

Parental Drinking in Scotland

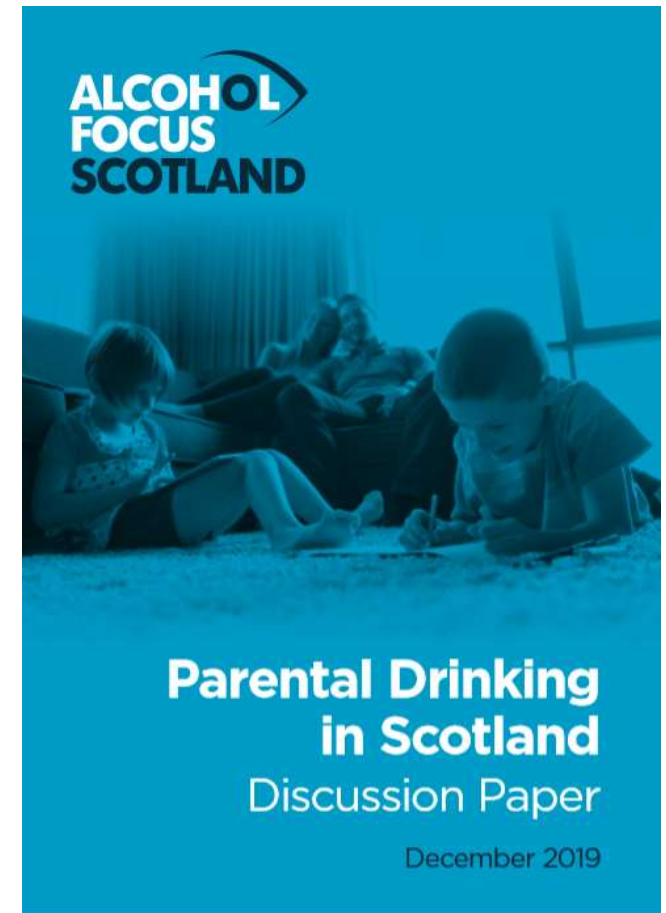
David Robertson, Senior Policy Coordinator

Alcohol Focus Scotland

John Holleran, Families and Communities Manager

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

- What have we found out about low level drinking in families?
- How does moderate drinking impact on children?
- What do parents think about the impact of their drinking?
- What might this mean for policy development and service provision?





40%



Two fifths of children surveyed reported that their parent's drinking had caused them to: be unpredictable; pay them less attention than usual; be less comforting and sensitive than normal; miss a family meal; argue with them more than normal; put them to bed earlier or later than usual; or make them late for school.

When asked why their parent chooses to drink alcohol, **just over a quarter of children** in Scotland said it was because 'it helps you when you feel depressed or nervous', 'to fit in with a group', 'to escape your problems', or 'to not feel left out'.

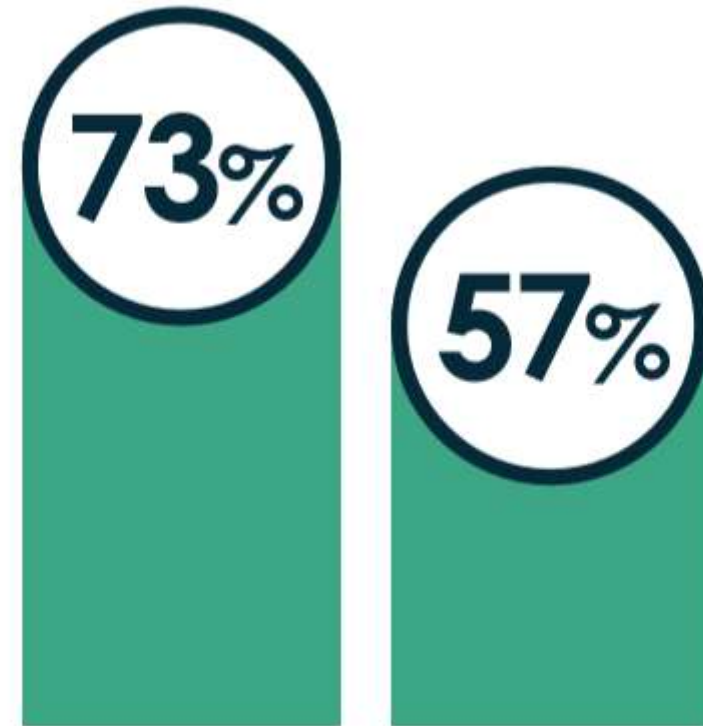
26%



So are we teaching our children that alcohol is a coping mechanism for stress?

