



"What do you think should happen to make it easier for people to have a responsible relationship with alcohol?"

## Morecambe Alcohol Inquiry

A Citizen Led Investigation  
Summer 2012

**"What do you think would make it easier for people to have a more responsible relationship with alcohol?"**



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the residents of Morecambe who gave up their time to be part of the Morecambe Inquiry, and Vicky Putt and Rose Roberts of North Lancashire NHS for their support during the Inquiry.

## About the authors

Report prepared August and September 2012 by Jez Hall and Laurie Smith of Shared Future CIC, and Peter Bryant. High standards have been used in the preparation of the information, analysis, views and projections presented in this report. No legal responsibility can be accepted for any loss or damage resultant from the contents of this document. It does not necessarily represent the view of Shared Future in relation to particular policy or projects.

## About Shared Future

We are a community interest company primarily serving the North West of England, and with associates based across the UK.

Our aim is to provide an excellent service that makes a difference to communities and individuals and works towards a fairer, more equal society.

Through our commitment to creating a fairer and more sustainable world, we decided to set up Shared Future in 2009.

We've built a team of experienced consultants and practitioners with a diverse range of skills. We work together on worthwhile and stimulating projects that reflect our personal values.



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# 1. Introduction

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**In 2012 NHS North Lancashire, as part of The North Lancashire Alcohol Partnership (NLAP), sought the public's views on how best to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.**

NHS North Lancashire appointed local not-for-profit organisation Shared Future CIC and the community engagement specialists Our Life to conduct what would become known as The Morecambe Alcohol Inquiry.

This was a deliberative process to produce a citizen-led vision for a community which has a more responsible relationship with alcohol and its use.

Following a thorough consideration of multiple perspectives the participants make a series of recommendations for public agencies, statutory services and policy makers, as well as proposing actions that members of the community and community based organisations might take



## 2. Aims of the Inquiry

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The project aimed:

- To undertake a process of participatory engagement through a Citizen's Jury process.
- To enable a selection of local citizens from Morecambe to gain understanding and knowledge regarding the impact of alcohol related harm on individuals, families and communities.
- To produce a series of recommendations to be considered by a Stakeholder Group.
- To provide a report reflecting the process and the recommendations from the Inquiry.

Valuing the knowledge held by local people, NHS North Lancashire decided to run this Inquiry to support their own action plan.

The results will guide the work of North Lancashire Alcohol Partnership (NLAP) over the next few years as they try to reduce the harm that is being caused by alcohol.

Shared Future CIC recruited a pool of local residents from three wards specified by NHS North Lancashire: Harbour, North Heysham and Poulton.

The recruitment took place via a randomised mail-out to residents in the areas and through using existing community networks. This panel of citizens met regularly throughout June and July 2012.

### Why in Morecambe?

Morecambe is a coastal town just north of Lancaster with a resident population of around 40,000. Morecambe was a thriving seaside resort well into the mid-20th century and retains a strong sense of this identity, distinct from the wider Lancaster district.

Like many coastal resorts there are a high number of unimproved properties in multi-occupancy, a relatively high rate of unemployment and poor health statistics. The three wards chosen for the Inquiry cover the central and seafront areas of Morecambe.

The wards were chosen due to the high rates of alcohol-specific hospital admissions for conditions such as liver disease, poisoning and alcohol intoxication and dependency.

**“As we drink more as a society, so the problems associated with alcohol rise.**

**This is putting an unsustainable burden on our public services, as well as the economy”**

Cllr Karen Leytham, Lancaster City Council Cabinet member with responsibility for health.

Some significant regeneration has occurred in the recent past, but much more needs to be done to reverse the effects of a severe economic decline. The harmful effects of alcohol misuse remain visible.

As reported on the Lancaster City Council website at the time, *“The negative impact of alcohol – such as crime, antisocial behaviour and illness – is costing more than £55.65m per year in the Lancaster District (the equivalent of £394 per person for the local area). In total it adds up to £3 billion across the North West per year”*.

Jacqui Thompson, Assistant Director of Public Health at NHS North Lancashire has said: *“It is really important that we continue to work across organisations and with our communities to address the harms caused by alcohol misuse in Lancaster District”*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> source: Lancaster CC Website, accessed 9/6/2012  
[www.lancaster.gov.uk/news/2012/may/3233costsalcohol](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/news/2012/may/3233costsalcohol)

## Who participated?

19 local residents of the three wards, reflecting some of the diversity of the community were shortlisted. 15 were able to attend the first session, and between 10 and 12 regularly attended Inquiry hearings. Ages ranged from teenagers to the retired, with a good balance between men and women.

As part of the recruitment, applicants were asked to say a little about themselves. Comments included:

*“25 year old who enjoys experimenting in the kitchen and taking long walks with my dog.”*

*“Football and music fan who loves life.”*

*“Father of three, volunteer at a local drop-in for disadvantaged people, ardent couch potato sports fan!”*

*“Recovering alcoholic, likes gardening, crosswords and computers (just learning).”*

*“Lived in Poulton for forty years. I like socialising, cycling and running.”*

*“Mother of two, lived in the West End most of my life. Had my daughter aged 17 and have always tried to better myself.”*

*“Active retiree. Was involved with local youth soccer club for 20 years. TU Secretary. Enjoys fell walking, cycling and reading.”*



They were supported by the facilitation team, of Peter Bryant at the time head of community engagement at the Manchester based Our Life, Jez Hall and Laurie Smith from Shared Future CIC, and Kevin Goodall, who was employed as administrative assistant for the project.



