

Community Action – Blackburn (*Changing Attitudes to Alcohol*)

Community Consultation Results

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1. Community Consultation and Engagement

Having identified Blackburn as the community for the pilot project, the next phase was to engage with the residents and key stakeholders in order to produce an in depth community mapping profile. This has taken the format of development, information gathering and reporting.

- Development
 - Developing separate lists of interview questions for those who reside in Blackburn and those who work in Blackburn. This provided the basis for one to one interviews that have been undertaken with both community members and key stakeholders;
 - Development of questionnaire for residents of Blackburn. The distribution of the questionnaires has been greatly supported by the various organisations within the community with a 16% return rate having been achieved.

- Information Gathering
 - Mapping the community into the seven Datazone areas and producing the relevant information relating to each of them;
 - One to one interviews with key stakeholders and members of the community;
 - Distribution of questionnaires. This has been achieved through the following means:
 - The three local primary schools provided a 'schoolbag drop';
 - Target day at Blackburn shopping centre;
 - Community Council;
 - Riddochill Residents Association;
 - Family Day Centre;
 - Blackburn & Seafield Parish Church;
 - West Lothian Youth Action Project – Youth street workers targeted the 10 to 17 year age group with former clients targeting the 17 to 19 year age group;
 - Community Development and Learning – targeted young people attending summer clubs and events organised at the Community Centre;
 - Engaging with the statutory and voluntary organisations and groups that have a vested interest in the community.
 - Supply of statistics by the relevant key stakeholders;

The information gathered has been analysed by Matthew Plunkett, mp Consultancy and separated into the following 4 strands of engagement results:

- Key stakeholder interviews
- Community questionnaire Survey
- Small sample of primary school children
- Young people survey

1.1 Results - Key Stakeholder Interviews (n=19)

Key stakeholder interviews were conducted either face to face or via a telephone interview across May to July 2008 with a range of key stakeholders who were part of organisations or groups who had input into the Blackburn community.

The types of organisation included were:

- Substance Misuse Treatment services (voluntary and statutory)
- Community Planning
- Education
- Criminal Justice
- Housing
- Health
- Youth Services
- Community Representation

Key themes

When asked about what it was like to work in Blackburn and the main concerns the stakeholders had regarding the local community a major theme of discussion within the interviews was the question of identity and how Blackburn viewed itself. A number of the key stakeholders felt that although there was a perceived distinct community often with a strong spirit it lacked cohesion and that that spirit and coming together to address concerns only surfaced with the same voices.

“there is a strong community and often close knit” ref 14

“we like it, it is good. Very much a community place” ref 15

“lots of dignity even if they do not have a good deal” ref 7

“it’s a forgotten communityinsufficiency of shops and lack of local facilities... when you get to the real roots ...they are very amenable friendly and willing to get involved... same players you see all the time” ref 14

It was acknowledged that there was considerable change within Blackburn and the populations that live there. There were a lot of new residents that worked within Edinburgh or Livingston and shopped in other areas but rarely engaged with the area that they lived in. Compared to this there was the long term residents of Blackburn who also had to deal with an ever changing viscous population whereby there was considerable council letting and renting to an increasing homeless population. Therefore it was felt that there was a considerable amount of dislocation between the different residential groupings

“decimation of the community investment in Livingston has seen a demise in things that make a community a community....although the heart of the community is being removed it is not to say there isn’t a spirit” ref 8

“new residents often do not mix with the rest of the community” ref 7

“often conflict between locals and the homeless” ref 13

“there is a community perception of the housing stock condition to be poor and perception of housing lets being given to homeless outside of the area” ref 5

"There is a need to get these new members of the community on board and to become part of the Blackburn community" ref 14

Obviously key stakeholders pointed out that a key aspect that affected the local community was the high levels of social deprivation that Blackburn had to contend with and substance misuse (including a culture of heavy drinking) was pervasive within the local area and stemmed from lack of opportunity and aspiration and often linked to anti social behaviour.

