



**Know the score on just about everything**

**PARENT ENGAGEMENT  
PROJECT  
HALTON**

**FINAL REPORT**

**V3.0 JULY**

**2015**



# **PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Parents/guardians of 13 and 14 year olds believe the majority of this age group are drinking alcohol, however over 9 out of 10 of year 9s (13 and 14 year olds) are never or rarely drinking alcohol<sup>1</sup>
- Young people often form their own drinking habits based on perceived drinking patterns among peers, however the behaviour, house rules and advice of parents/guardians is still a key driver
- Many parents/guardians lack the knowledge and confidence to support their children, often leading to approaches that are too lenient or too strict. One of the aims of the project was to equip parents/guardians with the tools and motivation to change how they might influence drinking levels among their children, importantly knowing how to talk to their children about alcohol consumption
- Working in partnership with The Alcohol Education Trust ([www.alcoholeducationtrust.org](http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org)), one of the main aims of the project was to add a sustainable element in delaying the onset of drinking behaviours among teenagers by engaging hard to reach parents electronically via schools, in an area where alcohol related harms are high
- The goal was to recruit 7 secondary schools in Halton onto the parent programme, involving a mobile survey for parents as part of a whole school approach
- The 'world leading' 2 year 9 *R U Different?* Programme in Halton engaged over 1260 year 9 students through school assemblies and enterprise days to draw out current behavior and misperceptions around alcohol
- Keen to maximise engagement with the schools, Social Sense and the Alcohol Education Trust personally visited all schools in Halton to gain support for the proposition
- As a result, 9 out of the 10 secondary schools pledged their commitment to communicating with parents of their students, using one or more of the following methods: Mobile Quiz, E-Newsletter and/or Printed Newsletter. This exceeded our first target of 7 schools

### The key headline findings (aggregated across all schools) were:

- **The majority of parents/guardians (61%) believed that most students drank more than they did, 39% of parents/guardians guessed drinking levels correctly and no parent underestimated consumption.** The baseline survey was conducted with 1264 year 9 students, and it was found that in reality 93% of the year 9s actually never or rarely drink alcohol
- Of those young people drinking, parents/guardians thought that **50% were getting alcohol from peers**, 10% themselves and 40% from parents. It was found that of those year 9s who reported drinking alcohol: **39% told us they get alcohol from their parents**, 50% of year 9s reported that alcohol is bought for them by friends, or other students who are older, and 11% of year 9s said they bought it themselves.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

- **47% of parents thought that most teenagers had their first full drink at age 13 or younger**, with 18% of parents saying age 12 and 29% age 13. 35% said age 14 with the remaining 17% believing teenagers have their first full drink at age 15 or above. **National data suggests that the current average age of a first whole alcoholic drink is age 13 and a half (in a supervised setting) and 14 and a half (in unsupervised setting)**<sup>4</sup>. The Chief Medical Officer's Guidelines suggest an alcohol free childhood before the age of 15 is best
- 76% **correctly guessed** the advised drinking guidelines for adults. This was expressed as approximate 'drinks' rather than units
- An encouraging **78% of parents said that this project would change** how they would talk to their kids about alcohol and that they now understand the importance of their role
- A total of 1040 bespoke newsletters were printed and sent to parents/guardians at the 9 individual schools, and an estimated 750 were also engaged using an e-newsletter, **bringing the overall engagement total to 1973**

### Lessons Learnt

- Start early in the academic year
- Adopt a multifaceted communications strategy
- Maximise face to face opportunities with parents
- Conduct an academic review of approach
- Allow adjustments for different types of schools
- Increasing Parent Sample Sizes

### Conclusion

Overall, the **project can be regarded as a very encouraging and insightful pilot for engaging schools and parents/guardians with the facts around alcohol.**

The project directly addressed the perceived social norms and misperceptions around early alcohol consumption and who buys alcohol for underage drinkers, which can positively affect future parental behavior and attitudes.

**Most encouraging of all is that 78% of parents/guardians said they will now change the way they talk to their children about alcohol.**

By implementing the lessons learnt recommendations this approach can only be more successful in the future.

Crucially, **equipping parents and guardians with the knowledge, confidence, and tools to set boundaries and talk about alcohol in the here and now**, which should lead to significant positive impacts for their teenage sons and daughters in their futures.

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

## 1.1 OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

Social Sense's most recent national UK data (over 20,000 students surveyed) reveals that over 9 out of 10 of year 9s (13 and 14 year olds) never or rarely drink alcohol<sup>1</sup>, with non-drinking rates increasing year on year.

When parents/guardians and the same teenagers are invited to estimate alcohol consumption levels among this age group, perceptions are markedly different to the reality – with both cohorts outlining that they believe the majority of this age group are drinking alcohol.

When probed, many of these perceptions are formed by what they hear in the media, and often in real cases closer to home. Rather like smokers, adolescent drinkers are of course more visible, especially when alcohol consumption leads to negative behaviour.

The *R U Different?* programme ([www.rudifferent.co.uk](http://www.rudifferent.co.uk)) – described as world leading<sup>2</sup> in its approach to change attitudes, perceptions and behaviours – has successfully been able to change the opinions peers have of each other in relation to expectations around alcohol consumption and other risk taking behaviours. In turn this reduces the pressure for young people to conform and helps to delay the onset of drinking.

The Alcohol Education Trust 'talk about alcohol' programme, with three pillars to its work: engaging pupils with non preachy bottom up engaging resources, training teachers, and engaging parents - significantly and consistently delays the onset of drinking.<sup>3</sup>

Changing peer perception is however only part of a story, since the research shows that at this age many young people are forming their drinking habits. These are largely based on the behaviours of parents and the house rules parents set them.

Often the problem for parents/guardians is the lack of knowledge of where to set boundaries, or even how to begin those important conversations with their children. Many take their baseline judgement from 'what we were doing at that age', when in fact cultures and behaviours have quietly (but significantly) changed over the past 20 years, during which time rates of underage drinking have halved.

Sadly, the result is that parents/guardians often adopt an approach that is either too lenient (evidence shows that of those drinking, most get alcohol consensually from parents/guardians), or they chose to take a more autocratic style to enforcing rules or setting disproportionate punishments that can lead to unsupervised risky drinking.

These approaches, combined with potentially a parent/guardian's own excessive drinking behaviour, may only serve to compound the problem and bring habitual drinking forward more quickly than would otherwise have happened.

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1 *R U Different?* Baseline Survey Results 2014

2 Quotation from the University of Southern Denmark 2014

3 Evaluation report summary: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14635240.2014.915759](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14635240.2014.915759)

4 Latest Alcohol Education Trust findings put the average first parent/guardian supervised drink at age 13 ½ and the first unsupervised drink (parties/public settings) at age 14 ½. For more details about how young people obtain alcohol in England, refer to the 2012 ONS findings outlined in Appendix 2



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

This project aims to deliver two high impact outcomes that can better help parents/guardians fulfil their responsibilities around alcohol.

Firstly, to help to remove or change some of the parent/guardian's misperceptions in relation to teenage drinking – using evidence uncovered in the *R U Different?* Surveys across schools in Halton. By doing this, it is contesting the idea that most teenagers of the same age, and at the same school, as their son/daughter are now drinking frequently.

Secondly, in partnership with the Alcohol Education Trust - the project equips parents/guardians with the tools and knowledge needed to nudge them into becoming better role models and feel more confident in achieving a 'tough love' stance on boundary setting and supporting their children through their teenage years.