The meetings were held at the West End Community Centre, connected to St Barnabas church, in the West End of Morecambe (Harbour ward).

## The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry met on Monday and some Thursday evenings between 6.30 pm and 9.00 pm in June and July 2012 and consisted of nine sessions.

During its informal and relaxed sessions, those taking part were encouraged to think and talk about alcohol and how it was being used and abused in their community.

Based upon the model of a “Citizens’ Jury”, participants think and talk about what needs to happen to make things better in their community. Shared Future and Our Life believe that citizens have a right to be involved in deciding the part that alcohol plays in society.

These decisions should not be left only to those who have lots of power and influence.

Through processes such as Citizens’ Juries we want to make sure that the general public are able to have their voices heard, especially those people who have had very little opportunity to be listened to in the past.

Citizens themselves decide what things they want to talk about and, after hearing from a range of outsiders, decide what they think should be the priorities for change.

## The best thing was feeling empowered to make a change

(Female participant in the inquiry)

These could be things at a local, regional, or national level. Equally there could be actions which citizens take themselves in their own lives or neighbourhoods or actions which public bodies, politicians, alcohol manufacturers and retailers can take.

In recognition of the fact that everyone's time is precious, all the residents that took part in the Inquiry were offered £15 for each session (through gift vouchers or into a Credit Union Account).

## The Question

The primary question for the inquiry to consider, as agreed by NHS North Lancashire, was:

**“What do you think would make it easier to have a more responsible relationship with alcohol?”**



## Expert witnesses

**‘Commentators’ are an essential part of the Alcohol Inquiry process**

Commentators were invited to speak on an issue that the participants have raised to further their

understanding. These commentators are people with expertise in various issues connected to alcohol, and how we consume it.

We invited them to make brief presentations to the Inquiry on these issues. They are able to offer new opinions to the participants and to help them to reach their own conclusions about the best way for people to have a more responsible relationship with alcohol.



The first session did not include commentators. Instead it introduced participants to the Inquiry process, laid the foundations for their input, and prioritised issues based on the opinions of the Inquiry members.

The outcomes of all these conversations are presented in the recommendations of the report.

## Where did it happen?

All sessions took place at the West End Community Centre, a central area of Morecambe.

Throughout the Inquiry the facilitators encouraged the participants to continue to meet as a local body concerned with the issues of reducing the irresponsible use of alcohol, or join other bodies where their detailed perspectives of the issues can be used to generate local improvements in health and well-being.

At the final session several of the group indicated they did intend to continue to meet and Shared Future will seek to try to work with the citizens to assist them with maintaining this community network.

## Session One: Setting the Scene

At the first session the participants learnt the process of the Inquiry and began to debate and prioritise issues.

The agenda included:

- Introductions and explanations of the process and how participants could draw down vouchers and other support;
- Looking at the issue in more depth through open discussion;
- Group work that included mapping where (and why) in Morecambe different factors encourage or discourage the drinking of alcohol;

- A “problem tree” exercise to discuss why there is ‘too much drinking’, and underlying reasons for that situation;

The participants reviewed each other’s work and added new comments based on the question:

***“What makes it difficult for people to have a more responsible relationship with alcohol?”***

Around 30 issues were proposed. These were grouped by the facilitators into a shortlist of 19 overarching factors. These were displayed on the wall, and voted upon.

## Responses to the question “What makes it difficult for people to have a more responsible relationship with alcohol?”

What makes a responsible relationship difficult (highest first)	Votes	Ranking
Loneliness and a lack of community spirit	11	1 <sup>st</sup>
Peer pressure and changing drinking habits (such as competitive drinking, bragging on social media and a lack of social places without alcohol)	10	2 <sup>nd</sup> equal
A British mentality and a family culture of drinking	10	2 <sup>nd</sup> equal
Too much cheap alcohol in supermarkets, and offers on alcohol	10	2 <sup>nd</sup> equal
Poverty leading to stress and debt	9	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Drinking is too easily accepted, with a lack of values and social stigma against those that don't drink	8	4 <sup>th</sup> equal
Lack of interpersonal skills and social isolation leading to drinking as coping mechanism	8	4 <sup>th</sup> equal
Not enough local support services and a lack of 'professional help'	5	5 <sup>th</sup>
High strength drinks	4	6 <sup>th</sup> equal
Influence of the media and marketing aimed at young people	4	6 <sup>th</sup> equal
Nothing to do	4	6 <sup>th</sup> equal
Nowhere for families to go together without alcohol	4	6 <sup>th</sup> equal
Re-thinking alcohol education in schools	3	7 <sup>th</sup> equal
Homelessness (and the security in numbers through drinking together)	3	7 <sup>th</sup> equal
Breakdown of extended family for support	3	7 <sup>th</sup> equal
Lack of interest in 'extra curricular' activities	3	7 <sup>th</sup> equal
Family problems and arguments	2	8 <sup>th</sup> equal
Easy access to alcohol	2	8 <sup>th</sup> equal

# 3. Follow up Sessions

The responses to the initial question “what makes it difficult to have a responsible relationship with alcohol” were things that members of the Inquiry felt needed to be considered within the Inquiry. This information was provided to commentators to help focus their presentations to the Inquiry.