Lack of employment and educational opportunities for the population led to lack of aspiration and an increasing apathy and frustration for certain groups. It was felt that this manifested itself in territorial boundaries being very important for the youth of Blackburn.

"there are serious social issues along with drugs and alcohol, large amount of people unemployed and unemployable and this has become a culture" ref 17

"There is a territorial issue...it still exists but the resistance has been broken down from what it used to be" (ref14)

A number of key stakeholders felt that the local area was hindered by a lack of up to date local facilities with a number of local people unable to access some amenities that are out of the local area. It was felt that though there were services available often access was prevented by transport issues but this range of services was also affected by lack of cohesion with regards to the different services not communicating with each other.

"Going back a while to late 80's ...it was fairly frustrating because there weren't any services in place in the local community. People had to travel and public transport wasn't that wonderful. Don't think much has changed albeit there are more agencies working out of Blackburn" ref 8

"there are gaps with regards to the services of the council and other agencies working together. There is a lack of communication and this needs to be improved..." ref 18

This it was felt often affected the most vulnerable and especially the young who had a lack of safe and good standard of places to access.

Alcohol within the community

Key Stakeholders acknowledged that there was a culture of heavy drinking within Blackburn not unlike a number of socially deprived areas of Scotland and it was felt that this culture of drinking was very visible with an increasing amount of alcohol related disorder.

"often anti social behaviour is drink related" ref 3

"intimidation and provocationwith drinking in the streets" ref 17

"there is a culture of heavy drinking that is often accepted as the norm" ref 8

For a number of stakeholders it was felt that there was an acceptance of alcohol related problems combined with an ignorance of the effects of that apathy which linked to high degree of availability and cheapness of product added to the overall problems of alcohol within the local community.

Specific concerns that were mentioned included:

- the worry of selling alcohol close to a primary school
- the high level of 3rd party buying of alcohol for young people
- the lack of a range of diversionary activities for young people
- schools closing on Friday afternoons that leads to considerable amount of young people drinking early at the start of the weekend period

Gaps in Services

The vast majority of stakeholders felt that the key gaps in services were based around the lack of good quality local amenities that all sections of the local community could utilise.

“more things for people to do, especially the elderly, lonely and the really young ones. Also need to remember that when looking at diversionary work not everyone likes football” ref 12

“lack of sports facilities which is not available for the community due to non availability of supervision” ref 14

“need to provide better shops and a bank...better services, health centre needs to be renewed” ref 16

There was a demand for better community engagement that took small steps in engaging the different groups within the local area and that could be enhanced by more inter agency work with a specific Blackburn context. There was a realisation that more services and organisations had to find bases and venues for provision within the local community that mixed specialist services with more generic service provision.

“need to have more links with generic service... for example health or mental health services – needs to be more accessible to the public” ref 4

There was also the request for community development and planning to consider the long term affect of the decisions that are made in respect to how the community grows and engages. An example of this was the affect that was still being felt of the closure of the local non denominational school a number of years ago.

“need to become more targeted in our approach in order for us to address the health inequalities and deprivation gaps that exist” ref 6

“We are getting better re locality planning and there will be always gaps but we need to join up our work a bit better” ref 14

Priorities in Addressing Alcohol within Blackburn

When key stakeholders were requested to indicate what they would want to see as top priorities regarding addressing alcohol within Blackburn the responses were split between alcohol related priorities and community development priorities.

Specific alcohol related focus was seen as having a need for consistent alcohol education at different points with different groups not just targeting young people. The message of sensible drinking had to be investigated and put within the context that a lot of individuals and families within Blackburn drink.

There was a clear request to address access and availability of alcohol especially to the young where it was felt that there was an acceptance that young people got drunk and this focused on clear pathways to address 3rd party buying.

In terms of community development priorities the major theme was development of a range of facilities that were for the whole community across shops, to the family centre to the community centre. This also extended to considering access and opening times and the resources required to allow more flexibility.

