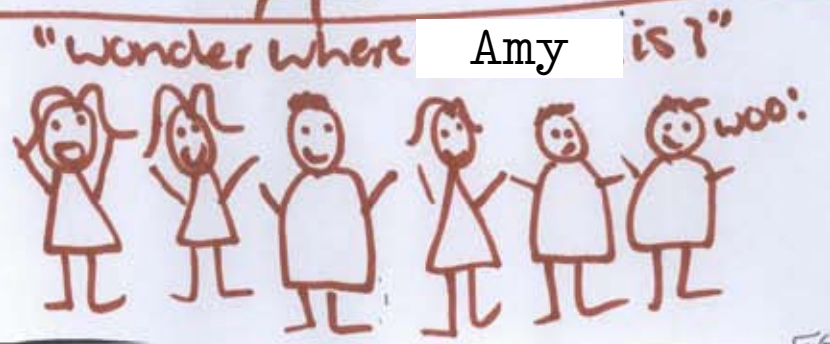
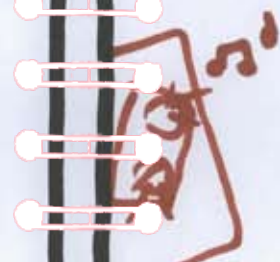
pecifically trying to pull, and you see people getting icked out.

The girls predrinking and getting ready.
"Aww ooh on the ~~part~~ full tonight" Amy

Boys drinking and getting stoned.
"this weeds heavy good" "wonder when the girls are getting here"

Page 1 of the girls
17-18

Page 1 of the boys
17-18



No 12 C Female 16-18 Present

Female 16-18

Storyline: The Present. Pre Drinking at home with the boys, and later loosing Amy.....

Ok. This is us pre-drinking together, the girls, and getting ready and we've done the boys as well and that's us meant to be out but we didn't finish it

Have you lost someone as well?

Yes, we lost Amy surprisingly

Yeah, we lost Amy.

Why did you lose me? When have you ever lost me?

When you're on the pull

I always lose you That time in the Box I could not find you for like an hour

Oh yeah

Someone shouts out on the pull tonight, Amy?

And then a boy saying, this weed's heavy good.

So this isn't in a bar then?

No this is us getting ready, drinking before we go out.

good drawing!

Nights out

Nights out

"I think also the fact that, for example, (...) if you start getting ready at 7pm probably is you're meeting people by 9pm. So from 9 o'clock to 3am you spend a full night socialising and meeting people rather than if like you go to the cinemas for two hours, you've got dressed for like such a short space of time."

"I think the bad thing about house parties as well if you going to buy from the off license you are not going to buy one can. You are going to buy a pack and you are probably going to finish that pack because it's there, if you know what I mean."

"In your younger years, yes, you know, there is a kind of peer pressure thing that's going round that everyone wants to be at the same level and a typical example of that is if you come to a party late you've got to catch up, which normally ends in dire consequences for that person."

"I think, see if you're sober and you're out, I sometimes don't mind it and sometimes I'll be like 'this is grand, so much fun, everyone else is absolutely smashed', but then there's some nights I'll be like 'oh my god, I'm so bored, every little thing's annoying me'. It just again depends on what mood

you're in and what's going on around you. Like the whole thing about having to make an effort, you kind of have to think about 'oh, ok forget about it, let's just dance', if some little thing annoys you whereas if you're drunk everything's just like 'ooh', you like don't notice it."

"You have an awful hangover, headache, puking, bleurgh. You always feel like bloated and ugly and feel like crap the next day. Um, and the night before you can get emotionally drunk and just flood like tears all night, have a crap night and crying in the toilets, all that crap."

"Embarrassed about what you've said as well. Like if you've phoned someone or spoke to someone face to face. And you don't know what you said, that's kind of embarrassing as well."

"On Facebook that's all I see, like 'oh I'm so hungover', this and that. Everyone is quick to post 'rough' on a Sunday morning."



MÖTLEY CRUE

I wonder if I'll pull tonight



Can't wait to get pissed

She sounds like me



House, 7.30pm. Jack and Jill pre drinking

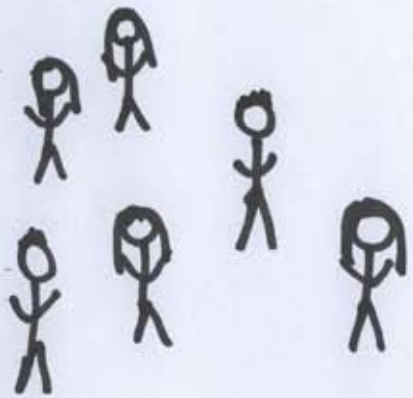
Taxi, 9.00pm Taxi en-route to club.

Wow! I'm feeling well tipsy



God, I wish they would shut it!!

In club, 9.30pm Jack + Jill in the club



BAR

What we'll do, this is quite
disgusting, but we'll get a
big bowl and fill it with
vodka and we'll put diluting
juice in and water and ice
and everyone gets a straw
and drinks it before we go out.

FALKIRK. (1998) 19:00



I'VE HAD A BOTTLE
OF BUKKIE, 10 HORN,
AND A BOTTLE OF MID
AND I'M NO EVEN
TOUCHED YET!!!

HOW MUCH
HAVE YOU HAD
TO DRINK?



NOT TONIGHT
SON, I CAN
SMELL THE
DRINK ON
YOU FROM
HERE!

NO, I'VE NO!

Male 25- 30

Storyline: The Past 16-18 Being refused entry by bouncer, returning home....

This is the queue to get into Cleo's under eighteens. Me and my mates still joke about it like everyone used to turn up and be like how much have you had to drink, how much have you had? And it's always something like I've had a lot of Bucky, a bottle of Mad Dog and ten bottle of Hooch and I'm not even touched yet, already bragging. We still reminisce fondly about that and the outcome of that was always if you got to go in you always smell of drink and sent you packing. So this is always my over riding memory of not getting into the under.

And what happened if you didn't get in?

If you didn't get in, you didn't get in, traipse home.

