Alcohol in the workplace: results of an empirical study

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Alcohol in the workplace: results of an empirical study

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The study investigates alcohol consumption amongst workers employed in a sample of UK firms. The report describes the nature and extent of such consumption and its relationship to workforce attitudes, type of alcohol policy in operation, impact on accident rates and absenteeism and a variety of other related variables. The data are drawn from three sources: semi-structured interviews with management and key personnel in a sample of 45 firms throughout the UK; questionnaires completed by 2,186 workers in a subset of 31 of these firms; a questionnaire study of alcohol treatment agencies located in areas where the firms were recruited. The study has five main objectives. These are:

1. To provide a basic picture of the nature and range of alcohol consumption amongst workers in a sample of British industries.
2. To compare subsamples of firms which differed in the drinking habits of their workforces, and to identify points of similarity and difference.
3. To investigate attitudes to alcohol and the way such attitudes relate to consumption and work performance.
4. To examine the relationship between drinking practices and general workplace cultures.
5. To examine the nature of alcohol policies and the degree of implementation of these, in the sample of firms obtained.

It is concluded that firms differ markedly in terms of drinking cultures and a number of drinking-related variables. It seems likely that alcohol policies need to take into account differences between firms in terms of workforce culture, attitudes and the nature of work being carried out. A strategy based on the adoption of a single uniform policy may encounter difficulties if it ignores certain important differences. It appears that the motivation for firms to adopt alcohol policies is usually highly pragmatic, the primary concern being litigation with health concerns being secondary. Discussion is needed to ensure that common goals are shared by policy providers and firms.

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Executive Summary

- In 1993 agreement was reached between the former Department of Employment (now the Department for Education and Employment), the Health Education Authority, the Alcohol Education and Research Council and the Portman Group to fund a study of the effects of alcohol in the UK workplace. After competitive tenders the University of Strathclyde Centre for Applied Social Psychology was awarded the contract.

- The work consisted of two main parts. Part 1 consisted on an evaluative review of the literature on the costs of alcohol in the workplace and the response of industries to alcohol related problems. This review has been published under a separate cover. The second part of the study involved an empirical investigation of a range of UK industries in order to explore the extent and dynamics of alcohol use in the workplace and the impact of alcohol consumption on work performance.

The study

- Firstly, the study aimed to provide a basic picture of the nature and range of alcohol consumption in a sample of British industries. Secondly it was proposed to provide a detailed comparison between firms which differed in terms of the drinking habits of their work forces. Thirdly, it was proposed to investigate differing attitudes to alcohol and the way such differences related to differences in reported consumption and reported work performance. The fourth objective sought to examine the relationship between drinking practices and general work place cultures. Finally, the fifth objective concerned alcohol policies and the degree of implementation of these in a sample of firms of a variety of types. Of particular interest is the relationship between policy implementation and the nature and extent of drinking problems presenting in a particular industry.
Methodology

- Data were drawn from three sources. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were carried out with key personnel in a sample of 45 firms and companies of varying types from a variety of locations within the UK. Secondly, agreement was reached for self-completion questionnaires to be distributed to members of the work force in 31 of these 45 participating companies. Finally, a questionnaire was circulated to alcohol treatment agencies selected from within the areas where the firms were recruited. A total of 2,186 completed questionnaires were returned. Basic descriptive data are provided on the age and sex distribution of respondents. Examination of existing data suggests that the sample reflects reasonably well the distributions of age, sex and salary that currently characterise UK industry.

Drinking Behaviour

- The data display systematic differences in consumption between work categories, sex, salary levels and a number of other variables of a predictable nature which have been found in previous research. Consequently there is confidence in the current data set. Analysis of mean alcohol consumption per week, by salary level, shows for men a peak in consumption amongst those earning around £1,000 per month with a slight decline from that point both towards higher and lower salary levels. Beyond the salary of £1,000 per month it appears that in general terms men drink less, if anything, the more they earn. For women, however, the picture appears to be rather different. There appears to be a tendency towards heavier drinking amongst higher paid women. Analysis by work category confirms this impression.

- Certain occupational groups are identified as drinking more heavily in total than others. The most heavy drinking of these work categories is the manual category. This group drinks significantly more heavily than the mean for all of the other groups in the study.
The effect appears to be mainly due to heavy drinking of male manual workers. A second group identified as more likely to consume greater amounts of alcohol is those working in the arts and media where men and possibly women also consume more than average.

- The data also include reports of consumption during working hours. Whilst reports of personal consumption during working hours are generally moderate, there is widespread knowledge and awareness of the effects of alcohol in the workplace amongst other workers. Over one-third of respondents indicated that there had been occasions when their own work performance had been affected by alcohol, and approximately twice that number indicated awareness of occasions on which colleagues had been so affected. Almost one-third of respondents indicated that they felt one of their colleagues might have a drinking problem. Finally data on frequency of alcohol related incidents indicated a small number of incidents occurring on a fairly regular basis. Overall, the data suggest the presence of a widespread awareness of the effects of alcohol on the workplace, and alcohol related incidents appeared to be common and regular occurrences. We did not, however, form an opinion that the workforce had a large scale or chronic problem of epidemic proportions in terms of alcohol consumption during the working day. The problem seems to be one of regular but localised occurrence rather than a general one.

- There was no great enthusiasm for the introduction of testing in the workplace.

- Finally, the data relating to sickness and absence revealed a somewhat unexpected picture. Total amount of sickness absence revealed no significant relationship to either amount of alcohol consumed at work or consumed in total. Whilst alcohol related absenteeism amongst heavier drinking sections of the work force ran at a higher level than amongst lighter-drinking sections, overall absenteeism rates of these groups were not significantly different. The data suggest that while absence from work is more likely to be alcohol related amongst heavier drinking groups, lighter drinking groups may show roughly similar absenteeism rates due to other causes.
Comparison of Higher and Lower Drinking Companies

- In this section comparisons were made between a selected group of higher drinking companies and a similarly selected group of lower drinking companies. The data from this section largely confirm the impressions derived from the previous analysis. It is clear on initial examination, however, that there are wide variations both in terms of overall drinking and in terms of drinking during working hours between different companies. There appears to be a moderate correlation between workforce drinking during the day and workforce drinking at other times.

- Whilst the data suggest that alcohol consumption is related to absenteeism, once again total absenteeism did not distinguish the heavier from the lighter drinking firms. Whilst alcohol therefore appears to contribute to absenteeism the data from the present study do not indicate that overall attendance level in the heavier drinking firms is markedly different from that in the lighter drinking firms. There was a suggestion from the interview data that absenteeism amongst lighter drinking sections of the workforce may run at an elevated level due to employees regarding paid sickness leave as a right rather than an entitlement in some non-manual sections of the workforce.

- The data suggest that employees from both higher and lower drinking companies feel a greater sense of responsibility when the work being carried out is safety critical. In general it appears to be the case that employers in the lower drinking companies are more likely to be involved in work which is (reportedly) more safety critical than those in the heavier drinking companies. It appears, therefore, that any discussion of the relationship between alcohol and safety risk has to take into account a number of important factors including the nature of the industry and the type of work carried out. Finally an examination of certain company actions which have a bearing on alcohol consumption revealed that higher drinking companies tended to be those which in a variety of ways communicated a more
relaxed attitude towards drinking during the working day than those in the lighter drinking firms.

Alcohol Related Attitudes

- Analysis of a set of attitude items showed that two basic dimensions or factors underlaid a broad range of specific attitude statements. These two factors concerned firstly the potential detrimental effects of alcohol in the work place and secondly the socially enhancing effects of alcohol in social situations. The second factor appeared to be the most important. Scores on this factor discriminated between a variety of criterion groups, and were clearly related to reported consumption. On the other hand the first factor which focused on the detrimental effect of alcohol in the work place, had less discriminatory power overall. This suggests that any education aimed at informing work forces of the dangers and consequences of alcohol in the work place might largely be wasted effort. All sections of the work force are, in general terms, aware of these facts regardless of the nature of the work and type of consumption. By contrast differences in consumption seem to be more clearly related to a general set of social and cultural attitudes towards the positive effects of alcohol.

- With respect to the issue of introduction of testing it appears there is a degree of defensiveness on the issue which precludes its open discussion. A majority suggested that testing was not necessary and that it would adversely affect staff and management relationships. Furthermore a significant proportion of subjects indicated they would object to the introduction of such schemes. Management views were mixed and ranged from unqualified support for testing through to a strong distrust for such a possibility.
Cultural Factors

- Whilst formal policies and procedures clearly have an important impact on workplace alcohol consumption it is clearly the case that a number of informal norms and rules contribute to the overall alcohol culture. Where these informal norms and rules conflict with the formal rules it is unlikely that there will be any openness on the part of the work force with respect to alcohol problems or their disclosure.

- There is evidence that formal alcohol policies are sometimes not communicated effectively to all sections of the work force and some specific instances where the beliefs of the general work force about the nature of the alcohol policy are clearly at variance with official policy statements.

- This section also provides a brief description of the development of alcohol policies within the alcohol industry where improvements appear to have been made.

Alcohol Policies

- Whilst health educators and others may possess a variety of health related and social motives for recommending the introduction of alcohol policies, it appears that in most industries the reasons for adopting such policies are more pragmatic. A majority of respondents indicated that the motivation for adopting a policy derived primarily from legislation and the desire to avoid possible litigation. Legislation appears to be the primary motive amongst those who have adopted an alcohol policy. Also mentioned was the need to be seen to have such a policy amongst firms contracting to larger industries who required such a policy to be in place.

- A problem was identified arising from the fact that policies commonly seek to differentiate between the voluntary consumption of alcohol in the work place as a possible disciplinary
offence, and the “compulsive” consumption of those with an alcohol problem, for whom non-disciplinary procedures are deemed more appropriate. This distinction between volitional and non-volitional behaviour in terms of alcohol consumption creates problems both for policies and for the agencies to whom employees are referred. There was some evidence from interviews that employees in some industries were aware of the strategic value of presenting their alcohol consumption as “addicted”.

- In some cases the simple possession of a policy appears to be the primary aim in view. There is by no means uniformity in terms of the communication and advertising of such policies; similarly there appear to be large differences in referral procedures and follow up once individuals have been referred for treatment. Most firms appear to show little interest in clients once they have been referred.

- It is apparent that evaluation of the effectiveness of alcohol policies is in its infancy. Few firms keep or collect any data which would enable such an evaluation to take place. There is a widespread dearth of information about productivity, efficiency and wastage rates as these relate to alcohol problems either at the group or the individual level.

Agency Case Study

- A survey was undertaken of agencies operating in the areas where the firms were located. A wide range of services are reported as being provided by these agencies but the provision of information, advice, counselling, assessment and training appear to be the most frequent resources. The most important finding from this section is the extremely low rate of reports from agencies that any active follow-up is engaged in by companies making referrals. Virtually no progress reports were reported as having been requested.

- Agencies tend to operate mainly from their own premises but a number do make company visits. Funding for the most part is via local and national government and health bodies but
fees for consultation and counselling are charged by some agencies either to the employer or the employee.

Conclusions

- On the basis of the data from the present study we conclude that

- The consumption of alcohol in the workplace is a regular but localised problem rather than a broadly based chronic problem.