Piloted in 9 schools across Halton (which the Home Office identified as a Local Alcohol Action Area where there are high levels of hospital admissions for under 18s), the aim of this intervention was to combine the latest technology with evidence based social thinking, to produce real and measurable outcomes for parents and their families around changing perceived social norms and so engendering behavior change.

Above all, our aim is to create a model for something scalable and sustainable in the quest to delay the onset of drinking behaviours for teenagers, and to change parental attitudes to the supply of alcohol.

### 1.2 KEY OBJECTIVES AT COMMENCEMENT

Working specifically with students age 13 and 14 (year 9s) and their parents, across Halton (see appendix 1 for maps including school locations), the objectives upon commencement of the project were:

- ❖ To agree 3 to 5 questions that could draw out the knowledge and attitudes of parents in Halton in relation to alcohol consumption of young people and recommended unit levels for adults
- ❖ To fully engage Halton Borough Council with the offer of integrating this programme into their overall alcohol strategy
- ❖ To recruit 7 secondary schools onto the programme (to engage 1260 year 9 students with a survey to draw out misperceptions around alcohol) this was not an aim but helped facilitate the engagement
- ❖ To create a bespoke version of a Parent Engagement App', customised for 7 schools
- ❖ To contact every parent for whom the school had a mobile number or email address with a mobile quiz to test their perceptions against the real results from their child's school with sign up links to the Alcohol Education Newsletter and/or
- ❖ Produce and send a newsletter to communicate the results specific to their child's school with signposted support to the Alcohol Education Trust

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

## THE APPROACH

### 2.1 APPROACH TAKEN

This section outlines the approaches taken by Social Sense and The Alcohol Education Trust in order to meet/exceed the aims set out in the project.

### 2.2 ENGAGING THE COUNCIL AND SCHOOLS

Upon agreement of this project, Social Sense and the Alcohol Education Trust met with Halton Borough Council to propose integrating parent engagement around alcohol with the already commissioned youth engagement project that had been awarded to Social Sense.

Immediately, support was strong and the council were able to endorse our suggestion to approach every secondary school (10 in total) with a view to taking part.

Keen to maximise engagement with the schools, Social Sense and the Alcohol Education Trust personally visited every school in Halton to gain support for the proposition.

As a result, 9 out the 10 secondary schools pledged their commitment to communicating with parents/guardians of their students, using one or more of the following methods: Mobile Quiz, E-Newsletter and/or Printed Newsletter. This exceeded our first target of 7 schools.



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

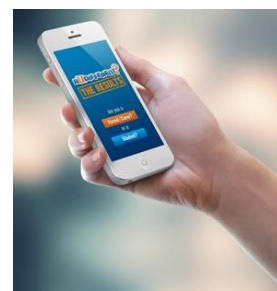
### 2.3 MOBILE QUIZ

The aim of the mobile quiz is to achieve a more direct and instant level of engagement than some of the traditional methods of communication.

By inviting parents/guardians to complete the quiz on their mobile, they are able to receive immediate feedback in relation to actual drinking levels within their child's school and exact age group.

The key headline findings (aggregated across all schools) were:

- ❖ **The majority of parents/guardians (61%) believed that most students drank more than they did, 39% of parents/guardians guessed drinking levels correctly and no parent underestimated consumption.** The baseline survey was conducted with 1264 year 9 students, and it was found that in reality 93% of year 9s actually rarely or never drink alcohol
- ❖ Of those young people drinking, parents thought that **50% were getting alcohol from peers**, 10% themselves and 40% from parents. It was found that of those year 9s who do drink alcohol, **39% told us they get alcohol from their parents**
- ❖ **47% of parents thought that most teenagers had their first full drink at age 13 or younger**, with 18% of parents saying age 12 and 29% age 13. 35% said age 14 with the remaining 17% believing teenagers have their first full drink at age 15 or above. **National data suggests that the current average age of a first whole alcoholic drink is age 13 and a half (in a supervised setting) and 14 and a half (in unsupervised setting)**<sup>4</sup>. The Chief Medical Officer's Guidelines suggest an alcohol free childhood before the age of 15 is best
- ❖ **76% correctly guessed** the advised drinking guidelines for parents
- ❖ An encouraging **78% of parents said that this project would change** how they would talk to their kids about alcohol



***"60% OF PARENTS  
THOUGHT THAT 13-14  
YEAR OLDS GOT THEIR  
ALCOHOL FROM PEERS  
OR BOUGHT IT  
THEMSELVES"***



## 2.31 SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES USING THE MOBILE APPROACH

During the project we identified a great deal of variation in the level of communication schools made using mobile texts. For example, schools such as Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy and Saints Peter and Paul Catholic and Church of England School had a system in place whereby they were able to confirm to us exactly how many text messages containing the mobile quiz had been sent out, as sending texts was very common at those schools.

Though this way of communicating will eventually become the 'norm', many schools still rely on traditional methods of communication with parents, hence for some schools there are only a limited amount of records complete with mobile numbers.

In terms of the sample size specific to this communication it has been difficult to ascertain exactly how many parents were contacted by each school to arrive at a total amount - however we are able to measure how many took the quiz and how they answered (full details in section 3.0)

To ensure that all parents had an opportunity to engage in the programme, Social Sense paid particular attention to ensuring that either an e-newsletter, printed newsletter or both supported the mobile communication.

## 2.4 E-NEWSLETTER

An e-newsletter was sent to parents in all schools (where facilities allowed) to supplement the mobile communication.

Similar to mobile, the numbers varied depending on whether the school had a valid email address for the parent.

The e-newsletters contained a link to the individual school's Parent Feedback Survey.

## 2.5 PRINTED NEWSLETTER

To support both the digital communications and to reinforce the campaign, Social Sense and the Alcohol Education Trust jointly issued a bespoke printed newsletter to each school's year 9 student's parents/guardians.

The printed newsletter contained both a web address and QR Code, linking to the individual school's Parent Feedback Survey.



# PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

## THE RESULTS

### 3.1 THE REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

Social Sense's *R U Different?* Project was commissioned in 9 schools across Halton in this year's completed academic year - commencing in October 2014 and completing in July 2015.

Parents/guardians from eight schools in Halton, completed the Parent Feedback Survey, schools included are:

School Name	Type of School	Approximate number of year 9 students
1. The Bridge School	Pupil Referral Unit	10
2. The Heath School	Mainstream	180
3. The Grange School	Mainstream	160
4. Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	Mainstream	140
5. Wade Deacon High School	Mainstream	330
6. Sandymoor School	Free School	25
7. Saint Peter & Paul Catholic College	Mainstream	290
8. St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School	Mainstream	140

Ormiston Chadwick Academy was the control school and are receiving their interventions in the Autumn term 2015.

A total of 183 parents/guardians answered questions on their perception of the drinking habits of students in their son/daughter's year 9 group, and a variety of other alcohol related questions. These questions linked to parent/guardian's knowledge around alcohol, and the actions they would take in future regarding their child's drinking habits. It is felt that the response rates can be significantly increased in the future if the lessons learnt, described in detail in section 5.0, are acted upon without delay. Activity needs to commence at the very beginning of the academic year (September).