It had been recognised that there had been previous initiatives to engage with the Blackburn population but it was felt that there needed to be concerted effort on what was meant by community engagement and what shape and form it took - not just between the community and services but also within and across services.

There was wish for practical movement forward on a number of issues and that required both political leadership and will but also community responsibility (that is affected by the previous point). This would have to be tackled in terms of the issues concerning for example:

- School opening times
- 3rd party buying and buying for underage
- diversionary activities

These were also, it was recognised, affected by often scant resources and a compromise had to be made, but capacity and sustainability of services were also key aspects that were not resource led but also had an affect on the provision of a range of services.

“there is a big gap with regard to funding issues relating to alcohol. In terms of capacity there is an issue but also one of community engagement” ref 6

1.2 Results - Community Survey of Population (n=141)

The second strand of community engagement results came in the shape of a sample of community respondents whose perceptions were asked via a brief questionnaire.

From the 141 who responded to the survey 32.6% (46) were male and 67.4% (95) were female. Of the 117 who responded to a question regarding marital status 48.7 % (57)

were married and 21.4% (25) were single. Other demographic information is stated below:

Age (n=134)

- Under 16 7.5% (10)
- 16-19 years 15.7% (21)
- 20-25 years 3.7% (5)
- 26 – 39 years 32.8% (44)
- 40 – 59 years 24.6% (33)
- 60+ years 15.7% (21)

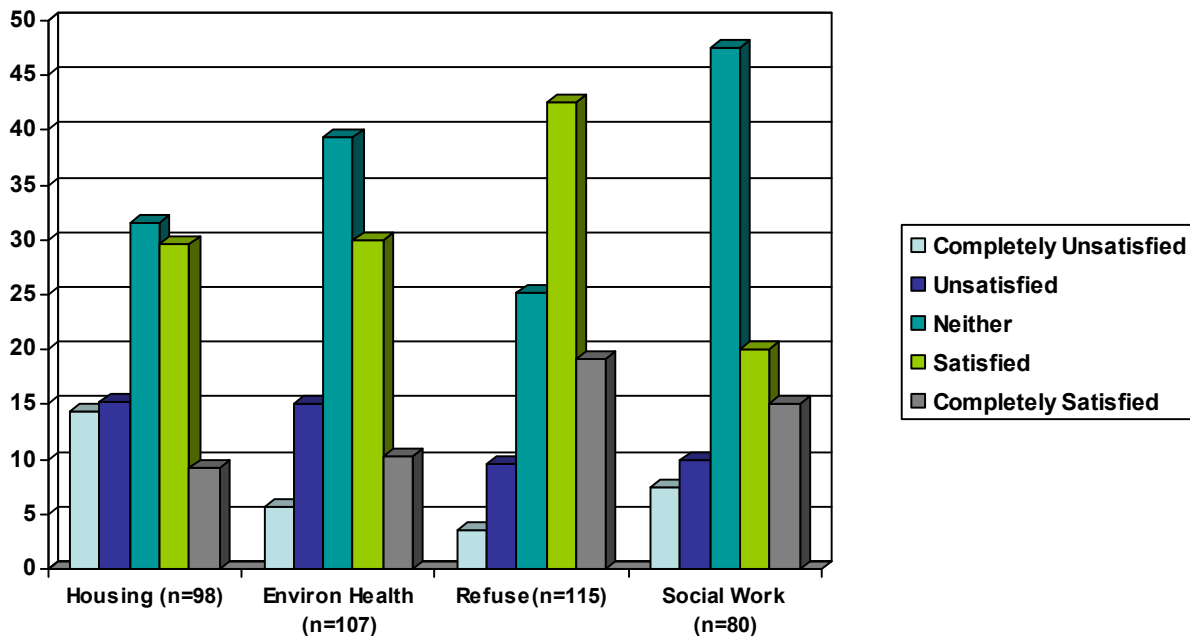
Employment (n=106)

- Employed 47.2% (50)
- Other 27.4% (29)
- Unemployed 16% (17)
- Other employment was mainly retired with also training, carer, housewife and self employed

Satisfaction with Staying in Blackburn and with local services

When asked whether or not they were satisfied with staying in Blackburn from 122 respondents over 69% (84) were either satisfied or completely satisfied. However when asked to respond with their level of satisfaction with a range of local services reaction is less so positive.