- Certain firms and certain groups of employees show patterns of alcohol consumption in general, and patterns of alcohol consumption during working hours that differ from other firms/groups. Male manual workers appear to be the highest consumers; above average consumption is also reported by those in arts and media; the position of more highly paid women invites some further investigation.

- Alcohol-related absenteeism is higher among heavier drinkers. However, there appears to be no simple relationship between alcohol use either in general, or during working hours, and absenteeism.

- It appears that more lax and tolerant attitudes on the part of management are sometimes associated with higher levels of consumption. It also appears that this set of circumstances is more likely to arise in industries where the work carried out is seen as less safety critical.

- A majority of alcohol policies seem to have been put in place as a response to external pressure. Foremost amongst these appears to be legislation.
• There is a shortage of data that would enable independent external evaluation of the extent of implementation of alcohol policies, and their effectiveness in leading to successful outcomes, to take place.

• Given the above we feel it may be premature to make claims that policies automatically translate into immediate economic gains.

• Whilst possession of an alcohol or related policy is one of the discriminators between higher and lower drinking firms, it is not the strongest. A better discriminator between higher and lower drinking firms were the presence and implementation of a number of specific and highly visible ad hoc disciplinary procedures.

• Most policies seem to be based on a need to distinguish between alcohol use as a disease and alcohol use as a volitional type of behaviour. This creates problems. The distinction is also one which has fallen out of favour with many agencies.

• There are clear difficulties in many of the firms with regard to disseminating and implementing alcohol policies. There also appear to be a number of differing views on the purposes of alcohol policies and what may be expected from them. There needs to be more discussion to prioritise goals as an aid to policy development.

• There appear to be no groundswell of support for the implementation of testing procedures in the workplace.

• A broad set of attitudes and cultural beliefs differentiated between a number of target groups. Educational programmes thus need to address these broader issues. By contrast most sections of the work force regardless of drinking habits or consumption were aware of the detrimental effects of alcohol on work performance.
• It is not clear from this study whether a uniform approach to alcohol policy implementation would be advantageous. It may be that different types of policy are required in different work contexts. Any such differences would need to be clearly spelled out to employees through their contracts.
CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

In late 1992 and the spring of 1993 discussions took place between the former Department of Employment and a number of other interested parties with respect to funding a major study of alcohol misuse in the UK workplace and the role that alcohol and related health policies might play in minimising any harm arising from the misuse of alcohol at work. The initial discussions involved the former Department of Employment, the Health Education Authority, the Alcohol Education and Research Council and the Portman Group. These various bodies collectively agreed to fund such a study with a view to research starting in late 1993. The contract was awarded by means of competitive tender and tenders were invited from a variety of interested parties during early 1993. A tender from the University of Strathclyde involving the Centre for Applied Social Psychology was received from Professor John Davies. This tender was successful. The project described had two main components. These were:

An evaluative literature review of the costs of alcohol in the workplace, the benefits of varying types of alcohol-related policies and an assessment of the best way forward. This review was to be completed within a six month period from the start of the project.

An empirical study of a variety of differing workplace environments
examining the extent of alcohol misuse during working hours, a description of company responses and a statistical analysis of interviews and questionnaire data collected from such a sample of companies. The aim was to shed light on the dynamics of alcohol use in the workplace.

The initial literature review was published in August 1995 under the title "Alcohol in the Workplace: Costs and Responses" (Hutcheson, Henderson and Davies, Department for Education and Employment Research Series No. 59, August 1995). This current report now completes the overall project and fulfils the requirement of the second aim described in the above paragraph.

Since this report refers from time to time to a number of alcohol-related issues including drinking in the workplace, types of alcohol policy, the costs and benefits of testing in the workplace, etc., it is strongly recommended that the original report which reviews this literature should be read prior to examination of the current document.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

In general terms, the overall aim of the research is to provide a description of the dynamics and correlates of alcohol consumption in a range of British industries. On the basis of these descriptions and observations it is proposed to arrive at some broad conclusions and to make recommendations. This overall aim is approached by way of
a number of more specific objectives as detailed below.

a. The first objective is to provide a basic picture of the nature and range of alcohol consumption in a sample of British industries. Using a varied and broad base of firms it is proposed to describe the extent of alcohol consumption, both at the workplace and elsewhere. In a series of simple breakdowns, these data will be cross-tabulated in terms of a number of pertinent variables including age, sex, size of industry, type of industry and specific type of work performed. In addition to the above, these data are also cross referenced with data on self-reported absenteeism as this relates to different industries and different occupations.

b. The second objective is to provide a more detailed comparison between firms which differ maximally in terms of this data set with regards to daytime drinking. It is proposed to compare and contrast eight lighter drinking firms with eight heavier drinking firms in terms of a number of drinking and individual variables.

c. The third objective is to describe differing attitudes to alcohol and the way such attitudinal differences relate to differences in reported alcohol consumption and reported work performance.

d. This objective derives from c. above and seeks to examine the relationship between drinking practices and general work culture. The data on workforce attitudes described under the previous objective are complemented in this section by data
obtained from different levels of management in a variety of industries.

e. The final objective concerns alcohol policies themselves. In this section the degree of implementation of alcohol policies in the sample of firms involved in this study is described. There is a detailed examination of different kinds of policies and the way in which the implementation of policy relates to drinking practices in particular work settings. Of particular interest is the relationship between policy implementation and the nature of the drinking problem presenting itself in a particular industry.

1.3 Methodology

The aim was to compile a database which would enable light to be shed on the dynamics of drinking practices in different work environments. The different work environments would include within company and between company differences in the type of work carried out, reported drinking, and alcohol policies and differences in employee attitudes towards drinking, testing in the workplace and other alcohol-related issues. The database would comprise information derived from three sources. These were:

1. Information obtained from semi-structured interviews with key personnel in each of the 45 firms and companies who agreed to participate in this study;

1 During the course of the study an extensive collection of policy statements and related documentary material was also collected. This was used as the basis on which to construct the semi-structured interview schedules.
2. Self-completion questionnaire data obtained from questionnaires circulated to the employees and workforce in 31 of the 45 participating companies;

3. A simple descriptive questionnaire completed by alcohol agencies in the areas where firms were recruited (N.B. the methodology for this additional study is given in Chapter 7).

1.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

No particular order of procedure was required. In individual cases there were modifications to the procedure to take into account the situations and remits of the particular companies concerned. Furthermore, there were two slightly differing schedules used in this part of the study. One version was tailored to the needs of companies already operating an alcohol policy, whereas the second version was tailored to the needs of those with no such policy in place. The interview schedules covered a variety of issues including: company background; history of the development of an alcohol policy, if any; perceptions of the workforce by management; perceived effectiveness of company alcohol policy; and a number of similar related issues. A copy of both interview schedules is given in Appendices 1a and 1b.

1.3.2 Questionnaires

The employee questionnaires again varied slightly to take into account the individual situations present in particular companies. However, in general terms the issues
covered included: levels of employee knowledge and awareness of any alcohol policy; self reports of drinking and alcohol consumption during the day and outside working hours; attitude towards testing and its possible introduction; and a number of other questions relating to workforce drinking, behaviour and lifestyle in general. A copy of the questionnaire is given in Appendix 2.

1.3.3 Recruitment of companies

The aim was to recruit a broad representation of employers from:

Home Counties, England. (1)*
Midlands, England. (7)
North East, England. (13)
North West, England. (4)
South East, England. (1)
Borders, Scotland. (1)
Central Belt, Scotland. (15)
North East, Scotland. (2)

* Numbers in brackets indicate the numbers of firms in each region who agreed to participate in the study.

Two hundred companies were approached directly by the researchers. Each company received a recruitment package which included a letter from researchers at Strathclyde University outlining the purpose of the project and what would be involved by participation in the project; a letter from the Department for Education and Employment indicating their support for the project; and information sheets which provided answers to a number of questions which employers might potentially be
asked by employees should they decide to participate.

The addresses of 150 companies were found in Compass Industry Directories. The remaining 50 companies were suggested by Aquarius (Birmingham), Employee Counselling (Glasgow), the North East Council on Addictions (Newcastle upon Tyne) and the Scottish, Glasgow and Renfrew Council's on Alcohol (Glasgow and Paisley).

1.3.4 Recruitment rate

Out of the 200 companies who were contacted, 45 agreed to participate in the research. A summary description of the nature of the obtained sample is given in Table 1 below together with numbers of questionnaires sent out and returned.

**Table 1: Type of industry sampled and return rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Industry</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
<th>Questionnaires sent out</th>
<th>Questionnaires returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2240</td>
<td>1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Manufacturing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Manufacturing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all 45 of these companies, interviews were carried out by a researcher with nominated management personnel using an interview schedule. In 31 of these companies the workforce was sampled and completed a workforce questionnaire.
Forty-five interviews were obtained with nominated personnel management and 2,186 questionnaires were returned out of a total of 5030 that were sent out, giving a total return rate of 43.5%. Table 2 below shows the title of each nominated person interviewed in each company, by type of industry.

1.3.5 Type of Industry

**Table 2: Nominated personnel by type of industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company No.</th>
<th>Interviewee Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Remuneration &amp; Employee Relations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Personnel &amp; Training Consultant &amp; Personnel Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Health Promotion Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Group Medical Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Personnel Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Occupational Health Manager &amp; Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Medical Services Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Senior Manager &amp; Maintenance Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Director of Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Assistant Director of Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Personnel Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>3 Personnel Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Head of Staff Relations &amp; Company Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Occupational Health Physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Personnel &amp; Occupational Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Safety &amp; Environmental Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager &amp; Safety &amp; Environmental Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Occupational Physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Safety Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Light Manufacturing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Personnel Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Personnel Administrator &amp; Personnel Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Occupational Health Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Regional Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Personnel Manager &amp; Occupational Health Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Occupational Health Nurse &amp; Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Personnel &amp; Training Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Deputy Governor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Defence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Personnel Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1.3.6 Interview schedules**

Two interview schedules were designed: one for companies with an alcohol policy.
and one for companies without an alcohol policy. These were compiled after extensive research into a variety of policies supplied by a range of companies. The interview schedules allowed the collection of in-depth information from each company regarding:

- the company background.
- the history of the development of their alcohol policy or related procedures.
- the day-to-day running of the company alcohol policy or related procedures including information about employee alcohol-related treatment referrals internally or to external organisations.
- background to aspects of the workplace culture which may influence alcohol consumption of employees (for instance, attitudes towards lunch-time drinking).
- the perceived effectiveness of the company alcohol policy or related procedures.
- the envisaged future development of the company alcohol policy or related procedures.
- relevant company statistics, where available.
- how to progress with the questionnaire phase of the project.

The interviews were semi-structured thus giving the interviewees opportunities to provide any information which they perceived to be relevant, and also aiding in the understanding of specific problems or any unique aspects of the policy or disciplinary procedure within individual companies. In addition, open-ended responses to questions gives an indication of the saliency of key issues to interviewees. This information was useful to the development of later stages of the project.
1.3.7 Interview procedure

In each company successfully recruited to the project the employee(s) nominated by the company as responsible for the implementation of their alcohol policy or related procedure was (were) interviewed. In smaller companies this often involved interviewing only one member of senior management. In larger firms the number interviewed was variable, all personnel recommended by each company were interviewed. Participants received a copy of the interview schedule two weeks in advance of the interview, thereby allowing negotiation of the content of the interview schedule if that was viewed by senior management to be necessary. No companies asked for changes to be made. The two week delay also allowed the interviewee to prepare figures and information to be provided at the interview. The duration of each individual interview varied, although on average an interview lasted between one and one and a half hours. Interviews were tape-recorded with the prior permission of the interviewees and later transcribed in full. All interviewees, apart from one, agreed to the tape-recording of the interview.