Alone or did you all go back somewhere?

No there was no camaraderie, if you didn't get in that was you. So if everyone else got in then you just had to go home and sneak past your parents and hopefully they didn't smell drink off you, sneak upstairs and say I didn't feel well.



Health

Health

“I’m more aware of the health aspects as well now. When I was 18 I was invincible and at 28, I’m not invincible and I know that now.”

“Mainly health, it could be anything from hangovers to beer bellies, anti-social behaviour, the way people act towards us and the way we act towards other people, and that includes poor judgement to making bad decisions.”

“That could stop people drinking I think, groups like this and I think you get taught just briefly at school about drugs but nobody tells you how bad alcohol is and it kills more people in Britain than drugs. So they need to get it across to school kids how bad it is.”

Is drinking safer or are drugs safer?

“I think smoking green is safer.”

Why’s that?

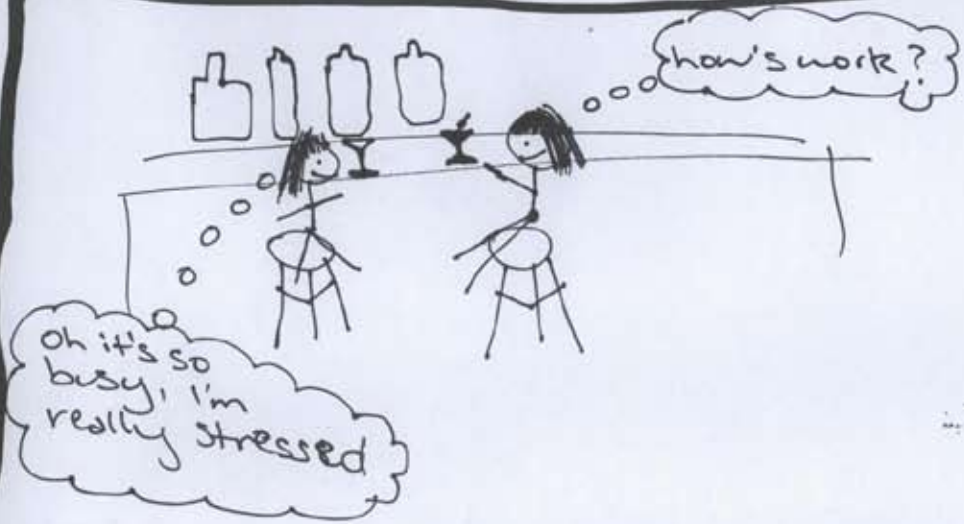
“Because you’re sitting in your house and you’re not going to start fighting. If they legalised cannabis then you know what I mean you wouldn’t see any.”

You wouldn’t see any what?

“There’d be less fighting.

There wouldn’t be but, if every **** just smoked green man, there’d be no fighting.”

Cocktail Bar



Being Stressed, meeting up with friend . . .

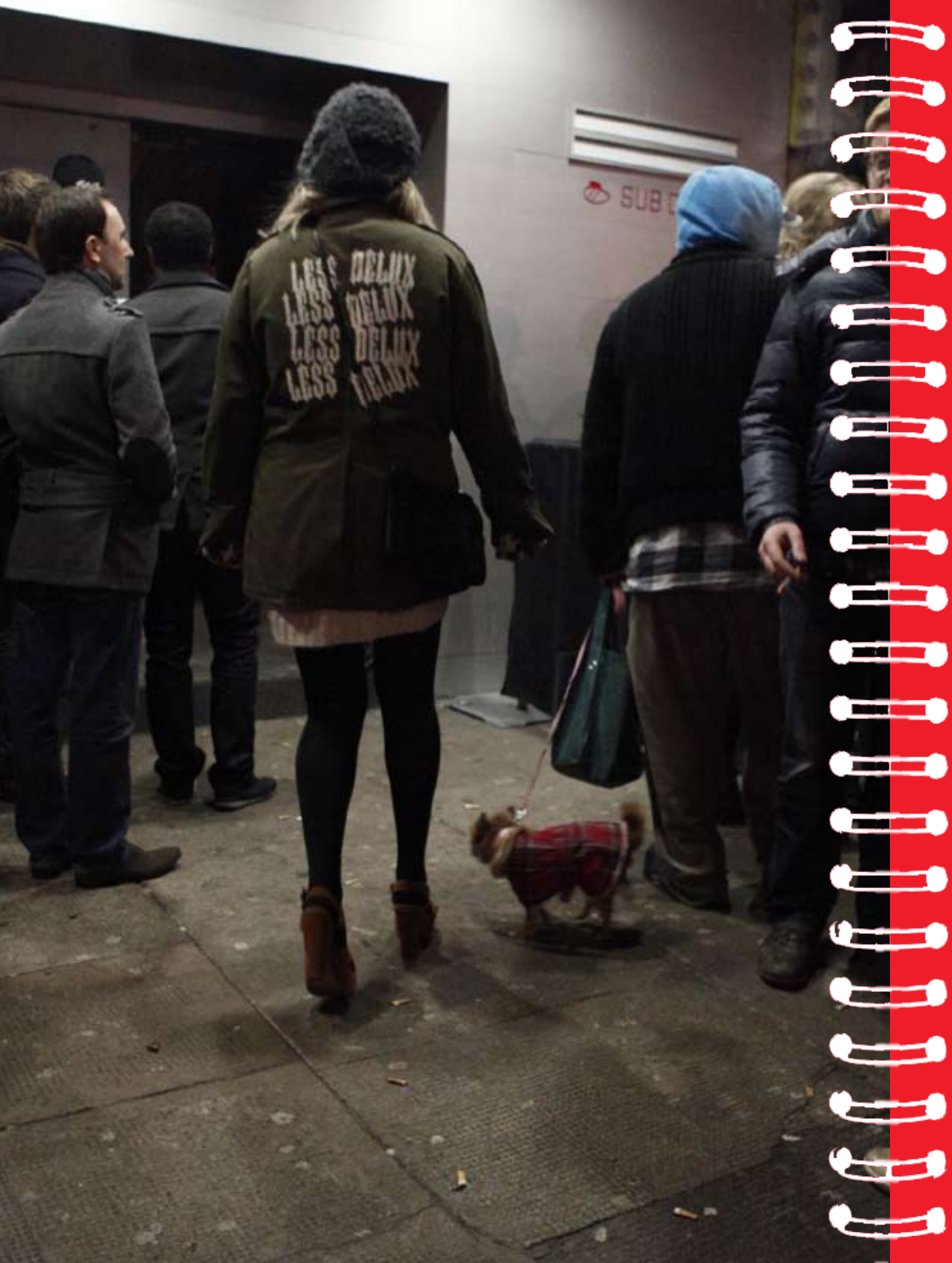
Just meeting up with a friend and having a drink or two, not getting drunk

One's saying 'how's work?', another one saying 'its so busy! STRESSED!'

