

Hull Adult Health and Wellbeing Survey Summary: Alcohol and Drugs

December 2019

Background

Earlier this year, more than 4,000 Hull residents aged 16 years and older belonging to groups representative of the local population were surveyed about health and lifestyle behaviours. Between March and June, interviewers knocked on doors and asked residents if they would be willing to take part in the comprehensive survey. Participants were left to complete forms in their own time, with interviewers returning to collect them on an agreed date. The response rate was 76 per cent.

Alcohol and drugs and why it matters

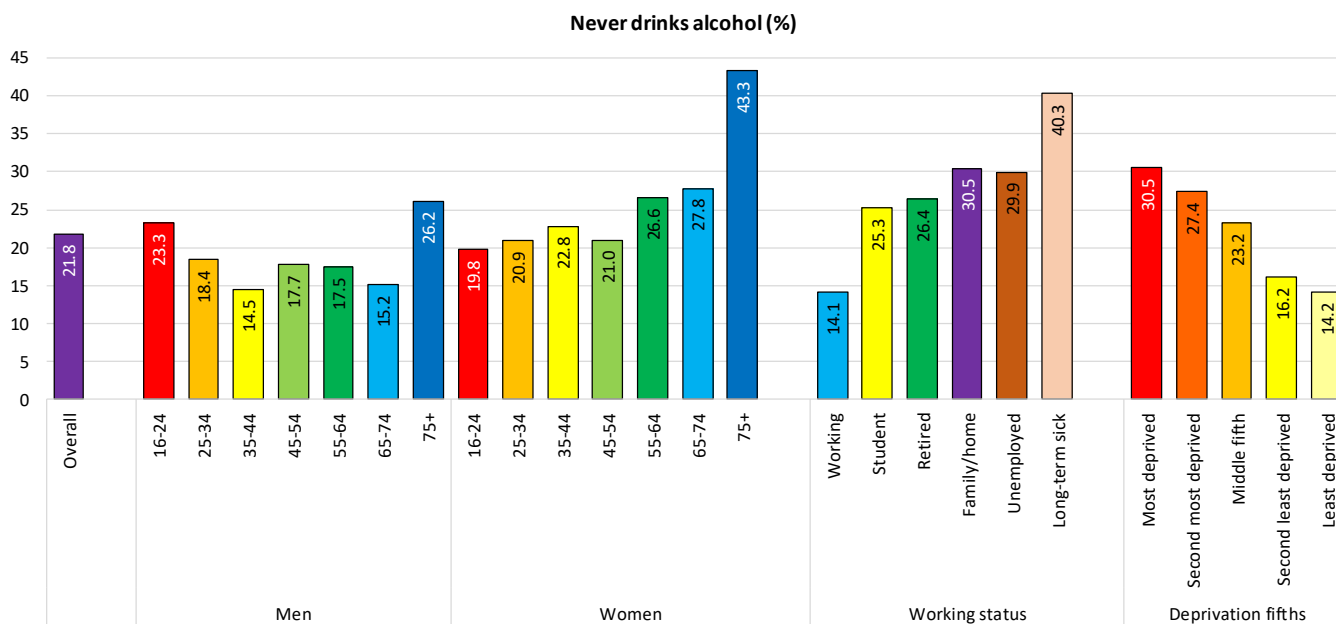
- Excess alcohol is a risk factor for a number of cancers, liver disease, cardiovascular disease, and can also lead to fatal alcohol poisoning as well as a range of other short-term effects such as injuries from accidents and violence, hangovers, memory loss, etc. It can also significantly affect families, and the wider economy and community.
- There are around 2,000 alcohol-related admissions to hospital and 150 alcohol-related deaths every year in Hull including over 30 deaths specifically related to alcohol. It is estimated that the cost of harmful use of alcohol costs the NHS in England around £3.5 billion a year. However, there are further sizeable costs to the police and economy, and other non-financial costs to society in general (£21 billion a year).
- Drug misuse and dependency can lead to a range of harms for the user including poor physical and mental health, increased risk of premature death, unemployment, homelessness, family breakdown and criminal activity. Drug misuse impacts on all those around the user and the wider society. The Home Office estimated that in 2010/11 that the cost of illicit drug user in the UK was £10.7 billion per year.

