

Alcohol Everywhere

A Report by the Alcohol Action Group



Alcohol
Action Group



**Scottish
Families**

Affected by Alcohol & Drugs



Scottish Families Alcohol Action Group designed a survey to get a better idea of how widely spread alcohol messages are in our homes, communities, online spaces, and other parts of everyday life.

The survey was open for views in January/February 2021 and then again in September/October 2021. We are now comparing the findings and sharing them to help raise awareness and contribute towards creating positive actions that will reduce alcohol harm in Scotland.

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“Constant exposure to the presence of alcohol only reinforces society’s acceptance of a substance that causes health problems and addiction.”

“I think it is all around and you need to accept that it is a choice.”

What are your thoughts on the presence of alcohol in daily life since carrying out this survey?

“Crazy, given the harms it causes. There’s a collective denial going on.”

“The message that alcohol is normal and part of the fabric of daily life is harsh considering the level of harm it causes.”

“Alcohol is everywhere and seen as an OK and normal thing.”

Section 1: Introduction

1.1. About the Surveys

The Alcohol Action Group was established by Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs in December 2020 to **understand the presence of alcohol** in people's communities across Scotland. The group is open to anyone who wants to take actions to reduce alcohol harms and includes family members who are impacted by someone else's alcohol use, community members, and people working in services and organisations addressing alcohol harm.

In **January 2021** the group undertook a **survey** to understand how widely spread alcohol messages are in everyday life. The survey asked people to note down how many different references to alcohol they noticed in one day¹. People could choose how much time they spent observing the presence of alcohol as they carried out their normal daily activities. People were asked to categorise what they were seeing and then reflect generally on what they had observed.

The group chose to do a **second survey** following the main design of the first in order to create a comparative report that would show differences. Particularly as covid restrictions were easing at the time of the second survey, which was conducted in **September and October of 2021**. We retained the purpose of the original survey to understand how widely spread alcohol messages are in everyday life. In addition, in our second survey, we wanted to understand to what extent people support or oppose restrictions on certain types of alcohol marketing so that we could gather opinions that could feed into two planned **consultations**: The UK Government Labelling Consultation and The Scottish Government Marketing Consultation.

1.2. Who Took Part?

35 people completed the first survey and of the 35 people, 33 said this was not the first time that they had noticed where alcohol was present in their life and across their community. The survey was carried out across **12 local authority areas**, including East, North and South Ayrshire, Glasgow City, Edinburgh City, the Lothians, Forth Valley, Lanarkshire, Dunbartonshire, Aberdeenshire and Renfrewshire. On average, people took 1.5 hours to make their observations.

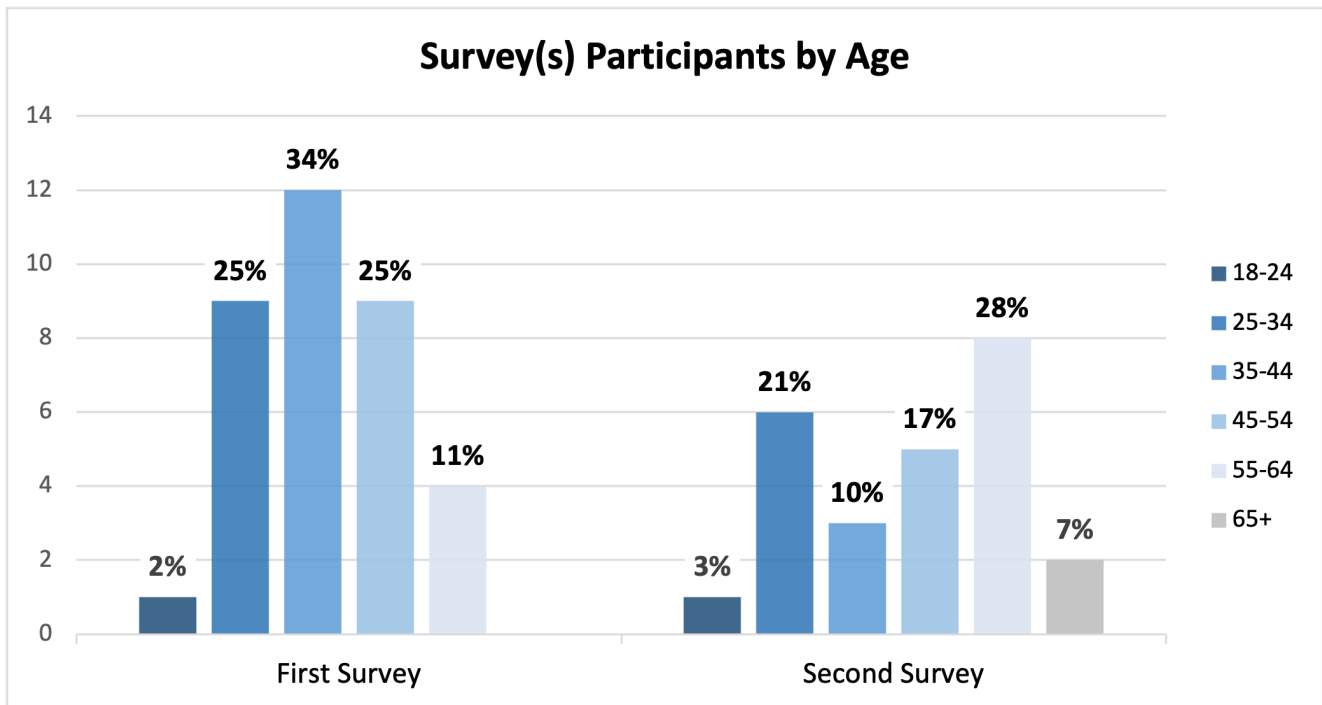
In our second survey of 2021, conducted throughout September and the first half of October, **28 people** from **12 local authority areas** in Scotland participated including Angus, Glasgow City, Fife, Dumfries and Galloway, Highland and Shetland. People from 9 additional areas participated in the second survey, meaning that across both surveys we have had responses from people in **21 of the 32 localities** in Scotland. About half of the respondents spent an hour collecting data and filling out the second survey, everyone else spent somewhere between 2 hours and throughout the course of an entire day. The survey participants included the Alcohol Action Group members and others in our networks and via social media advertising. Most of those who took part were directly affected by alcohol as individuals or family members.