**I feel prevention is, or should be, the main focus for the future**

(Female participant in the inquiry)

The Inquiry met nine times in total and commentators presented from their professional knowledge on the themes given above. Each session looked at different aspects of the issue under discussion, by following this format:

- 1. Commentators are invited to talk for 15 minutes** addressing the question being discussed and priorities already agreed by the Inquiry.
- 2. Commentators are asked to use clear, simple, easy to understand language** and include:
  - Details of who they are (and, if relevant, about their organisation);
  - An explanation of the problems or issues as they see it;
  - A brief explanation of what they feel are some of the best solutions;
- 3. After their presentation the commentators are asked to leave the room** to allow participants the space to talk with each other about what they have learned and develop questions for the commentators. They do this for about 20 minutes.
- 4. The group then ask the commentator their questions** developed during the previous activity. This normally lasts about 30 minutes.

- 5. Participants are continually asked to reflect on their learning.** This helps ensure that the conclusions reached are their own and that they feel ownership over any actions that they decide upon.

In the two final sessions of the Inquiry the group started to formulate the recommendations which were eventually refined and prioritised in the final session.

This provided an opportunity to reflect on what had been discussed throughout the Inquiry and to inform this report, prepared by the facilitators.

## Creating an Impact

The report will be presented to a wider group of Stakeholders, including the North Lancashire Alcohol Partnership, local councillors and public agencies who will be asked to help implement the findings of the Inquiry.

Inquiry members will also be supported to continue to meet to develop and follow up locally based solutions, based on their new knowledge and experience.



# 4. Session Nine: Outcomes

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## Developing the Inquiry recommendations

The second half of session 8 was spent beginning to develop the group's recommendations.

The Inquiry was divided into three smaller groups, each of which produced a number of initial ideas. These draft recommendations were collated and grouped at the next session.

## Planning the stakeholder meeting



Recommendations produced at session 8 were compiled into a number of 'themes' and displayed on the walls. Prior to discussing these, the Inquiry focussed on the feedback to the Stakeholder event scheduled for September 2012.

Peter Bryant, lead facilitator from Our Life, described who was in the Stakeholder group, for example, local Health and Wellbeing leads, Community Safety Partnership team members, and clinical commissioning team members.

The Inquiry members felt they would like to invite the local MP and NHS North Lancashire agreed to do this. The group also requested that

the recommendations be sent with the invite, to enable Stakeholders to begin working on the next steps as soon as possible and for one of the focuses of the feedback event to be finessing actions rather than starting from scratch.

The citizens agreed that the format for the stakeholder session needed to include small group discussions (around themes) and a general Question and Answer debate, but where possible to avoid a 'them and us' approach.

It was agreed that there would also be a pre-meeting to help prepare for the 26th September event.

## Agreeing and voting on the recommendations

Pete, from Our Life, went on to read out the draft recommendations, explaining how they had been grouped, and how they would be refined today by working in small groups around those themes. It was confirmed that the recommendations, as they appeared in the report, would be in the 'words of the Inquiry', and not be re-written or added to by the facilitators. All recommendations would appear in the report, even if on the day it got no votes. Everyone would get eight votes to distribute as they wished.

It was stressed that the group should try to make the recommendations specific so they could be acted on and so the Stakeholders could be more fairly held to account if they didn't address the recommendations. Too broad a recommendation would be difficult to achieve. The Inquiry agreed the proposed themes were appropriate and did not need to be changed. They then went on to re-word the recommendations to tighten them up as much as possible.

There was a break in the general discussion between the Inquiry members. They discussed

the issue of why drug misuse received disproportionate attention and apparently more services, and why there were such long delays when people needed to access alcohol services.



The Inquiry then voted on the final recommendations. The results are shown on the next page of the report. It should be noted that the first recommendation – to improve education in schools and colleges – received considerably higher support than the rest.

The session ended with an evaluation of the process (results in appendices) and agreement to reconvene for the planning session on the 19th September, prior to the Stakeholder event.

