

**Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore,
Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection**

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 January 2018
Subject:	Alcohol related Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Related Violence in Lincolnshire

Summary:

This report provides information on alcohol related violence and alcohol related anti-social behaviour in Lincolnshire and the measures undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership to address these issues.

Actions Required:

Members of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the contents of this report and review the response to alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour within the county.

1. Background

Alcohol related community safety issues are less straightforward to quantify than individual types of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). This is because the presence of alcohol is not always easy to identify or record on agency systems. Thus a range of different methodologies need to be applied in order to identify whether alcohol was likely to have been involved in a community safety incident.

The Substance Misuse Strategic Management Board (SMSMB), which forms part of the Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership (LCSP), predominately leads all activity in response to alcohol related crime and ASB in Lincolnshire.

2. Current trends

Although Q2 2017-18 Council Business Plan targets for alcohol-related violent crime and alcohol-related ASB have been missed, there is growing evidence that alcohol may be declining in its significance as a driver of crime and disorder in Lincolnshire.

During Q2 2017-18 alcohol-related violent crime increased by 38% compared to the same quarter in the previous year. Meanwhile alcohol-related ASB fell by 10%.

Both of these Council Business Plan indicators are currently missing the year to date target for a 5% reduction on the year before.

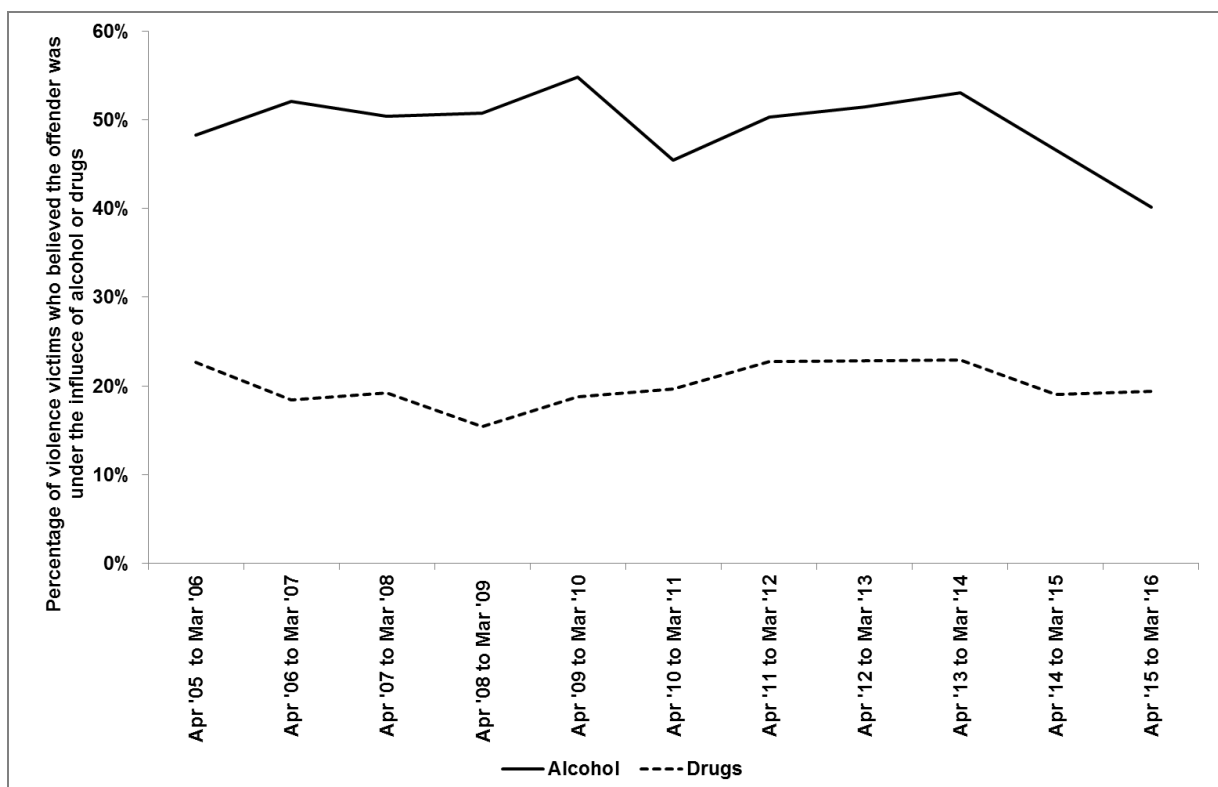
Part of the reason for the increase in alcohol-related violent crime can be attributed to the increase in the rate at which all types of violent crime are being recorded by the police. This is a national trend that has been noted by the Office for National Statistics.¹ Since police forces were inspected for the quality of their crime recording by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), the number of violent crimes recorded by the police has been on a long term rise. The HMIC review concluded that, across England and Wales, an estimated 1 in 3 violent offences were incorrectly not recorded as crimes. The drive to improve crime recording practices across the police service has therefore had the effect of increasing the number of violent crimes that the police record. The increase in violent crime and alcohol-related violent crime is therefore not necessarily indicative of a rise in actual violence.