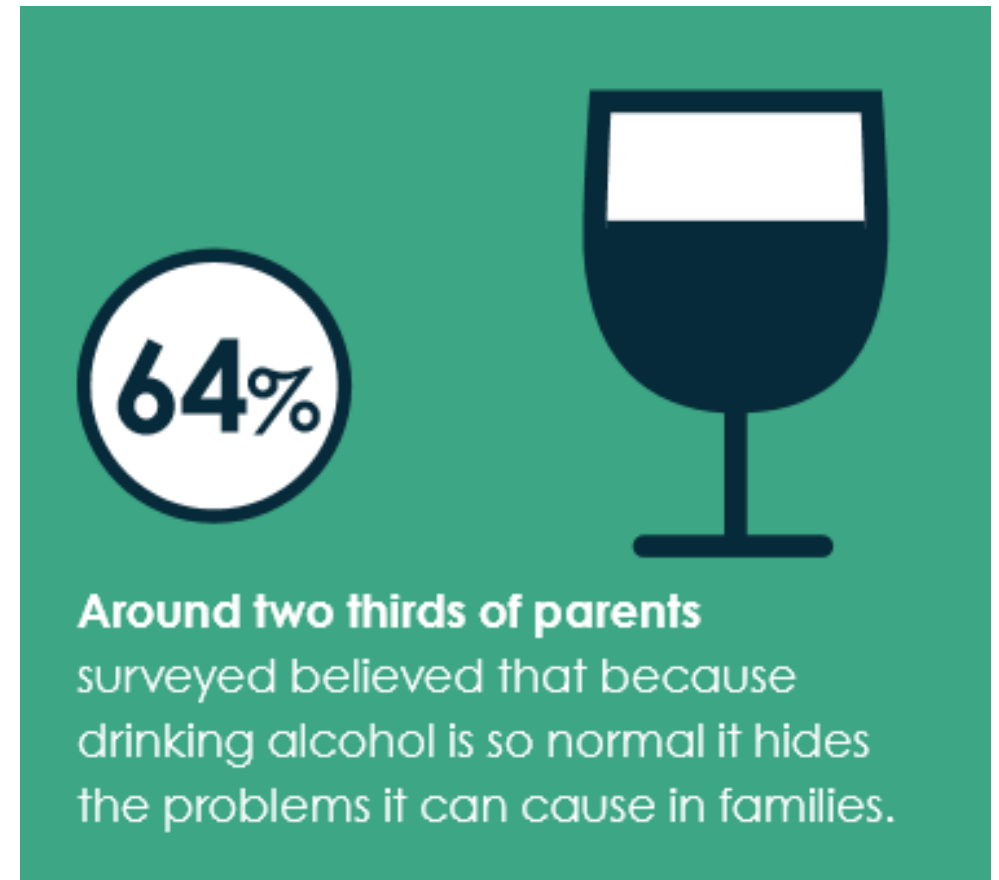
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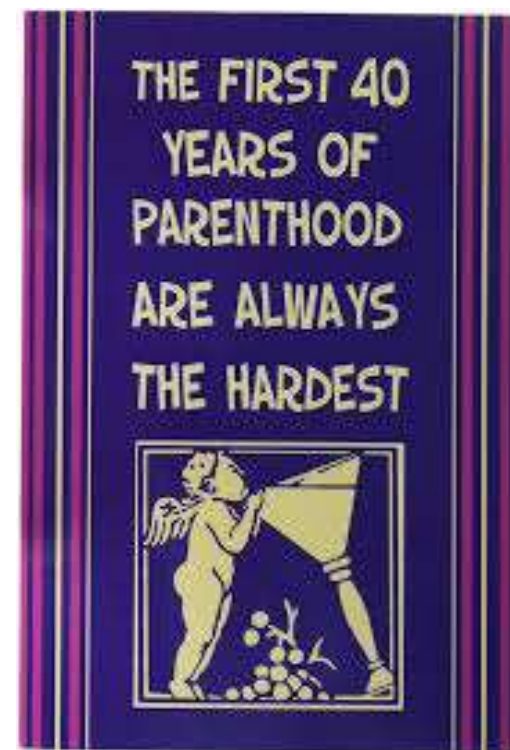
Of the families surveyed, 73% of children believed that how their parent drinks influences the way they think about alcohol, compared to only 57% of parents