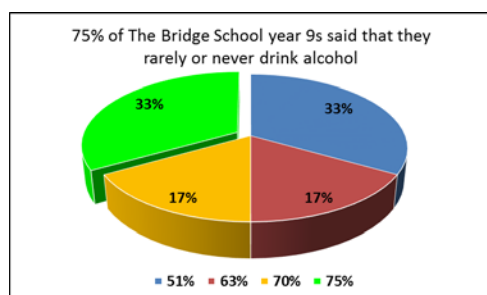
A total of 1040 bespoke newsletters were printed and sent to parents/guardians at the 8 individual schools, and an estimated 750 were also engaged using an e-newsletter, bringing the overall engagement total to 1973<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The exact final number of parents engaged is a calculated estimate as some schools have yet to confirm correspondence numbers. An overview outlining the figures, where known for each school, can be seen in Appendix 3 - The Communications Summary

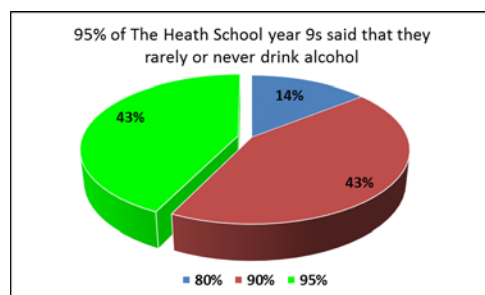
# PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

## 3.2 PARENT QUIZ QUESTIONS - QUESTION 1 - HOW MANY YEAR 9S SAID THAT THEY RARELY OR NEVER DRINK ALCOHOL? WHAT THE PARENTS THINK (PARENTS WERE PROVIDED OPTIONAL ANSWERS SEEN IN THE KEY UNDER EACH PIE CHART)

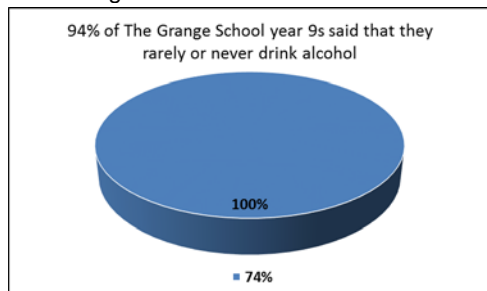
The Bridge School



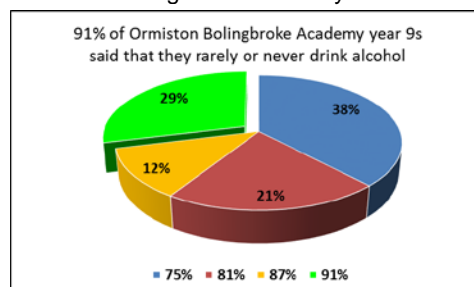
The Heath School



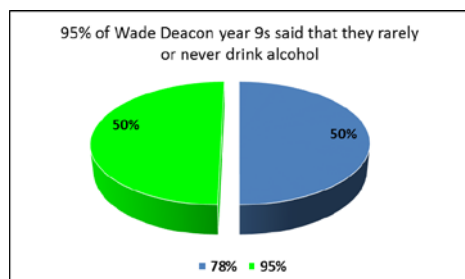
The Grange School



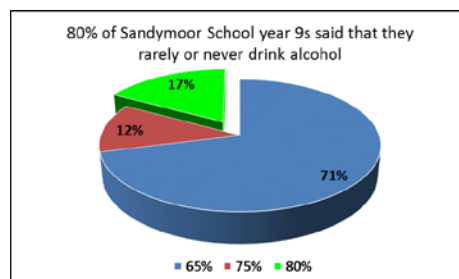
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy



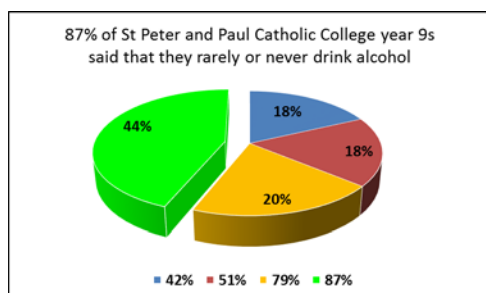
Wade Deacon High School



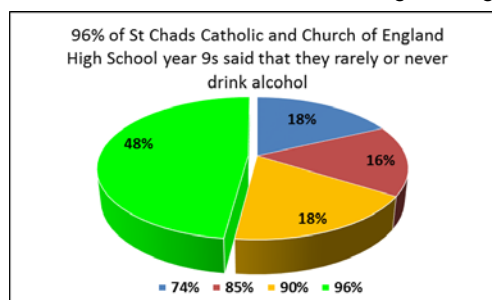
Sandymoor School



Saint Peter & Paul Catholic College

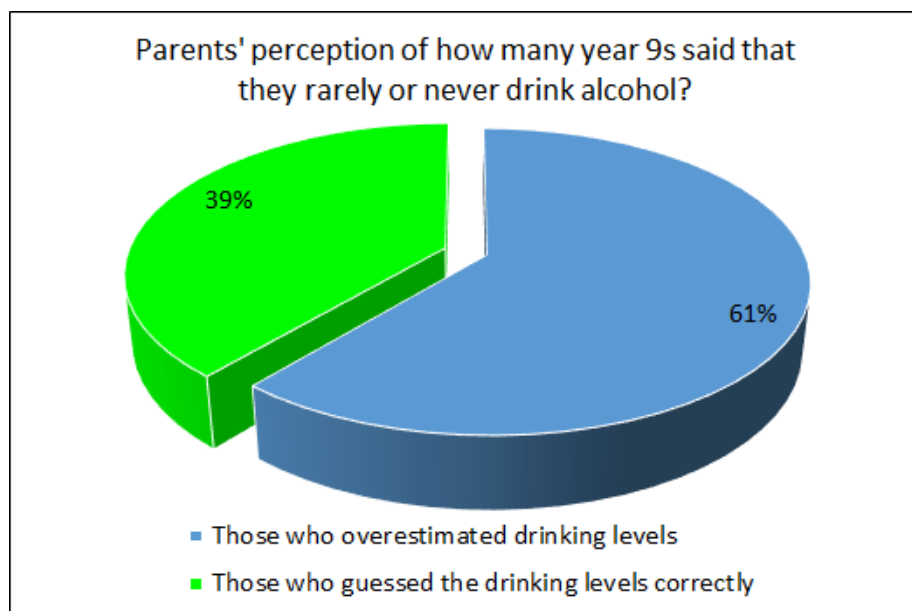


St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

### OVERALL AVERAGES



**The majority of parents/guardians (61%) believed that most students drank more than they did and 39% of parents/guardians guessed drinking levels correctly.**

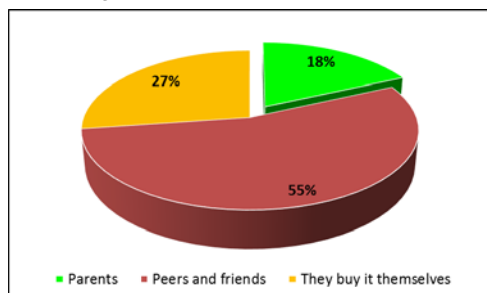
In question 1, Parents/guardians were offered a number of options for each answer, including the correct answer, which was taken from the results of responses provided by the year 9s in their *R U Different?* Baseline Survey 2014 at each specific school.

No parents underestimated drinking levels.