Of the 35 people who participated in the first survey, 15 (**42%**) identified as family members with experience of addiction in the family and 5 (**14%**) people said they had previously

¹ By references we mean anything that includes or refers to alcohol, for e.g. an advert for an alcohol product on the television or a birthday card that asks 'what time is it? It's Gin-o'clock!'

experienced problematic alcohol or drug use. 2 (5%) people said they were actively using substances, 12 people (34%) said they were none of the above, 1 (2%) person preferred not to say and 3 (8%) identified as 'other.'

Of the 28 people who participated in the second survey, 16 (57%) identified as family members with experience of addiction in their family and 4 (14%) people said they had previously experienced problematic alcohol or drug use. 5 (17%) people said they were none of the above and 3 (10%) people preferred not to say.



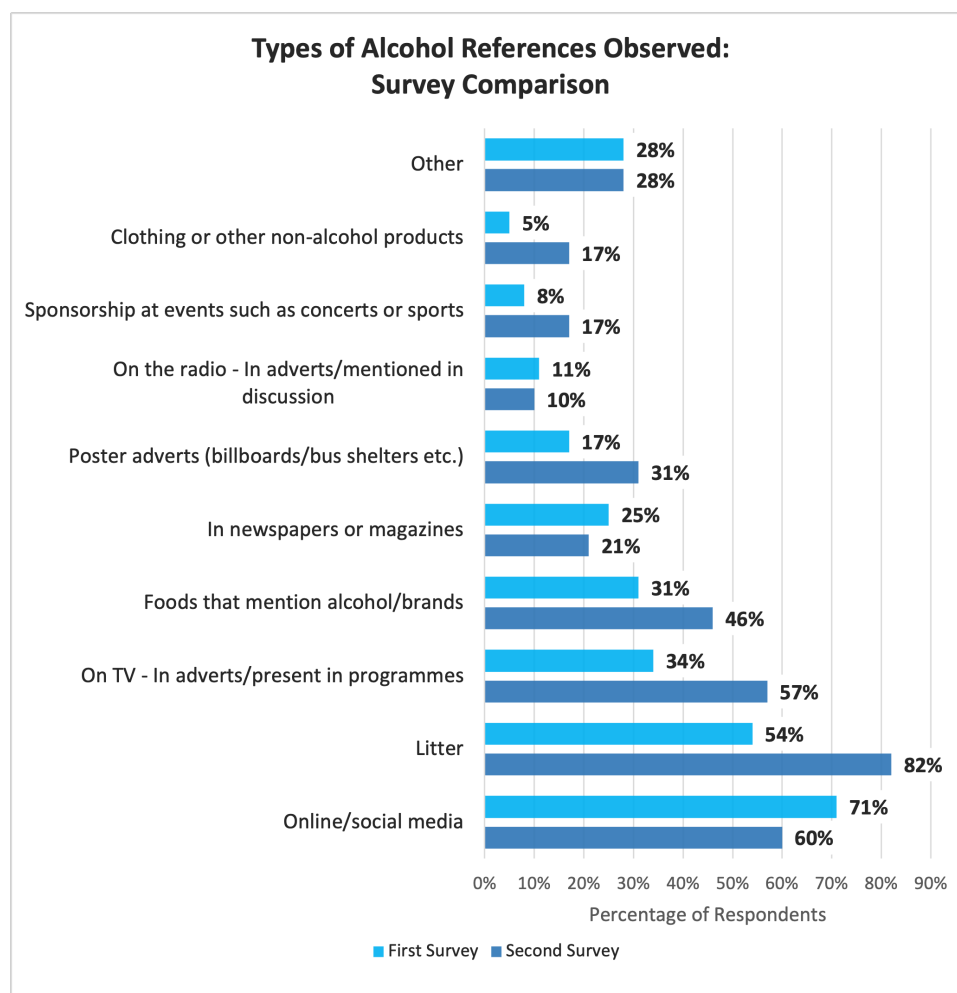
In our first survey the greatest engagement by age was the 35-44 age group, followed by those in the 25-34 age group and the 45-54 age group. Representation from people in the youngest age group was lowest both times and the AAG have agreed to take an action forward to consult on how to modify the original survey to better appeal to this age group.

Section 2: What Did People Observe?

2.1. Alcohol Observations

In the first survey, 35 people noted over 350 alcohol references. In the second survey, 28 people noticed over 199 alcohol references (some people documented the number as, for example '20 +' or 'too many to mention').

The graph below compares the categories of alcohol references observed in each survey.



The percentages in the graph show how many people observed an alcohol reference in a particular category. More than half of people who took part across both surveys saw alcohol referenced **online**, specifically on social media, and noticed alcohol-related **litter**.

It's also worth noting that higher numbers of people noted alcohol references "On TV" and in "Foods that mentioned alcohol/brands."

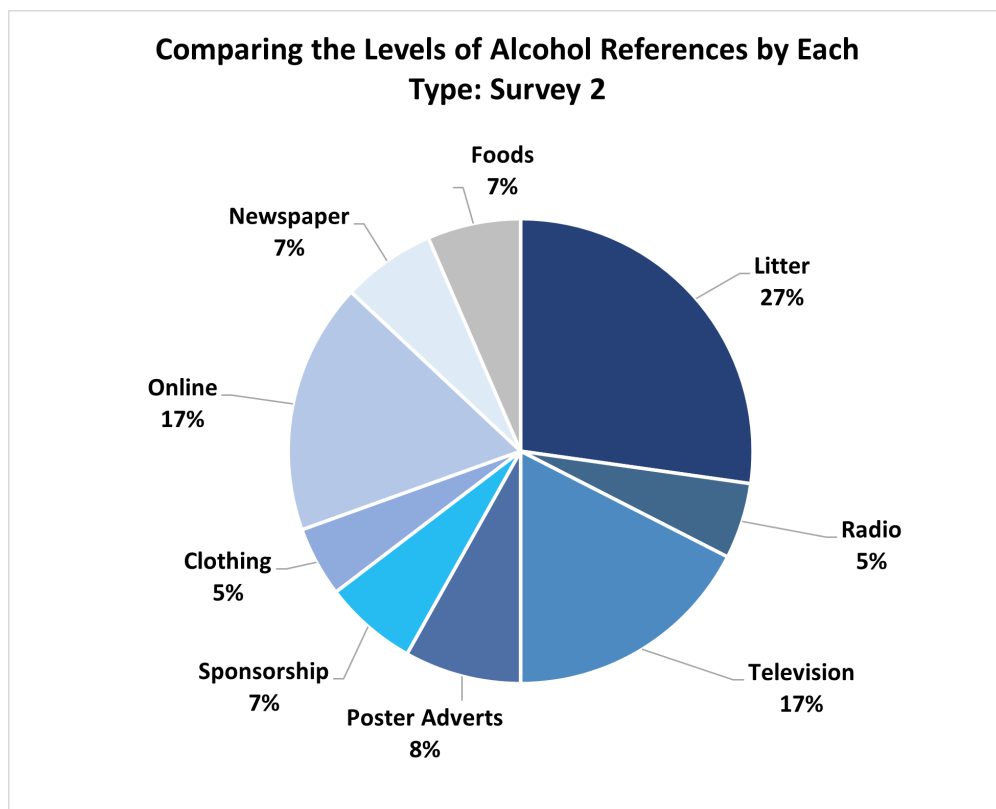
Here are some of the 'other' places people saw references to alcohol in their communities:

- At the dump, in skips and in rubbish/household waste
- Congratulations cards
- In conversation with colleagues and friends
- Emails
- Mentioned as part of teaching at university
- At shops.

We then asked people to elaborate by telling us how many of each example they had noted. This helps us understand what parts of community life are most impacted and can influence where we choose to concentrate our efforts in taking actions that help to reduce and/or raise awareness about alcohol harm.

The categories most frequently represented were:

- Litter
- Television
- Online – social media



Most people said **they were aware** of the presence of alcohol in their community before doing these surveys. Only 6% of participants in the first survey and even less (4%) in the second survey stated this was the first time they had noticed the presence of alcohol in their local area. For the first survey, 62% had been impacted by alcohol or drugs (either as a family member or as a person who has used alcohol and drugs either in the past or at present) and 71% in the second survey. It is possible these respondents could have had a greater awareness of alcohol due to their own personal experience.

“Living with someone with alcohol dependency I've been aware for a long time about the presence of alcohol in our daily lives. Particularly around things like trying to buy a birthday card/gift that doesn't reference alcohol or organising a lunch/dinner that doesn't include alcohol. I recently had a big birthday myself and I had asked friends what they would like to do, I had told them that I didn't want an event in a pub or a cocktail night etc and it was disheartening to see the response and a number of people dropping out before I had even said what I was going to do.”

Section 3: Alcohol and the Pandemic

3.1. Observations of Alcohol References Throughout the Pandemic

It is evident from the reflections people shared that **Covid-19** had an impact on the presence of alcohol and the use of alcohol in people's own lives and the lives of people around them. People talked about the intersection of **alcohol advertising** and **social media**. People also commented on the **seriousness** of alcohol and the cultural attitudes towards alcohol that diminishes the understanding and acknowledgement of harm that alcohol can cause. People remarked on the **acceptability** of alcohol consumption generally that is often trivialised through the general public's attitude toward it.

“I agree that alcohol has been mentioned a lot in memes across social media since the start of the pandemic. I've also caught myself saying “what else is there to do but drink?” On the days where I have found the lockdown deflating.”

“It's wrong, totally wrong. So many posts about home schooling and needing a drink...”

Those who completed the survey noted a difference in how they consumed advertising during the pandemic to compared to before. Things like 'joke' posts and 'memes' by friends about alcohol and coping with challenges such as home schooling and lockdown in general were said to be common on social media throughout the pandemic.

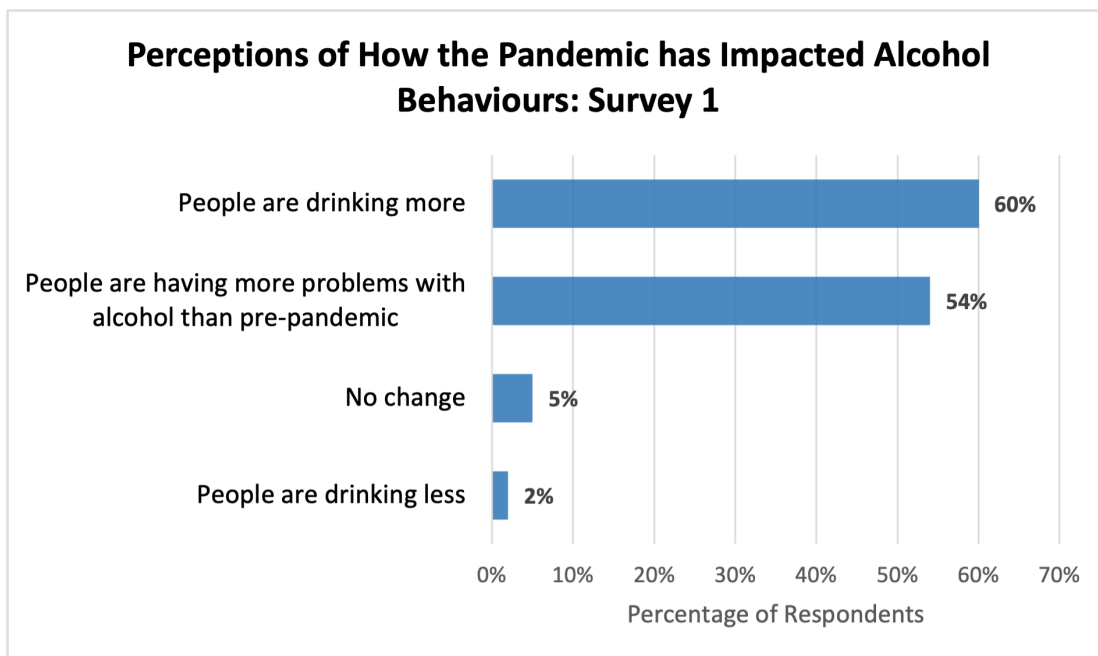
“It's becoming a habit because everywhere is shut and there is nothing else you can do during this lockdown.”

On the other hand, others did not notice this as much and thought they would have noticed more advertising or references to alcohol if they had been out in their local town centres as normal. It is important to note that an individual's online presence can determine how much or how little they see online advertisements as opposed to traditional advertisements such as billboards regardless of national lockdowns.