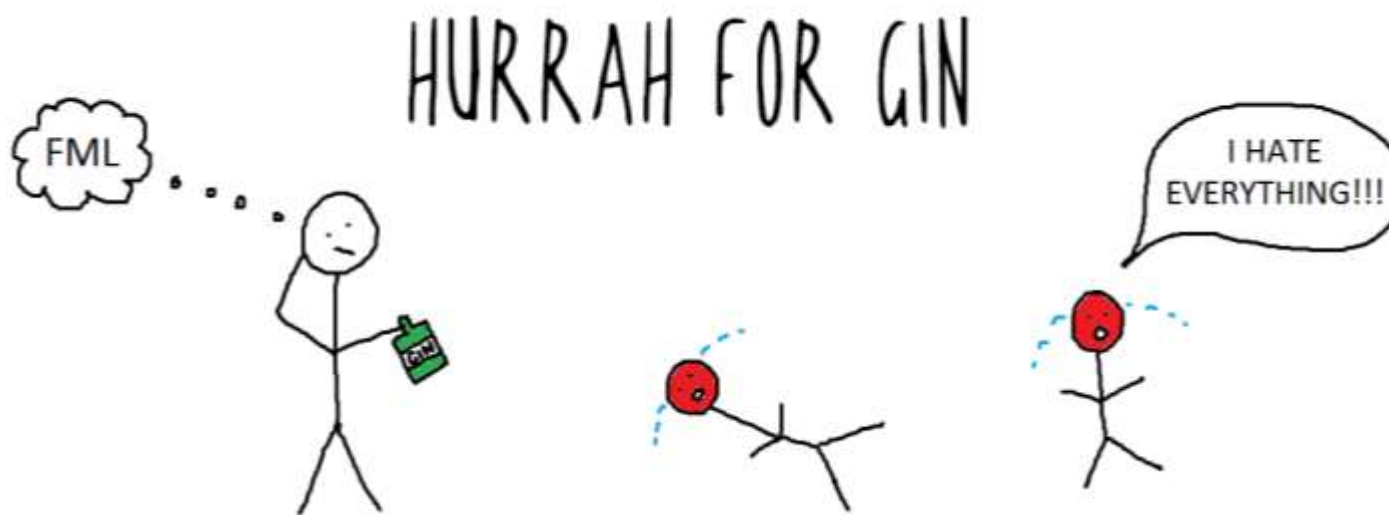


It's the normalisation of alcohol use within the home that might present problems later on. Even looking at the role of alcohol as a coping strategy as well...for the young people when they grow older in terms of modelling behaviours.

John Holleran, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs







I think just on the case of the home drinking, it almost becomes more difficult to help support and identify young people with the normalisation of alcohol use within the home. JH



There's a perception that the consequences of reporting that is actually worse than the situation. Sometimes, from what young people have told us, it's like... 'this is what I know so I'm going to stick with that and I don't want to betray my family'. JH



“Maybe I was difficult and maybe I did not go to class...but after a long time I got the support I needed and have started to believe in myself and go to school... in the end I am happy and can be normal like everyone else”.

YP (15), Routes project



“Many young people are embarrassed to open up about what goes on in their personal lives, and similarly may feel judged by support services.” YP 14, SYP.

“lack of trust, even with close friends, I wouldn’t speak about it.” YP, 12, Focus-group discussion.



Implications of low level drinking for services

- Whole family approach
- Joined-up services
- Access to services

John Holleran

Families & Communities
Manager

**Scottish Families Affected by
Alcohol & Drugs**

0141 465 7523

john@sfad.org.uk

David Robertson

Senior Policy Development
Coordinator, Alcohol-Free
Childhood

Alcohol Focus Scotland

0141 572 6598

[david.robertson@alcohol-focus-
scotland.org.uk](mailto:david.robertson@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)

@afs_protect