It should also be noted that violent crime has been increasing at a faster rate than alcohol-related violent crime. Since violent crime levels began to rise in 2015, overall violence has increased by 42%, while alcohol-related violence has only increased by 19%. This would suggest that alcohol is declining in its importance as a driver of violent crime in Lincolnshire.

Similarly to the alcohol-related violent crime figures, alcohol-related ASB figures are also influenced by changes to the way that overall ASB is recorded by the police. While overall ASB has increased by nearly 10% in Q1 and Q2, alcohol-related ASB has remained unchanged (as the decreases in alcohol-related ASB noted in Q2 have cancelled out the increases noted in Q1). This would again suggest that alcohol is declining in its importance as a driver of the current increase in police recorded ASB in Lincolnshire.

National data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) offers further corroboration that alcohol may be declining as a factor in violent crime. CSEW data suggests that the proportion of violent assaults where the victim perceived the offender to be under the influence of alcohol has reduced in recent years, although the trend for those assaults perceived to be drug-related has remained relatively static (see graph below).

¹ For a full explanation of this national trend see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2016/overviewofviolentcrimeandsexualoffences>



Proportion of victims of violence who believed that their offender was under the influence of alcohol or drugs, Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2005 – 2016

Trends in alcohol and drug related violence may be linked to overall trends in alcohol consumption and drug use. Information from the CSEW and the Office for National Statistics suggests that alcohol consumption has started to fall in recent years, especially in the 16-24 age group. This decline appears to be driven in part by an increase in teetotalism in this age group.² Meanwhile, drug use in the adult population has remained relatively static. Since 2005 between 4% and 6% of the adult population have taken some form of illicit drug in the last month.³ This would equate to between 16,000 and 24,000 people in Lincolnshire (assuming that prevalence in England and Wales is comparable to prevalence in Lincolnshire). This can be compared to the estimated prevalence of those who are drinking at levels harmful to their health of 106,000 people, those who are drinking at harmful or higher risk levels of 25,000 and those who are alcohol dependent of 17,000 people.⁴