Friday Night, ^{Quiet} Night In



And then, this is like a quiet night in, sharing a bottle of wine over dinner, and this is one of them saying, 'I'm just having one glass.'



Parents

Parents

“Your home’s a controlled environment when you’re young from whatever, 16 or under. So either you’ve got to sneak out and do it against their will or you do it with their permission. And my experience was, you know, having a bottle of wine, my mum would give me half a glass or my dad or whatever, and just take it from there. And then you know watching a movie, you’d be given a can of lager but it was all quite controlled and you know, it wasn’t. It was just sitting down having a drink, it wasn’t a party atmosphere or anything so it was quite tame. I think you’ve got to introduce your kids to alcohol and I think my folks had their theory that they would like to be in control of that rather than growing up and letting me discover it for myself.”

“My mum and dad don’t drink so drink was never about my house and I don’t know if it was one of the reasons why I just, when I went out that first time I got so drunk. But I know people whose mum and dads let them have a beer when they were watching the football or whatever and they’re usually the ones that take alcohol a bit better, like they don’t go out and get absolutely steaming. So I think maybe the attitude your parents have, can change it a bit, especially when you’re a teenager, if your mum and dad are hard line against alcohol you will want to go out and get drunk just to rebel.”


“You want your child to fit in though. I mean my sister has just moved school, my mum’s saying ‘if I don’t let her go out with her friends she won’t make friends’. But then the people she’s hanging out with, they are drinking and she doesn’t drink then she won’t have any friends any way, so either way you want your child to be happy and stuff. Obviously it’s dangerous but if that makes them have friends and hang about with friends then where’s the line, where do you stop it, stop it at all so they don’t have any friends or let them go out and get like that? You can’t win. It’s hard.”


“My mum and dad have a better social life than I do. Like they have parties and get drunk and stay up to all hours in the morning so I don’t think that necessarily you’re going to change as you get older. Maybe more responsible and you might understand what you’re doing and putting it into your body, make you think a bit more, but I don’t necessarily think you are going to hit 10 o’clock at night and think right time for my bed, I need to go home, I’ve got work on Monday.”

16-18

Shop where I worked. Drink easily available.



 - Mum sad that I'm drinking. Lots of arguing + shouting.

 - Missing my dad, drinking to rebel, smoking. Friends all doing the same. Missed my brother + sister.

No35 i female 25 -30 booze from the newsagents

Female 25-30

Storyline: The past 16-18. Working in newsagents with unending amounts of alcohol.....

I used to work in a newsagent's when I was sixteen and obviously there was unending amounts of alcohol that we could get access to without having to get someone to buy it for us. So me and my friends used to get our drink from there and we would go and hang about the park on a Saturday night and get really, really drunk, and then try and sneak home without my mum seeing me although she mostly always did. My brother and sister had moved away at the time so I kind of, and my dad had just died so I felt quite lost. I just felt quite angry at the time as well and even though I knew drinking was bad I would drink to real excess and I think it was a way of rebelling. There's nothing else to do where we live there was absolutely nothing on, no Youth Clubs. I mean, when I say there was a swing park it had a frame with no swings, and a shoot. If it's cold and that as well you're out drunk you don't notice, you don't care.

I used to argue with my mum quite a lot at that time as well, until we kind of reached a compromise where she said that if she would let me sit in the house and have a drink with my friends, and as long as she was there to kind of supervise us and made sure that we only drank what she was giving us. Which did make things well not other things, but it did make my relationship with her a bit better.

What is that feeling before you go out for the night out?

Anticipation, excitement, there's a direct intention to get drunk, you will achieve that regardless of whether it's going well or not, so it's a direct link between you getting ready to get drunk, so why you put on that nice dress and all your make-up and whatever you do, why you do that when at the end of the night it's going to be all over your face, and you're going to be eating chips and cheese, even though you went to the gym, like two gym classes the day before it's there's no correlation between the start and the end. And then yes, I suppose the picture I was drawing was, it was intimate, it was genuine, it was the focus of the night had changed relationships, to people, to conversation, and alcohol was an addition, not the focus.

Risks

Risks

“I don’t let it worry me too much. I just go out and enjoy myself. I wouldn’t wait on a taxi myself or anything, I always make sure I’m with friends, but it’s not at the forefront of my mind on the night out that I have to look after myself and be careful.”

“I don’t like to leave my drink, so I would rather leave a glass of water than a drink because I know I can always get another glass of water. One time I think I got my drink spiked and (...) you know that way I hadn’t left it down so I don’t know how, but no, I know when to stop.”

“I don’t really like being with boys when they’re drunk because they just get really angry and argue with each other.”



16-18. INVINGIBLE.

25-30. OLDER + WISER?



No1 Invincible Female 25-30

Female 25-30

The storyline: The Past 16- 18. Invincibility and pushing your limits to see how much fun you can have.....

It was just that feeling of invincibility, it's usually busy, bustling, loud... You're comfortable with the fact that you don't know a lot of people actually, you want, that you want to actually you want to go and talk and do random chat, and be like 'oh my god, I just met this person' and do that, and make those sort of completely meaningless sort of friendships on a night out, and just letting loose and not caring. You get to that point where you don't care how much you've drunk, you don't care what you're dancing like, it's just all about, it's about pushing yourself, it's about probably pushing your limits to see, like how much fun you can have, and then talking about it the next day, it's like a licence just to be a bit mad.