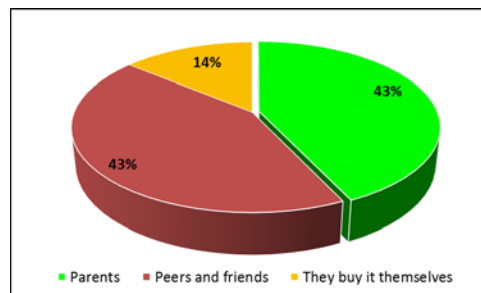
## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

### 3.3 PARENT QUIZ QUESTIONS - QUESTION 2 - OF THOSE WHO DO DRINK, WHERE DID THE YEAR 9S SAY THEY GOT THEIR ALCOHOL? WHAT THE PARENTS THINK

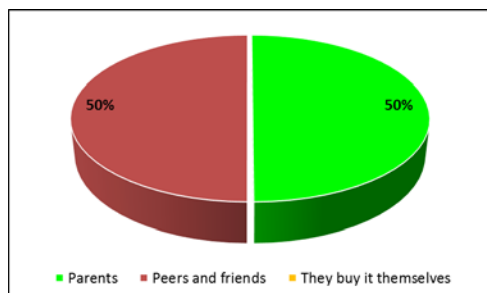
The Bridge School



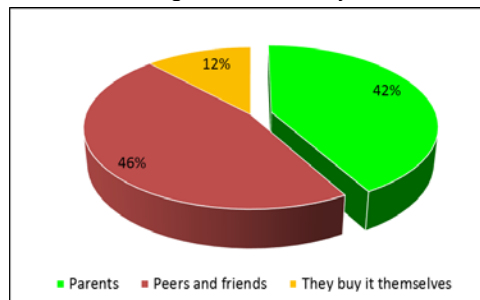
The Heath School



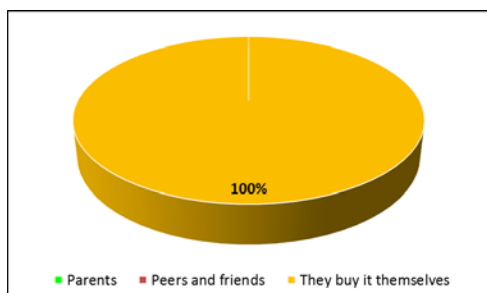
The Grange School



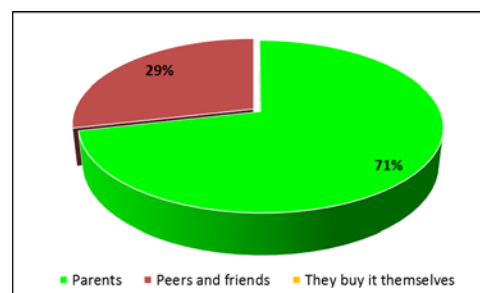
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy



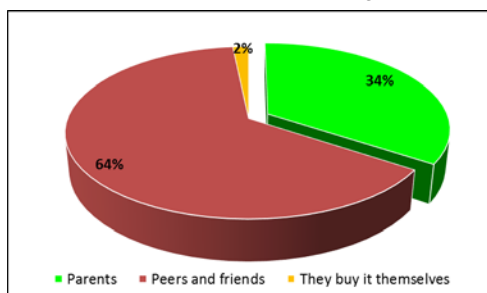
Wade Deacon High School



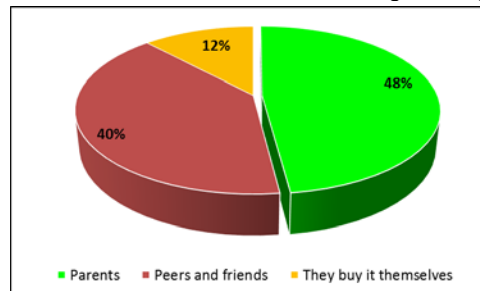
Sandymoor School



Saint Peter & Paul Catholic College

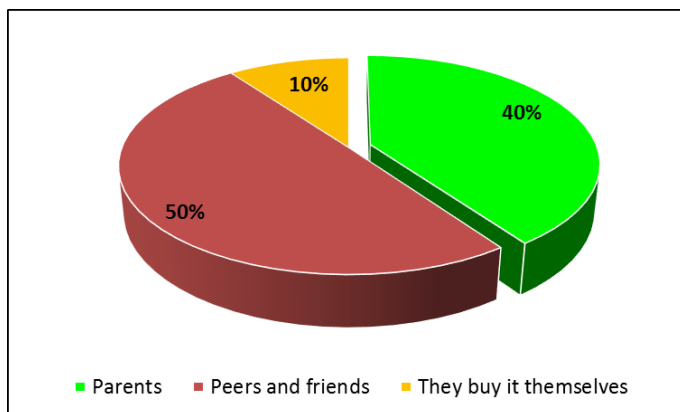


St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

### OVERALL AVERAGES - PARENTS VIEW



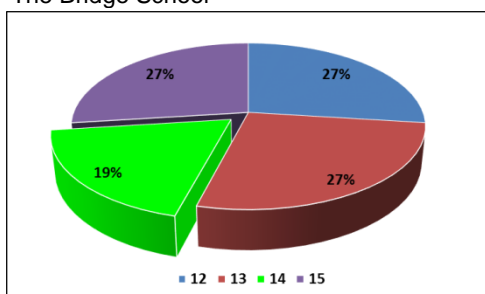
Of those young people drinking, parents thought that **50% were getting alcohol from peers and friends**, 10% themselves and 40% from parents.

In the year 9 survey it was found that of those year 9s who do drink alcohol, **39% of year 9s told us they get alcohol from their parents.**

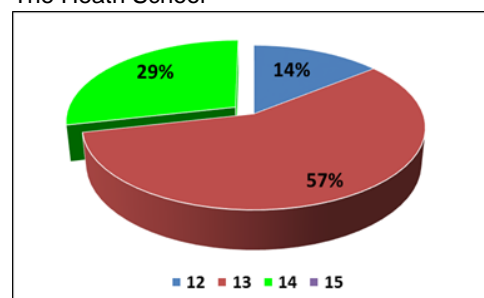
## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

### 3.4 PARENT QUIZ QUESTIONS - QUESTION 3 - WHAT DO YOU THINK THE AVERAGE AGE OF A FIRST GLASS OF WINE/CIDER/BEER IS? WHAT PARENTS THINK

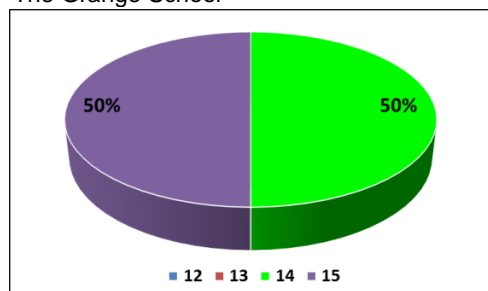
The Bridge School



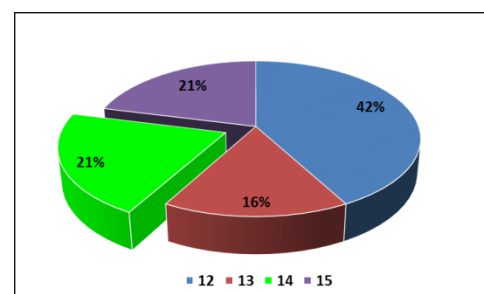
The Heath School



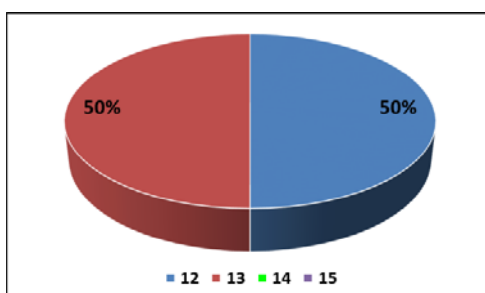
The Grange School



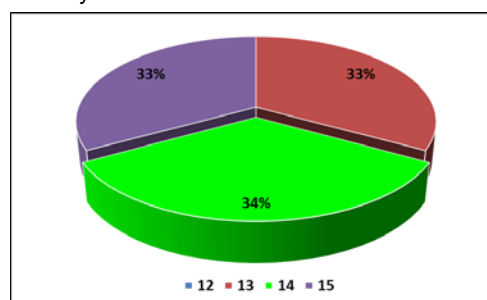
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy



