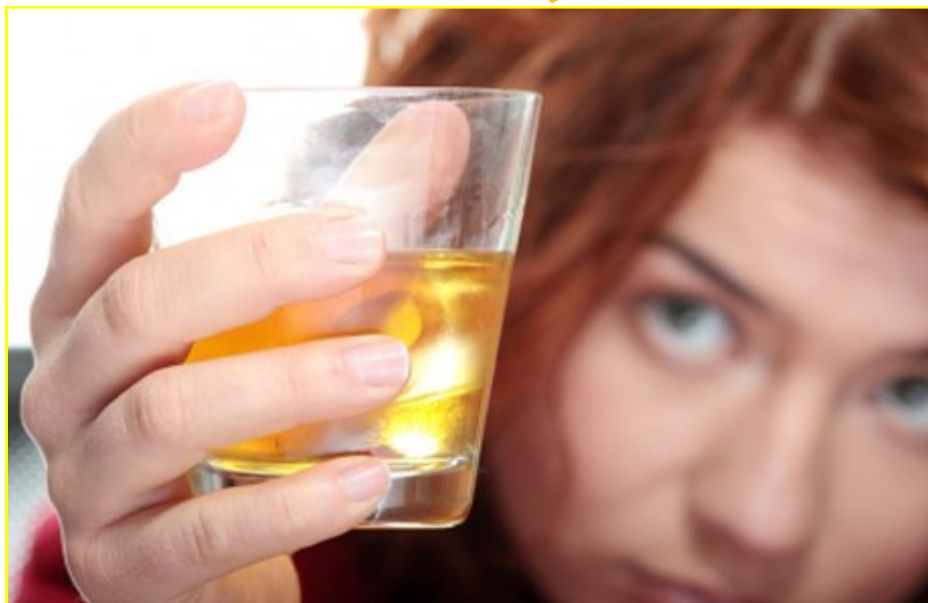


YOUNG PEOPLE DECIDED WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ASKED



THEN THEY WENT AND ASKED THEM

“GROWING UP IN A CULTURE OF ALCOHOL”

An Alcohol Focused Peer Research Project

Background to “Growing Up In A Culture of Alcohol”

By the end of 2013, whilst supported by The Junction’s Alcohol Service a team of young Peer Researchers completed 55 interviews with local young people living in North East Edinburgh. The theme of the research “Growing Up In A Culture Of Alcohol” built on a pilot peer research project undertaken by The Junction earlier in the year. This report endeavours to share both the research findings and some narrative of the project behind it.

"you guys are so good with us, you really listen and give us a chance to contribute"

Peer Researcher Feedback on Junction Staff

the junction*
young people, health & wellbeing

PEER RESEARCH PROJECT
"Growing Up In A Culture of Alcohol"

YOU DECIDE WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ASKED

TAKE PART IN A RESIDENTIAL

LEARN NEW SKILLS

ADD TO YOUR C.V.

INTERVIEW LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE

Are you living in North Edinburgh, aged 14-18 and do you think it is important young peoples opinions are heard?

Well then why not do something about it!
Become a PEER RESEARCHER!

To find out more join us at our **INFORMATION EVENT**
Thursday 5th September 6.00pm - 7.00pm at The Junction

The Peer Researchers will meet 5.30-7.00pm Thursdays in September/October and together develop a peer research project that explores young peoples experiences and thoughts when it comes to Alcohol.

For more information call 0131 553 0570
or email aprilwendy@the-junction.org

Travel Costs, Snacks & up to £30 in Completion Vouchers are provided

The Junction, 160-162 Great Junction Street, Leith Edinburgh, EH6 5LJ

On the 5th September The Junction Alcohol Service ran an information event for local young people interested in being Peer Researchers.

The project on offer gave participants the opportunity to explore their own thoughts and understanding of the impact of alcohol on young people, whilst developing the peer research skills that would also allow them to further gather this information from other young people.