Again when asked how satisfied they were with the level of services from housing only 39% of 98 respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied. Similar lower figures are representative of environmental health services (40% of 107) and social work (35% of 80). Interestingly for refuse services a higher percentage (62% of 115 respondents) were satisfied with the level of services



A higher percentage of respondents were satisfied with the level of services from:

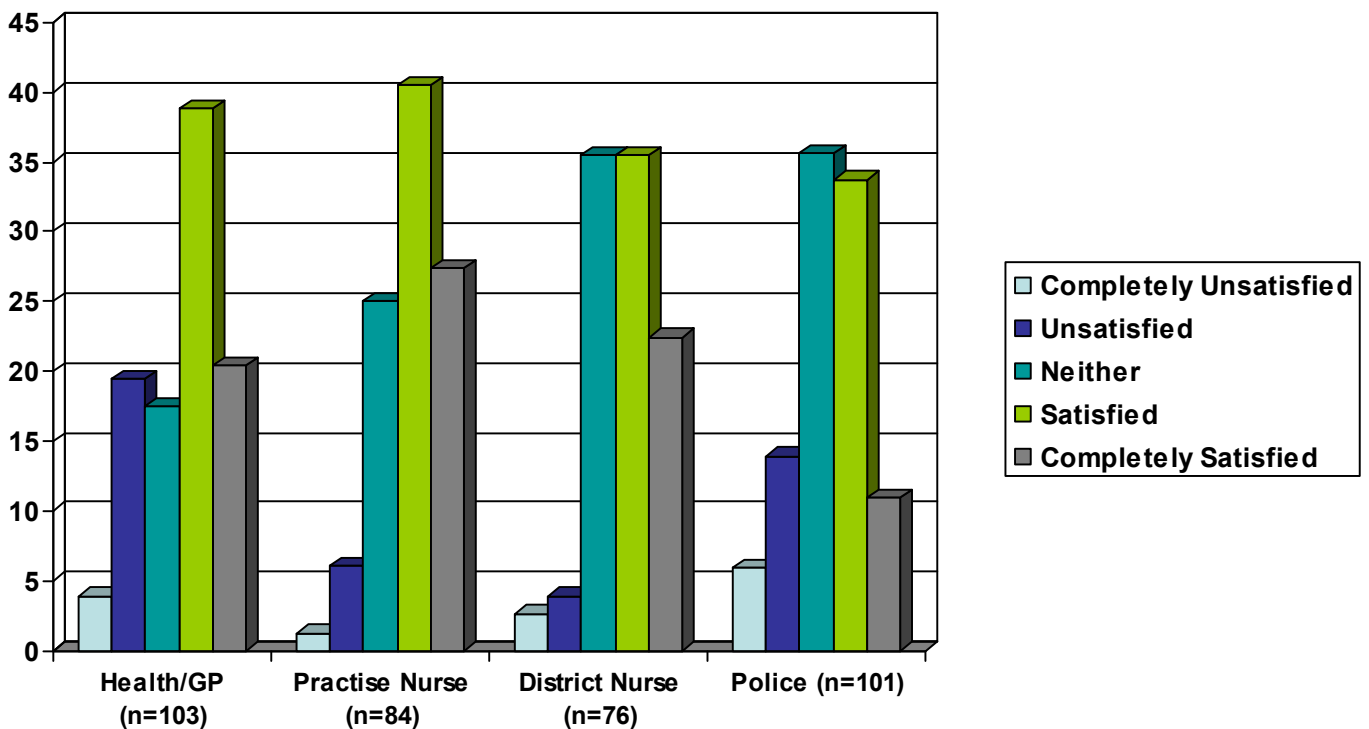
Health Centre / Doctors	59% (of 103 respondents)
Practise Nurse	68% (of 84 respondents)
District Nurse	58% (of 76 respondents)