1.3.8 Employee questionnaires

The employee questionnaire enabled data to be collected regarding:

- levels of employee knowledge and awareness of the procedures involved in the company alcohol policy.
- employees’ views regarding the company alcohol policy.
- social drinking behaviour.
- workplace drinking.
- demographics and lifestyle.
- attitudes.
- health and safety in the workplace.
- reports of specific incidents.

An information package was sent out to recruited companies which explained the background to the project, and described what would be involved by participating. For companies participating to the fullest extent of the research this involved not only an interview as described above, but also questionnaires to be completed by company employees. A number of companies declined to participate in the questionnaire stage of the research.

1.3.9 Questionnaire procedure

Companies were sent a copy of a ‘template’ questionnaire two weeks before the interview stage of the research. This allowed time for companies to make a decision on how best to proceed with the questionnaire stage. The template questionnaire was altered to the specifics requested by the interviewee: this included the addition of suitable job categories for each company, the inclusion or exclusion\(^2\) of questions regarding testing and occasionally the insertion of questions relevant to a particular company. After negotiation the questionnaire was then sent to individual companies for approval prior to printing and dissemination.

\(^2\) Certain companies felt that the issue of testing was sensitive and therefore inappropriate within the questionnaire. In these cases the questions on testing were omitted.
At interview the best way to disseminate questionnaires to employees was discussed. Companies were asked to distribute questionnaires, randomly selecting every ‘nth’ employee from personnel staff records where possible. However, this procedure was frequently not acceptable to companies. In some cases, it was easier to recruit particular available groups, and on some occasions, the sample recruited encompasses the whole company. Details of the obtained sample are given in the next section. To ensure confidentiality and ease of return, a pre-paid stamped addressed envelope was attached to each questionnaire.

1.4 The Sample

Since firms varied in their willingness to participate, and in the extent of their participation if they did, obtaining a fully representative national “cross-section” was not possible under the circumstances. Accordingly, issues of national prevalence are difficult to address directly.

Consequently, the sample used in this study was ‘purposive’ rather than ‘cross-sectional’, in the sense that a broad representation of employers was required, rather than a sample representing a national cross-section. This facilitates the asking of detailed research questions about the impact of alcohol at a local level, and about the social dynamics of alcohol consumption in specific settings.
A total of 2186 questionnaires was returned from 31 companies. The graphs below illustrate the breakdown of this sample in terms of age, sex, salary, and work category.

**Figure 1: Distribution of age among questionnaire respondents by percentage of sample**

Figure 1 above shows the majority of respondents falling within the age band 26 - 54. There are relatively fewer employees in the younger (16 - 25) and older (55 and over) age brackets. This approximates roughly to the overall age structure of employees in British industry *(Data from Labour Force Survey Quarterly Bulletin Number 16; Government Statistical Service; June 1996)*.
Figure 2: Distribution of sex among questionnaire respondents by percentage of sample

In the obtained sample there was an imbalance in the sex distribution with males roughly outnumbering females by two to one. This compares with relative male-female employment rates in Britain at the present time (54.9% male; 45.1% female).

Data from Labour Force Survey 1996 op cit.)
Figure 3: Distribution of salary by percentage of sample

![Bar chart showing salary distribution]

The distribution of salaries and wages (all figures are monthly salary before tax) approximates roughly to a normal distribution. However, there appears to be a 'kick in the tail' which positively skews the distribution, with 15.6% of the sample falling in the highest category of the coding system.
Figure 4: Distribution of work category among questionnaire respondents by percentage of sample

![Bar Chart]


Figure 4 above shows the percentage of the obtained questionnaire sample falling in each of ten work categories. The work categories used in this scale were constructed taking into account information derived from the interview stage of the research. It represents the most parsimonious system into which all the participating firms can be placed. Using this method it can be seen that there are substantial proportions of the sample falling in categories one (managerial/administrative) and two (manual), which enables certain important comparisons to be made. Category three (clerical/secretarial) also contains large numbers; thereafter the numbers in other categories become progressively smaller.
CHAPTER TWO

2. DRINKING BEHAVIOUR

The following chapter describes the relationships between self-reported drinking behaviour and a variety of work-related variables. The discussion centres on the distribution of drinking across the entire sample. A number of basic relationships are investigated including the relationship of drinking to variables such as age, sex, occupational type and salary level, effects on the workforce and absenteeism.

In the present study drinking behaviour is measured in terms of two self-completion scales in which the respondent estimates in units (a) their total weekly consumption and (b) their typical weekly consumption during working hours. Further questions then explore the number of occasions when the individual had been affected by alcohol whilst at work; alcohol-related absenteeism; awareness that colleagues had been affected by alcohol whilst at work; and frequency data for the latter. Due to a certain amount of unspecified reluctance on the part of the companies, it did not prove possible to collect fine-grained quantity-frequency data or retrospective diary data of the kind that characterises many clinical studies. The data therefore comprise the most detailed that was acceptable to all the companies willing to participate. Because of the relatively coarse-grain of these data, drinking is analysed in terms of a number of ordinal categories. Since the drinking data overall conform roughly to a log normal distribution, drinking is also assumed to be evenly distributed within categories. Consequently mean consumption for specified groups is taken to be the mean of the category or categories over which the group data are spread. Certain of the analyses
are based on an ordinal treatment of the data. The justification for using ordinal data for certain analyses is given in Jessurum et al (1968) and also in Davies and Stacey (1972). It is recommended that the reader use an ordinal framework when interpreting many of these data since there is reason to suppose that the context of the present study might have led to a higher degree of defensive reporting than would normally be the case.

2.1 Drinking during the week

2.1.1 Weekly drinking in the total sample

The graph below shows the pattern of self-reported weekly drinking for the whole questionnaire sample.

Figure 5: Weekly drinking in total sample

![Graph showing weekly drinking in total sample](image-url)
Figure 5 above shows a modal consumption of some ten units per week. Roughly
15% of the sample report no consumption. On the other hand, a substantial
proportion report consumption in the regions from 11 - 40 units per week. A small
percentage report weekly consumption in excess of 50 units.

2.1.2 Weekly drinking by age

In the figure below weekly drinking is broken down by age category.

**Figure 6: Weekly drinking by age**

The similarity in the shape of the five graphs is striking; this also suggests that the
data are systematic and reliable. It is noteworthy that for over-55s, smaller proportions
than any other age bands are evident in nearly all drinking categories: and this age
band includes a larger proportion of non-drinkers than any other. Conversely, the
youngest age group (16-25) tends to the opposite. There are larger proportions than other age bands in nearly all higher drinking categories and the smallest proportion of non-drinkers.

In Figure 7 below the relationship between age and consumption is further explored. The figure shows the mean consumption category for the five different age groups. The heavier consumption in the 16 - 25 age band and the lighter consumption after age 55 are apparent.

*Figure 7: Comparison of mean weekly drinking levels by age*

![Bar Chart](image)

2.1.3 Weekly drinking by sex

Figure 8 below shows the distribution of self-reported drinking over all drinking categories for men and women. The data clearly indicate that a smaller percentage of
men than women have consumption levels in the lower categories; and a higher proportion of men report consumption levels in the higher categories.

Sex is a major modifier of drinking behaviour, inasmuch as the women drink significantly less than men (P< .000).

**Figure 8: Weekly drinking by sex**

2.1.4 Drinking by salary

Figure 9 below shows the mean consumption category reported by men and women in a number of salary categories ranging from below £500 per month to over £2000 per month (all figures before tax).
Figure 9: Mean units of alcohol drunk per week by salary (men and women)

There is a small but significant association ($r = .11; p<.001$) between alcohol consumption and income, arising mostly from the lower income levels. The graph above demonstrates that alcohol consumption peaks at over £1000 per month, and beyond that level there is little relationship.\(^3\) However this relationship is not simple. A possible reason for the lower income bands consuming less alcohol is that they cannot afford to drink as much as others. However, given that sex is a significant modifier of alcohol consumption (see above), and that women are over-represented in the lower salary bands, it could be reasonably argued that the apparent effect of income is substantially modified by the effect of sex. The data show that 61.1\% of the

---

\(^3\) The slight increase for the last two salary values is non-significant.
sample whose monthly salary is £1000 or less are female. This is nearly twice the expected frequency as only 38.2% of the total sample are female.

In light of the above we would expect graphs displaying the same data, but for each sex independently, to provide a more revealing picture. Such graphs are presented below in Figure 10 and Figure 11.

**Figure 10: Mean units of alcohol drunk per week by salary (men)**
As expected, by controlling for sex, the comparative consumption of alcohol displays less variation across salary ranges, with the noticeable exception of female earners over £2000. This group drink significantly more than women in lower salary bands (p < .001). Within the women’s data there is little overall relationship between income and weekly consumption; the fact that the more highly paid women stand out from this pattern clearly merits some further study. The men’s data are self-explanatory.

2.1.5 Drinking by work category

Figure 12 below shows reported weekly consumption by work category (an explanation of the work categories is given in the Methodology section).
Figure 12: Mean units of alcohol drunk per week by work category (both sexes together)


N.B. The apparently heavier consumption of engineers in this graph is accounted for by the fact that there were virtually no women in this group. Male engineers do not drink significantly more than other male workers (see page 28).

T-tests on individual work categories by units per week reveal six work categories whose levels of drinking differ significantly from the mean consumption of the sample overall. The results of these tests are presented below in Table 3.
Table 3: Significant results of t-tests (individual work categories by units per week)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work category</th>
<th>Comparative social drinking</th>
<th>Independent t-tests (df = 2171)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t value</td>
<td>p value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>more than others</td>
<td>-7.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/Secretarial</td>
<td>less than others</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical &amp; related</td>
<td>less than others</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker &amp; related</td>
<td>less than others</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Media</td>
<td>more than others</td>
<td>-2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>more than others</td>
<td>-2.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data show that, of the six work categories, those in Manual Occupations, or working in Arts and Media, and Engineers drink significantly more than the mean consumption for the remaining groups. On the other hand, those in Clerical/Secretarial, Medical and related, and Social Work and related drink significantly less. For interest, it should be noted that the consumption of those in Management/Administrative does not seem significantly more or less than the mean for all occupational groups studied. However, controlling for gender the pattern displayed in Table 3 is modified. The results from this gender analysis are shown below in Table 4.
Table 4: Results of t-tests (individual work categories by units per week)

controlling for gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work category</th>
<th>Men (df = 1313)</th>
<th>Women (df = 804)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t value</td>
<td>p value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>-1.68</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>-3.28</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/Secretarial</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical &amp; related</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>.947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc. Work &amp; rel.</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Media</td>
<td>-2.51</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main point to emerge from this re-analysis is that gender differences obscure the overall pattern in two, possibly three, cases (in the performance of this analysis the difference between male and female engineers is not reliable since there were only two female engineers in the sample. Consequently male and female data for this occupational group are not meaningful and the apparent heavier drinking of Engineers is an artefact of the comparison group used in the first analysis).