Soon we had a team of young people aged between 14 - 18, committed to the progression of the peer research and several Junction Project Volunteers ready to support them.

"I found working with the peer research project very interesting and fun. I really enjoyed getting to know a smaller group of young people and supporting them throughout the project."

Junction Project Volunteer Feedback

The project was made up of a series of groupwork sessions, one-to-ones and a weekend residential.

Early groupwork sessions focused on alcohol awareness and growing a basic understanding of what 'research' is and could be within the context of this project.

These progressed in to wider discussions on what it means to grow up in this part of Scotland, at this time, when alcohol is omnipresent in most young peoples lives, through mass advertising, familial & friend influences and mixed societal messages.

Research is an
**organised and
systematic way of
finding answers
to questions**

planned

*follows a
set of steps*

*answers a
question*

The Research Process...

Over time the Peer Researchers created a series of questions to use and were shown a variety of ways to hone their interview skills and to encourage interviewees to expand on/give more detailed answers.

Together it was agreed that for this project a “peer” would be classified as someone who has something in common with you (such as age, school, interests, etc.), but not necessarily a friend. The Junction encouraged the interviewers to consider their widest networks to ensure a more diverse sample of young people were involved.

Alongside The Junction; Muirhouse Youth Development Group, Pilton Youth & Children Project and The Citadel Youth Project also proactively welcomed and supported our researchers to meet young people accessing their services.

Attention was paid to what makes a productive interview and a ‘top tips’ sheet was designed for researchers to reflect upon, prior to interviews.


PEER RESEACHER TOP TIPS for interviews



- **Be Prepared!** It might sound obvious, but being well prepared can make a huge difference, and remember we are looking to speak to young people aged 14 – 18 who live in North Edinburgh (e.g. Leith, Muirhouse, Granton, Pilton, Trinity)
- **Make sure there is enough time to do an interview.**
- **Whenever possible do the interviews 1-to-1.**
- **Be aware of your body language and of making the young person feel comfortable.**
- **Always give yourself time after an interview to check or to add to your notes.**
- **Remember a young person can chose not to answer a question.** (Just record it as ‘chose not to answer’)
- **Remember how important it is to respect the young persons anonymity and to take care of your notes.** (Don’t put their name/or anyone else’s on the sheet)
- **Remember if the interview prompts the young person to want to talk about alcohol or health issues further, you can always refer them to The Junction.**
- **Remember you don’t have to wait until you’ve done all your interviews to get in touch. Keep us updated on how your research is going.**
- **Make sure to thank each young person and to give them a Junction leaflet.**

After an initial series of interviews the group negotiated that the research be expanded from 14 - 18 year olds to 12 - 19 year olds, as many of them had found the age parameters too narrow for their peer groups. A further series of interviews were then conducted.

"Oh right, I get it now!" Peer Researcher, eureka moment

PEER RESEARCH PROJECT "GROWING UP IN A CULTURE OF ALCOHOL"		Oct 2013	
INTERVIEWER:	TIME/DATE:	INTERVIEW NUMBER:	
AGE OF YOUNG PERSON:	AREA YOUNG PERSON LIVES IN:	M / F / O (ord)	
1. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time... and why?			
2. Why do YOU think people choose to drink alcohol?			
3. Do you drink alcohol?			
<input type="button" value="Yes"/> If 'Yes' why and what do you drink?		<input type="button" value="No"/> If 'No' why do you choose not to?	
4. Do you think young people are 'Peer Pressured' to drink alcohol?			
<input type="button" value="No"/> If 'No' go to question 5.		<input type="button" value="Yes"/> If 'Yes' tell us in what ways do young people pressure other young people?	
5. Do you think the area you live in has a "reputation for drinking"?			
<input type="button" value="No"/> If 'No' go to question 6.		<input type="button" value="Yes"/> If 'Yes' tell us more?	
6. Do you think young people have a reputation for drinking?			
<input type="button" value="No"/> If 'No' go to question 7.		<input type="button" value="Yes"/> If 'Yes' tell us why you think this and how it makes you feel?	
7. When it comes to drinking alcohol, do you think young men and young women drink differently?			
<input type="button" value="No"/> If 'No' go to question 8.		<input type="button" value="Yes"/> If 'Yes' tell us how they drink differently.	
8.a If you knew a young person who was being negatively affected by alcohol, what advice would you give them?			
8.b What organisations (if any) would you recommend?			
9. Is there anything else you'd like to say about: 'Young People growing up in a Culture of Alcohol'?			
Remember to THANK the interviewee and to offer them a Junction leaflet.			