You'll drink until you've passed out, and you'll be a bit cheekier, you'll be a bit more open with stuff that you'd maybe keep private or whatever, or not be able to pick up on social signals so well, so won't be able to read a mood because you're completely in your own little zone.

Yes, and the emphasis is on fun, fun, fun, whether it's actual, real genuine fun, is beside the point it's about I'm having fun and I'm looking like I'm having fun.



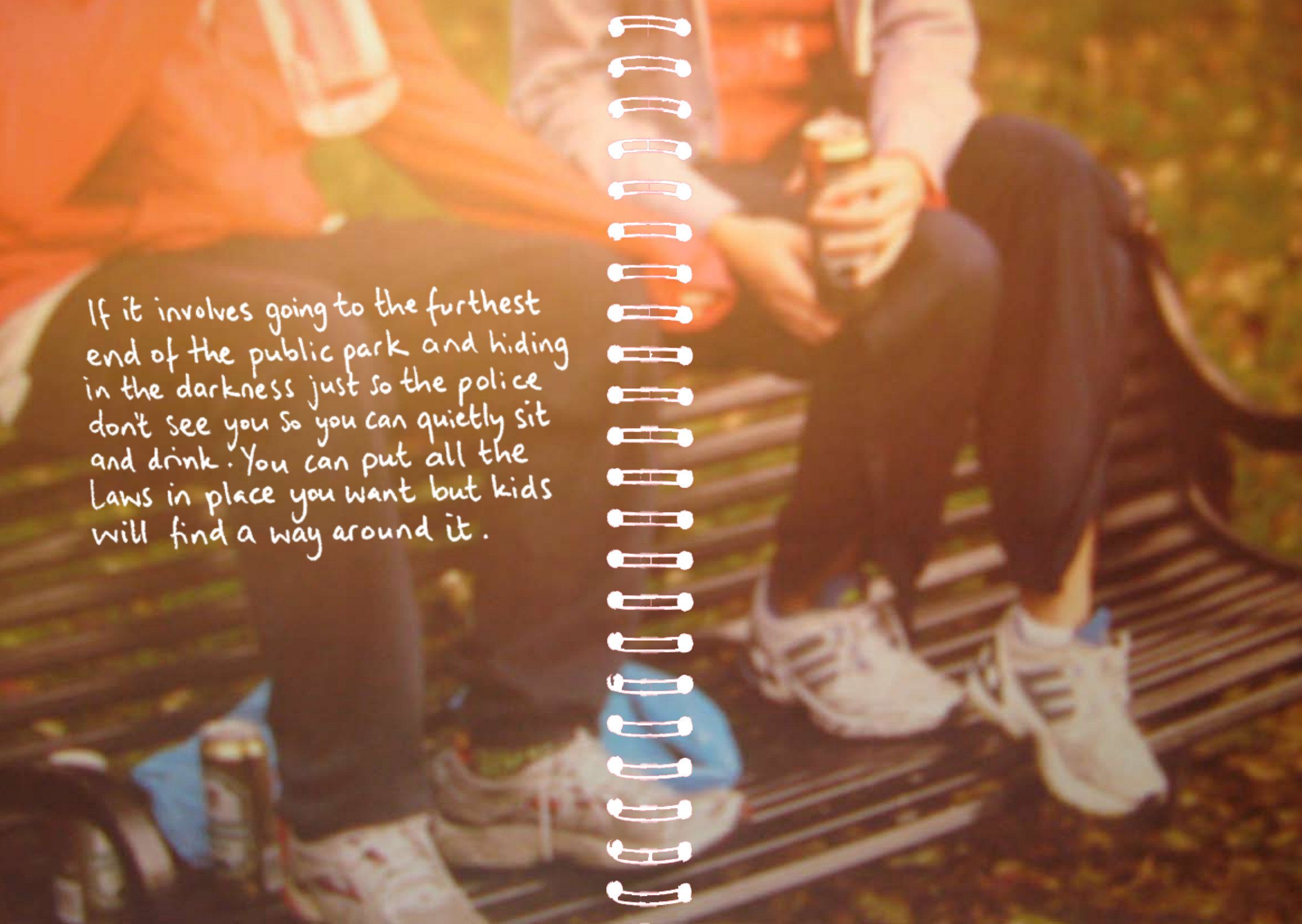
Storyline Altercations in Glasgow

Another time when the happy slapping craze was going around again, a big gang of youths walking through Glasgow decided to pick on myself and my mates and ended up in hospital with that one as well. But I never it's not nice at the time but I guess in a sense I just feel as if that's part and parcel of growing up in Glasgow and it never stops me from going out again, it never instils any fear in me it's just these things happen really.

Does it diminish as you get older, are you less likely to be, getting into trouble?

I don't know, I think you become more streetwise perhaps and you know how to avoid it better, because you still do see trouble but you know the hotspots in Glasgow that you want to avoid. And I think as you get older you go to places perhaps that are a bit more respectable and you are less likely to come across people that are out to fight or cause aggro.





If it involves going to the furthest end of the public park and hiding in the darkness just so the police don't see you so you can quietly sit and drink. You can put all the laws in place you want but kids will find a way around it.

I just go out and
enjoy myself. I
wouldn't wait on
a taxi myself or
anything —
I always make
sure I'm with
friends, but it's
not at the fore-front
of my mind on the
night out that I
have to look out
for myself and be careful.

Scottish culture

Scottish Culture

“People are ignorant towards it, because it’s socially acceptable, because you go to a Christening or you go to a funeral and it’s our culture. At 12 o’clock it’s not even about the baby being christened it’s just ‘I’m going to go and get drunk.’”

“There is a guy who has turned up to my work and he is a diehard Rangers fan. And just every Rangers-Celtic game it’s absolutely normal that he will turn up steaming. And honestly, it’s allowed it is actually acceptable.”