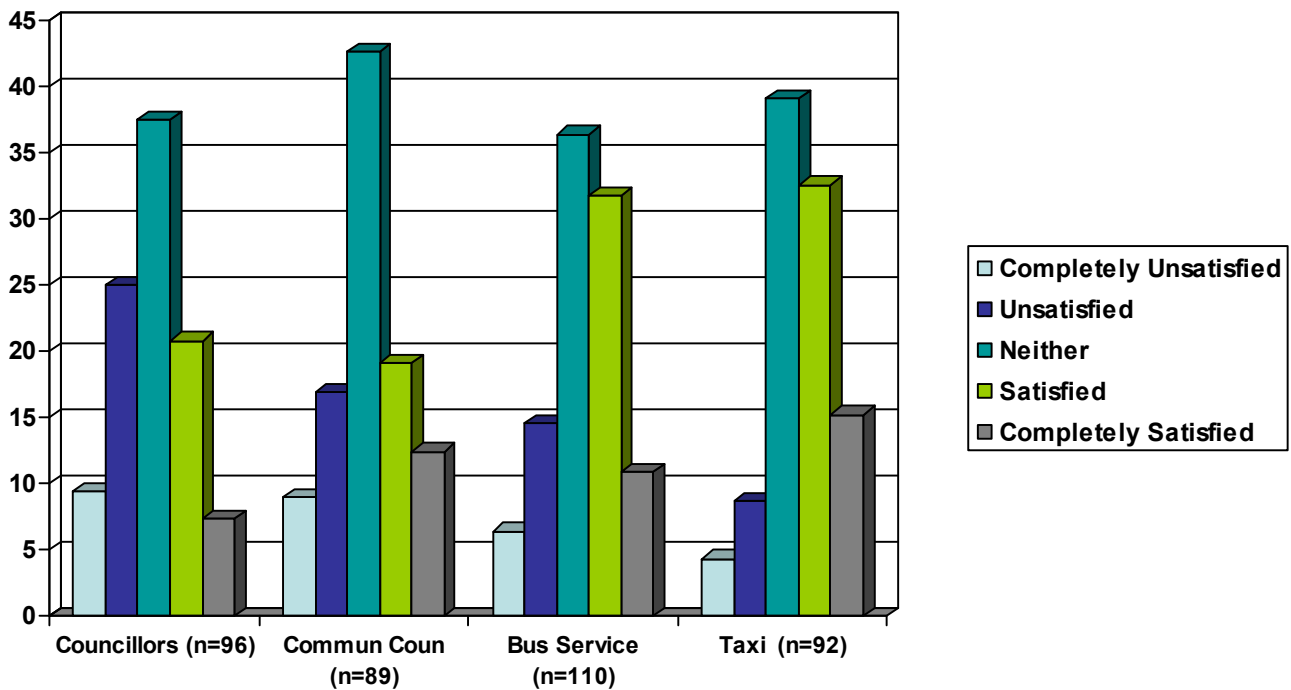
However a slightly lower percentage were satisfied with the level of service from the Police (45% of 101 respondents), from Bus services (43% of 110 respondents) and Taxi services (48% of 92 respondents).

When asked about their level of satisfaction with a number of other services lower levels percentages of people were either completely satisfied or satisfied were indicated with:

Councillors	28% (of 96 respondents)
Community Council	22% (of 89 respondents)

However this may be an indication of a lower level of engagement with these services than others.





However the majority of respondents from the survey were not satisfied with the level of community facilities and community events within Blackburn.