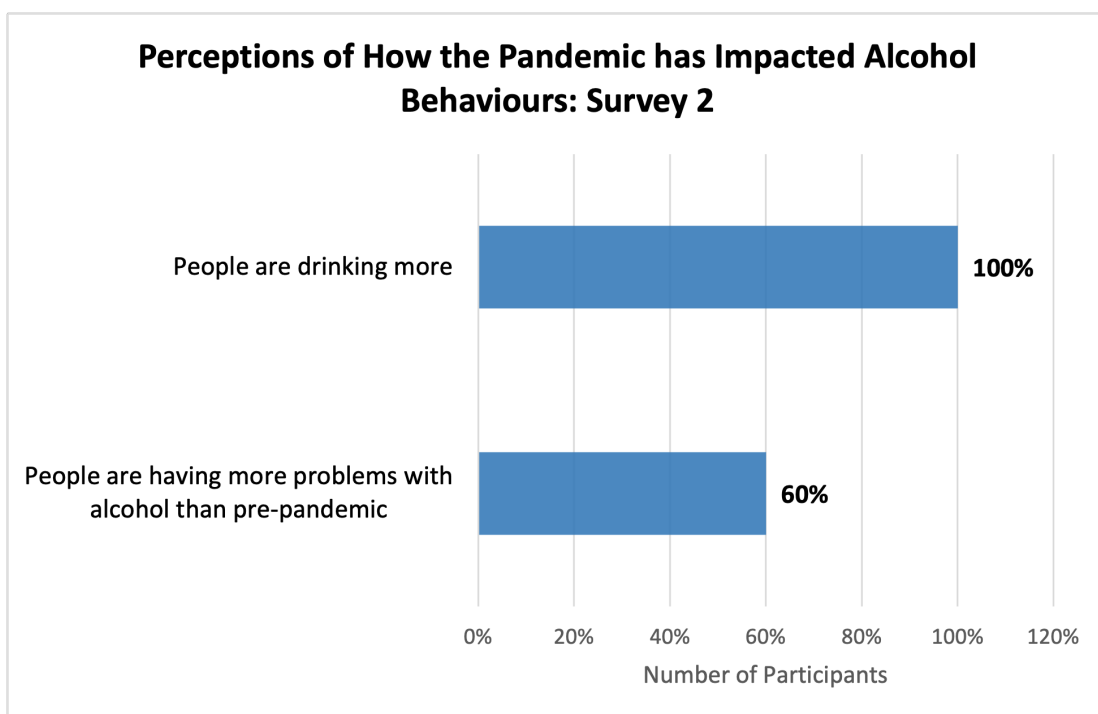
“Because of lockdown I think I might be under-estimating the prevalence. If I was in town centre, there would be more advertising.”

3.2 Perceptions of Drinking During the Pandemic

We asked participants to consider their own **perceptions** or **experiences** of how the pandemic has impacted people's behaviour in relation to alcohol. In the first survey, the majority of participants (**60%**) perceived or experienced that people were drinking more than they were pre-pandemic, with just 1 participant thinking people were drinking less.



In both surveys, a high number of participants thought that people were **drinking more** than they did pre-pandemic and that people were having **more problems** with alcohol than they did pre-pandemic. **100%** of participants in the second survey thought that people were drinking more since the beginning of the pandemic.



“The Covid pandemic had the authorities lost as what to do with alcohol dependent drinkers who had to self-isolate and the shock closure of LEAP and other alcohol services. No targeting of support for families or parents.”

“Everybody has issues and Covid has put a great strain on all our mental health.”

Further Comments about Alcohol and Covid

“I do believe that depictions of people having a healthy relationship with alcohol i.e., a glass of wine with food from a young age can make it easier to talk about when alcohol should be consumed.”

“Alcohol has definitely increased among my friends who are now drinking most nights – because they can.”

“Alcohol can be a problem for some, not all, don't punish all for a few.”

3.3. Perceptions of Drinking as Restrictions Eased

In the second survey, we also asked respondents to reflect on their own drinking and their perception of other's drinking as lockdown restrictions began to ease. The response to this question was rather mixed. Some felt that they and others were **drinking less** since the strictest lockdown measures:

“I drank more during lockdown.”

“I drink less personally now that I am no longer confined to my home and I'm able to get out and about and socialise with others again - I don't feel the need to drink to pass the time or make my night more enjoyable.”

“We were drinking more at the start of the pandemic, but our drinking patterns have pretty much returned to how they were prior to the pandemic.”

Others felt that drinking had **increased** during lockdown and had not reduced with the easing of restrictions. One comment noted the increase of people drinking alone at home, changing habits from drinking socially.

“Everyone around me still drinks excessively.”

“I do not drink but friends are drinking more often and alone.”

“People are drinking at home and often alone and drinking larger quantities.”

“During lockdown I noticed family members drinking more 'for something to do' and they have continued this pattern.”

Whilst others felt that people around them were **drinking more since restrictions were eased**, and one person noticed **no change**.

“Personally, and within my family and social circle alcohol consumption reduced during lockdown but has surged while restrictions have eased”

“I was always working throughout the pandemic, so my drinking pattern was not affected by lockdown or the release of restrictions.”

Section 4: Alcohol Marketing and Advertising

4.1. The Presence of Alcohol

In doing the survey, people were forced to consider things they may not have noticed before. Those who completed the survey said they noticed how **'in your face'** alcohol can be, and how **normalised** drinking alcohol and alcohol references are in their local communities.

“We wouldn't advertise illegal drugs the way we do alcohol, so why? Shocked at several references made to drinking in a film aimed at kids. Also shocked at myself because I noticed that discarded bottle months ago and had forgotten all about it - this might be lockdown related as I tend not to leave the house just now!”

“I did not realise how in your face alcohol is. It is very difficult to avoid, and this would be particularly so if you were trying to break the cycle. You cannot avoid it permeates every area of our town.

4.2. Alcohol Labelling

As a labelling consultation is expected from the UK Government in 2022, we wanted to understand, through our second survey, what people thought should be included as a legal requirement on alcohol labelling.

Of the 24 people who answered this question **everyone (100%) thought there should be a health warning included on labelling**, 22 (92%) people thought the **number of units** should be included, 20 (83%) people thought a **warning not to drink when pregnant or trying to conceive** was important. 18 (75%) people felt strongly that a **drink driving warning** should be included, 17 (71%) people thought **weekly low risk drinking guidelines** should be included and 15 (62.5%) people thought a **cancer warning** should be included. Exactly half (12 people) thought **nutritional information** should be included on the labelling of alcohol products.