“Being a backpacker that’s all everyone does is drink. Australians, they’d actually quite a big culture, they drink quite a lot by the way. Just as bad as here.”

“Fair enough it’s lower in other countries, but if you lowered it here I don’t think people can be trusted to be allowed to go out and drink at like the age of 15/16. Because they’ll just take advantage of it, whereas like he was saying, in France and stuff they have been brought up that way and they are not going to go out and just get drunk.”

“I don’t know what it’s like in your circles, if you find that everyone talks about drink. In my life, in my work, in my social life, going to the local shop, everybody is talking about drinking.”

“It’s Saturday night, I’ve worked hard all week so I’m going to have a glass of wine...”

NO 20 C Male 25-30 the present on the coach

Male 25- 30

Storyline: The Present. Getting Booze from the Corner Shop, the goal is still to get wasted...

We all tend to, well me and all my mates go round friends house and tend to drink in front of the telly in the living room, and normally the first thing we do when we get to my mates is go to the corner shop and get some more booze. But one of my other mates actually owns a corner shop and always turns up quite late with his own carry- out.

You were asking and not much has changed between then and now for a lot of my friends for the fact that the goal is still to drink loads and get wasted, and he often turns up with a bottle of Vodka and Tequila and he'll say right we need that bottle of Vodka finished before we leave. And there is quite a few of us there and so it is not as excessive as it could be, but not everyone takes part and on some of the wilder nights that has been a problem. And the problem is because you are out so late it sets that kind of challenge. It's almost kind of like, you almost kind of rise to it and drink a ridiculous amount. They're already on spirits and beers before he's arrived and then they start going daft with it.

Getting older

Getting Older

“I think clubbing, like once you hit 23 you can’t be seen in a club ever again (laughs). It’s just, you don’t want to be that creepy older guy in a club, do you know what I mean? You need to go because you’ve only got like 5 years to do it.”

“The wee voice in your head is no longer saying ‘you have to fit in’. I am probably more secure in myself as a person and in my relationships with my friends that I don’t have to please them. I can, if I want to, go home and I don’t care what they think.”

“I like knowing that I’ve experienced it all like personally now. There is some stuff that I’ve done and it’s like I’ll never do that again. But I feel like until you actually do it you are not really going to know and you will always have that wonder, like ‘oh, what if whenever I was young if I’d have tried that I would have known’. And I’m glad that I have tried it and experienced it all for myself.”

“I think as you get older you think more about the consequences as well, when you are younger you think you are invincible and you can drink for three days in a row and still make work, college or whatever. But now we’re older with jobs and things you can’t be drunk all the time, you have got to get up and go to work and whatnot.”

“Nowadays I can see my Saturday nights sitting in just watching X Factor or Britain’s Got Talent or something, whereas before I was in the pub every Saturday night. And I think, because the two of us, like myself and my fiancé, the two of us are quite happy doing that. I think, I couldn’t actually nail down an actual point where I said, ‘right, I’m not going to go to the pub anymore, I’m just going to stay in on Saturday nights’. I think it just kind of happened naturally with us because we’ve really got things to pay and we need to be careful with our money and things like that.”

“I used to go through various alcohol binge drinking and the same with other substances. And only after a while, when I was just sick of hangovers or feeling rotten the next day and you know, you’d kind of wipe off days of your life with a hangover or whatever. I just thought yeah, there’s a bit more to what I want to be getting out of life than bingeing on a Friday, then not being able to do anything on a Saturday or Sunday and all of a sudden, you know, you’re back into work. And all of a sudden you realise you’re 3 or 4 years older and I made that personal choice that that’s not how I want to be living my life.”

25-30.

SAT NIGHT!!

Sat night at home...
with a wee wine watching
a movie, feel relaxed, my
wine is nice and refreshing




Claire

Matt

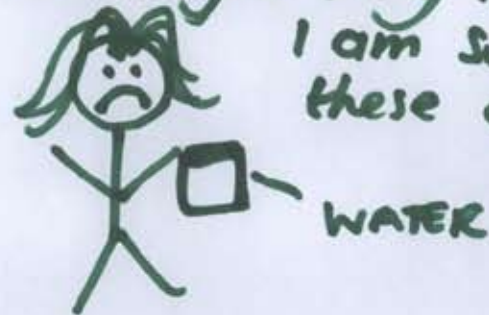
Maybe need
to buy
smaller glass....

Wonder how my mum is, hope
she is ok....

 Phone rings
that will be
mum drunk, don't
answer....


SUNDAY MORNING!!

Why did I have that wine
last night, my head hurts,
I am such a lightweight
these days.....



Get up and do
the housework, wish
I had more energy today.



 Need to walk Zack for
some fresh air.

The Trolley full of booze

In a shop not far from here, better get a trolley for booze because we can just buy as much as we can. And there's me thinking six crates and how many bottles can I get, and then much later on back at the party there is me sitting in my wee recliner chair absolutely steaming. And I'm asking if there is anymore booze because I'm drunk and just want to drink it all and I'm asking my mate if the shops are still open because it's probably only half eight by that point.

A lifetime away

I will only need a basket for my booze because I've settled down and I'll have a mortgage and a motor to pay off and probably a wean by that point but hopefully not, and I will say I'm just going to get a crate and a bottle of something. I know that says half ten but I will probably have been in my bed since half eight.



No 13 C Male 16-18 Getting a jump in

Male 16-18

The Storyline: The Present. Getting a jump in to get MWI.....

Two boys decide to get a booze so they go to get a jump in at the shops, getting mad with it with their pals.

One of the boys is mad with it and he sees a lassie. And then he wakes up in the morning with her lying next to him and then all his pals are slagging him.

What does getting the jump in mean?

If you're no eighteen you canny go into shops then someone goes in for you

Aye, When you get them to go into the shop for you

They're always tapping a pound off you when you ask them to get you your booze

There's always a supey in it for them
A super lager

There's 50p for you or a drink

Some randomers, like women, who you don't think they'll get it, get it.