# 5. Recommendations

Recommendation	Theme	Rank
Have set lessons within the curriculum from Primary School through to and including University on alcohol. Include issues such as bereavement, stress and coping. Include input from students (including in the reviewing of the curriculum).	Educate and inform	1st
Designated area for alcohol, with one specific till for purchasing alcohol in supermarkets (consider health and safety benefit from dedicated trained staff working the till?).	Sales	2nd =
Cap the number of licences for Pubs and Off licences in this area (i.e.as in Blackpool).	Sales	2nd =
Morecambe lacks a youth and community centre (with job clubs/activities/days out/links to other things going on and run by a community committee). If this was in place it would reduce boredom and isolation and create community spirit.	Root causes	2nd =
Mandatory training for every social worker in the local area to include alcohol abuse, and this eventually to be cascaded through other services, including the voluntary sector.	Services	2nd =
A pathway for referral between services, which is co-ordinated by an appointed person, who will ensure individuals are directed to the correct sector (shared with the oluntary and public sector).	Services	2nd =
Stricter enforcement and less leniency of licensing laws. Name and shame offenders (customers and retailers). Reduce licence hours. Shut down offending licences faster (not 8 weeks).	Sales	3rd =
There needs to be more parental involvement when minors are arrested. E.g. Mandatory that the police take parents to the scene of an alcohol related crime.	Services	3rd =
Stop cheap offers and ‘multi-purchase” of cheap alcohol in supermarkets and off licences.	Price	3rd =
Community representatives to be part of the North Lancashire Alcohol partnership.	Services	4th =
Recommendation for soft drinks: Maximum price for draught soft drinks in pubs (i.e Coke, Pepsi etc) of £2.00 per pint. Also cordial drinks at a maximum of £1.00. At one local pub a pint of Mild is £1.35 and a pint of draft coke is £1.72.	Price	4th =
The government gets a 48% tax on alcohol. The Public should know this. We think it is wrong that the government profits from alcohol misuse.	Price	4th =
Ban all alcohol advertising – on TV and cinemas etc as with advertising	Adverts	5th =

Recommendation	Theme	Rank
tobacco.		
The community needs to be supported more to be able to build a sense of community.	Root causes	5th =
“Giving something back”. i.e. Drinks companies putting a percentage of their advertising budget direct to the NHS.	Adverts	6th =
More tourist attractions needed in Morecambe.	Root causes	6th =
Support vulnerable people: e.g. Bereavement and homelessness support. (Tell people about them, don’t make them ask).	Root causes	6th =
Define “irresponsible drinking offers” as in the Licensing Act and disallow them.	Sales	7th =
More intensive training and regular refresher courses for licensed people (and anyone serving alcohol) on responsible serving of alcohol. E.g. How to deal with abusive behaviour etc.	Educate and inform	7th =
Lower strength of alcohol (to 2%).	Sales	7th =
Everyone being I.D. checked including over 18’s. (Photographic I.D.).	Sales	7th =
Send out alcohol awareness leaflets via schools to parents (via mail). Support home learning.	Educate and inform	7th =
We like the idea of a community pub! – mixing ages. – community notice board – sessions (activities).	Pubs	7th =
Make pubs show posters. e.g. “Know your limit”. “Don’t buy for minors”.	Adverts	7th =
Somebody needs to take overall charge of services and policy so there is a comprehensive sharing of information between alcohol services and so there is accountability.	Services	7th =
Increase duty on high strength drinks and show ingredients on drink containers.	Price	7th =
A community website (Facebook) - a forum for advertising events and bands, information and campaigning etc.	Educate and inform	Unranked
Get landlords to pay a levy after a certain time (e.g.11pm). Restrict or do not allow 24 hour pub licences.	Pubs	Unranked
(for D Morris MP): - More contracts awarded to local companies (e.g. future infrastructure ) to increase local employment.	Root causes	Unranked

# 6. Stakeholder session

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On Wednesday 19th September the Inquiry members reconvened to prepare for the final session of the Inquiry, held on Wednesday 26th September, where the report was received by the North Lancashire Alcohol Partnership and a range of invited Stakeholders. Over 35 individuals and organisations gathered at the More Music Hothouse, to action plan what could happen next. As part of the session a number of commitments were made to support the recommendations and this included the Inquiry members continuing to meet as a community led action group.

## Working groups: Write up of flipchart rough notes.

### Proposal: Put Alcohol on the curriculum (from primary onwards with links to bereavement, stress, coping etc.)

First steps:

- (Identify some) key messages
- The right support for other 'issues'
- Who needs to be involved:
- Young people. Peer education. Find out how this can work

Resources needed:

- Moodle video diaries, equal provision with other subjects, long term funding/commitment, volunteers

Community involvement:

- Focus on changing culture of drinking in families

### Proposal: Parental involvement

First steps:

- Understand Children & Young People (CYP) service of prioritisation early intervention: i.e. looking at holistic picture of young peoples' life, including parents, plus looking past the 'presenting' issue. Need to encourage abstinence to counteract advertising. Change culture of 'badge of honour' after heavy drinking. Question: what are the consequences for parents of young people drinking?

Who needs to be involved:

- CYP service, Police, Youth Offending Team and Young AddAction to share current working. communication campaign targeted at young people focussed on abstinence and peer pressure/social norms.

Resources needed:

- Time. Finding time for running a media campaign.

Community involvement:

- Leadership of focus groups for communications campaign. Have a more confident voice to request information about current practices.

### Proposal: Sales and Licensing

First steps:

- Keep watching to see if/when new licences come up and assess them – Blue notices. Approach council licensing officer about putting in place a CIP (Saturation policy) and to discuss this with the Inquiry members. Awareness-raising about what peoples' rights are with Licensing. Investigate the idea of setting up a licensing forum – approach the PACT (Police and Community Together). Approach local retailers. Everyone should leave their details and agree to share with the group. Consult with the Inquiry members whether a Community Alcohol Partnership may be appropriate.