Research results...

Do you drink alcohol?

GENDER breakdown

Participants

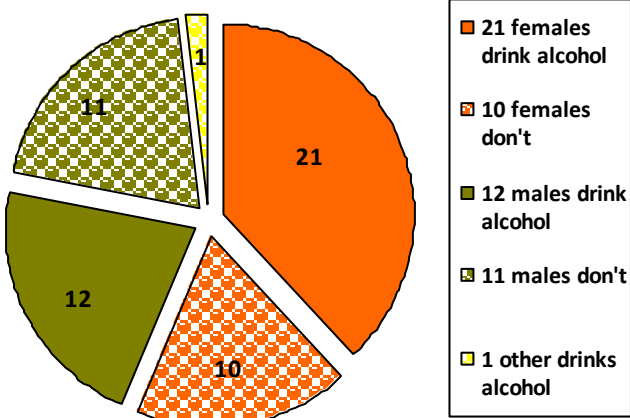
55 young people agreed to be interviewed for our research, 31 young women, 23 young men and one young person who identified themselves as other.

When asked if they drank alcohol 32% of young women and 48% of young men said 'No'. Reasons for not drinking included: "I don't like the taste, I am too young, it's silly, because I can't control myself, it's horrid, it's not good for you, it's dangerous".

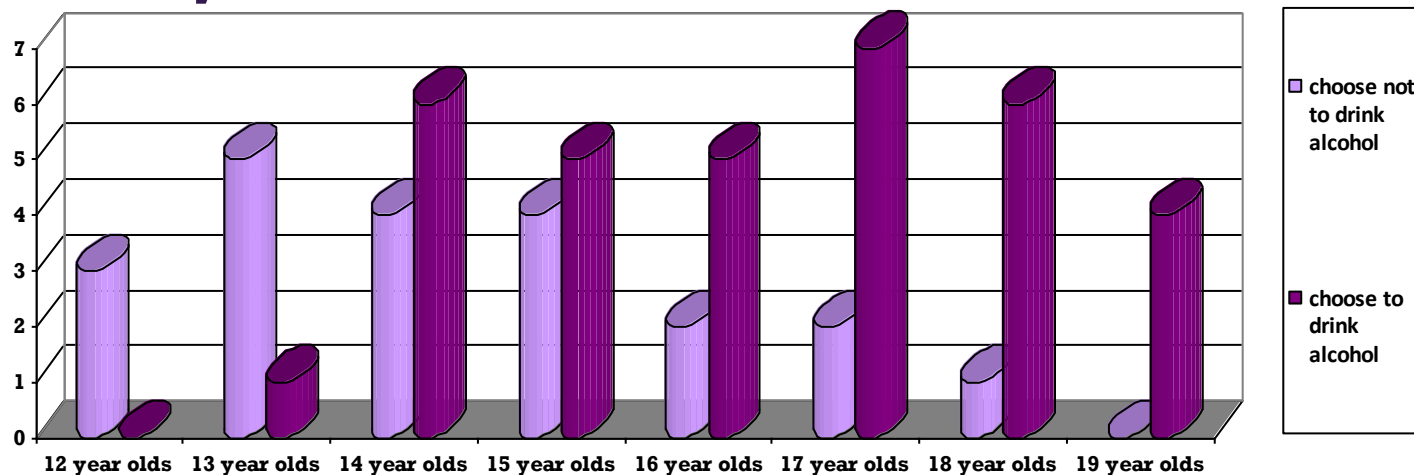
For those who chose to drink their reasons included:

"to get out of my head, everyone else does, like the taste & how it makes me feel, to calm down, for socialising, because it's funny to get drunk, because it's cheap for cider and to get reekin."