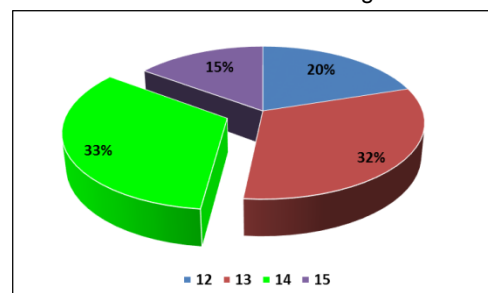
Wade Deacon High School



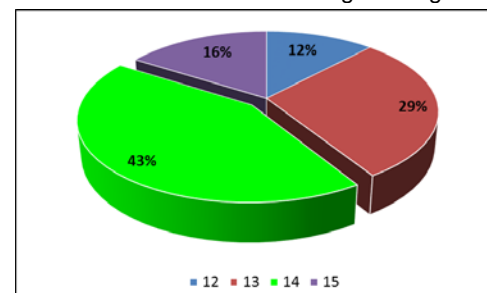
Sandymoor School



Saint Peter & Paul Catholic College



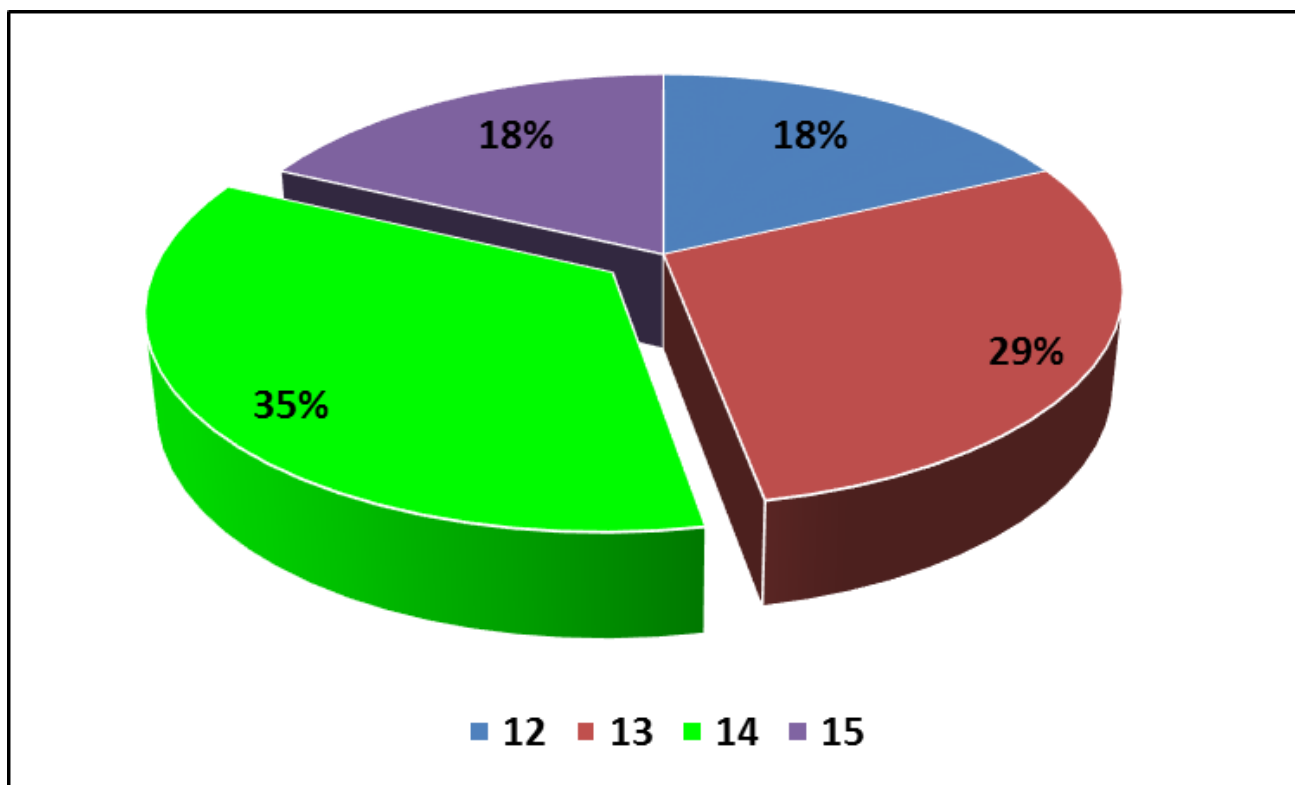
St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School





## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

### OVERALL AVERAGES



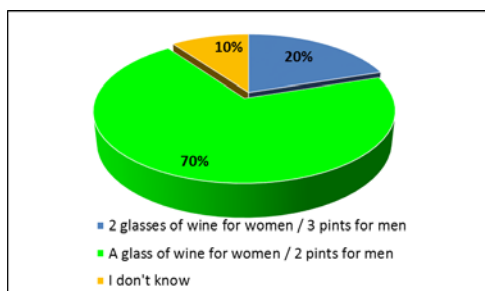
The majority of students wait until the age of 14 to have their first glass of wine/cider/beer. Young people's livers and brains cannot cope with more than small amounts of alcohol at this age.

A high percentage (47%) of parents/guardians in Halton believed the age of a first alcoholic drink to be younger than 14.

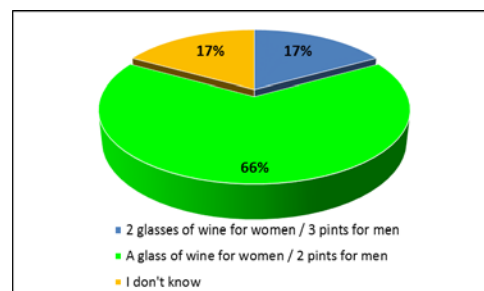
# PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

## 3.5 PARENT QUIZ QUESTIONS - QUESTION 4 - WHAT ARE THE DAILY LOW RISK DRINKING GUIDELINES FOR ADULTS? WHAT THE PARENTS THINK

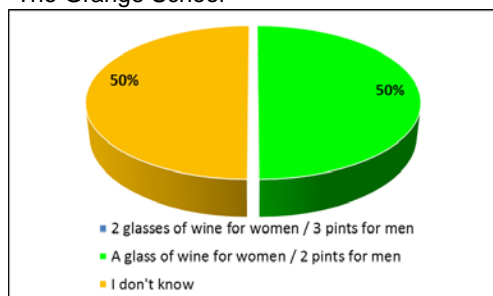
The Bridge School



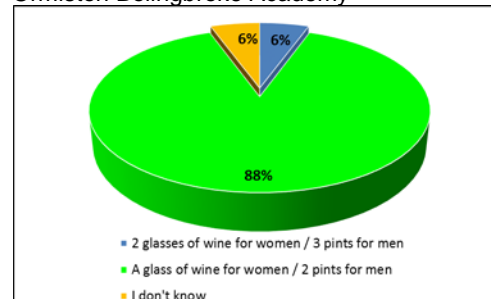
The Heath School



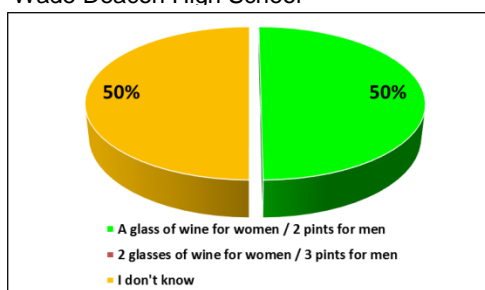
The Grange School



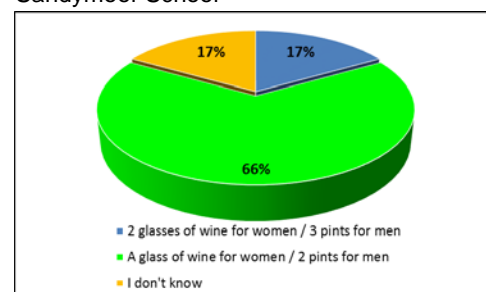
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy



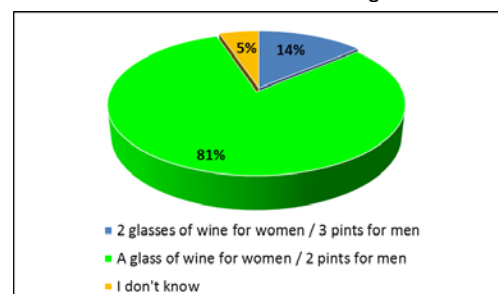
Wade Deacon High School



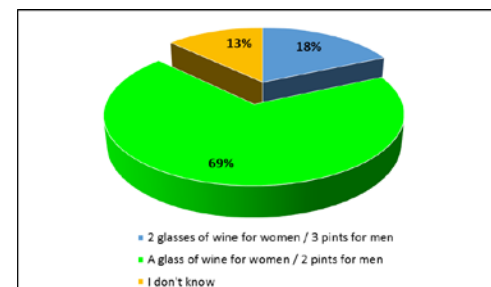
Sandymoor School



Saint Peter & Paul Catholic College

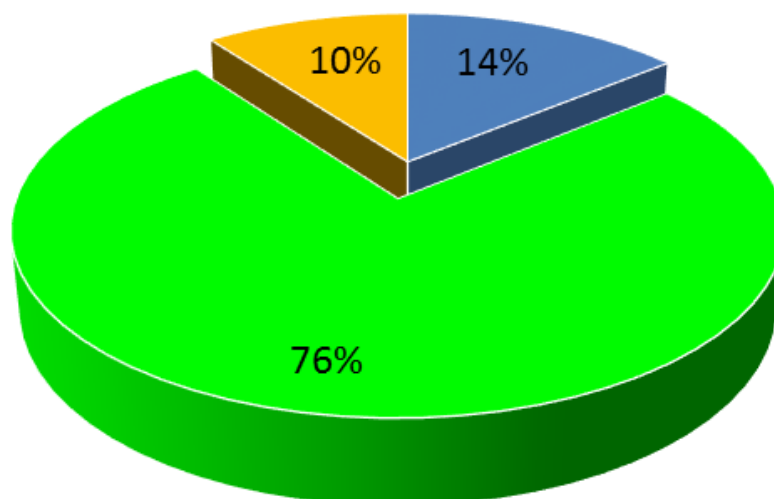


St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

### OVERALL AVERAGES

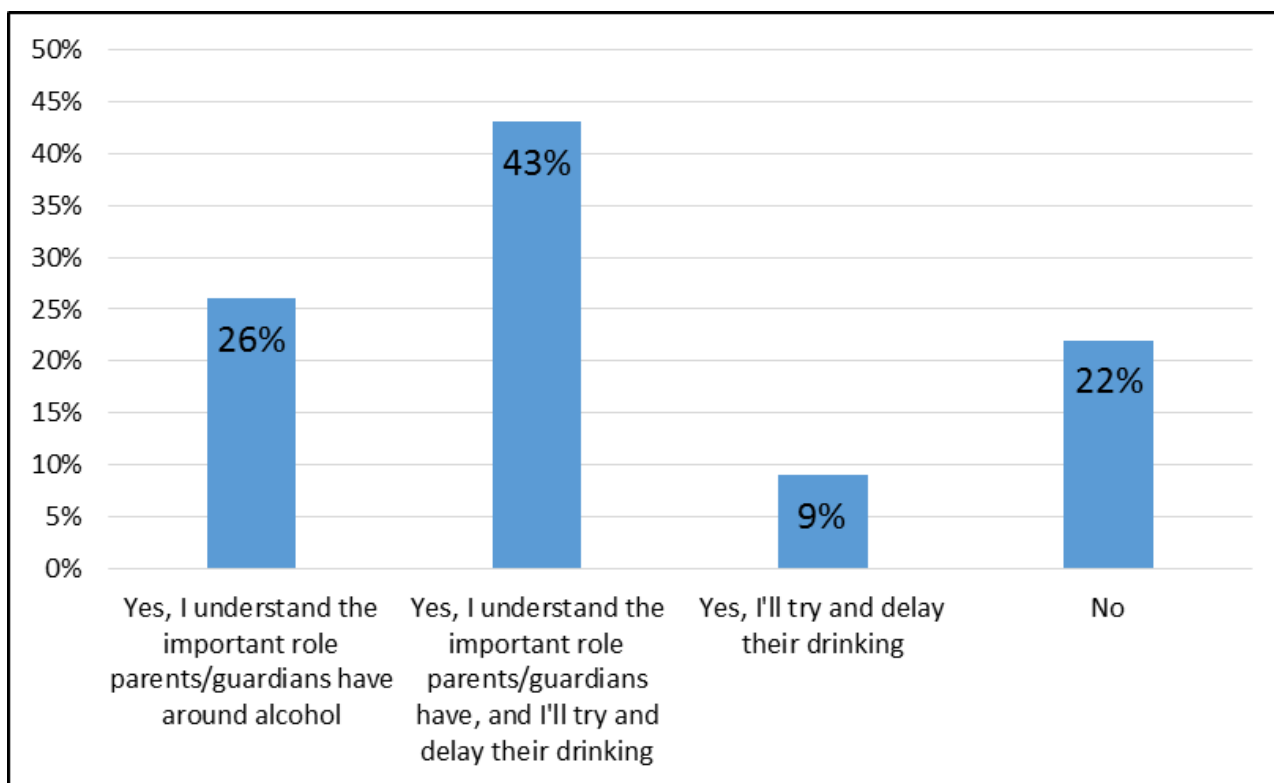


- 2 glasses of wine for women / 3 pints for men
- A glass of wine for women / 2 pints for men
- I don't know

The **majority of parents (76%)** were aware of the **daily low risk drinking guidelines** of 2-3 units for women (approx. a 175ml glass of wine at 13%) and 3-4 units for men (approx. 2 pints of beer at 3.5%).

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### 3.6 PARENT QUIZ QUESTIONS - QUESTION 6 - AFTER ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS WILL IT CHANGE HOW YOU TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL TO YOUR KIDS? WHAT THE PARENTS SAID



The majority of parents (78%) said that after answering the questions in the parent quiz, it would change the way they talk to their kids about alcohol.

22% said it would not change the way they talk to their kids about alcohol, this may be because they are comfortable with their current approach as parents/guardians to their children.

Of the 78%, 43% of parents/guardians said that not only would they talk to their kids differently about alcohol, they also understand the important role they have as parents/guardians and will try and delay their kids drinking.

**"78% OF PARENTS SAY  
THEY WILL NOW  
CHANGE THE WAY THEY  
TALK TO THEIR  
CHILDREN ABOUT  
ALCOHOL"**

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SUMMARIES

This section revisits the original aims versus the actual deliverables.