Who needs to be involved:

- Wendy Peck – Licensing officer in Lancaster (to present?). Councillors surgery every Tuesday at West End Impact. GP's to be asked to investigate their role in this.

Community involvement:

- PACT meets every week. Is this the appropriate group to take some of these issues forward?

### Proposal: Community Facilities

First steps:

- Map what exists. Break down preconceptions and perceptions of the community. Find out how (local) people are communicating. Model good behaviour – celebrate what is good. Help people understand more about what

constitutes 'responsible' drinking. A community newsletter.

Who needs to be involved:

- PACT meetings (Town Council). Children: in pubs and more visible.

Resources needed:

- Open access community pub – what are the thresholds for it being responsible for children to be in pubs.

### Proposal: Social Worker training

First steps:

- Social workers to be able to broach the subject. All front line workers made aware of services. Approach university and other responsible authorities.

Who needs to be involved:

- Peers. Community (as equals) able to set the agenda.

Resources needed:

- Skills/expertise. Local community.

### Proposal: Service Pathway

First steps:

- Visit to J2R. J2R provide information of service to other community services (e.g. Signposts). Individuals making referrals to maintain contact and support with client. Access training provided by J2R. More outreach into vulnerable groups and people who drop out of services. J2R recruit more 'assertive outreach' workers.
- Regular network meetings for community services e.g. J2R, Young ADDaction, Community Services, Health Visitors, etc. etc.

Who needs to be involved:

- J2R. Community organisations. Individuals. Young ADDaction.

Resources needed:

- Time and prioritisation.

Community involvement:

- Individuals to access training opportunities. Empowerment of community to provide brief advice and support. Share information about 'recovery communities'. Have a voice in requesting/joining networking events. Support concept of 'dry bars' being explored by J2R. Look at the set up costs of a social enterprise.

### Proposal: Price of soft drinks too high

First steps:

- Research into the cost price of cordial drinks and draught soft drinks locally – (is there a national public survey?).

Who needs to be involved:

- The licensing department of the local council. Licensees need to be involved. Support public participation/campaign. Police, NHS, AA(?).

Resources needed:

- Administration, venue for meetings, website

Community involvement:

- Media coverage: i.e. local newspapers and local paper). Go to local schools: i.e. reach/involve school children)

### Proposal: Identifying root causes-identity and facilities

First steps:

- Education on cheap Off Licences. Councillors to look at this issue. Identify links between gambling and alcohol. Reflect on identity of the Morecambe area – What has it become? Challenge assumptions. Communicate what is 'anti-social'. Consider who is vulnerable to being stigmatised. Clear about what are the effects of deprivation.

Who needs to be involved:

- Councillors. Parents – culture and behaviour. Map services. Support parents on how to positively introduce young people to alcohol. Community Safety Partnership. Police to talk the (right) language. Remember the 'hidden' drinkers (who are not anti-social). Connect with local providers (of alcohol) (retailers).

Resources needed:

- Money has been 'squandered' on West End Regeneration (that didn't work). Look at our local assets. Support existing sports facilities. Visit other areas- find out what works.

Community involvement:

- Proposal for a community café – community members run it. Not patronising. Not 'class' based. Alcohol doesn't discriminate. Use community networks

## Closing statements: Offers of support:

- Jacqui Thompson, NHS North Lancashire: Peer training for Inquiry members to become health champions.
- Jez Hall, SFCIC: Meeting again with Inquiry members.
- Jane Attfield, Lancaster District CVS: Support the Inquiry members to form a group. Create links into the Heysham North Community Forum.
- Steve Stebbings, J2R: Would host a visit to look at J2R's services and offer opportunities to volunteering.
- Cheryl Simmell-Binning, Lancaster University: Access to detailed reports, evaluations and research on young people and alcohol. Help the Inquiry not to reinvent the wheel.
- Local Councillors: Will help to raise this at the Three Tier Forum – County/City/Council.
- James Martin, Lancashire Police: To keep in touch with the Inquiry members and help to problem solve around licensing issues.
- Lee LeClercq, British Beer and Pub Association: Happy to maintain contact and feed in the industry perspective as needed.
- David Johnnie, Trading Standards: Maintain contact on issues relating to sales, support with information on forming a community alcohol network.
- Signposts: Connections to local advice and information service, with a focus on alcohol. Opportunities to make use of social work students on placement with Signposts.

## Thanks:

Shared Future and Our Life would like to give their thanks to (and also pass on thanks on behalf of):

NHS North Lancashire Public Health team.

To all the commentators who gave their time to brief the Inquiry.

To the Stakeholders from the North Lancashire Alcohol Partnership, from the Local Council and from associated public agencies.

Most especially to the local residents of Morecambe who made the Morecambe Alcohol Inquiry possible.

# Appendix 1: Early ideas

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## Ideas for draft recommendations gathered midway through the Inquiry.