Key Health and Wellbeing Survey findings

- 22 per cent never drank alcohol but women, those aged 75+ years and people living in the most deprived areas of Hull were much more likely to never drink alcohol. Across all of Hull, 32 per cent had displayed behaviours related to alcohol that were potentially harmful (too much alcohol over the week, binge drinking or a high Fast Alcohol Screening Tool score). The prevalence was highest among men aged under 75 years, women aged 16-24 and 45-54 years, people who were working or students, and people living in the least deprived areas of Hull.
- Overall, 4.5 per cent had used drugs other than those required for medical reasons 'everyday', 'weekly' or 'monthly' with 8.3 per cent having used them in the last year. Monthly usage was much higher among men, people aged 16-24 years, people living in the most deprived areas of Hull, and people who were unemployed or not working due to long-term illness or disability.

Frequency of drinking alcohol

Just over one in five people never drank alcohol and this was higher among people aged 75+ years particularly women, people who were not working due to long-term sickness and disability, and people living in the most deprived areas of Hull. People in Central (34 per cent), Orchard Park and St Andrew's & Docklands (both 31 per cent) were the most likely to never drink alcohol, whereas people living in Kingswood (12 per cent), Beverley & Newland (13 per cent) and Holderness (14 per cent) were the least likely to do so.



Overall, half of men aged 45-74 years stated they usually drank alcohol every week with around four in ten men aged 35-44 and 75+ years, people who were working, and people living in the least deprived two-fifths of areas of Hull also doing so. The highest prevalence of women drinking alcohol was among the 45-54 year age group where 36 per cent drank alcohol every week. People in Avenue (50 per cent), Beverley & Newland (43 per cent) and Sutton (40 per cent) were the most likely to drink alcohol at least once a week.

Among all responders, 48 per cent had drunk alcohol the previous week and this was around 60 per cent or higher among men aged 35-74 years, people who were working and people living in the least deprived fifth of areas of Hull. Residents of Avenue (63 per cent) and Kingswood (61 per cent) were the most likely to have drunk alcohol the previous week.

Drinking over recommended weekly units

It is recommended that people do not exceed 14 units of alcohol in a week, and spread any drinking out throughout the week with several alcohol-free days. Over one-third of men aged 35-64 years, and one-quarter or more of men aged 16-34 and 65-74 years, people who were working and people living in the least deprived fifth of area of Hull had drunk more than 14 units the previous week. Residents of Pickering (29 per cent), Holderness (28 per cent) and Avenue (28 per cent) were the most likely to have exceeded 14 units the previous week.

Overall, 8.4 per cent had exceeded 28 units the previous week, but this was considerably higher among men aged 16-24 (14 per cent), 35-44 (15 per cent), 45-54 (17 per cent) and 55-64 years (18 per cent). Residents of Beverley & Newland and Drypool (both 12 per cent) and Pickering (11 per cent) were the most likely to have exceeded 28 units the previous week.

Types of alcoholic drinks consumed by those who had drunk the previous week

The types of drinks consumed differed by age and gender. Of those who had drunk alcohol the previous week, almost nine in ten had drunk beer, lager, ale, stout or cider, 28 per cent had drunk wine (although higher among men aged 35-64 years), 2.1 per cent had drunk sherry, port or martini (highest among those aged 16-24 years at 4.0 per cent and decreasing with age), and 35 per cent had drunk spirits. Young men who had drunk alcohol the previous week were much more likely to have drunk spirits (52 per cent) compared to those aged 35-44 (38 per cent) and 75+ years (13 per cent), and other age groups (around one-third). Of the women who had drunk alcohol during the previous week, just under a half had drunk beer, lager, ale, stout or cider (although lower among 65+ years), 52 per cent had drunk wine (42 per cent among 16-24s and 75+ years, around 50 per cent among 25-34 and 45-54 years, and around 60 per cent for other age groups), 3.6 per cent had drunk sherry, port or martini (highest among 75+ years at 9.8 per cent, 16-24s at 7.3 per cent and 65-74s at 6.3 per cent), and 44 per cent had drunk spirits with a considerable difference by age (79 per cent among 16-24s, 52 per cent for 25-34s and reducing gradually with age to 24 per cent among women aged 75+ years).