In the manual category it can be seen that the significant difference between the consumption of this category and other work categories is specific to the male gender. Women in the manual category do not drink significantly more than those in other occupational groups. We can see, therefore, that the results in Table 3 for the manual group come about mainly as a result of the heavier drinking of male manual workers. With respect to those in Social Work and Related occupations, the opposite picture emerges. Women in these occupational groups drink significantly less than the mean for other occupational groups. We can see, therefore, that the reason why those in Social Work and Related occupations drink less than other groups is mainly due to the lighter drinking of women in this group. The consumption of male Social Workers is
not significantly different from consumption in other groups. Finally, with respect to those working in Arts and Media there is a significant difference for men, indicating heavier consumption in this occupational group than in other work categories; but the significance level for women is highly marginal in nature. The confidence level set throughout this report has been .05. For women working in Arts and Media the significance level obtained is .06. This is very close to the statistically desired cut-off point. A conservative interpretation of this result therefore would suggest a tendency for both men and women to drink more than those in other occupations.

The above analysis of six work categories is based on the derivation of six data sets revealing consumption which differed from the mean of the overall group. Such an analysis clearly makes it possible to overlook specific differences arising from sex by work-type interactions. A within gender by work-type trawl of the remaining data failed to show any other differences with the exception of women in the Academic and related category, and men in Management and Administration.

Women in Academic and Related jobs drink significantly more than women in other categories (p = .013). It would appear that for women there is some link between higher drinking, a salary of over £2,000 per month and a job in academia or management administration. On the other hand, men in Management and Administration drink significantly less than other men ( p = .007)
2.2 Drinking during working hours

2.2.1 Drinking during working hours in the total sample

Out of the total sample who completed the questionnaire, 139 volunteered the information that they consumed alcohol during the working day. Given the sensitive nature of this topic it is felt that this may be an underestimate of the true figure. The numbers are still sufficient however to enable the exploration of a number of basic relationships.

Figure 13 below shows numbers of respondents reporting drinking during working hours. The modal reported consumption is quite moderate, with the vast majority drinking no more than 10 units during the working week, within working hours. The graph does have a tail however, with a few respondents reporting amounts over 40 units.

Figure 13: Alcohol consumption during working hours
2.2.2 Drinking during working hours by age

Figure 14 below shows the distribution of drinking during working hours across age categories. Although the differences between age categories are not particularly marked, Figure 14 below makes an interesting comparison with Figure 13 in the previous section. There is a tendency for the younger drinkers (16 - 25) to be represented less frequently in the lower consumption categories, and more frequently at the higher levels.

![Figure 14: Alcohol consumption during working hours by age](image)

A clearer picture is presented in Figure 15 which gives the mean consumption category for drinking during working hours for each age group.
Figure 15: Mean alcohol consumption by age for those reporting consumption during working hours

The data in Figure 15 bear a close similarity to the data in Figure 14 which describe the distribution of drinking by different age groups. It can be seen that of those who report drinking during working hours, the largest number belong to the age range 16-25 and the smallest number to the over 55 age category. (In Figures 15 - 19 inclusive, category 1 indicates zero consumption. A score between 1 and 2 indicates consumption between 1 and 10 units; a score of over 2 would indicate consumption between 11 and 20 units.)

2.2.3 Drinking during working hours by salary

Figure 16 below shows no overall progressive relationship between salary and drinking during working hours. The most notable feature of the data is, once again, the lower rates of consumption amongst the lower paid and the higher rates amongst
those with higher income. However, as in the previous section it is likely that these data are confounded by sex differences.

**Figure 16: Drinking during the working day by salary**

![Bar chart showing mean alcohol during work hours by monthly salary/wage categories](image)

Figures 17 and 18 accordingly present the same data broken down by sex.
The principle feature of the above graph is that it presents a rather different picture from that in Figure 16. In place of the fairly flat distribution in the latter figure a much more variable picture emerges. Whilst those in the lowest salary bracket consume little, the remaining data appear to form an inverted-U function. Whilst in terms of total weekly consumption increasing salary amongst males appears to be associated with lower consumption, the data in the present case suggest that amongst those who do drink at work, those earning at the lower end (£501 - £750 per month) and at the top end of the scale are over-represented. By contrast, the comparable data for females (see Figure 18 below) resemble very closely the data on total female consumption shown in Figure 11.
**Figure 18. Female drinking at work by salary**

Overall, the analysis of total consumption by salary and of workplace consumption by salary suggests rather different dynamics underlying male and female consumption. Workplace consumption does not mirror total consumption for males; whereas the pattern of workplace consumption for females strongly mirrors that of their total weekly consumption (once again we see the higher consumption of those in the most highly paid jobs). This suggests that, whilst male drinkers generally show a discontinuous pattern for social drinking in comparison to workplace drinking this is not the case for females. For the females the possibility arises that workplace consumption is simply a continuation of other consumption patterns particularly for higher paid women.

2.2.4 **Drinking during working hours by job category**

Figure 19 below shows the distribution of respondents reporting drinking during working hours by job category. Such drinking is reported most often by those working in either arts/ media or sales/ customer service. Since within the present
database these two work categories employ roughly equal numbers of males and females it is unlikely that this result arises from any sex bias. On a post hoc basis it seems reasonable to argue that these two occupational groupings probably offer more opportunities for drinking during the working day than do some other occupations. Amongst the remaining work categories no individual group stands out from the data, though it is evident that a low level of consumption during working hours takes place in all of them.

**Figure 19: Drinking during working hours by work category**

![Graph showing mean alcohol consumption during work hours by work category.]


Overall however, the present findings do not provide a picture of commonplace or normative heavy drinking taking place during working hours in the firms and industries sampled by this project. Problems when they occur thus seem likely to be focused and specific rather than general.
2.3. Effects of alcohol on work performance

In the following section data are presented which describe the self-reports of questionnaire respondents with respect to their awareness of the effects of alcohol on work performance. It remains to be said that the strongest data on these issues would come from databases compiled from hard information concerning output, quality, wastage rates and other production data cross-tabulated by time of day, day of week and so forth. Such databases would include information from all sections of the workforce and make use of appropriate output data so as to take into account the varying nature of different types of work. In the firms studied such information is almost universally absent; self-report data represent the only information available.

Table 5 below describes respondents’ answers to questions about their awareness of (a) the effects of alcohol on their own work performance, (b) the effects of alcohol on the performance of colleagues and (c) their subjective opinion that a colleague or colleagues may have a drink problem.

**Table 5: Self-reported effects of alcohol on the workforce**

**(forced choice, yes/no format)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever felt the effects of alcohol whilst at work?</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>2159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever noticed a colleague feeling the effects of alcohol whilst at work?</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>2166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe any of your colleagues to have a drinking problem?</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>2156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Totals vary since numbers of respondents declined or failed to answer certain kinds of questions.
It is apparent from the above that there is a perceived impact of alcohol on the workforce. Roughly one third report having personally felt the effects of alcohol on their work and over two thirds are aware of colleagues having been similarly affected. Furthermore, a substantial minority are aware of a colleague or colleagues they suspect of having an alcohol problem. These figures suggest a widely experienced problem. Further light is shed on this issue in Table 6 below which describes the frequency of the events/perceptions detailed in Table 5 above.

**Table 6: Frequency of effects of alcohol on self and colleagues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Most days (%)</th>
<th>A few times a week (%)</th>
<th>About once a week (%)</th>
<th>About once a month (%)</th>
<th>Less than monthly (%)</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you have felt the effects of alcohol at work, how often has this happened?</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often have you noticed a colleague feeling the effects of alcohol?</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>1498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data show that the modal response is in the category "less than monthly" for both questions. It would also appear that respondents are more likely to report an awareness of effects on their colleagues than on themselves. From a methodological point of view it is also interesting that roughly twice as many respondents reported colleagues feeling effects of alcohol as reported similar effects for themselves.
Overall, these data suggest a regular but not common effect of alcohol on the work force. However, such instances are common knowledge.

To conclude this section data are reported in Tables 7a and 7b below detailing responses to two supplementary questions, namely:

a) How often would you say you, your customers or colleagues are put at risk because of drinking? (five point scale)

and

b) If your company tests for alcohol, or if random testing were introduced, are you (or would you be) worried that one day you might be found to be over the limit? (yes / no)

\[ Table 7a. \] Percentage reporting alcohol-related risk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Risk”</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not very often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>2186</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ Table 7b. \] Percentage reporting worries about testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Worried about testing”</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>1269</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst reporting is generally conservative, it is of some concern that 11% (i.e. 240) out of a sample of 2186 reported a contribution of alcohol to workplace risks. In a similar way, whilst the majority express no worries about the introduction of random testing 12.1% (i.e. 153) expressed anxiety that such a programme might reveal them to be positive. Furthermore, the apparent number of non-responses to this question is
made up of 23 individuals who declined to answer and 879 non-responses from firms who declined to allow the question to be asked. Once again the picture presented resembles a regular but not typical pattern of occurrence rather than a heavy chronic pattern.

It is clear that there are some perceived problems with alcohol. Small but potentially important percentages of the employees produced positive answers on a number of alcohol-related topics. Whilst these data would not support a claim that the workforces taking part in the present study were in the grip of a widespread alcohol epidemic, the data do suggest a widespread awareness of alcohol problems occurring from time to time, sometimes on a fairly regular basis. Unfortunately, data relating to major performance indicators such as quality and quantity of work, accidents, relationships between staff, and between staff and customers were not collected by the companies participating. It is clear that a more definitive treatment of these issues would require an expansion and development of the types of information that companies regularly record.

2.4. Sickness and absence due to alcohol

The data reveal relationships between employees' self-reports of drinking and the amount of self-reported sickness absence attributed to alcohol consumption. This relationship is small but significant for alcohol consumption generally \( r = .18; p < .0005 \) and also for self-reported alcohol consumption at work \( r = .20; p < .0005 \).
On the basis of these simple correlations it appears that a detrimental effect of alcohol consumption on work attendance has been identified.

However, such a conclusion requires considerable modification in the light of supplementary analyses of the total amount of sickness absence amongst different sections of the workforce. Examination of the total amount of sickness absence reveals no significant relationship to either the amount of alcohol consumed at work \( (r = .0153; \ p = .478) \) or consumed in total \( (r = -.0221; \ p = .306) \). It would appear therefore that there is no marked positive relationship between the amount of time taken off by employees in total and levels of employee drinking. This could show that a certain level of "sick leave" is seen as acceptable by numbers of employees independent of their personal drinking patterns. This is illustrated clearly by the following quote from one of the participating companies:

"We monitor sickness absence and we’ve monitored that particularly closely for the last two years, because there has been a problem with sickness absence. The procedure we are operating is that the sickness entitlement for all staff was up to a maximum of six weeks per year and what we found with certain members of staff is that they were perhaps looking on that as six weeks extra holiday per year, because they would actually gain full pay for that. Now we’ve worked out a different system to accommodate that particular aspect, but to my knowledge it was nothing to do with people being off sick because of alcohol."

Manager, Service Industry.