It is felt worthwhile to include these as specific actions are listed that could be picked up as part of the recommendations:

- Ask the bin men where the bottles are (to spot at-home drinking)
- Move resources towards prevention not recovery
- Improve outreach and advice
- Leaflets – who gets them? We are in the community but don't know about them
- To reach families through schools – get pupils to take information home
- Improve information in the obvious places – Community venues
- Local people don't see them at the moment
- List the venues receiving information
- Target the money being spent better
- Community notice boards/ public displays – are there any?
- Reasonable messages – when enough is enough (not total abstinence)
- Recognise its not easy to talk about alcohol to our children
- Train and support parents
- Parents and children are living more separate lives – too much space/time apart
- Parents don't always want to know where their young people are or up to
- Support Community pubs and positive venues
- Young role models and celebrities leading the campaign
- Peer to peer information
- Use music and performance to get the message across
- It's an embedded culture – need to start young, in junior schools
- Don't forget education for all ages and for all kinds of people
- Adult classes on alcohol
- Community based trainers
- Looks matter – you decide - do you want to end up looking like this?
- Honest messages – be more direct and forceful
- Funding issues within 'the helpers' – community based organisations are being cut
- Track: where does the money for alcohol work comes from?
- Link taxation on alcohol directly to harm reduction initiatives
- We're feeling the government is paying lip service – they benefit from alcohol income
- Make the budgets transparent
- Respect us more
- Put the people in charge
- Trying to solve it with money won't work
- Benefit cuts – impacting on people – will make it worse
- The most vulnerable aren't being protected
- We (the community) need to have a pot of money
- Cut subsidised alcohol in the House of Commons
- Call in local MP's – to commentate
- Track where the money goes better – pooled budgets
- Cut out overlap and waste
- Commentators seem to have the same answers, whatever the question
- They say 'We are experts' but appear to have little power
- Close Off Licenses on the first offence, not the second or third – zero tolerance on breaking the rules
- Complaints from the community about breaches of licence aren't being followed up – from experience of living above a late off licence
- Ensure retailers are following the guidelines
- Focus on the divide between addressing mental health and alcohol
- Could we do a survey in the group- to see if people we know think alcohol use is falling among young people

# Appendix 2: The Jury sessions

## Session 2:

**Commentators: Vicky Putt and Rose Roberts, North Lancs NHS Public Health Improvement Specialists**



Following a brief refresher of the introductory session Vicky and Rose gave a presentation giving the perspective of the Public Health sector and North Lancashire NHS (NLNHS).

This was the first of the commentator sessions and included a briefing by the commissioners and an exercise delivered with the support of NLNHS looking at the use of alcohol over a whole life, identifying points where health risks occurred and alcohol use developed.

They talked about the local determinants of health and statistics around harm, and about alcohol units and consumption. Their presentations looked at how Public Health services had evolved, how patterns of alcohol use were changing, and gave their response to new Government policies, such as minimum pricing. Partnership working was essential.

Following the presentation the Inquiry met in small groups to prepare questions.

The questions asked by the Inquiry included:

- Do you think the issue of 'units' matters to people who drink?
- Can you explain why services such as J2R (Journey to Recovery) are having funds cut, but we are being asked how to improve alcohol services?

- In your professional experience, what do you believe drives people to drink irresponsibly?
- How easy is it to recognise problem drinkers?
- Comparing the smoking campaign to the sale of alcohol, how's it worked for smoking?

## Session Three

**Commentator: Ali Wheeler, Director, Drink Wise North West**

Below we have given a detailed description of the session to show how the inquiry worked. Subsequent sessions receive less attention for the sake of space and readability of the report but they all followed a similar format.

This session included a de-briefing exercise where participants were asked to reflect on what they had heard so far, and focus on the sort of commentators and issues they wanted the Inquiry to focus on.

Following a brief refresher of the previous session and introductions we asked to hear from Ali Wheeler, who delivered a presentation giving her perspective of the issues around the responsible use of alcohol.

Ali Wheeler talked about...

Her experience as a police officer and the sense of threat that went with alcohol related violence. Ali described how, in her role as director of Drink Wise, and as a parent she felt alcohol represented a hidden harm, with drinking at home the most concerning aspect. The public



perception of drinking too much was clear and Ali has seen the real harm that drink-driving can cause. It is also a growing problem for 18-25 yrs who haven't been exposed to campaigns. Industry promotion of drinking far exceeds publicly funded awareness campaigns and campaigns have to get across different messages to different audiences as there is such a wide spectrum of issues, and many different services responding to alcohol use. Drinking is deeply embedded in our culture, for good and ill. You know it's a problem when people are saving money in other areas of their lives to be able to continue to drink.

Alcohol can play a positive role in celebrations, but messages reinforcing the need to drink to have fun are everywhere, even in innocent things like birthday cards. Alcohol promotion is everywhere.



The focus has shifted towards the most at risk families, as services take a more whole life approach. Drinking is an intergenerational problem and Ali would welcome people using pubs more, where positive as well as negative messages can be passed on. Feeling involved in a family, socialising together and thereby learning to drink responsibly is important, but there are growing pressures on young people. While young people are drinking less overall, drinking to excess is strong within the most at risk families.

Ali felt there are mixed messages coming from home and school and this is leaving young people confused. There are links between unplanned pregnancies and alcohol, and health problems from heavy drinking in pregnancy such as foetal alcohol syndrome, as well as its role in breaking down apparently secure and successful

lives. Ali described a particular homeless man she knew and how use of alcohol had tipped him into a worse position when faced with an unexpected personal crisis.