Binge drinking

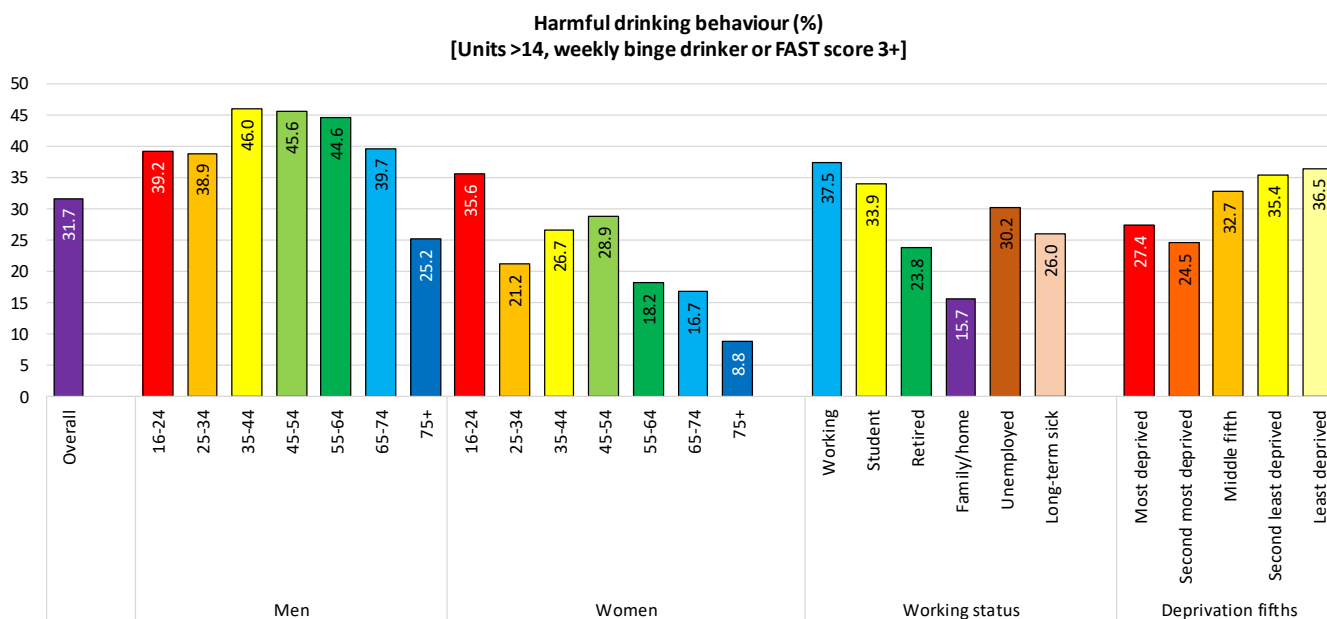
It is recommended that people spread any drinking over the week and have several alcohol-free days. The survey asked how frequently people drank 6+ units of alcohol on a single occasion. People who did this at least once a week were defined as 'binge drinkers'. One third of men aged 45-54 years drank 6+ units on a single occasion at least once a week as did around 30 per cent of men aged 55-64 years and one quarter of men aged 35-44 years. Women were much less likely to do so with the highest percentage those aged 45-54 years (at 19 per cent). The percentage was higher among people living in the least deprived fifth of areas of Hull (23 per cent) compared to the most deprived fifth of areas of Hull (17 per cent). People living in Pickering (28 per cent), Avenue (24 per cent) and West Carr (22 per cent) were the most likely to binge drink weekly.