The participant group was relatively small in terms of generating trend analysis, it is however interesting to note that, proportionally, 16% more young women were choosing to drink than young men.

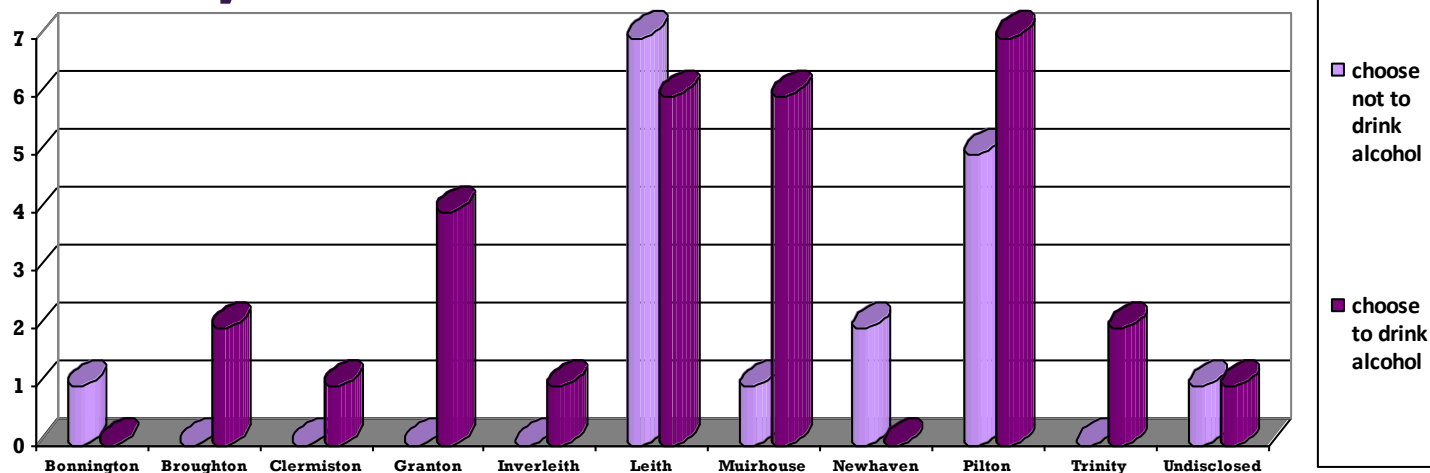


Do you drink alcohol? AGE breakdown

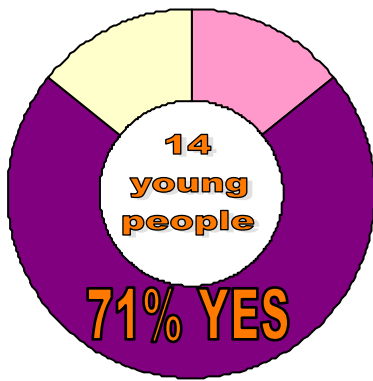


Participants ages ranged between 12-19 and whilst there were respondents from most areas in North East Edinburgh; Pilton, Leith & Muirhouse made up the three largest groups.

Do you drink alcohol? AREA breakdown

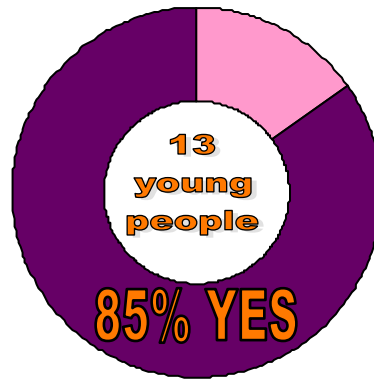


Do you think your area has a reputation for drinking alcohol?