The above findings merit some closer scrutiny since their nature is somewhat unexpected. Since there is a positive relationship between drinking and absence attributed to drinking by a sub-group of respondents, but a slight negative overall relationship, it is necessary to consider the possibility that whilst drinkers have more
days absence due to alcohol, they actually have fewer days overall absence than those reporting no such alcohol-related absenteeism. Although the data are not strong on this point it is instructive to consider the possibility that certain heavier drinking sections of the workforce are more likely to turn up for work whether they are affected by alcohol or not; whilst on the other hand certain lighter drinking sections of the workforce may be more likely to take more days off for reasons other than alcohol (N.B. respondents were explicitly asked not to include time taken off due to pregnancy). The issue clearly merits further investigation.

Overall the data on absenteeism and drinking appear to contradict the established view that employees who misuse alcohol take more time off work than employees who do not (Jellinek, 1947; Joeman, 1991; see Hutcheson, Henderson & Davies, 1995, for a review). It is important to note, however, that the present study investigated alcohol use as opposed to alcohol misuse. Whilst alcohol misuse may indeed lead employees to take more time off work, alcohol use per se does not. This result is in broad agreement with a study conducted by Joeman (1992) who, on the basis of an analysis of data from the General Household Survey, concluded that there were no reliable differences in rates of absence between light, moderate and heavy drinkers. On the other hand, these results suggest that some re-appraisal might be appropriate with respect to the assumptions underlying certain estimates of the costs of alcohol in terms of absenteeism. For example these have been placed at £799.3 million by McDonnell & Maynard (1985) and £774 million by Godfrey & Hardman (1990). It may well be that these estimates give a useful guide to the cost of absenteeism, but the data from
the present study suggest that absenteeism may have a broader base than has been
supposed.

2.5. Overview

The consumption data conform to the type of log normal distribution normally
displayed by research into patterns of alcohol consumption. Furthermore the data
display systematic differences between work categories, sexes, salary levels and a
number of other variables where differences have been found in previous data sets.
Consequently there are strong grounds for viewing the obtained data set as a valid
basis for discriminative statements. Consumption is found to be heavier among men
than women, both in terms of overall social drinking and in terms of drinking during
working hours. There are also differences between age groups with the age group 16-
25 self-reporting the heaviest consumption. There is also a relationship, though not a
strong one, between salary level and alcohol consumption. Those earning lower
salaries appear to consume less. This difference, however, is confounded by gender
since women are over-represented in this low-paid group. Analysis of mean alcohol
consumption per week by salary shows for men a peak in consumption amongst those
earning around £1,000 per month with a slight decline from that point both towards
the higher and lower salary levels. Beyond the salary of £1,000 per month it appears
that in general terms men drink less if anything the more they earn. For women the
picture appears to be rather different. Whilst consumption levels are lower overall the
present data suggest a marked tendency towards heavier drinking amongst higher paid
women. Analysis by work category confirms some of these impressions. It appears
that a salary of over £2,000 per month or a job in academia is associated with higher drinking amongst women. The particular dynamics of alcohol consumption amongst women in different occupations clearly merit some closer scrutiny.

Overall, certain occupational groups are identified as drinking more heavily than others. The most conspicuous of these work categories is the manual category. This group drinks significantly more heavily than the mean for all of the groups in the study. This effect appears to be mainly due to the heavier drinking of male manual workers. A second group identified as more likely to consume greater amounts of alcohol is Arts and Media where men and possibly women consume more than average.

The data include a number of self-reports indicating consumption during working hours. Whilst the amounts reported are generally conservative the distribution has a tail indicating that the drinking of larger quantities during working hours takes place. The data also reveal a widespread awareness of the effects of alcohol at work. Over one/third of respondents indicated there had been occasions when their own work performance had been affected by alcohol and twice that percentage (69.5%) indicated awareness of occasions on which colleagues had been so affected. Perhaps most disturbing of all, almost one third of respondents (30.1%) indicated that they felt one of their colleagues might have a drinking problem. Data relating to the frequency of alcohol-related incidents indicated a small number of incidents occurring on a fairly regular basis. Indeed 5% of our respondents were aware of a colleague feeling the effects of alcohol most days of the week. Whilst the actual amounts reported may
possibly err on the conservative side (see Discussion Chapter) there is reason to have more confidence in indirect data concerning occurrences in the workplace which do not include personal involvement. Overall the data suggest a pattern of consumption during working hours which is fairly broad but is not normative or typical. We formed the opinion that, whilst it is a widely known and in some instances common event for a member or members of the workforce to be affected by alcohol on any day or during any week, this is not a picture which characterises the whole, or even a large part of, the workforce. Rather than a chronic problem of epidemic proportions we conclude from these data that the problem of alcohol in the workplace is a regular occurrence which is focused and localised rather than general. We form a picture of workforces amongst whom at any time a number of individuals may be affected by alcohol; we do not, however, form a picture of workforces as a whole in the grip of a generalised alcohol epidemic. Consequently we are inclined to believe that some of the more lurid accounts of the impact and extent of alcohol misuse amongst the workforces of particular industries are not justified. On the other hand, there is clearly a pattern of regular occurrences which requires to be addressed.

A question about testing revealed 12% of respondents (from amongst those who responded to this question) who would be concerned about the introduction of testing. It is possible to argue that some of this concern might be due to ethical objections or civil rights issues which may be raised when particular testing procedures are implemented. However, the specific question used in this survey required respondents to indicate whether they were worried that one day they might personally be found to be over the limit. Given the wording of this question it is difficult to put any other
interpretation on these results than the most simple one. 12% of respondents were concerned about testing because they themselves were worried about being found over the limit should testing procedures be introduced.

Finally, the data relating to sickness and absence reveal a somewhat unexpected picture. Whilst there is an overall relationship, between alcohol consumption generally, alcohol related consumption at work, and self-reported sickness absence due to alcohol, the picture is by no means clear-cut. Total amount of sickness absence reveals no significant relationship to either amount of alcohol consumed at work or consumed in total. The data appear to suggest that absenteeism from work is due to alcohol misuse and a number of other causes. It appears that people can have rather other reasons for not going to work than a hangover, and that total absenteeism amongst those reporting alcohol-related absences is not higher than in any other sections of the workforce.
CHAPTER THREE

3. COMPARISON BETWEEN HIGHER AND LOWER DRINKING COMPANIES

The following chapter is in two parts. Part one provides an account of the selection and description of eight higher and eight lower drinking companies and describes the differences between these groups of companies in terms of the amount of alcohol consumed by employees both during working hours and in total. Part two presents detailed analyses of the differences between these two groups of companies in terms of a number of variables relating to company action, the effects of alcohol in the workplace, disciplinary action, safety, and absenteeism.

3.1 Part One: Selection, description and differences between higher and lower drinking companies

The previous chapter described the relationship between levels of alcohol consumption both in and out of the workplace and some of the reported effects this has on work. However, the amount of alcohol consumed is not only dependent upon individual employees, but is also a function to some degree of the company where the employee works. An analysis of the data shows that there are significant differences between companies in the amount their employees drink in total (F = 6.532; p < .0005) and the amount they drink whilst at work (F = 5.552; p < .0005). The workplace and the working environment therefore appear to be related to drinking behaviour, and play a role in determining the level of consumption.
Figures 20 and 21 below show the range and variability of alcohol consumption in the sample of firms taking part.

**Figure 20: Total weekly drinking by company**

**Figure 21: Drinking during working hours by company**
Figures 20 and 21 above give the distributions across companies of total drinking during the week, and weekly drinking during working hours. Some companies appear lower, or in one case higher, (relative to other companies) on both variables. Where this is the case alcohol consumption during working hours appears to be a continuation or reflection of more general consumption patterns. However, whilst this may be true in specific instances it has only limited truth as a general statement. Product moment correlation between the two consumption data sets across all firms yields an r of 0.27 (p < .001; n = 2164). A correlation of .27 explains only 7% of the variance, and the size of the correlation is moderate rather than higher. Nonetheless the fact that there is some relationship suggests the existence of firms within which heavier drinking during working hours is continuous with a broader pattern of heavier consumption. It would not be surprising if firms who recruit sections of their workforce from amongst sections of the community where alcohol consumption is heavier encounter more alcohol problems in the workplace. In such a case a workplace behaviour would merely be a continuation of a broader sub-cultural pattern.

In order to compare higher drinking and lower drinking companies, eight higher drinking and eight lower drinking companies were selected after excluding small companies from the analyses. These were selected so that there were no significant differences between them in terms of gender (t(1158) = .380; p = .704), age (t(846.014) = 1.735; p = .083) and the type of work the respondents carried out (t(974.007) = -.239; p = .811). It should be noted that, for the purpose of this section of the report, reference to higher and lower drinking companies refers to the employees’ alcohol consumption while in the workplace and not their general overall
weekly consumption. Comparisons of these groups of companies then sheds light on a number of important differences between higher and lower drinking workplaces.

3.1.1 Description of the higher and lower drinking companies

The tables presented below provide a description of the higher and lower drinking companies in terms of geographical location of the companies: size and type of industry; and the number and sex of respondents in each group.

Geographical location

Table 8: Geographical location of higher and lower drinking companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Lower companies</th>
<th>drinking</th>
<th>Higher companies</th>
<th>drinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Scotland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East England</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands, England</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West England</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East England</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Industry type

Table 9: Industry type by higher and lower drinking companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry type</th>
<th>Lower companies</th>
<th>drinking</th>
<th>Higher companies</th>
<th>drinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light manufacturing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy manufacturing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 9 above, the higher and lower drinking companies are fairly evenly distributed across industry type. All types of industry in the study are represented in the higher and lower drinking groups, with the exception of the defence
industry. From this table it would appear that higher and lower drinking is not specific to certain types of industry.

Size of firm

No small companies were included in these groups as this would have reduced the number of respondents in the sub-groups and may have led to a misleading picture. Of the sixteen companies selected as either higher or lower drinking firms, nine were large (i.e. employing over 250 people); and seven were medium sized (i.e. employing between 50 and 250 people). These size criteria were taken from the system used by the Department of Trade and Industry. Using the above criteria it was observed that the lower drinking group comprised mainly large firms (seven out of eight) and the higher drinking group contained more medium sized companies (six out of eight).

Number of respondents

A total of 1182 employee questionnaires were received from these selected groups: 746 employees in the lower drinking group and 436 in the higher drinking group. This difference in the number of respondents results from the lower drinking sub-group comprising mainly large companies and the higher drinking sub-group containing mainly medium-sized companies.

In the sample obtained for higher and lower drinking companies there was an imbalance in the sex distribution which roughly corresponds to the distribution obtained for the sample as a whole. The distribution for the sub-groups and for the sample as a whole can be seen in Table 10 below.
Table 10: Distribution of sex among respondents of higher and lower drinking companies and the total sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Lower companies drinking</th>
<th>Higher companies drinking</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no significant difference in the distribution of males and females in the higher and lower drinking groups, and this approximates to the gender distribution in the sample as a whole.

3.1.2 Alcohol consumption in the higher and lower groups

Analysis of these sixteen companies shows that employees in the higher drinking companies report drinking significantly more alcohol than companies designated as lower drinking, not just within the workplace ($t(446.172) = -7.871; p < .0005$), but also in total ($t(1181) = -3.094; p = .002$). Furthermore, there is additional evidence from the interview data that this method of grouping companies has correctly identified a number of companies where alcohol consumption was an issue.