No 5 D male 16-18

Male 16-18

Storyline: The Future 25-30. Becoming an alky, living on the streets

He drank his house away
Then the wee guy gets the jail

Right, and why does he end up in jail?

Because he's been causing trouble

Is it common for people to end up homeless because of alcohol?

Aye

It's the way forward. It's the way forward in life, being homeless *

Off Sales

WESTERN UNION
MONEY TRANSFER

IF YOU'RE NO 18
YOU CANNAE GO
IN TO SHOPS
THEN SOMEONE
GOES IN FOR YOU



WESTERN UNION
MONEY TRANSFER
Send money worldwide from here

NO SMOKING

Open

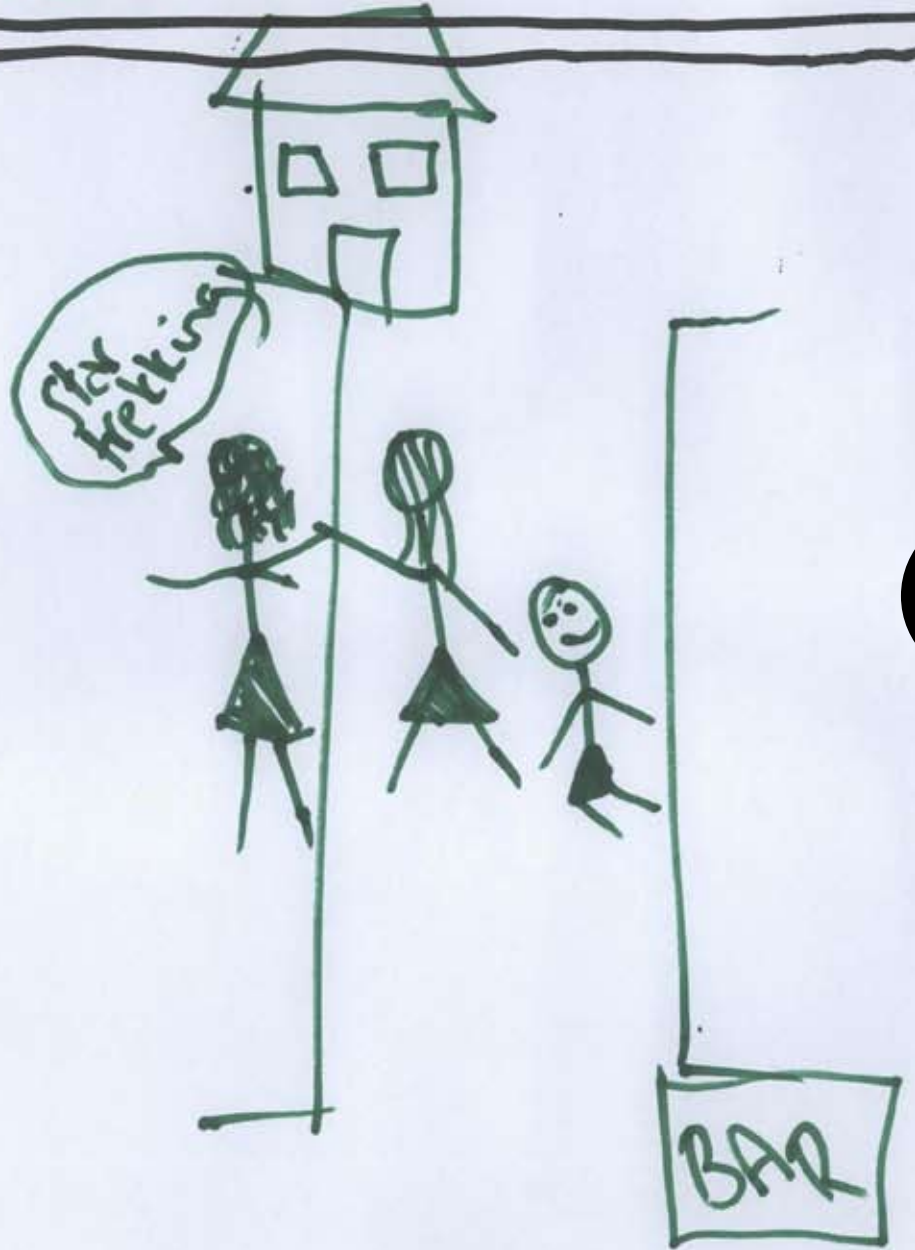
VISA
MasterCard
American Express

Push

Lebara
International calls from
5 10

25 - 30

later ...



No 17 C Female 25-30 the present drinking

Female 25-30

Storyline: The Present (A nice night) out at a bar but still getting drunk.....

So, here is our before part of it. Which is just a nice night out and it's in a nice bar, good for drinking wine and chatting and stuff. I think the point we're trying to make is, just because we're older doesn't mean we don't get drunk. Which then becomes later on when one of our good friends had to carry both of us up the road singing, and me having jelly legs.

Ok

Although we have a different type of night out sometimes we can get worse for wear.

It looks the same as what it looked like at 16 - 18, come the end of it. * . . . *

Weekly Drinks Diary

Weekly Drinks Diary

A Drinks Diary is a personal record of your alcohol consumption over a weekly period.

This drinks diary has been designed to encourage you to think more about alcohol use, from a personal viewpoint. We hope it will help you to think about how you relate to alcohol and whether it is good for your wellbeing.

Simply tear out the drinks diary and fill in each of the sections over the course of a week. There is space for you to describe where you were drinking, what you were drinking, your feelings beforehand, and the effects that the alcohol had. After you've filled it in, what are your thoughts? What else might you spend the same money on? How else could you socialise with your friends? You may want to ask what your friends think.

Feel free to copy, email, distribute and use as you wish.