**1. Aim:** To agree 3 to 5 questions that could draw out the knowledge of parents/guardians in Halton in relation to alcohol consumption of young people and recommended unit levels for adults

**Delivered:** 5 questions that were able to reveal gaps in knowledge, perceptions and a willingness from 78% of parents to change how they now talk to their children about alcohol

**2. Aim:** To fully engage Halton Borough Council with the offer of integrating this programme into their overall alcohol strategy

**Delivered:** Immediate and wholesale commitment from the council to integrating this programme within the overall strategy

**3. Aim:** To recruit 7 secondary schools on to the programme

**Delivered:** 9 secondary schools recruited for the programme (Ormiston Chadwick Academy are our control school, therefore are receiving their interventions in the Autumn term 2015)

**4. Aim:** To engage 1260 year 9 students with a survey to draw out misperceptions around alcohol)

**Delivered:** We slightly exceeded this target by achieving 1264 responses from the baseline survey.

**5. Aim:** To contact every parent for whom the school had a mobile number or email address with a mobile quiz to test their perceptions against the real results from their child's school

**Delivered:** For some schools it was possible to confirm that correspondence took place with every parent/guardian who had a mobile or email address on record.

For other schools, this information has been difficult to gather. Refer to Appendix 3 – The Communications Summary, for further details.

***“MOST PARENTS  
SIGNIFICANTLY  
UNDERESTIMATED THE  
RECORDED 93% OF  
TEENAGERS IN HALTON  
WHO RARELY OR NEVER  
DRINK ALCOHOL”***

## LESSONS LEARNED

As with any pilot, there are certain assumptions made upon commencement of a project or unforeseen circumstances that require flexibility within the project plan.

Whilst most of the key performance indicators were either met or exceeded, there are some valuable lessons that will help us achieve greater impact if the project is to be repeated in Halton and/or rolled out to other areas.

Specifically these are:

### **1. The need to start early in the academic year**

By starting early in the academic year (ideally September) there are two notable benefits for achieving greater impact. Firstly, it would give Social Sense an earlier opportunity to engage councils and schools with the aims, objectives and specific milestones for the project, and agree a service level agreement for the respective deliverables on each side.

One such requirement from schools would be a mandatory requirement to offer exact numbers of campaigns delivered/parents engaged to support the overall evaluation. Encouraging schools to ensure they have the correct contact information (mobile numbers and email addresses) of all year 9 parents/guardians.

Secondly, it would also provide the Alcohol Education Trust with a valuable face to face opportunity with parents/guardians at parent evenings, which often take place in October. Engaging parents early is the key to achieving more responses with the subsequent communications throughout the year.

### **2. The need for a multifaceted communications strategy**

In any social marketing campaign, rarely does receiving one communication have any sustainable impact.

Mobile engagement is effective when it is balanced with other, more traditional means of communication. Our recommendation is a 5-6 tiered strategy that encompasses ALL of the following for parents/guardians:

1. Face to face briefing of the project and its aims (AET parent evenings)
2. Interactive quiz feedback via mobile SMS (sent a maximum of 3 times)
3. Interactive feedback via email
4. 2 printed and sent parent newsletters (1 to inform of the programme and 1 to inform of the results, including a link and QR code to the Interactive Quiz Feedback)
5. Relationship building with AET – e.g. sign up to their newsletter for ongoing advice

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A potential 6<sup>th</sup> tier suggestion is a members only social media discussion group for parents, either created independently or via the AET website.

### 3. Maximise face to face opportunities

Quite often there is no substitute for face to face advice to parents on issues around alcohol. With more time, the project could do more to explore face to face opportunities with schools, including parent evenings or the additional events that many schools have often already scheduled.

### 4. Academic Review of Approach

The questions asked offered us a valuable insight into the perceptions, knowledge and attitudes of parents. Could they be refined to give us even more insight? Should we balance the quantitative data gathering with more qualitative discussion, e.g. parent focus groups?

A recommendation would be some independent review of the approach from a leading academic working in this field.

### 5. Adjustments for different types of schools

In Halton there are a mixture of schools: Mainstream Schools, a Free School, a Special School and a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

Generally the questions worked quite well across all schools, however with further consultation in 5.4 there may be some recommendations around adjustments/variations for each school according to deprivation levels and/or strategic needs.

### 6. Increasing Parent/Guardian Sample Sizes

One concern has always been how to engage parents/guardians without offering reference to data directly affecting their son or daughter. However, current thinking is that parents/guardians of year 7 and 8 students will naturally be concerned about their child's progression into year 9, 10 and 11.

As a result, it is felt that there is a strong enough reason to also engage year 7 and 8 parents/guardians in completing the online quiz. There would be a newsletter to year 7 and 8 parents/guardians telling them about the year 9 programme describing the text and email they will receive.

For the new year 9s we would repeat the programme, implementing the lessons learnt recommendations.

Halton Borough Council has commissioned a year 10 follow up survey (for those who left year 9 this year), therefore this would give us a second opportunity with the parents/guardians we engaged this year, we can repeat the quiz with year 10 parents/guardians. Year 11s would not be involved because of examination commitments.



### CONCLUSION

Overall, our conclusion is that this project can be regarded as a very encouraging and insightful pilot for engaging schools and parents/guardians, in Halton, with the facts around alcohol. There is some evidence to show that as a result of this work parents/guardians are now better equipped with the tools and motivation to change how they might influence drinking levels among their children.

Specifically it is very encouraging that we have been able to directly address misperceptions around early alcohol consumption, inform parents/guardians on who buys the alcohol, and reinforce key guidelines about adult drinking rates, all of which can positively affect future behaviours.

Most encouraging of all is that **78% of parents/guardians are saying that they will now change the way they talk to their children about alcohol.**

Our hope is that some parents/guardians may also make adjustments to their own drinking habits with renewed understanding of their role model status.

The project was not without its challenges, which is to be expected in any pilot. These challenges included the adjustments required for the Pupil Referral Unit, the difficulties of ensuring schools sent out communications on time (and reporting of numbers delivered) and finally the lack of face to face opportunities with parents/guardians, largely due to the project commencing after the year 9 parents evening for most schools.

Many of these challenges can however be overcome with renewed insight and further testing of a process that involves an early start at the beginning of the academic year, a multi-tiered communication strategy and engagement of year 7, 8, 9 and 10 parents/guardians.

The legacy could ultimately be a highly effective and very measurable way to challenge parents/guardians to make those vital changes in how they think and act in relation to alcohol consumption.

Crucially, equipping parents and guardians with the knowledge and tools to intervene now, can lead to significant positive impacts for their teenage sons and daughters - who themselves will one day become the next generation of parents.

For more information about this report, please contact Gary Lovatt at Social Sense.