“*We’ve had various kinds of problems with alcohol - people getting found drunk underneath the waves on the ships... and I’m talking maybe having to get carried out of the yard, really drunk... It’s the same kind of problem as anywhere else, it’s just maybe a wee bit more of a problem - people coming in to work not sure of having a job next week so they turn to alcohol...it’s all related to job security etc*."

Heavy manufacturing company

“I think because of the nature of the work and the culture within the organisation, alcohol has played a part in coping with stress as part of the job...and there have also been occasions where staff have approached me, whether it’s been..."
identified through performance levels or though absence levels or through financial
difficulties that members of staff are having it's been quite clear that there has been
some form of alcohol dependency problem or an alcohol problem at the back of it. I
think it's been seen as a norm almost, you know intake of alcohol, and it's been seen
as one of the, how can you put it, the old joke about New Year's Eve, there's more
staff locked up than prisoners, that sort of culture".

Prison Service

"Yes [we have problems] but only on a minority/individual basis, we've never
had major problems in this area, they've been individual and relatively infrequent".

Service Industry

As can be noted from the above quotes, designated personnel in the companies
identified as being heavier drinking do tend to recognise the fact that they have at least
some employees with alcohol-related problems.

3.2 Part Two: Differences between companies in company action and the effects
of alcohol

According to employees' questionnaire data, a number of features characterise
different companies which appear to have a bearing on the amount of alcohol
consumed in the workplace. These features are widely varying in nature and include
such things as the company's perceived attitude to employees who drink during
working hours, the restriction of alcohol both inside the workplace and during
working hours (for example during breaks and at lunchtime), the instigation of no-
alcohol clauses in contracts and formal alcohol policies, and whether any sub-group of
employees is exempt from any alcohol bans. An important factor affecting the
consumption of alcohol during working hours appears to be the employees' perceptions of the company rules and regulations surrounding alcohol. The table
below lists the significant relationships between the employees' perceptions and whether the companies are higher or lower drinking. Non-parametric tests are used on this occasion since the perception data are not normally distributed.

**Table 11: Employees’ perceptions of the company’s rules and relationship between higher and lower drinking companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Mean Rank* Lower drinking</th>
<th>Mean Rank* Higher drinking</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organisation prohibits alcohol on its premises</td>
<td>495.28</td>
<td>562.34</td>
<td>109407</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My organisation prohibits alcohol consumption during breaks</td>
<td>428.84</td>
<td>599.91</td>
<td>71606.5</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company allows expenses claims for alcohol</td>
<td>465.37</td>
<td>382.64</td>
<td>71021.5</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company incorporates a no-alcohol clause into the contract of employment</td>
<td>327.86</td>
<td>368.62</td>
<td>49743.5</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company conducts business in pubs or licensed premises</td>
<td>540.08</td>
<td>353.85</td>
<td>62372</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your company have a formal policy on alcohol consumption?</td>
<td>326.84</td>
<td>365.72</td>
<td>47561.5</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there certain employees in your company to whom the alcohol rules do not apply?</td>
<td>558.43</td>
<td>514.82</td>
<td>12564</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any special occasions when a &quot;blind eye&quot; might be turned to employees consuming alcohol?</td>
<td>613.28</td>
<td>504.45</td>
<td>122935.5</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that your company would provide help or treatment for an employee with an alcohol-related problem?</td>
<td>427.07</td>
<td>485.25</td>
<td>81263</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that your company takes a sympathetic approach to employees who experience problems with alcohol use?</td>
<td>380.34</td>
<td>435.09</td>
<td>60563.5</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A higher mean rank indicates a NO answer*
Table 11 above shows that employees' perception of their company rules differs significantly in the higher and lower drinking companies. The results from the table above show that higher drinking companies are more likely not to prohibit alcohol on the premises or during working hours. Further, they are more likely to allow expenses claims for alcohol and to conduct business in pubs or licensed premises. However, they are less likely to have a formal policy on alcohol or to include a no-alcohol clause in their contracts. Employers from lower drinking companies are viewed by the workforce as more willing to provide help for employees with alcohol-related problems and more willing to take a sympathetic approach to employees experiencing problems. Employees from higher drinking companies believe that their employers are more likely to turn a blind eye to the consumption of alcohol on special occasions; furthermore, they are more likely to believe that there are certain employment groups within the company to whom the rules do not apply.

A number of the reported differences between the two types of company make intuitive sense. The higher drinking companies are seen as promoting a more lax attitude towards the consumption of alcohol during the working day, but as being less likely to provide help should problems of an alcohol-related nature arise; whereas lower drinking companies operate a stricter system while tending to offer more help to employees with alcohol-related difficulties.

All of the above variables assist in the discrimination between higher and lower drinking companies. However, since the variables in Table 11 are correlated with one another it is difficult to determine which factors are the most important in
distinguishing between higher and lower drinking companies. Therefore a factor analysis (rotated solution) was computed. This identified the following four factors:

**Table 12: Factor analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor One</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organisation prohibits alcohol on its premises</td>
<td>.6493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My organisation prohibits alcohol consumption during breaks</td>
<td>.70542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company incorporates a no-alcohol clause into the contract of employment</td>
<td>.65968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your company have a formal policy on alcohol consumption?</td>
<td>.63428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factor Two**

| Do you think that your company would provide help or treatment for an employee with an alcohol related-problem? | .82493 |
| Do you think that your company takes a sympathetic approach to employees who experience problems with alcohol use? | .78497 |

**Factor Three**

| Are there certain employees in your company to whom the alcohol rules do not apply? | .76148 |
| Are there any special occasions when a “blind eye” might be turned to employees consuming alcohol? | .74291 |

**Factor Four**

| My company allows expense claims for alcohol                                | .78440          |
| My company conducts business in pubs or licensed premises                   | .75523          |

A logistic regression analysis of the effect that these factors have in determining whether a company is higher or lower drinking revealed that all factors had a significant effect although some appeared to exert more of an influence than others. Factor One (whether or not the company had strict rules related to alcohol consumption during work hours) played the most significant role in determining the level of consumption within the workplace (p = .0013); Factor Four (whether business was conducted in licensed premises and the acceptability of alcohol as a legitimate expense) proved to be the next most significant (p = .0092); Factor Three (whether the company turned a blind eye to particular employees and/or on special occasions)
was the next most significant, \( p = .0184 \), whilst Factor Two (whether or not the company is sympathetic to the alcohol-related problems of its employees) was the least significant \( p = .0260 \).

Therefore, it would appear that the employees' perception of company rules and regulations surrounding alcohol, (especially as regards the prohibition of alcohol on site and during breaks) along with a formal policy or no-alcohol clause plays the biggest part in determining whether the company employees are higher or lower drinking during working hours.

It is interesting to note that a number of companies with less formal rules do acknowledge that this gives a certain amount of leeway to their employees. This can be seen from the following quotes:

"There are a number of meetings/lunches that happen in this building, primarily with big advertisers which would be attended by some of our commercial managers and there is no restriction put on alcohol at those sort of things...people do go off site and drink at lunchtime, there is no rule that says they can't. It's common for a journalist to take someone from the football club into a pub to have a pie and a pint. It's not unusual for managers to go for a pint".

Service Industry.

"While we don't condone consumption of alcohol on the premises if someone came back from the pub after lunch there's a social acceptability about it provided it's kept within reason".

Service Industry.

"Because part of our business is actually encouraging people to drink alcohol on our premises...to have no alcohol on the premises is not appropriate...if somebody is leaving or arriving it's again celebrated by everyone having a drink on the house".

Service Industry.
3.2.1 Relationship between drinking and overall policy type

The analysis reported above identifies a number of specific features which discriminate between higher and lower drinking companies. In particular, Factor 1 included a number of clear and specific rules (a) no alcohol on the premises b) no alcohol consumption during breaks c) a no-alcohol clause in the contract of employment; these rules played the most significant role in discriminating between higher and lower drinking companies. Factor 1 also included the possession of a formal policy on alcohol. It is important to note that the discrimination derives from Factor 1 as a whole; that is, the relationship is between higher and lower consumption and the four Factor 1 variables working in conjunction. It cannot therefore be concluded that the simple implementation of a formal policy on alcohol consumption, in isolation, achieves a similar degree of discrimination. Independent correlation analyses relating policy type⁴ to consumption variables do not show strong levels of association. Parametric correlation analysis (Pearson) of type of policy implementation and total weekly consumption shows a very lower level of association \((r = .072; p = .001)\); and a similar analysis based on units consumed during working hours produces a similar substantively unimportant level of association \((r = .003; p = .89)\). Finally, a non-parametric analysis (tau) of type of policy implementation and higher/ lower drinking firms produces a lower negative degree of association \((\text{tau} = -.16; p < .001)\). Despite their statistical significance none of these correlation coefficients explain sufficient variance to be of any practical usefulness. It is concluded therefore, that the type of policy implementation adopted by different firms

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⁴ An ordinal four point scale was derived for policy type. A more detailed description of this variable is given on page 115.
bears very little relationship to self-reports of alcohol consumption by employees.

What does appear to discriminate between higher and lower drinking firms is the visible implementation of a number of specific rules regardless of whether these form part of a well-developed policy or not.

This is not a surprising finding. There are a multiplicity of reasons why a firm should introduce an alcohol policy, and there are no a priori reasons for supposing that a firm with such a policy should have either a markedly worse, or a markedly better, drinking record than any other. What is interesting however, is that a number of specific local rules do appear to have an impact.

3.2.2 Formal and informal discipline within the companies

Employees’ perception of company rules appears to be related to levels of consumption during working hours. It seems possible therefore, that both formal and informal discipline-related procedures might also have a bearing on the level of consumption within the workplace. The following table however, shows that there are no significant differences between the lower and higher drinking companies on a number of self-reported measures of discipline-related behaviours.
Table 13: Self-report measures of discipline by higher and lower drinking companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Rank* Lower drinking</th>
<th>Mean Rank* Higher drinking</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you speak to colleagues about problems of an alcohol-related nature?</td>
<td>600.07*</td>
<td>575.34*</td>
<td>155160</td>
<td>.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a colleague had an alcohol problem which seriously affected safety - would you report it?</td>
<td>573.34*</td>
<td>603.79*</td>
<td>150102.5</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a colleague had an alcohol problem which does not affect safety - would you report it?</td>
<td>581.87*</td>
<td>602.78*</td>
<td>155109.5</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever been spoken to about your behaviour in relation to alcohol?</td>
<td>595.82**</td>
<td>585.35**</td>
<td>159345</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever been reported or disciplined at work for an alcohol-related offence?</td>
<td>592.27**</td>
<td>587.42**</td>
<td>160081</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** A lower mean rank score indicates an answer which is very often or very likely.

* A higher mean rank indicates a NO answer

The level of alcohol consumption within the workplace thus appears to be relatively independent of the climate of reporting within the companies. No difference is found between the higher and lower drinking companies in terms of whether an individual has (a) ever been spoken to in relation to alcohol use at work, or (b) ever been reported for an alcohol-related offence. However, it can be seen from the graphs below that the level of reporting of colleagues for cases where a safety factor is involved is considerably higher than reports for instances which are not safety related. This is the case in both higher and lower drinking companies. The difference in the magnitudes of the two graphs overall is due to differences in the number of cases in the higher and lower drinking firms overall. However, the relative proportions represented in the two graphs are very similar, both for safety-related and safety-
unrelated cases. In both cases the likelihood of taking action when safety is concerned is significantly greater than when safety is not involved [for higher drinking firms, the difference between safety-related and safety not-related scores is significant at $p < .0001$ ($z = 12.9$; Wilcoxon signed ranks); and for lower drinking firms, $p < .0001$ ($z = 16.8$; Wilcoxon signed ranks). All differences in the same direction]. It appears that, where safety issues are concerned, people feel a stronger need to take action regardless of levels of consumption in the firm overall.