**Aren't we just dealing with the tip of an iceberg? What about secret middle class drinkers?**  
*(Male participant)*

Alcohol increased all kinds of unpleasant anti-social behaviours, such as littering, public urination, vomit on the streets, that shouldn't be acceptable. These made it harder to feel proud of your community, but people find it hard to intervene personally.

Progress is being made on minimum pricing, though it has faced strong lobbying by the drinks industry. So mixed messages have been created in the media, but important to remember it's only on the cheapest alcohols. Many of us will be unaffected as we already pay the premium. Ali fears the price hasn't been raised enough.

Ali finished off her presentation mentioning the role alcohol has in violent relationships, and the secondary illnesses related to alcohol like cancer and heart disease.

Ali expressed how much she valued the opportunity to take part in the Inquiry and her willingness to be challenged and be asked questions afterwards.



## The questions by the inquiry members included:

- Are the government and its various agencies more interested in the cost in money of alcohol abuse than the social or humanitarian outcome?
- If the price of alcohol goes up are people going to turn to cheaper (illegal) drugs to get high?
- In relation to school visits are these done by Alcohol Concern and the police, or do they rely on teachers? Is it part of the curriculum?
- [How do we] limit the amount of advertising which young people can access?
- Would it be possible to start limits on drinks advertising as in the tobacco industry?
- Would it be possible to match budgets of the awareness campaigns with that of the drinks industry?
- The smoking ban has driven many people away from pubs and into people's own homes. Yet we agree community pubs are a good thing.
- Who is responsible for giving licences to new or existing pubs and clubs?
- As a police officer, do you have experience of signposting and advising people who have had 'significant events' which might start them on a path to drinking?
- What would it take to build a positive pub culture?
- A follow-up question the Inquiry wanted to ask: what is the number of alcohol related deaths in relation to the number of drug related deaths?

## Ideas participants wanted the Inquiry to focus on.

### Proposed Commentators were:

- A Brewery representative: The manager of the York Hotel (Mick Dennison) was suggested as a good local commentator from the pub trade.
- J2R. Local support organisation/recovery service.
- A Supermarket Manager ... someone at a higher level (pricing and promotion).
- A counsellor, with knowledge of the preventative aspects.
- Someone from a support group or involved in early intervention.
- A doctor, with experience of signposting people on.

- A social worker... to look at the personal issues and pathways into alcohol misuse.
- Emergency accommodation or someone involved in supporting young people.

## In the debriefing following the commentator the Inquiry reflected on what it had heard and generated a number of ideas:

- Looking at examples of a community pub, perhaps a commentator from an example in another town. What activities they put on, the types of entertainment they provide, how they build a sense of community spirit?
- How community events can support a more responsible environment and build a sense of community?
- Pricing. What other ways besides minimum pricing?
- Where does the money generated by alcohol sales go?

### How easy is it to recognise future problem drinkers? (Female participant)

## We finished off with a simple information/evaluation session.

Comments included: "Ali Wheeler was very good and committed", "Well structured, and opportunity for all to speak", "Friendly facilitator, variety of commentators, plus tea and biscuits". There was one comment about someone not enjoying the smaller group sessions.

## Session Four

### Commentator: Jade Morley, Alcohol Practitioner, Journey 2 Recovery (J2R)

Working across North Lancashire J2R delivers a range of services to drug and alcohol users to help them access support and detox services and move towards a drug and alcohol free life.

Jade focussed on the support available through local recovery services, describing the programmes provided by J2R, how people were referred into their service and the community-based support available following any period of more intensive treatment for serious alcohol misuse.

### Questions for Jade included:



Q: Have you noticed if there are any common themes amongst people who access your service? How they have come to have an alcohol problem?

Q: How realistic is it to be able to go out with friends and stay sober?

Q: How do you publicise the services of J2R? Would better advertising of J2R in the local paper or through public notices be beneficial?

Q: Not everyone is registered with a GP (e.g. the homeless). How do they get referred?

Q: Is there a clear statistic or reason why people who access J2R drink?

Q: J2R seems to stress we all have a choice about drinking. When minimum pricing comes in aren't we taking people's choice away by pricing people out of the market?

Q: Exiting intervention - where do people go who have accessed the service to avoid drinking? Do you refer on to more specific groups following detox?

Q: What is the difference between dependency and addiction?

Q: Aren't we just dealing with the tip of an iceberg? What about secret middle class drinkers?

Q: Does J2R do any preventative work, rather than cures?

Q: How many people come through addiction and help others? Is this useful to the people still recovering?

After hearing from Jade Morley and going through the questioning process we moved into a reflection session around the theme "We are



all experts". In pairs members of the Inquiry shared a personal experience they have had with alcohol, followed by a group feedback of around 20-30 mins. Following this was a sharing of ideas they may have for things that need to be done, or actions that need to be taken. Reflection sessions like these ran throughout the process and helped to form the final recommendations of the Inquiry.