According to research², when alcohol labels include any three health warning labels (text only, image and text, or image only), participants were least likely to select a drink that included a warning. The largest decrease in drink selection included an image, similar to the current display on tobacco packaging. There is some evidence to suggest that using similar warnings that are already in place on tobacco packaging on alcohol products could change drinking behaviours across the population. However, this evidence is currently limited and is mostly based on hypothetical situations.

“Alcohol should be advertised the way tobacco is, discreetly to reduce the temptation, especially for young and vulnerable who recognise it as glamorous.”

² Clarke, N., (2020), [Should Alcohol Packaging Display Graphic Tobacco-style Health Warning Labels?](#)

Other research suggests there is support for labelling measures such as health warnings, cancer warnings and information on contents/ingredients³. The University of Stirling study⁴ surveyed 1,360 people who drink alcohol, living in the UK, aged between 18-35. The study concluded that young adult drinkers are more likely to perceive alcohol products as “unappealing” and/or “socially unacceptable” if health warnings are prominently displayed on packaging.

4.3. Alcohol Advertising

The Scottish Government is planning a consultation that looks at alcohol marketing sometime in 2022. We wanted to ask people what changes in **advertising** they might support (Alcohol Advertising) and alongside this ask people about what changes to purchasing they might support (Access to Alcohol). To capture people’s views, we used a sliding scale function in this survey question, included in the second survey, that allowed people to indicate their support by choosing a point on a line between 0% (oppose) and 100% (very strongly support).

In terms of **restricting online advertising**, 25% of respondents were strongly supportive (between 50% and 76%) and 32% were very strongly supportive (voting 95% and higher), showing general support for this.

A high percentage of respondents were also in favour of **restricting TV advertising before the watershed (between 5.30am and 9pm)**, with 53% being very strongly supportive (voting 94% and higher with 39% voting 100%).

Restricting cinema advertising to only 18 certificate films received the highest percentage of strong support, with 68% of respondents saying they were very strongly supportive (voting 91% and higher with 50% voting 100%).

Restrictions to Sports Sponsorship received more mixed results with 21% of respondents showing no to little support (voting between 0% and 13%) but 43% of respondents being very strongly supportive (voting 89% and higher).

Restrictions to Events Sponsorship also received more mixed results with 18% of respondents showing no to little support (voting between 0% and 3%) and 32% were very strongly supportive (voting 96% and higher), the lowest level of ‘strong support’ out of all the measures discussed in the survey.

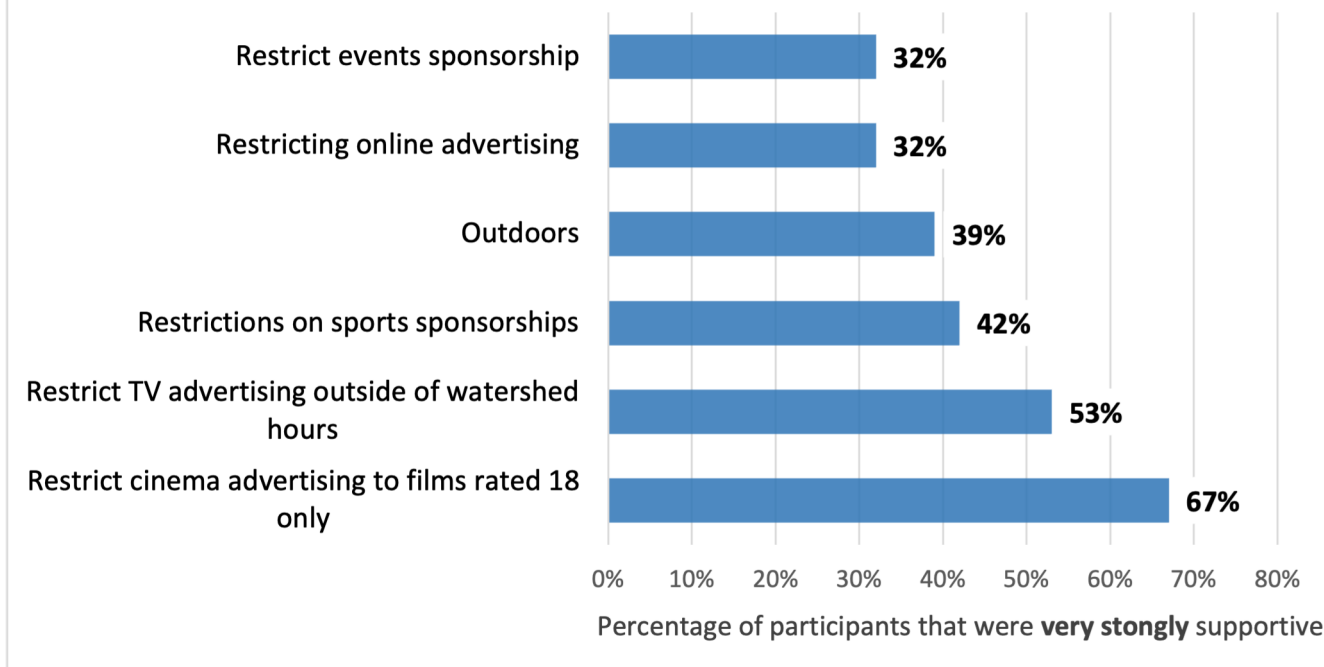
Restricting Advertising Outdoors showed similar results to sports and events sponsorships with 21% of respondents showing no to little support for this (voting between 0% and 9%) and 39% were very strongly supportive (voting 91% and higher).

Overall, those who completed the second survey were supportive of measures to restrict alcohol advertising. The most favourable were to restrict cinema advertising to films rated 18 only (**67%** very strongly supportive), restrict TV advertising outside of watershed hours (**53%** very strongly supportive), and restrictions on sports sponsorship (**41%** very strongly supportive).

³ Jones, D., (2022), ‘[Current Alcohol Labelling of Little Relevance to Young Adult Drinkers.](#)’

⁴ The University of Stirling, (2022), ‘[Prominent Health Warnings on Alcohol Products Make Drinking “Unappealing”. New Study Finds.](#)’

Support for Alcohol Advertising Measures: Survey 2



The way in which alcohol is advertised was also discussed by survey respondents, who felt advertising pushed an image of alcohol being a positive way to relax and have fun.