MY WEEKLY DRINKS DIARY

DAY	LOCATION DRINKING WITH WHO, WHEN, WHERE AT HOME, CLOUB, BAR, HOUSE, FRIENDS...	NUMBER + TYPE OF DRINK CONSUMED, 9/16/5 PINTS OF BEER, CIDER, GLASSES OF WINE, COCKTAILS, SPIRITS...	UNITS	COST £	FEELINGS BEFORE GOING DRINKING EXCITED, TIRED, HAPPY, SAD, CHILLED	EFFECTS OF DRINKING RELAXED, CHILLED, SAD, DEPRESSED, TIRED, HAPPY, DRUNK, SOBER
MONDAY						
TUESDAY						
WEDNESDAY						
THURSDAY						
FRIDAY						
THE WEEKEND						
SATURDAY						
SUNDAY						
END OF WEEK TOTAL	TOTAL NUMBER OF TIMES... RELAXED <input type="checkbox"/> MERRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOBER <input type="checkbox"/> DRUNK <input type="checkbox"/> HANGOVER <input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL NUMBER OF DRINKS CONSUMED <input type="checkbox"/> AM I SURPRISED, SHOCKED?	TOTAL UNITS <input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL COST £ <input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER THINGS I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO BUY...	MY END OF WEEK THOUGHTS ON... DIARY

TEAR OUT HERE

Daily Recommended Limits: Men 3-4 Units / Women 2-3 Units

UNITS:

MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED WEEKLY ALLOWANCE
 MEN - 21 UNITS *
 WOMEN - 14 UNITS *
 MEN - 3-4 UNITS PER DAY
 WOMEN - 2-3 UNITS PER DAY

1 PINT OF ORDINARY STRENGTH LAGER/BEER (3-4%) = 2 UNITS
 1 PINT OF PREMIUM STRENGTH LAGER/BEER (5%) = 3 UNITS
 1 PINT OF ORDINARY STRENGTH CIDER (5%) = 3 UNITS
 SMALL GLASS OF WINE (175ml) = 2 UNITS
 LARGE GLASS OF WINE (250ml) = 3 UNITS
 BOTTLE OF WINE (75cl) = 9 UNITS
 SPIRITS (40%) SMALL MEASURE (25ml) = 1 UNIT
 LARGE MEASURE (50ml) = 2 UNITS
 BOTTLE OF ACCOPOP (275ml) = 2 UNITS
 A CAN OF SUPER STRENGTH LAGER OR CIDER (9%) CAN BE UP TO 5 UNITS

MY Weekly DRINKS DIARY.

DAY	LOCATION DRINKING WITH WHO, WHEN, WHERE AT HOME, CLUB, BAR, HOUSE, FRIENDS...	NUMBER + TYPE OF DRINK CONSUMED, SHOTS PINTS OF BEER, CIDER, GLASSES OF WINE, COCKTAILS, SPIRITS...	UNITS	COST £	FEELINGS BEFORE GOING DRINKING EXCITED, TIRED, HAPPY, SAD, SMILED	EFFECTS OF DRINKING RELAXED, CHILDED, SAD, DEPRESSED, TIRED, HAPPY, DRUNK, SOBER
MONDAY						
TUESDAY						
WEDNESDAY						
THURSDAY						
FRIDAY						
THE WEEKEND						
SATURDAY						
SUNDAY						
END OF WEEK TOTAL	TOTAL NUMBER OF TIMES... RELAXED <input type="checkbox"/> MERRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOBER <input type="checkbox"/> DRUNK <input type="checkbox"/> HUNGOVER <input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL NUMBER OF DRINKS CONSUMED <input type="checkbox"/> AM I SURPRISED, SHOCKED?	TOTAL UNITS <input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL COST £ <input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER THINGS I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO BUY...	MY END OF WEEK THOUGHTS ON... DIARY

Daily Recommended Limits: Men 3-4 Units / Women 2-3 Units

TEAR OUT HERE

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MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED WEEKLY ALLOWANCE
MEN - 21 UNITS *
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- BOTTLE OF WINE (75cl) = 9 UNITS
- SPIRITS (40%) SMALL MEASURE (25ml) = 1 UNIT
- LARGE MEASURE (50ml) = 2 UNITS
- BOTTLE OF ACCOPOP (275ml) = 2 UNITS
- A CAN OF SUPER STRENGTH LAGER OR CIDER (4%) CAN BE UP TO 5 UNITS

Using visual materials

Using visual materials in the project

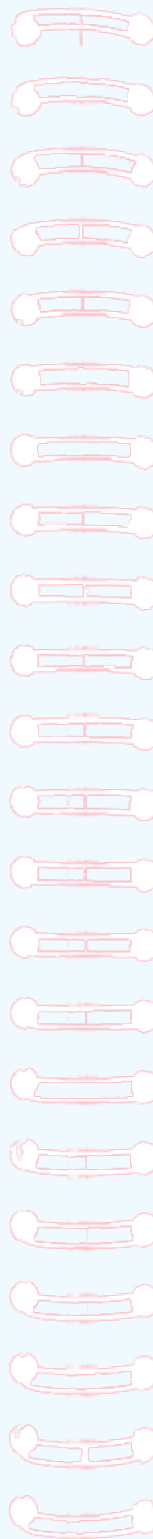
Having creative activity based focus groups worked in different ways. Each of the focus groups lasted for about two hours. The activities helped to break this time up into more manageable and varied chunks that kept participants (and us!) interested and focused.

Opting for a more activity based set up, however, did mean that a lot of preparation, time and effort had to go into designing and planning the focus groups. It involved generating lots of different ideas and we went ‘back to the drawing board’ on more than one occasion. We developed, tested out and gained feedback on the different ideas, so that we could work out what would be most effective in this particular focus group setting. We feel this set up was a key strength of the research. Some of the specific advantages are highlighted in the sections below.

Creating a relaxed atmosphere

The feeling was that the activities allowed individuals within the focus groups to feel more at ease, making the atmosphere more relaxed and less formal. We provided refreshments for participants, which were also valuable in establishing an informal and friendly environment. The intention was to make a more communicable space for participants, so that they felt comfortable in opening up and talking about alcohol use.

At the beginning of the focus group, working in smaller groups for the t-shirt activity was especially useful in easing participants into the group setting; exploring ideas, picking up a pen, drawing, writing, discussing, and then speaking to the group about their creations. They perhaps felt less ‘put on the spot’ because they had discussed ideas with each other before sharing them with the wider group.