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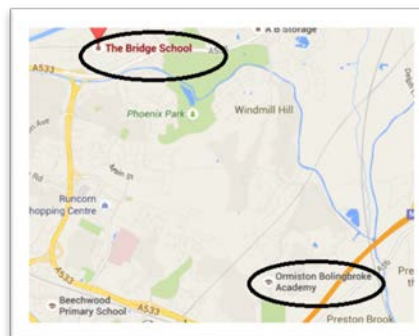
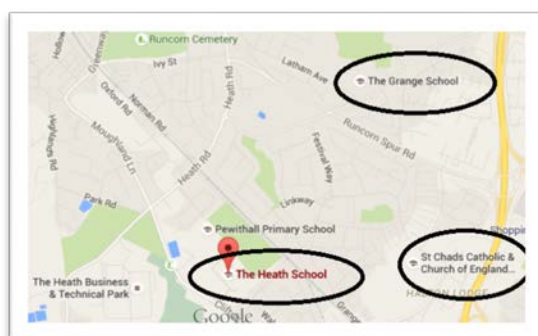
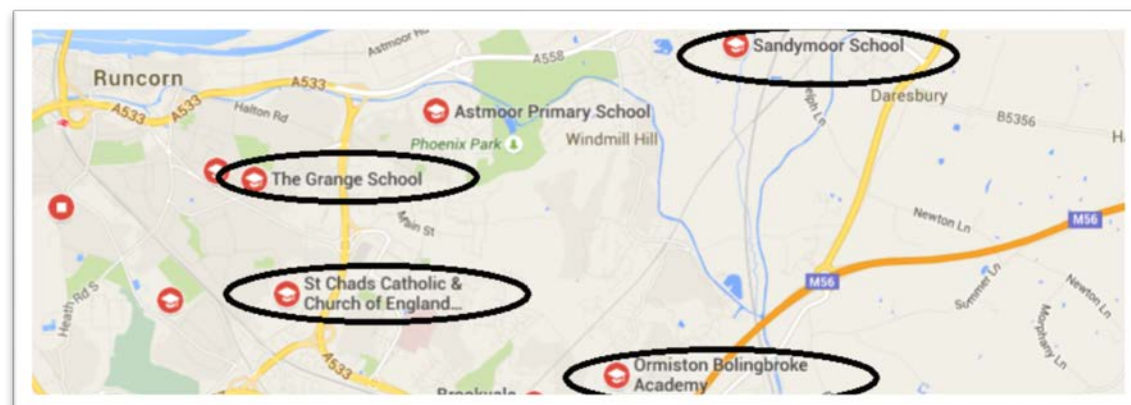
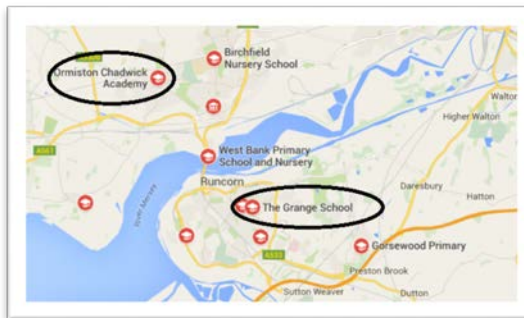
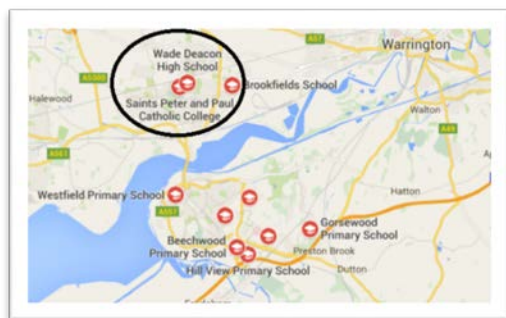
E: [gary@socialsense.co.uk](mailto:gary@socialsense.co.uk)

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

## APPENDICES

### 7.1 APPENDIX 1

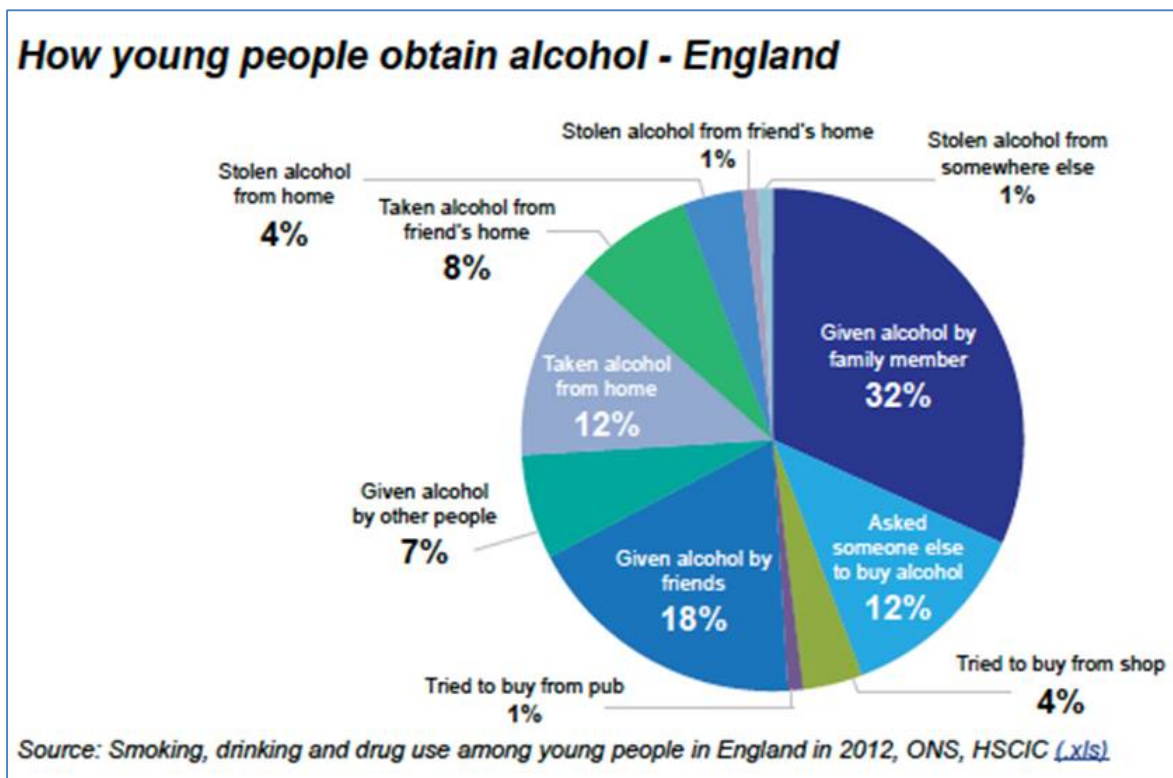
Maps of the Halton Borough Council territory (includes the towns of Runcorn and Widnes) - participating schools circled



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

### 7.2 APPENDIX 2

How young people obtain alcohol in England - Office of National Statistics findings, 2012



# PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HALTON

## 7.3 APPENDIX 3

### The Communications Summary

#### Key

Green – response from the school

\* As responses to the Parent Feedback Survey were received, this confirms engagement despite some schools not confirming that the text was sent out. Going forward, a Parent/Guardian Engagement document has been developed for schools to complete throughout the programme, the document ensures schools record when the survey is sent to parents/guardians, and how many, for all communication channels. Schools would then be able to communicate this back more easily by doing it all in one.

Halton			
School	Number of Parent Feedback Survey Links sent via text*	Number of Parent/Guardian Newsletters sent, included QR Code & web address to the survey*	Email version of the Parent/Guardian Newsletters sent to the school, included web address to the survey*
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	131 confirmed	125 sent to the school. Confirmation received that newsletters distributed	Email version sent to school
Ormiston Chadwick Academy	Intervention in Autumn 2015	Intervention in Autumn 2015	Intervention in Autumn 2015
Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College	Email record stating it was being sent but the number that were sent was never confirmed	290 sent to school. Confirmation received that newsletters distributed	Email version sent to school
Sandymoor School	Link was sent but the number that were sent was never confirmed	30 sent to the school	Email version sent to school
St Chad's High School	No confirmation received that the text was sent	135 sent to the school	Email version sent to school
The Bridge School	No confirmation received that the text was sent	40 sent to the school	Email version sent to school
The Grange School	All parents/guardians of year 9s were sent the text, approximately 130	200 sent to school. Confirmation received that all newsletters were sent out to parents/guardians	Email version sent to school
The Heath School	Unknown	220 sent to the school	Email version sent to school
Wade Deacon High School	No confirmation received that the text was sent	320 sent to the school. Confirmation received that newsletters distributed to full year group's parents/guardians	Email version sent to school