## Session Five

**Commentator: David Johnnie, Trading Standards Officer, Lancashire County Council**

David described the work he did in partnership with the Police and other agencies to enforce government policies around licensed premises. He covered existing initiatives such as showing of I.D. up to the age of 25, mystery shopping and test purchases, and how the community could support the work of licensing by becoming more involved. He described a number of preventative campaigns that had run in the past, with examples of leaflets and information produced and situations where premises closed as a result of enforcement action.



## What do you define as ‘irresponsible’ drinking?

*(Male participant)*

One example he gave that received wide support from the Inquiry was of parents being taken out to the scene of underage drinking to see the environment in which youngsters were drinking and the risks they were running.

### Questions asked of David Johnnie included:

Q: Statistically, how can you measure use is falling among young people when you know more adults are buying drink for young people?

Q: Can you trust young people to be honest about completing a survey - aren't they giving the answers they think you want, not the real truth?

Q: Don't we need to get more parental involvement? Like the idea of making parents come out to collect their young people, not have them brought home.

Q: What is needed to close a continuously offending drinks outlet?

Q: Shouldn't we be forgetting about minimum price and be focussing on maximum strength?

Q: What do you think motivates people to drink in this area specifically? And what is being done to combat this?

Q: Who are leaflets being distributed to, as we have never seen these examples before?

Q: Are you sure that the reason more young people appear to be buying less alcohol from retailers isn't because their preferred drug is weed [cannabis]? Do you not think you may have already missed the boat (as the problem is already shifting elsewhere)?



Q: You're the man with the power. What would you do if you had the opportunity to be radical? Following this commentator the Inquiry once again returned to refining their ideas, and a detailed set of ideas began to emerge, as given in

## Session Six

**Commentator: Sgt James Martin, Licensing and Alcohol Harm, Lancaster, Wyre and Morecambe**

James focused on the Licensing Act 2003 and how its broad definitions cause difficulties for the police. He talked a lot about irresponsible drinks promotions and provided good examples of these for the group to examine and discuss. The group clearly found his presentation interesting and it stimulated a lot of discussion and debate and he faced some interesting and challenging questions from the group during the Q&A session. Amongst other issues, the difficulties the police have when it comes to identifying how and where already drunk people are served more alcohol proved to be a hot topic amongst the group, as were the positive aspects of the night time economy to the area.

### The second half of the session featured a “Power Pot” exercise

Involving the group deciding who has the power when it comes to tackling the issue of developing a more responsible relationship with alcohol in Morecambe.

- Participants listed on pieces of paper who they think is able to influence the problem of alcohol over-use in this area. Examples included ‘our local MP’, ‘the police’, ‘supermarket managers’, ‘parents’, and ‘me’;
- The “Power Pot” is placed in the middle of the floor to represent the centre of power;
- Each participant places their piece of paper as close or as far from the Power Pot as they see fit, representing the power that person has to tackle the issue.

Discussions continued on the result using prompts such as ‘What does this mean for the Inquiry?’ ‘How far from the Pot are you’ ‘How can we move closer to power?’

**We have heard your professional opinion. Would you share your personal views with us too? Be as radical as you like!**  
*(Male participant)*

## Session Seven

**Commentator One: Ian Paylor, Senior Lecturer, Applied Social Science at Lancaster University**

Ian talked about his research into drugs and alcohol misuse and why some people develop an unhealthy relationship with alcohol. He talked about how strong communities can help maintain responsible drinking but ultimately it is down to choices made by the individual and the circumstances they find themselves in.

Ian's talk generated some good debate and it was interesting to see some of the group display increasing confidence to challenge ideas with which they didn't agree.



**Commentator Two: Matt Jackson, M.D. The Lancaster Brewery**

Matt spoke both as a landlord of local pubs and as MD of the Lancaster Brewery. He spoke about how chain pubs had no interest in the community aspect of a pub and were solely driven by profit, often to the detriment of the pub and its regulars. When asked about landlords who knowingly served underage people he told the group about a system in the USA where anyone opening an establishment serving alcohol must pay a \$100,000 bond which can be taken from them if there are any infringements of their licence. Matt also talked

about the low quality products on sale in most pubs and about how he prides himself on the quality of the products and experience on offer in his establishments. He also emphasised the positive aspects of a responsible attitude to alcohol and the numerous benefits a good pub can provide. One aspect of his talk that particularly interested some jurors was his policy of providing cheap soft drinks for designated drivers.

## Session Eight



**Commentator: Mick Dennison, Chair, Morecambe Pub watch**

**Hard lines on alcohol could make people find other outlets, like illegal drugs**  
*(Male participant)*

Mick talked about the importance of responsible retailing of drink and how the PubWatch organisation operated in the town. His emphasis was on dealing with troublemakers and drunk people and how important it is to ensure that bad behaviour is not tolerated.

He disagreed with some of the Inquiry member's ideas about why people drink irresponsibly and this led to some interesting discussions. Mick was also challenged about some of his perceptions of local people. This ability to challenge demonstrates how the confidence of the Inquiry developed over time.

## Morecambe Alcohol Inquiry 2012

This report summarises the deliberations of a group of local residents from across Morecambe who in 2012 took part in the Morecambe Alcohol Inquiry.