Active participants

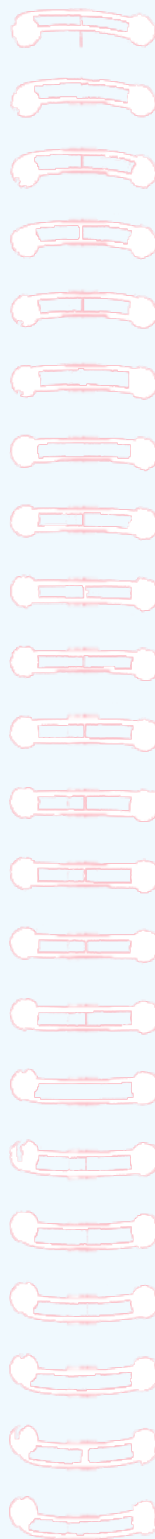
The activities were effective in stimulating and opening up further discussion amongst the groups. Participants asked each other questions, joked together and opened up about their narratives, based on what they had drawn. The set up meant that each participant was an active participant in the focus group, with everyone contributing and sharing his or her experiences and insights. The visual materials acted almost like a trigger and were particularly helpful when participants found it difficult to express themselves verbally. It enabled participants to share their experiences in a less pressurised way. For example, one of the older male participants, having drawn a comic strip, asked not to talk through his experience with the group. Without the visual materials, we would not have gained an insight into the way his relationship with alcohol had changed over time. Another group found it difficult to speak about their experiences with alcohol but easier to draw. Their drawings then opened up a dialogue for open discussion with the rest of the group.

Putting participants at ease about drawing activities

So that participants would know what to expect, they were told that the focus groups would be activity based beforehand. In some groups, a small number of participants expressed that they were not confident about their drawing capabilities. In the actual groups, we overcame this by being enthusiastic and reassuring them that we were not judging their drawing skills at all and that they could draw stickmen if that was easier. They were also given the option of doing a speech bubble instead, if they preferred, to capture a key quote of their alcohol experience instead of drawing the comic strip.

The use of visual materials within the analysis

The materials produced by participants provided another source of information, one that was authentic and raw. Being able to refer back to the visual materials was a great help throughout the analysis process. Having these materials opened up possibilities for us, to present the research in a more varied, visual and accessible way. Producing this book adds a rich dimension to the study by illustrating how the young adults themselves represented drinking during the transitions to adulthood.

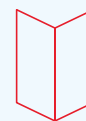


Further reading

Books and Films



Swimming with Crocodiles: The Culture of Extreme Drinking / edited by Marjana Martinic & Fiona Measham



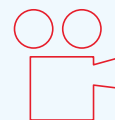
Binge Britain: Alcohol and the national response / by Martin Plant & Moira Plant



Hangover Square / by Patrick Hamilton



The Tears that Made the Clyde / by Carol Craig



Rain in my Heart / by Paul Watson (access via) YouTube

Websites



Alcohol Focus Scotland
www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Drinkaware
www.drinkaware.co.uk

The Greater Easterhouse Alcohol Awareness Programme
www.geaap.com/

Play Safe in Glasgow
http://css.dev2.999design.com/playsafe/whats_new.html

Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems
www.shaap.org.uk/

The Institute of Alcohol Studies
www.ias.org.uk/

Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Alcohol Programme
www.jrf.org.uk/work/workarea/alcohol

Note: All links correct at time of going to press. GCPH cannot be held responsible for the content of external sites or publications.

Acknowledgements

This book is published in parallel with the report **Creating better stories: Alcohol and gender in transitions to adulthood**

authored by
Pete Seaman
Fiona Edgar

The report can be downloaded from

www.gcph.co.uk/genderandalcohol

Photography

Colin Gray

Design

After the News

Published

March 2012
in an edition of 250

ISBN 978-1-907349-05-8

First and foremost, the authors would like to say a big thank you to all of the young men and women who took part in the focus groups.

We would also like to thank:

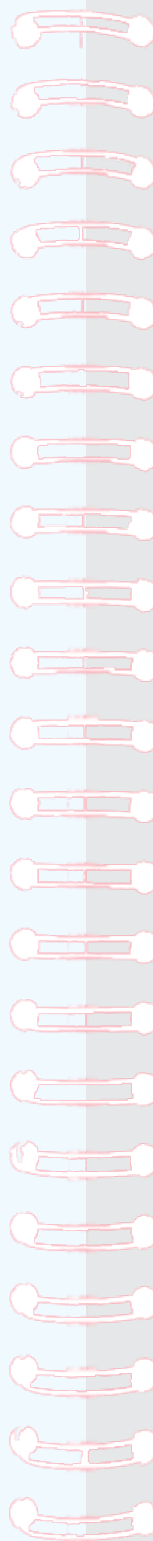
The advisory group for the project:

Andrew McAuley
Barbara O'Donnell
Jennifer Curran
Rosie Ilett
and Jane Wilson

Our key informants:

Alcohol Focus Scotland
Association for Young People's Health
Diageo
Drinkaware
Fast Forward
Glasgow Community Safety Services
Glasgow Council on Alcohol
Glasgow Licensing Board
Greater Easterhouse Alcohol Awareness Project
Health Scotland
Institute for Social Marketing, Stirling University
Interventions Unit, Strathclyde Police
National Union of Students
NHS Ayrshire and Arran,
Alcohol and Drug Partnership
North Community Addictions Team
RCA Trust (formerly Renfrew Council on Alcohol)
Sandyford Initiative, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Social and Health Sciences, Abertay University
Violence Reduction Unit, Strathclyde Police
Violence, Risk & Public Health Network

And special thanks to The Big ShoutER for giving us valuable feedback on an earlier draft of this book.



ALCOHOL: THROUGH OUR EYES

A visual resource, published in parallel with the report *Creating better stories: Alcohol and gender in transitions to adulthood*

The full report can be downloaded from www.gcph.co.uk/genderandalcohol

ISBN 978-1-907349-05-8

March 2012

Glasgow Centre for Population Health