**Figure 22: Likelihood of reporting a colleague when safety involved**

![Graph showing likelihood of reporting a colleague](image)

- 300
- 200
- 100
- 0
- Count
- 1.00
- 2.00
- report a colleague
- very likely
- quite likely
- don't know
- not very likely
- not at all likely

(n = 727 and 428 respectively)
Figure 23: Likelihood of reporting a colleague when safety not involved

(n = 735 and 430 respectively)

In Figures 22 and 23, category 1 represents lower drinking companies and category 2 represents higher drinking companies.

3.2.3 Safety and drinking

Although the likelihood of reporting a colleague appears to vary more as a function of safety issues than of general drinking levels, a number of other factors relating to safety show a stronger relationship to alcohol consumption in the higher and lower drinking groups. The following table shows the responses made to a number of questions which addressed safety.
Table 14: Employees in higher and lower drinking companies perceptions of safety issues within their company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Rank* Lower drinking</th>
<th>Mean Rank* Higher drinking</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important is safety in your job?</td>
<td>538.01*</td>
<td>687*</td>
<td>121673</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you do a safety-critical job which is covered by any specific piece of legislation?</td>
<td>433.22**</td>
<td>524.70**</td>
<td>84740</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often would you say that you, your customers, or your colleagues are put at risk because of drinking?</td>
<td>575.61***</td>
<td>599.87***</td>
<td>151781</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A lower mean rank score indicates an answer indicating “very important”  
** A higher mean rank indicates a NO answer  
*** A lower mean rank indicates less risk

From the table above it appears that more employees in lower drinking companies report safety to be an important factor in their jobs than is the case in higher drinking companies. By contrast more employees in higher drinking companies report that their work is less safety critical. However, there is no significant difference between the higher and lower drinking firms in terms of how often they themselves, colleagues or customers are put at risk due to alcohol. This may be because although employees from higher drinking firms consume more alcohol, they are not involved in safety critical work and therefore their alcohol consumption may not have an adverse effect in terms of risk of accident or injury. It may, however, impact upon other aspects of work such as quality or output. There is one aspect of risk however, which, although part of a non-significant data set, may give grounds for further consideration. Table 15 below gives numbers and percentages of employees endorsing various categories of risk in the higher and lower drinking companies.
Table 15: Perceived alcohol-related risks in higher and lower drinking companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not very often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>216 (50%)*</td>
<td>137 (32%)</td>
<td>65 (15%)</td>
<td>10 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>388 (53%)</td>
<td>237 (33%)</td>
<td>82 (11%)</td>
<td>15 (2%)</td>
<td>6 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All percentages are given to the nearest whole number; discrepancies arise due to rounding errors.

It is observed that small numbers of respondents in both higher and lower drinking companies report alcohol-related risks as being often present. Furthermore, in the lower drinking companies six individuals felt that such risks were always present. There are two possible interpretations. Firstly, it is possible to argue that the lower drinking companies have derived their lower drinking culture as a response to an observed prior problem, of which the current data represent a vestige. Secondly, and perhaps more likely, the perceived greater risk arises due to the safety-critical nature of the work carried out and an increased awareness of the dangers of alcohol in such a context.

It would appear then, that safety factors are important - the lower drinking companies are more safety oriented, both with respect to the proportion of employees who report having safety critical jobs and the proportion who regard safety to be important in their work. Higher levels of drinking appear to be present in those companies where safety is not seen as so important. Overall therefore, the data suggest that the relationship between alcohol consumption and a variety of safety and risk factors varies in different work and employment contexts. Consequently any general

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pronouncement about the relationship between alcohol consumption and safety has to
take account of such contextual factors.

3.2.4 Sickness absence in higher and lower drinking firms

The relationship between alcohol consumption and absenteeism for the whole sample
was described in Chapter Two. This relationship proved more complex than was
anticipated. Nonetheless, under a simple hypothesis that alcohol consumption and
absenteeism would be correlated in a straightforward positive way, this issue was
again examined in the context of higher and lower drinking firms. It would perhaps
be expected that employees in the higher drinking companies would take more time
off work due to alcohol consumption than employees in lower drinking companies.
This is precisely what was found ($U = 68755; \ p = .0008$). On this evidence it would
thus again appear, on first examination, that alcohol consumption has a detrimental
effect on work output as higher levels of drinking lead to greater amounts of time off.
However, as in the previous section, this simple relationship between alcohol
consumption and time off becomes less clear when the total amount of time
respondents report taking off work (that is, the amount of time which is taken off due
to all causes) is taken into account. Whilst it might be expected that employees in the
higher drinking companies, who take more time off due to alcohol consumption,
would also take more time off in total, this was not the case. Employees in the higher
drinking companies take less time off overall, although this result is not significant ($U
= 156092.5; \ p = .2056$). On this evidence, it appears that alcohol consumption does
not result in more time being taken off overall by employees in higher drinking than in
lower drinking companies. This result mirrors the findings discussed in Chapter Two.
It is tentatively suggested that some sections of the workforce may be more likely to turn up for work than others, whatever their physical or health status. It may be that those on daily or hourly rates fall into this category; also that there may be social class differences in ability to function under varying conditions of physical stress or discomfort; or that personal physical well-being may have a higher degree of salience for some individuals than for others. More research is needed on this issue. However, such fortitude may not be without its dangers. Individuals may report for work in an unfit state. Furthermore, Martin, Kraft and Roman (1994) have argued that alcohol-related absenteeism may have a positive aspect insofar as such absenteeism represents "substance abusers' efforts to protect themselves from harm that might occur if they tried to work; obviously this protection can extend to co-workers and the workplace itself". This is clearly a two-edged sword. These issues are discussed more fully in the companion volume to this study (Hutcheson, Henderson et al.; op cit). Whatever the truth of the matter, the present data suggest that employees of all categories may have a number of reasons for not going to work and that alcohol misuse is only one of these.

3.2.5 The perceived effect of alcohol in higher and lower drinking companies

The shortcomings of existing databases with respect to variables such as output, quality, wastage rates and other production data have been discussed in Chapter Two. Accordingly, the following analyses are based on perceptions of the effects of alcohol. In this case however, a more precise statistical analysis is presented contrasting the data from higher and lower drinking firms. Table 16 below presents data on a) the effects of alcohol on personal performance, b) the effects of alcohol on the
performance of colleagues and c) opinions as to whether a colleague or colleagues may have a drink problem.

**Table 16: Effects of alcohol consumption in higher and lower companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Rank* Lower drinking</th>
<th>Mean Rank* Higher drinking</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you felt the effects of alcohol whilst at work?</td>
<td>607.88</td>
<td>559.31</td>
<td>148344</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever noticed a colleague feeling the effects of alcohol whilst at work?</td>
<td>605.66</td>
<td>571.02</td>
<td>153290.5</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe any of your colleagues to have a drinking problem?</td>
<td>629.25</td>
<td>543.61</td>
<td>141746</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A higher mean rank indicates a NO answer

The table above shows that there are significant differences between the lower and higher drinking companies in the apparent awareness of the effects of alcohol consumption. Significantly more respondents in the higher drinking companies had felt the effects of alcohol whilst at work, had noticed the effects of alcohol on a colleague and believed that at least one of their colleagues had a drinking problem. Employees in the higher drinking companies were thus more likely to report that alcohol is having an effect on the company via impairment of their own and colleagues’ performance.

In addition to the above an attempt was made to gather indirect information about the effects of alcohol consumption in the workplace by asking a number of questions concerning the adequacy of the company response to alcohol problems. The table below shows the results from the following three questions a) is the organisation doing enough to address the issue?; b) do you feel a formal policy is necessary?; and c) is testing necessary?
Table 17: Perceived adequacy of response to alcohol in lower and higher drinking companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Rank* Lower drinking</th>
<th>Mean Rank* Higher drinking</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that your organisation is doing enough to address the issue of alcohol misuse?</td>
<td>540.55</td>
<td>582.20</td>
<td>132553</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel a formal policy is necessary?</td>
<td>510.1</td>
<td>559.53</td>
<td>118083</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is testing necessary?</td>
<td>248.09</td>
<td>259.55</td>
<td>28703</td>
<td>.258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A higher mean rank indicates a NO answer

Although respondents from the higher drinking companies feel significantly less satisfied with the response their companies are making to the problems associated with alcohol misuse it is interesting to note that they are less likely to feel that a formal policy covering alcohol consumption is necessary than employees from lighter drinking companies. On the other hand, the issue of testing produced a mixed bag of results covering a variety of individual responses, but not distinguishing between the higher and lower drinking companies. In conclusion therefore, it appears that whilst the higher drinking companies are perceived as providing a less than adequate response to alcohol problems, the workforce in these companies is less likely to see a formal policy as necessary. This type of contradiction appears paradoxical. However, as will be seen when the attitudes of employees to alcohol consumption are examined, the higher drinking companies tended to have a workforce with a more positive attitude to alcohol. It may be the case that they see a deficiency in service provision for individuals but do not favour any kind of over-arching policy that might affect the drinking practices of the workforce at large.
3.3 Overview of comparison between higher and lower drinking companies

The first point to emerge from these comparisons is that a number of important factors, identified on the basis of analyses from the entire sample, emerge in a more focussed form from the comparison of higher and lower drinking companies. Perhaps the most striking of these concerns the data on the relationship between reported consumption and absenteeism. Whilst it is clear that alcohol consumption is related to higher absenteeism, total absenteeism did not distinguish the heavier from the lighter drinking firms. In fact, insofar as there was a relationship, it was in a direction opposite to that anticipated. Clearly alcohol consumption makes a limited contribution to absenteeism statistics and the overall attendance record in the heavier drinking firms does not differ markedly from that in the lighter drinking firms.

With respect to alcohol-related problems at work, it would appear that employees in the higher drinking companies are aware of the effects of alcohol consumption and are also aware of some of the problems it can cause. However, although they are aware of the effect it is having on the workforce, and believe that their companies are not doing enough to tackle the problems, they do not want a formal policy introduced. Reactions to the possibility of testing in the workplace were mixed and do not distinguish between the two groups of companies. It is apparent however, that current data based on perceptions of the effects of alcohol are of limited value with respect to certain key issues. If hard answers are required to questions concerning quality, output, wastage rates etc, firms will have to compile databases that will enable the appropriate analyses to be carried out.
On a more positive note, the data indicate that employees from both higher and lower drinking companies feel a greater responsibility when there is a question of safety. It appears to be the case however that employees in the lower drinking companies are more likely to be involved in work which is more safety-critical than those in the heavier drinking companies. Because of this factor it appears that any discussion of the relationship between alcohol and safety risk has to take into account a number of important contextual factors including the nature of the industry and the type of work carried out.