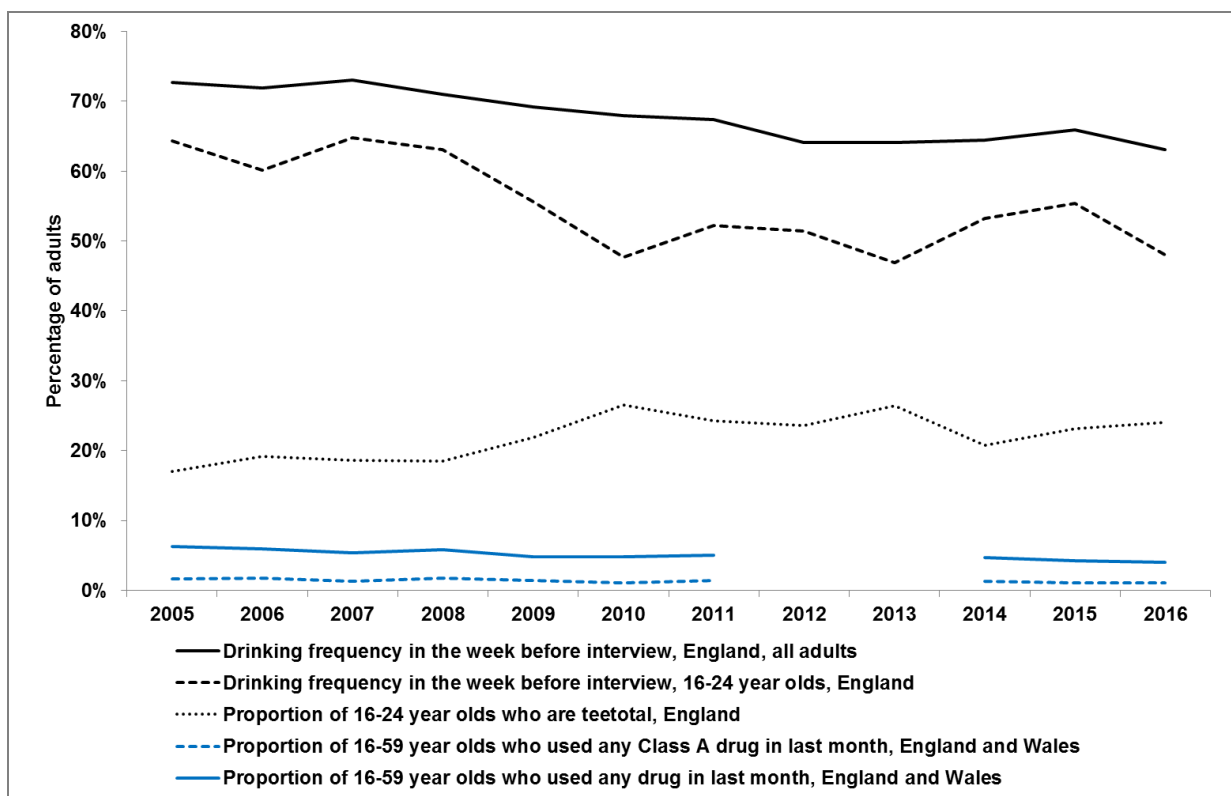
² Adult drinking habits in England, ONS

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/drugusealcoholandsmoking/datasets/adultdrinkinghabitsinengland>

³ Drug misuse: findings from the 2015 to 2016 CSEW second edition, Home Office

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2015-to-2016-csew>

⁴ <http://www.research-lincs.org.uk/jsna-Alcohol.aspx>



Prevalence of alcohol and drug use within the adult population, Office for National Statistics and Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2005 – 2016

Despite this long term trend, alcohol does continue to be factor in a high proportion of offences, while drunken and rowdy behaviour in public places remains a concern for a significant minority of the public. Alcohol and drug related issues continue to be perceived as a fairly or very big problem by a relatively high minority of respondents to the 2016 LCSP survey of Lincolnshire residents' experience and views of community safety issues.⁵ People being drunk or rowdy in public places and people dealing or using drugs was perceived to be a problem in the local area of 1 in 3 respondents to the survey. Unfortunately there is no trend data available for this survey, so it is unclear if these figures represent a change in perception from recent years.

3. Response

A series of measures have been undertaken by the LCSP to support the prevention of alcohol related community safety issues.

Blue Light Project

A 'Blue Light Outreach Service' has been established in Lincolnshire to address low alcohol treatment rates across the county; using a model developed by Alcohol Concern to tackle treatment resistant drinkers. The service provides a more holistic response which looks to address the needs of the client, which contribute towards their alcoholism, for example homelessness, unemployment and mental health, before trying to tackle the actual alcohol abuse.

⁵ LCSP Survey Results 2016, LCC Safer Communities Service

It is commissioned by Safer Communities (LCC) and the Police and Crime Commissioner with equal contributions being made by each. The funding goes towards training delivered by Alcohol Concern and the Blue Light Outreach Service which is provided by NACRO.

In Lincolnshire the Blue Light Project focuses on 'Blue Light' clients; those higher risk and dependent drinkers who are not only treatment resistant but are also placing a significant burden on emergency services such as the Police, EMAS and A&E.

Blue Light Outreach Workers work with those identified by Police data as frequent users of their service as a result of their alcohol misuse. They will work closely with the client and put together an action plan to address any identified issues the client may have such as housing, financial and health, with the aim of reducing the impact these clients have on emergency services and increasing the chance of them entering and engaging in a meaningful way with treatment services.

Up to November 2017, 80 of the most problematic drinkers have been referred to the outreach service.

ASB Tools and Powers

The introduction of the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 has provided police and councils with several new tools and powers to better respond to incidents of ASB.

These tools, which replaced and streamlined a number of previous measures, were brought in as part of a Government commitment to put victims at the centre of approaches to tackling ASB, focussing on the impact behaviour can have on both communities and individuals.

In preparation for the Act commencing, the LCSP both financially supported and co-ordinated the delivery of training to all necessary staff within the partnership to ensure effective use of the legalisation across Lincolnshire. This training has proved invaluable in providing the knowledge and understanding required to address a wide range of ASB issues, including those related to alcohol.

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) have been utilised throughout the county by councils to ban the consumption of alcohol within specific areas to prevent drunken rowdy behaviour. PSPOs are a wide ranging and flexible power for councils in response to a particular issue affecting their communities, provided certain criteria and legal tests are met. They can be used to either (or both) prohibit specified activities, and/or require certain things to be done by people engaged in particular activities, within a defined public area.

In the last year daytime alcohol related ASB has fallen by 11.3 % (197 fewer incidents). The fall in this type of behaviour may reflect an actual reduction in this type of behaviour (especially in Boston and Lincoln), where PSPOs have been implemented.

4. Conclusion

Although Council Business Plan targets have not been reached in relation to alcohol related violence and alcohol related ASB there is growing evidence that alcohol may be declining in its significance as a driver of crime and disorder in Lincolnshire. In spite of this the LCSP recognise the impact alcohol related community safety issues can have on individuals and communities and the importance of tackling it effectively. Initiatives such as the Blue Light Project intend to provide long term solutions, whilst the use of new ASB tools and powers provide a swift effective response.

5. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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