“There's too much advertising that promotes alcohol as a way to relax, reduce stress and have fun or as a way to reward yourself for working hard or achieving a goal. Alcohol advertising implies that social occasions/ holidays require alcoholic drinks in order to be enjoyable.”

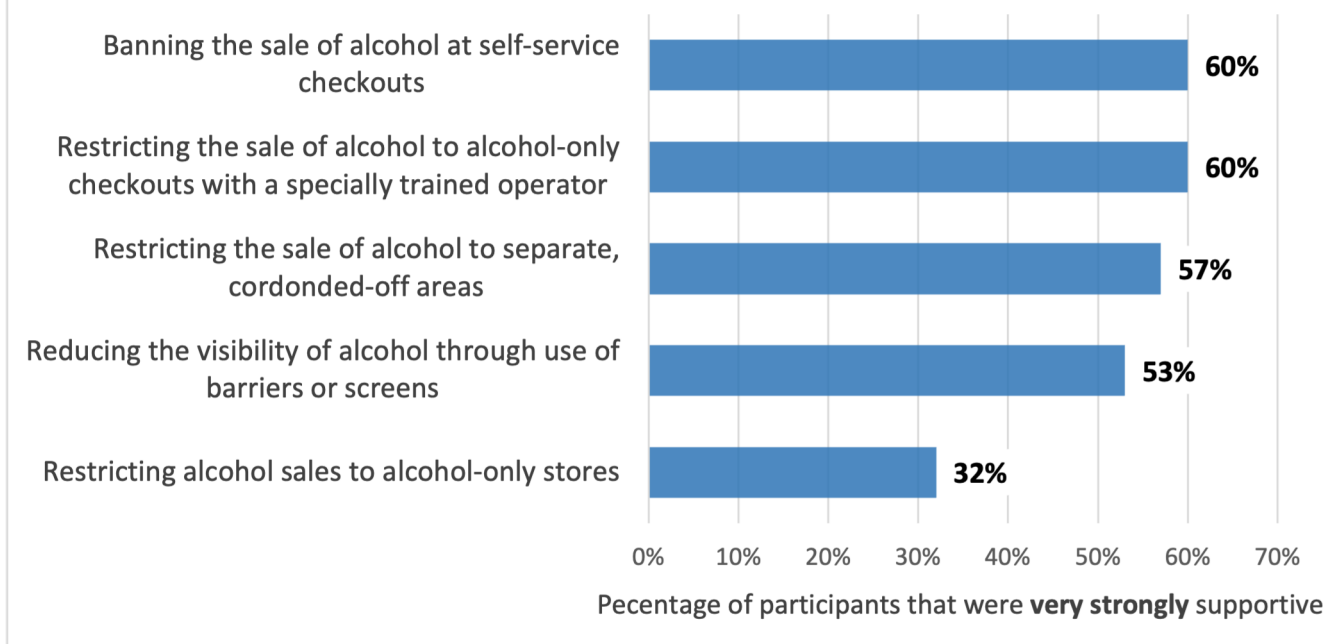
And how the names of drinks can be deceiving:

“On Buckfast bottles it is labelled as a tonic. I am sure it can be evidenced that the vast majority of consumers do not drink it for medicinal purposes!”

4.4. Access to Alcohol

Furthermore, we wanted to understand how respondents felt about access to alcohol, and if measures to reduce alcohol availability would be supported. Using the same sliding scale as the previous question, we asked participants to rate how supportive they would be on a scale of 0%-100% of the measures displayed on the chart below, showing the levels of very strong support for each measure.

Support for Alcohol Access Measures: Survey 2



The most favourable measures were banning the sale of alcohol at self-service checkouts (59% strongly supportive) and restricting the sale of alcohol to an alcohol-only check out with a specially trained operator (also 59% strongly supportive). Overall, measures to restrict access to alcohol and generally higher support than measures to restrict advertising.

4.5. Alcohol Marketing

Throughout the surveys, we provided respondents with the opportunity to leave comments and share their thoughts. We asked respondents to leave their thoughts on their perceived **prevalence of alcohol marketing**. The majority of comments reflected that alcohol is indeed everywhere and there is a sense of **normalisation** of how ingrained alcohol is in our communities.

“It’s casually slipped into film & tv in product placements; it’s never seen as an issue when alcohol is promoted and yet there would be outcry if cigarettes still had the same prevalence now as it once did. It’s strange to think we can banish the cigarettes, but alcohol is the done thing and few bat an eyelid.”

“It makes it look like alcohol is OK and normal daily life.”

“Normalises alcohol as a leisure activity for young people rather than more healthy/active leisure pursuits.”

Others felt strongly that action had to be taken to reduce or limit the way alcohol is marketed, with a handful of comments suggesting alcohol marketing should be **“banned”** altogether.

“We are on the right track by lessening the advertising, but it still has a long way to go.”

“It's terrible, manipulative and alluring.”

Some comments reflected upon the **alcohol industry**, arguing that profits are often put above consumer's health.