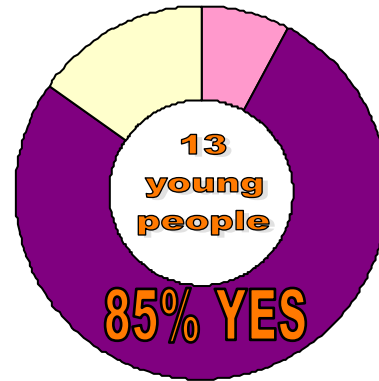
PILTON

“it’s a rough area, with signs of arson... they’re out drinking every weekend... some people walk about with drink... because Pilton is full of junkies... Pilton is full of drinkers”



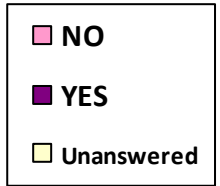
LEITH

“lots of pubs open a lot... the number of alcohol related services in the area... Leith has lots of addicts... people drinking in the street don’t try to hide it... young people sit outside pubs.”



MUIRHOUSE

“because people here are smackheads... because you see everyone drinking... because Muirhouse is full of junkies... underagers get older people to go to the shop for them.”



One of the most significant findings was the number of young people who viewed the area they lived in as having a reputation for alcohol and why they felt this. A common comment was simply: ‘Cos it’s Pilton... ‘Cos it’s Leith... ‘Cos it’s Muirhouse. One particularly strong response to Muirhouse was “Because there’s lots of Buckfast, junkies and prostitutes, it’s the worst area”, whilst one insightful young person from Leith commented that:

“it’s much more common in poorer areas to see evidence of drinking, with some places selling to underagers, adults influence young people and it’s probably a stereotype that has stuck”.

“I feel more confident to do the interviews now”

Peer Researcher Feedback after groupwork and residential

Do you think young people are ‘peer pressured’ to drink alcohol?

Of those who chose to answer this question said **YES**. They also said:

76%

“Peer pressure shouldn’t be an excuse”

“It depends on the person and the peer group, including adults & parents if it’s seen as the norm”

“friends make a fool of non-drinkers”

“Obeying what someone else tells you to do, because they are deemed superior to you, as they appear to be cooler”

Do you think young people have a reputation for drinking alcohol?

94%

of those who answered this question said **YES**. When asked how that made them feel there were a mix of responses including: “annoyed, angry - I don’t like being labelled with this image too, not bothered at all, good, some people think it’s cool, makes you feel that you can harm yourself... **sad in a sense - we are becoming the generation known for alcohol abuse rather than the generation with the largest increase in young people achieving better in exams.**”

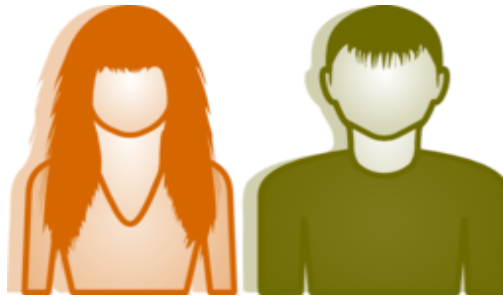
**80%
YES**

Do you think young women and young men drink differently?

Of the young people who responded to this question 80% felt that there were differences in the way that young women and young men drink alcohol. These perceived differences included:

**F
E
M
A
L
E**

drink more
drink less
makes socialising more flirty
more giggly, chatty
try to keep up with men
become bitchy
drunker easier
drink cocktails & spirits
more slutty
You can tell when they're drunk



BOTH ARE...

**...MORE AGGRESSIVE, MORE
EMOTIONAL and MORE SEXUAL**

drink more
handle it better
more violent
more predatory towards females
try to get sex
get in to fights
drink cider & beers
are annoying
more macho
can drink all night

**M
A
L
E**

If you knew a young person who was being negatively affected by alcohol, what advice would you give them?