Only 27% (of 124 respondents) were either satisfied or completely satisfied with the level of community facilities. Similar low percentages were indicated for:

Sports facilities	27% (of 124 respondents)
Community events	20% (of 115 respondents)
Clubs and Organisations	26% (of 119 respondents)

When asked what they would change about the local facilities the most popular responses (n=100) were focused on providing more for the local young people and a better standard and upgrading of facilities.

More and better facilities for young people (41%)
 Better facilities / clubs (28%)
 Better use of sports facilities (9%)

These responses were in the middle of a huge range of suggestions including:

- General increase in opening times for facilities
- Parks being open more hours
- Parks being upgraded
- Better use and open times for the local swimming pool
- Addressing local vandalism

It is clear from the information gleaned that respondents wanted improved service provision and facilities. When asked overall how satisfied they were with the level of services within Blackburn only 25% of 113 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied. In response to being asked how satisfied they were with the response to getting things done only 22% were satisfied or very satisfied.

Concerns regarding alcohol in the community

The survey asked respondents to indicate what their concerns were regarding alcohol in the local Blackburn community. The most mentioned concerns were:

- Underage drinking (26.9%,32)
- Drinking on the streets (16%, 19)
- Alcohol and violence (13.4%, 16)
- Too many place to buy drink (12.6%, 15)
- Young being bored (7.6%, 9)

Other less mentioned responses included the selling to underage drinkers, lack of facilities, the young being bored, adults buying alcohol for youngsters and litter with broken bottles.

When asked what alcohol services people were aware of there were limited responses with only 26 individuals mentioning organisations. The most mentioned were:

- WLDAS (42.3%,11)
- AA/ALNON (38.5%,10)
- WLYAP (11.5%, 3)

along with ELCA and a local licensing forum.

Involvement with Clubs

Although the survey indicated a general lack of enthusiasm for the standard and level of services / facilities within Blackburn there was a considerable amount of involvement in local organisations and clubs, with 57% (59 of 104) of responses showing that people were involved in something of which 11.5% (12) stated involvement with local youth organisations.

Again within a huge range of other responses included:

- The Bowling Club
- Community Council
- Family Centre
- Tenants Association
- B.L.E.S. Training
- After School Club
- Swimming
- Gala Day
- 5 a Side Football
- Baby Group
- OAP Club

Priorities to address within Blackburn

The final question of the community survey asked respondents to indicate what they felt should be the top two priorities that needed to be addressed regarding alcohol within the local Blackburn area. From the results it is interesting to note that the top responses in terms of most popular were non alcohol related and focus on activities.

- More to do (20.3%, 28)
- Lack of community facilities (13.8%, 19)
- Address drinking on streets (10.1%, 14)
- Address drug issues (9.4%, 13)
- Underage drinking (8%, 11)
- Better access to community facilities (5.8%, 8)

- Other responses included: deal with alcohol related violence, sort out youngsters hanging about, more support for vulnerable youngsters

The majority of the most popular responses were focused on aspects of local community development that were not necessarily alcohol related including sorting out youngsters hanging about, more support for vulnerable youngsters.

1.3 Results - Primary school survey (n=22)

An informal school survey was conducted with a small group of primary school children based in Blackburn. The children were simply asked to write down on a sheet:

- What their concerns were living and going to school in Blackburn
- What they liked about Blackburn
- What their wishes were for Blackburn

When asked about their concerns the most popular responses were very visible concerns:

- Concerns (n=32):
 - Vandalism (31%, 10) drunks and street drinking (25%, 8), bottles and glass smashed (15.6%, 5) underage drinking (12.5%, 4)
- Like about Blackburn (n=25):
 - Good park (28%, 7), nothing good (16%, 4), football (16%, 4), swing park (12%, 3)
- Wishes for Blackburn (n=24):
 - Better things at the park (45.8%, 11), more to do (25%, 6), better facilities / shops (20.8%, 5)

The most popular thing that the children liked about Blackburn from a range of 25 responses was the park (28% 7) though a number of the children suggested nothing good about Blackburn (16% 4). Unsurprisingly the main wish for Blackburn was a focus on more amenities and especially better things at the park (46%, 11).