High risk behaviour

However, the pattern of high risk was slightly different for having a high Fast Alcohol Screening Test* with the prevalence also high among those aged 45-54 years (37 per cent among men and 24 per cent among women), but additionally high among those aged 16-24 years (35 per cent among women and 31 per cent among men). Furthermore, whilst there was a significant trend by deprivation (29 per cent among least deprived fifth compared to 20 per cent among second most deprived fifth) it was slightly higher for the most deprived fifth (24 per cent) compared to the second most deprived fifth. Residents of Avenue (36 per cent), Pickering and Beverley & Newland (both 33 per cent), University and Sutton (both 30 per cent) were the most likely to have a high FAST score.

Overall summary of harmful drinking behaviour

In summary, 32 per cent displayed harmful behaviours with regard to alcohol consumption. This was considerably higher among men under 75 years, women aged 16-24 years, and higher among people living in the least deprived area of Hull. Residents of Avenue (42 per cent), Pickering (40 per cent), Beverley & Newland (39 per cent), Sutton (38 per cent) and University (37 per cent) were the most likely to display harmful behaviours in relation to alcohol.



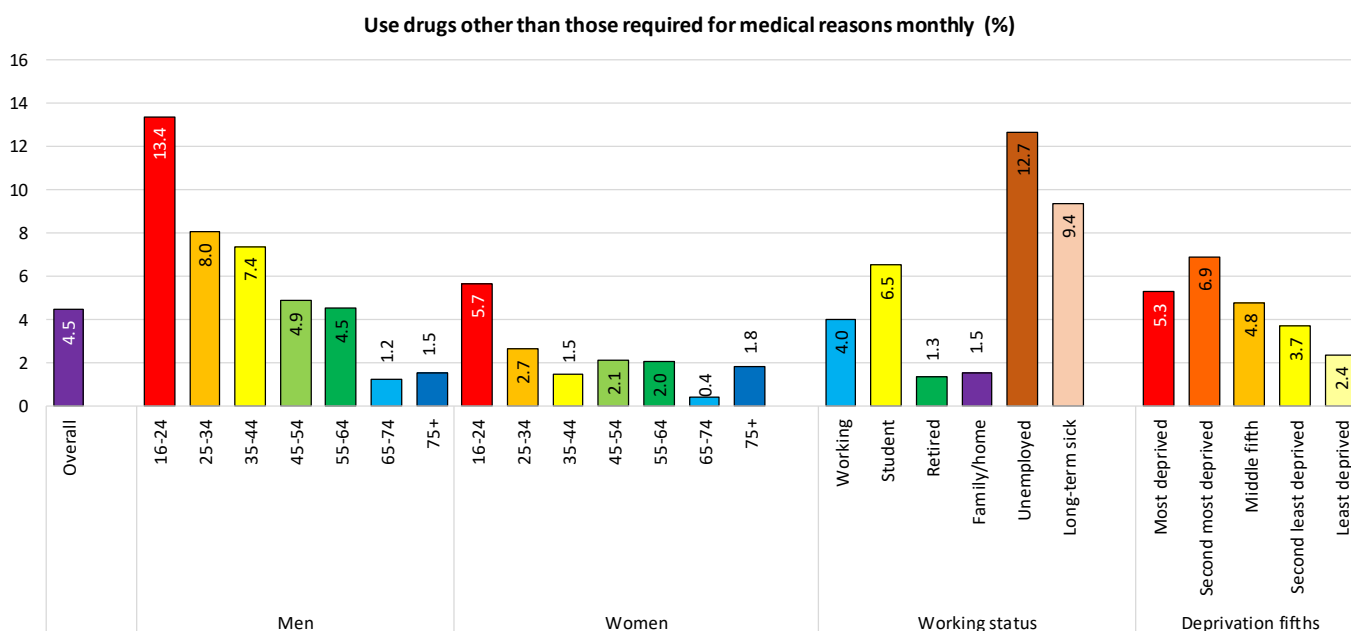
Across all of Hull, 45,450 never drink alcohol and 71,750 usually drink alcohol at least once a week. Around 100,000 adults in Hull had drunk alcohol the previous week including 42,800 who had drunk more than 14 units (including 17,500 who had drunk more than 28 units and including 7,000 who had drunk more than 50 units). Around 39,450 usually drink 6+ units on a single occasion at least once a week. Around 2,000 adults fail to do what is normally expected of them because of their drinking on a weekly basis, around 3,300 are unable to remember what happened the night before because of their drinking on a weekly basis, 13,650 adults have had a relative, friend, doctor or other health professional who have been concerned about their drinking or suggested they cut down (including 6,950 who have been told this within the last year). Overall, 54,050 adults in Hull had a high FAST score including 6,450 who had a score of 8-16. In total, it is estimated that 66,250 adults display harmful drinking behaviour (more than 14 units previous week, usually binge drink weekly and/or a high FAST score).