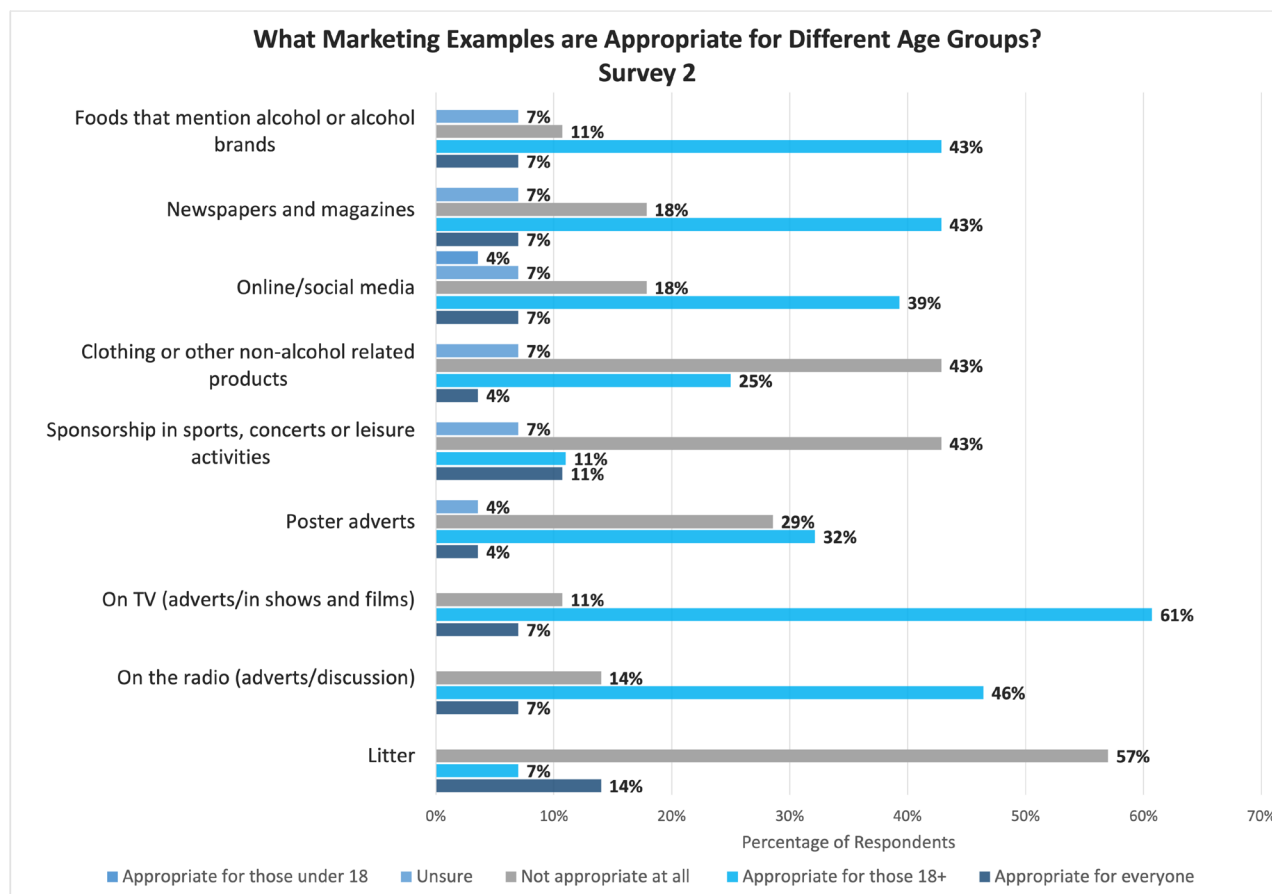
“Greed and no concern for people. As profit is main aim.”

“It's excessive, profits should not be prioritised over health and wellbeing.”

One respondent noted the rise of **alcohol-free alternatives**, as the industry seems to be placing more focus on creating and marketing their alcohol-free products. According to a YouGov survey commissioned by the Portman Group in January 2020, one in three UK drinkers (32%) now regularly choose low or no alcohol products⁵. According to Heineken UK, by early 2020, there was a 36% growth in the low and no alcohol sector, which at the time was worth around £94m⁶, showing an increase in popularity of low and alcohol-free alternatives. It is said that 30% of big brand's marketing budget now goes into 0% beer⁷.

“It's still in your face and because the market is so competitive it seems to be everywhere- one good thing is that there are many more alcohol-free options for beers and spirits.”

Following on from this, we asked respondents to reflect upon how appropriate different types of alcohol marketing are for **different age groups**. The chart below found that alcohol related litter (an unintentional form of marketing) was not appropriate at all (52%), likely due to negative general attitudes about litter.



⁵ Portman Group, (2022), 'One in three UK drinkers now regularly choose low or no alcohol products.'

⁶ Morning Advertiser, (2022), 'Low and no isn't about compromise.'

⁷ Ibid, (2022)

The majority of the other categories were deemed appropriate to those over 18, showing a strong consensus **against marketing to those who are too young to consume and purchase alcohol**. In June 2022, Alcohol Focus Scotland published a report on alcohol marketing, which included the impact on children and young people. The report outlined that exposure to alcohol marketing causes youth drinking and leads to young people beginning to drink earlier and heavier. The findings noted using sporting events and celebrities to market a product has particular influence on young people due to high exposure and an emotional connection that young people may have with a certain sport or public figure⁸. The report also highlights the retail environment as exposing children and young people early on and also brand awareness and familiarity⁹.

⁸ Alcohol Focus Scotland, (2022), 'Realising Our Rights: How to Protect People from Alcohol Marketing.'

⁹ Ibid, (2022)

Section 4: Impact of ‘Alcohol Everywhere’ on People in Recovery

We asked respondents to consider how the presence of alcohol they noted whilst undertaking the surveys may impact **people in recovery**, and if they were in recovery themselves, to share their own experiences.

“I know people talk about having freedom of choice, but the advertising of alcohol is so in your face that anyone who has alcohol problems or is in recovery never gets a break from seeing this constant push for everyone to drink alcohol.”

“It's everywhere and if you're recovering you cannot get away from it.”

Throughout this section, there was a **strong recognition** of how **difficult** it is to **avoid** alcohol throughout our daily lives, and how difficult this must be for people in recovery and their families. From advertising, to going to a supermarket, to buying a card, to social media, it was noted there is little escape from alcohol while doing everyday tasks. Responses also highlighted how alcohol is perceived to be the ultimate way to have fun and socialise, again adding challenges to everyday circumstances.

Research in Scotland found that by that those in recovery often face **environmental triggers** and the “persistent availability and marketing of alcohol” is “the largest place-based risk that they face.”¹⁰ A 2022 Alcohol Focus Scotland report discussed an analysis of advertising case studies which found that alcohol companies target those who may already be drinking at high-levels.¹¹ Furthermore, a focus group held in February 2022 with people in recovery found that most participants noticed alcohol advertisements at least 5 times a day.¹² The Alcohol Focus Scotland report concluded that “marketing effects have the potential to translate into increased alcohol use.”¹³

“I am in recovery and am annoyed that the message conveyed is that alcohol = fun. This message makes it very hard for young people to get and then stay in recovery.”

“Alcohol is everywhere, in our local corner shops, supermarkets etc. it makes shopping a hazard for someone in recovery.”

“It must be so difficult to try and control or abstain from drinking with the level of advertising there is in Scotland.”

¹⁰ Shortt, N. K., Rhynas, S. J., & Holloway, A., (2017), Place and Recovery from Alcohol Dependence: A Journey Through Photovoice, Health & Place, 47, pp. 147-155, Alcohol Focus Scotland, (2020), Alcohol Marketing and its Impact, p. 3.