1.4 Results – Young Persons Survey (n=41)

The final batch of results comes from a small sample of young people who responded to a young person's survey. Out of the 41 who responded 56% (23) were male and 44% (18) were female, and 73% of those were under 16 years of age.

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	12.00	2	4.9	4.9	4.9
	13.00	5	12.2	12.2	17.1
	14.00	12	29.3	29.3	46.3
	15.00	7	17.1	17.1	63.4
	16.00	4	9.8	9.8	73.2
	17.00	3	7.3	7.3	80.5
	18.00	6	14.6	14.6	95.1
	20.00	1	2.4	2.4	97.6
	22.00	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

What it is like living in Blackburn

When asked what it was like living in Blackburn there was a clear demarcation in terms of responses. 49% (20) felt it was ok with 37% (15) thinking it was boring and 15% (6) suggesting that it was 'not good at all'.

When requested to indicate what their general concerns were about Blackburn out of 60 responses 34 of them focused on Blackburn being boring and needing more or better facilities with 11 responses focusing on the trouble and violence that occurred.

General Concerns				
Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
boring	1	17	28.3	42.5
more/better facils	2	17	28.3	42.5
problem families	3	3	5.0	7.5
get hassle from yp	4	2	3.3	5.0
drug users	5	9	15.0	22.5
trouble / violence	7	11	18.3	27.5
not allowed in community centre	8	1	1.7	2.5
Total responses		60	100.0	150.0
1 missing cases; 40 valid cases				

Drinking Culture

71% (29) drank alcohol mostly at weekends and with their pals. The majority of those who drank did it on the streets or with mates at a house. Over 57% were getting alcohol via a 3rd party either a person off the street, an older mate or a big brother or sister.

“Older friends – we ask older people at shop” Female (14yrs ref 39)

“My older sister buys it or her pals” Female (15yrs ref 38)

“From random people outside shops” Male (13yrs ref 25)

When asked to indicate whether they were concerned about alcohol and what those concerns were 55% were concerned with another 26% concerned about the level of violence related to alcohol use / misuse.

The young people were asked whether or not issues or concerns regarding alcohol had been brought up anywhere and there was a very limited response with the Police being the most popular response in terms when alcohol had been brought up often when they themselves had been asked to pour alcohol away:

“yes the police are always about” Female (15 yrs ref 10)

“police sometimes pour drink out” Male (13 yrs ref 21)

The two other popular routes of communication were youth workers (16%, 6) and school (13.5%, 5).

- Police 27% (n=10)
- Youth workers 16.2% (n=6)
- School 13.5%(n=5)
- Don't know 13.5% (n=5) No 10.8% (4)
- 30% feel ok in getting things done, the rest either don't know, see it as slow or not aware of processes to get response
- Very limited response when asked if they considered asking about solutions raised – of those who did perception that locals needed to be listened to more

There was no mention of parents or grandparents as a route for information or concerns being raised regarding alcohol.

Gaps and Priorities

The young people were finally asked like the other groups to indicate what they felt were gaps in services in Blackburn for young people and what the priorities should be when addressing alcohol.

Very clearly the gaps focused on the majority seeing the need for more to do (52% 13) matched with better and more local facilities.