Get help

**Speak to The
Junction**

**Don't drink if
you're too young
or not ready**

**I'd try to think of
someone else for them
to speak to for help**

**Alcohol can't
solve problems**

**Check if it's
their choice
to drink**

**Go home,
speak to
your
family**

**Help them to
understand what
they are doing is
affecting their
happiness,
encourage them
to do other
things**

It was important to the Peer Researchers that they checked this out with young people; it also gave them the opportunity to promote the support and services available at The Junction.

Of the young people who highlighted an organisation they would recommend to another young person, **47%** mentioned The Junction, with some specifically mentioning it's Counselling Service and one young person stating that they **considered The Junction the "1st Choice"**. Six young people each mentioned Pilton Youth & Childrens Project, Muirhouse Youth Development Group, and The Citadel Youth Centre.

It was also important to the Peer Researchers, that in addition to asking about alcohol, young people should be invited to share what they enjoy doing in their spare time, with hopes this might inform local agencies about potential diversionary activities. When asked only a couple mentioned alcohol or getting drunk, in fact there were a wide variety of interests, **most notably spending time with friends, playing and listening to music, playing & watching sport.**



Recommendations...

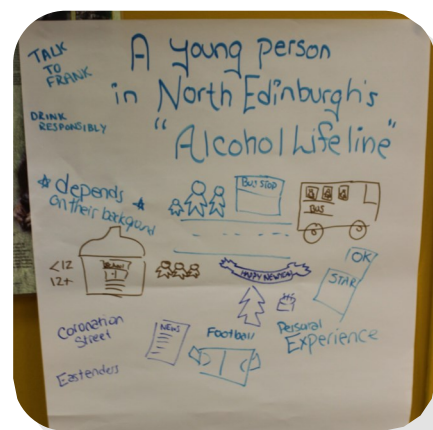
There is great value in up skilling young people to undertake peer research and great value in them being given the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions on alcohol and health related matters. When these come together there is an honesty of sharing unlikely to be reached when adults pose the questions.

With these findings to hand however there are now opportunities for practitioners to further explore these issues with young people in the context of their own agencies, and the services they offer.

One question that generated a wide range of responses was the perceptions around how young women and men differ in their drinking behaviours, further exploration of this may prove effective as a route to engage young people in alcohol awareness work at a deeper level.

Similarly further exploration of young people's attitudes and feelings towards the areas they live in, in relation to the impact it has on a communities health aspirations and in particular young people's ability to develop healthy long term relationships with alcohol, merits more attention.

In recognising the inherent benefits and potential of peer research as a model of working with young people The Junction is eager to pursue similar health and wellbeing projects in the future.



The Weekend Training Residential

"they made me feel really included"

Peer Researcher talking about the other Peer Researchers

Saturday Schedule	
9.30am	Breakfast
10.00am	A Culture Of Alcohol
1.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Dissecting The Qu's & Our Qu's Interview Technique
4.00pm	Free Time
5.00pm	Interview Plans & Practicalities
6.00pm	Dinner
7.00pm	Free Time - Singstar, Wii fit, Twister
10.00pm	Supper
11.00pm	Chill - Quiet Enough for people to sleep



Throughout the weekend training residential the young peer researchers explored, developed and practiced listening and interview skills. They demonstrated their understanding of these concepts through discussion, role play and a variety of group activities.



Our thanks go to all those who supported the “Growing Up In A Culture Of Alcohol” project, in particular the many young people in North East Edinburgh who agreed to be interviewed and the young peer researchers who chose to contribute their valuable time, passion, wisdom and energy to the success of this project.

The Junction was established in 2005.

Since then the Volunteers, Staff & Board Members have worked to positively impact the health & wellbeing of young people aged 12-21.

The Junction - Young People, Health & Wellbeing
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