¹¹ Alcohol Focus Scotland, (2022), ‘[Realising Our Rights: How to Protect People from Alcohol Marketing.](#)’

¹² Alcohol Focus Scotland, (2022), ‘[Realising Our Rights: How to Protect People from Alcohol Marketing.](#)’ – Focus group with people attending a mutual aid recovery group conducted by We Are With You in Glasgow, February 2022.

¹³ Alcohol Focus Scotland, (2022), ‘[Realising Our Rights: How to Protect People from Alcohol Marketing.](#)’

The sheer level of marketing, advertising and simply the presence of alcohol in our daily lives was highlighted. Respondents noted how it could be difficult to do something as 'normal' as go to a supermarket for essentials and be faced with alcohol.

“If I have noticed the prevalence of alcohol advertising and do not have a problem with alcohol consumption, I can only imagine that it must be very testing for people who are struggling with alcohol or are in recovery.”

There were reflections on **stigma** in relation to drugs and alcohol, and how alcohol is viewed compared to other substances. There was comment on how our society acts towards alcohol, which downplays its seriousness.

“It helps create a false sense of seriousness - people tend to look at differently at those who drink compared to those who use [other] substances. The two often go hand in hand yet when establishing a problem - binge drinking for example is often thought of as being "okay" because an individual isn't your stereotypical drinking constantly. The belief that you are "functioning" despite the alcohol levels in your system is scary because it stops people being able to consider their consumption as problematic.”

“I'm in recovery and find it really irritating when I get alcohol adverts on social media. Feels very intrusive. No longer triggering, but unwelcome.”

100% of survey participants said they do not think it is essential to drink alcohol to have a good time.

“Definitely not. I am living proof. My life is infinitely brighter without it. I still enjoy music gigs in pubs even though I'm in recovery from problematic substance use.”

People also said they thought that the point of view that drinking alcohol was essential to have a good time was a “very **outdated** point of view”, and another person reflected, “but that is a cultural message we hear all the time.”

Section 5: Key Findings

Both surveys uncovered respondents' thoughts and feelings around alcohol's presence in our communities, alcohol marketing, advertising and labelling, and their perceptions of alcohol use during the pandemic. The **key findings** of this report are as follows:

1. When looking for alcohol references, survey respondents noted a **large number** over a relatively short time (over 350 between 35 people in the first survey, and over 199 between 28 people in the second survey). This shows just how present alcohol is everywhere in our communities.
2. Alcohol advertising and references to alcohol are extremely prevalent **online** and on **social media**, with the majority of respondents seeing references online in the first survey.
3. Alcohol-related content **online** was particularly observed during the **first full lockdown**, with a large number of jokes and memes being recalled by participants across social media during that time.
4. **Alcohol-related litter** is commonplace in our communities, being the second most spotted reference to alcohol in the first survey, and the most spotted reference in the second survey.
5. Alcohol-references were noted from other **daily tasks**, such as in conversations, in emails, whilst at the shops and on TV.
6. Survey respondents noted that alcohol is very much '**in your face**' wherever you go.
7. In the first survey, **60%** of respondents perceived or experienced that people were **drinking more than pre-pandemic**, and **100%** of respondents in the second survey agreed.
8. Opinions differed on the **impact of the easing of lockdown restrictions** on the consumption of alcohol, with some participants perceiving that people were **drinking less** than in the height of lockdown, while others thought people were **drinking more** as restrictions eased. Others noted no change, while an increase of **drinking alone** at home was highlighted.
9. There was **very strong** support for alcohol labelling measures. Over 75% of respondents supported health warnings, number of units, warnings around drinking when pregnant or trying to conceive and a drink driving warning to be included on alcohol labels.
10. There was **strong** support (between 40% and 70%) for other alcohol labelling measures, including a cancer warning, nutritional information and weekly low risk drinking guidelines.
11. In terms of alcohol advertising, the most supported measure (65% of respondents strongly supportive) was to **restrict cinema advertising** to films rated 18 only.
12. **Restricting TV advertising** outside of watershed hours was also moderately supported (51% of participants strongly supportive).

13. In terms of access to alcohol, the most supported measures were to introduce a **ban on the sale of alcohol at self-service checkouts** and to introduce **alcohol-only checkouts** with a specially trained operator (59% of respondents strongly agreed with both measures).
14. **Restricting the visibility of alcohol** through the use of alcohol barriers or screens also had support (51% of respondents were strongly supportive).
15. A small handful of comments suggested alcohol marketing should be banned altogether.
16. Respondents reflected on the influence of the **alcohol industry**, noting that profit is often placed above public health.
17. The **rise in the alcohol-free drinks market** was noted by respondents, as the alcohol industry has increased production and marketing of alcohol-free alternatives.
18. The vast majority of respondents were **against** the marketing of alcohol to those **under the age of 18** (legal age to purchase and consume alcohol).
19. There was a strong recognition that the presence of alcohol in our communities is **difficult to avoid**, and the difficulties this can cause for **people in recovery**.
20. Participants discussed the **stigma** surrounding both alcohol and drugs, and how often the public view of alcohol can be vastly different to the public view of other substances.
21. Alcohol is **downplayed**, normalised and not taken as seriously as drug use.
22. 100% of survey participants in the second survey said they **do not** think it is essential to drink alcohol to have a good time.

What is next for the Alcohol Action Group?

Broadly our goals within the next year are:

- Sharing the Findings
- Influencing Change

Some of the ways we plan to do this include:

- Publishing this report and sharing it widely
- Creating graphics for our Twitter Channel
- Contribute to upcoming UK Labelling Consultation and Scottish Government Marketing Consultation
- Lobbying Members of Parliament to take action to reduce alcohol harm
- Modifying this survey in order to get the views of young people
- Creating other content – blog posts, podcasts, etc.

Interested in being part of the Alcohol Action Group?

Do you have experience of living with a family member or friend who uses alcohol to problematic levels? Are you interested in exploring the presence of alcohol in everyday life and across your community? If so, we would like you to get involved!

Email susie@sfad.org.uk or rebeccamc@sfad.org.uk to find out more.

You can follow us on Twitter for updates on the Group's activities on [@AlcSFAD](https://twitter.com/AlcSFAD).



Alcohol Everywhere
A Report from the Alcohol Action Group
September 2022

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

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