“more places for youths to go” Female (15yrs ref 4)

“Nothing local – problem with job centre, cannae get a dentist” Male (18yrs ref 11)

“more things to do for teenage girls” (Female 15 ref 38)

“better counselling services and more local facilities needed” Female (16yrs ref41)

Again there was a priority when addressing alcohol in the community with respects to 'more to do' (21%) however over 39% of responses to the question of top priorities were the needs for education on alcohol for not just young people but the wider community:

“occupy teenagers more and education to kids and parents” (Female 15yrs ref38)

“More for young people to do, a meeting place for info for young people” (Female 15 years ref 1)

“education in schools should be better on drugs and alcohol plus sex and teach parents!” (Female 14yrs ref 29)

1.5 Routes Forward from the Consultation

Within the community consultation process there have been key points that have been raised on a number of occasions by individuals and groups throughout the consultation. Below those points are presented with questions to encourage a route forward for development points that the Community Alcohol Project can begin to address:

- **How to build capacity in community**

- Engagement – what shape or form will this take, can concerns and issues from previous engagement initiatives be learnt from with regards to addressing alcohol across a number of different groups with Blackburn.
- Can a development of a mix of a wide range of residents / local people be developed – in what forum, how exactly?
- Can confidence in local service provision across the board improve – how exactly is this going to be achieved?
- Does this include links between parents and their children re access to alcohol information and advice?
- Better standard amenities encourage this?
- Who should be involved and what links need to be made?

- **How to build capacity and inter agency work within Blackburn?**

- Are there opportunities for more local bases for services within the area?
- What services have an opportunity to move more into the area?
- Are there more generic services that can build access to specialist provision more into their venues?

- **Addressing the clear alcohol issues:**

- What can be done regarding availability of alcohol at a local level?
- What first steps can be taken to addressing acceptance and apathy towards heavy drinking culture and young peoples drinking in the local community?
- What practical steps can be addressed regarding 3rd party buying of alcohol access – links between police, community council and licensing forum?
- Can alcohol education packages be put into local schools in a consistent manner?
- Are there specific alcohol awareness events that can be focused on parents and older adults? How exactly and what routes should be utilised?

- **Local facilities – access availability and safety**

- How do you define ‘more to do’ for young people? What is it exactly?
- Can local access to amenities be improved with more flexibility regarding open times and supervision especially for young people?
- Could simple changes to system problems solve potential blocks to access? Travel requirements, changes to timetables, simple advertising of provision, opening the parks? (but each of these must be thought through carefully)
- Are there diversionary activities available that are not focused on football and encourage more female involvement?
- How further can those excluded from mainstream activity be linked into and encouraged to access services – especially young people?
- Are there resources and capacity issues that need to be addressed - if so how and what funding is required?

These issues are raised as starting points to allow the local steering group to take forward the agenda of addressing alcohol within the community of Blackburn.

1.6 Initial Priorities and Outcomes identified by Steering Group

The Steering Group having given due consideration to the results of the community consultation identified the following priorities as being the main areas of concern for the community.

Capacity in the Community

Community interaction, involvement and ownership are seen as key components in ensuring that all interventions undertaken will be sustained and built upon by the community once the project has reached the end of its life span. As the ‘whole community’ approach is new and never having previously been attempted in Scotland, it has always been viewed as the biggest challenge confronting the project.

- Community Engagement

- Communication

How to build Capacity and inter agency work within Blackburn

- Prevention & Treatment Services.
- Improve community engagement programme with addition of more inter agency networking to target identified concerns.

Addressing the clear alcohol issues

The alcohol issues within Blackburn, although no worse than any other part of West Lothian, are greater than those associated with drug misuse. Like all other areas of the UK actions to address alcohol related harm have been hampered due to a severe lack of funding. Alcohol harm plays a part in all aspects of life and has a bearing on a person's ability to make the correct life choices for themselves. As Community Action on Alcohol Blackburn is about providing the community with the relevant information to make positive life choices, any actions identified to address alcohol related issues within the community will require to be looked at in this regard.

- Alcohol Availability
- Education
- Employability

Local Facilities

It has been suggested that community development has been hindered by lack of both local and modern facilities.

- More to do
- Community Facilities
- Resources

Outcomes

In line with the above, the following outcomes were identified for addressing in the initial stage of the project:

- Engage with the community;
- Improve communication links within the community;
- Improve Alcohol Awareness Education;
- Reduce underage drinking

A work plan with actions related to achieving the above outcomes has been developed.