Trends over time

It is not possible to compare harmful drinking over time across the local surveys as the questions have changed to reflect the changing strength of alcoholic drinks and changes in national guidelines. Nevertheless, it is possible to examine frequency of drinking and to some extent the number of alcoholic units consumed. More people in Hull are never drinking alcohol (17 per cent in 2003 compared to 22 per cent in 2019) and those that drink are drinking less frequently (45 per cent drinking at least once a week in 2003 compared to 34 per cent in 2019) and also fewer alcoholic units (8.4 per cent drinking more than 14 units in 2003 compared to 6.8 per cent in 2019). Nevertheless, the addition of the FAST screening questions has revealed new information relating to young adults in Hull.

Frequency of using drugs other than those used for medical reasons

Overall, 4.5 per cent stated they used drugs other than those required for medical reasons 'everyday' (2.2 per cent), 'weekly' (1.5 per cent) or 'monthly' (0.8 per cent), although it was considerably higher among men aged 16-24 years at 13 per cent. People who were unemployed (13 per cent) or not working due to long-term illness or disability (9 per cent) also had a high rate of usage. There was also a trend across the deprivation fifths with a higher percentage using drugs other than those required for medical reasons monthly among those living in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas of Hull. Residents of St Andrew's & Docklands (9.2 per cent), Beverley & Newland (7.6 per cent) and Newington & Gipsyville (6.7 per cent) had the highest prevalence of usage monthly. Overall, 8.3 per cent had used drugs in the last year, and this equates to around 17,350 adults across Hull (9,300 people using them monthly including 7,600 using drugs weekly).



The impact for Hull

Whilst slightly more people are never drinking alcohol, and among those that do drink alcohol, they are drinking alcohol less frequently and fewer alcoholic units, there is substantial concern about the levels of harmful drinking behaviour particularly among men aged under 75 years with around 40 per cent or more displaying harmful drinking behaviour, and among women aged 16-24 (36 per cent) and 45-54 years (29 per cent). In the 2019 survey for the first time, questions around the frequency of failing to do what was expected and not remembering what happened the night before was included, and this picked up differences in harmful drinking behaviour among different groups. Men particularly middle aged men and people living in the least deprived areas of Hull have high levels of excessively weekly alcohol and/or regular binge drinking, but to a lesser extent fail to do what was normally expected of them or are unable to remember the night before. However, people (including students) aged 16-24 years particularly women are drinking excessively and binge drinking to a lesser extent, but they are failing to do what was normally expected of them or are unable to remember the night before on a regular basis.

Further information

Further survey reports and a copy of the questionnaire are available on request. Please contact us at PublicHealthIntelligence@hullcc.gov.uk for more information.

* FAST was designed as a screening tool for use within the emergency setting such as A&E. People are assigned a score based on the frequency of (i) drinking 6+ units on a single occasion; (ii) failing to do what was expected of them because of their drinking; and (iii) being unable to remember what happened the night before because of drinking, and if a relative, friend, doctor or other health worker had been concerned about their drinking or suggested they cut down (in last year or not, or never). Anyone with a score of three or more is deemed to be at risk of harmful drinking and should be asked to complete the full Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Tool. Anyone stating they drink 6+ units on a single occasion at least once a week would have a score of three or more.