Finally, an examination of company actions which have a bearing on alcohol consumption revealed that the higher drinking companies tended to be: those which exert less direct control over their employees’ drinking behaviour; allow business meetings in pubs; permit alcohol expense claims; have lax company rules relating to alcohol consumption for particular employees and/or occasions; but are not seen as having a particularly helpful policy to the alcohol problems of its employees.
CHAPTER FOUR

4. ALCOHOL-RELATED ATTITUDES

4.1 Attitudes and behaviour

In social survey research, relationships between behaviour and clusters of attitudes are found with some regularity. More specifically, relationships between certain kinds of attitudes and drinking and smoking behaviours have a long pedigree. For example, Davies and Stacey (1972) found clusters of attitudes that discriminated between youths who drank to varying degrees; Bynner (1969) found similar attitudes that discriminated between smoking and non-smoking youth. The major problem with the attitude-behaviour link lies not in finding such relationships but in predicting the outcomes of interventions which seek to influence such relationships. It has been found in the area of health education, for example, that attitude change frequently fails to translate into behaviour change. At least part of this difficulty is epistemological. Education campaigns which specify a desired verbal outcome (i.e. changes on a self-completion attitude scale) may succeed in achieving such a surface aim (i.e. a modification of verbal behaviour in a particular context) without changing any underlying schema. These issues are discussed in a recent paper by Davies and Best (1996).

In the present context it is proposed to follow a simple descriptive path of the type referenced in the above paragraph. Any relationships emerging from such an approach illustrate ways in which habitual or normative behaviours and particular sets of attitudes tend to be integrated and mutually supportive, without necessarily
indicating that an attempt at attitude change will translate easily into approved behaviours.

4.2 Attitude methodology

Employees’ attitudes to alcohol use in the workplace were elicited by means of 8 Likert-type scales included in the employee questionnaire (see Appendix 2). These 8 items were expanded to 11 after experience with the first company tested. Each item was scaled on a five-point bi-polar rating scale; an additional “don’t know” category was included.

4.2.1 Items

The items were as follows:

1. Alcohol is part of working life
2. Alcohol helps people get on with each other
3. Alcohol causes problems
4. Small amounts of alcohol do no harm
5. Alcohol should be freely available
6. Alcohol helps relieve stress
7. Alcohol is a threat to safety
8. Alcohol use reduces work output
9. Alcohol use reduces work quality

10. It's OK to drink heavily at lunchtime if you have a desk job and don't have to drive or operate machinery

11. The company takes a sympathetic approach to employees who have problems dealing with alcohol

4.2.2 Factor analysis

Whilst questionnaires typically include substantial numbers of attitude items, people do not possess a separate attitude for every item. A number of workers (e.g. Osgood 1957) have shown that large attitude databases are invariably founded on a much smaller number of core constructs. Osgood (op cit) showed on numerous occasions that large bodies of attitude data were typically underlaid by no more than three or four basic dimensions.

By examining the patterns of inter-relationships (consistency) between people's answers to large numbers of questions, the technique of factor analysis provides a statistical basis for identifying those clusters of items (factors) that relate more closely to each other than to other items, and thereby offers strong clues as to the nature of the basic underlying dimensions. In a sense it therefore reduces a large number of individual item scores to a more manageable number of broader dimensions.

A factor analysis was carried out on the attitude data. An initial examination showed
that the data set was suitable for this purpose (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = .72). Principle components analysis showed two eigen values greater than unity. Oblimin rotation subsequently identified two factors, which explained 58% of the total variance.

The items comprising the two factors (Factor 1 and Factor 2) and their associated loadings are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol reduces work quality</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol reduces work output</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is a threat to safety at work</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol causes problems at work</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of Factor 1 shows that the highest loadings are associated with items which are related to work productivity, specifically quality and output. Two remaining items relate to work-related problems. For the purpose of all subsequent analyses, this group of items has been given the title “detrimental to work performance”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol helps people get on with each other at work</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is part of working life</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small amounts of alcohol do no harm  .70
Alcohol helps reduce stress  .67

Examination of Factor 2 shows that the two highest loadings are on the socially integrative aspects of alcohol consumption. Item three emphasises belief in the relative harmlessness of small amounts of alcohol and item four claims a stress reducing capacity. Since the major definers for Factor 2 appear to be social in nature this Factor has been given the title “socially enhancing” for the purpose of all subsequent analyses.

With the derivation of two strong factors, analyses now proceed by comparing relevant criterion groups in terms of their scores on these two factors. [Whilst the above two factors show the main dimensions in terms of respondents’ answers, they do not serve to illustrate differences between different categories of employee, for example between employees who drink at work and those who do not, or employees in safety critical work as opposed to those whose job does not involve safety etc.] It is possible to look at the attitudes of any given sub-group using factor scores. This technique derives a mean score for any sub-group selected, based on the scores of that group on the items comprising the factors. In the present context any sub-group can be given a standard score (i.e. a score based on zero mean and unit standard deviation) on the “detrimental to work performance” and the “socially enhancing” factors described above.
4.3 Attitude differences between groups

4.3.1 Higher and lower drinking companies

A comparison between employees working in the higher and lower drinking companies (n= 333 and 604 respectively) shows no significant difference between the two groups in terms of employee attitudes on Factor 1. That is, there was no systematic variation in terms of their attitudes concerning the detrimental effects of alcohol on work (p = .09). In terms of Factor 2, however, a clear difference between higher and lower drinking firms emerged. Employees from the heavier drinking firms were significantly more likely to report a socially enhancing effect of alcohol consumption (p < .001). From these results it would appear that both higher and lower drinking company employees recognise the detrimental effects of alcohol on work; both groups of employees hold the view that alcohol has a detrimental effect on work performance, that is, decreased output and quality (which may include leaving early, arriving late or decreased work output following lunch time drinking). However, when it comes to employees’ attitudes toward the social effects of alcohol consumption employees from higher and lower drinking companies have different views. That is, employees from higher drinking companies hold a significantly more positive view of the benefits of alcohol as a social tool within the workplace than do employees from lower drinking firms. These findings are illustrated graphically in Figure 23 below, where position on the horizontal line represents a group mean factor score for each of the two dimensions. As an aid to interpretation of the diagrams, the more negative the mean factor score on work performance then the more performance is viewed to be adversely affected by alcohol at work. However the more negative the score on the
social factor then the more positive the attitude towards alcohol. Interpretation of the
other figures in this section proceeds in the same way.

**Figure 24: Attitudes held by higher and lower drinking companies**

![Diagram showing two factors]

**Key**

- Lower drinking employees
- Higher drinking employees

### 4.3.2 Sex

Comparison of the attitudes of males ($n = 1055$) and females ($n = 583$) across all
companies showed no significant difference in terms of Factor 1, but a highly
significant difference in terms of Factor 2. This indicates that overall women’s views
of alcohol were not significantly different from men’s with respect to the set of items
concerning the detrimental effects of alcohol in the workplace ($p = .38$). On the other
hand, there were highly significant differences in terms of Factor 2 concerning the
socially enhancing effects of alcohol ($p < .001$). In terms of this factor, men were significantly more likely to endorse a positive social effect of alcohol within their workplace. These results are of interest insofar as they mirror the results from the higher and lower drinking companies; women's attitudes appear more like those prevailing in lower drinking firms; men's attitudes appear more like those in higher drinking firms. It should be stressed however, that this is not due to differences between the lower and higher drinking firms in terms of gender distribution, since these were approximately matched in terms of this variable (see page 49).

**Figure 25: Attitudes held by males and females**

![Factor One Diagram]

**Factor One**
- Detrimental
- Not detrimental

**Factor Two**
- Social
- Not social

**Key**
- ■ Male
- ◦ Female
4.3.3 *Companies with a written alcohol policy and companies with no such policy*

The attitudes of employees in firms with a written policy (n = 1150) differed significantly on both factors from those of employees in firms with no such policy (n = 383). In firms with a written alcohol policy employees were more likely to see alcohol as having a potentially detrimental effect on work; and they were less supportive of the idea that alcohol had a socially enhancing effect in the workplace. By contrast those in firms with no such policy produced answers towards the opposite poles of these dimensions (p < .001 in both cases).

**Figure 26: Attitudes by whether company had a policy or not**

![Factor One: Detrimental vs. Not detrimental](image)

![Factor Two: Social vs. Not social](image)

**Key**

- Company has a policy
- Company does not have a policy
4.3.4 Safety-critical and non-safety-critical work

Comparisons between employees who reported that they were involved in safety-critical work (n = 469) and those who reported no such involvement (n = 907) revealed no significant difference for Factor 1 (p = .209), but a significant difference for Factor 2 (p = .036). There were no differences between the groups in terms of perception of the detrimental effects of alcohol in the workplace. However, in terms of Factor 2 those involved in safety critical work were less likely to report a socially enhancing effect of alcohol in the workplace.

Figure 27: Attitudes by safety critical nature of work

---

Figure 27:

Key:

- Work is safety critical
- Work is not safety critical
4.3.5 Employees who drink during working hours and employees who do not

Comparison of employees drinking during working hours (n = 104) and those not drinking during working hours (n = 1576) show highly significant differences in terms of both attitude dimensions identified in the factor analysis (p < .001 in both cases). Those drinking at work are more likely to see alcohol as not detrimental to work performance (Factor 1) and as more socially enhancing (Factor 2).

**Figure 28: Attitudes held by those who drink during working hours and those who do not**

---

**Factor One**

Detrimental | Not detrimental
---|---
-1 | 0 | +1
-1 | +1

**Factor Two**

Social | Not social
---|---

**Key**

- Employees who drink during working hours
- Employees who do not drink during working hours

4.3.6 Employees who take time off sick due to alcohol and those who do not

There was no significant difference in terms of either factor between employees who reported alcohol-related absenteeism and those who did not.
4.3.7 Employees who reported feeling the effects of alcohol at work and those who did not

Comparison between employees who reported feeling the effects of alcohol at work (n = 589) and those who did not (n = 1080) shows significant differences between the two groups for both factors (p < .001 in both cases). Those who reported feeling the effects of alcohol at work felt alcohol to be less detrimental, and to be more socially enhancing compared to those who had not felt the effects of alcohol at work.

Figure 29: Attitudes held by employees who reported feeling the effects of alcohol at work and those who did not

Key

- Employees who had felt the effects of alcohol during working hours
- Employees who had not felt the effects of alcohol during working hours

4.3.8 Employees who had been reported for an alcohol-related offence and those who had not

These data differ from the previous comparisons since the target group (n = 15) is
very small compared with the reference group (n = 1653). In terms of the two factors derived the attitudes of those who reported having been disciplined on some occasion did not differ significantly from the attitudes of the rest of the sample. This is in no small part due to the fact that the reference group, as has been seen from the previous results, consists of individuals with all shades of opinion on these issues. Consequently, they do not form a reasonable comparison group in this instance. It may be worth noting that, in terms of the direction of their responses, employees who have been reported for an alcohol-related offence tend to see alcohol as potentially detrimental to work but as socially enhancing.

**Figure 30: Attitudes held by employees who had been reported for an alcohol-related offence and those who had not**

![Factor One Diagram]

- Detrimental
- Not detrimental

-1 0 1

![Factor Two Diagram]

- Social
- Not social

**Key**

- Employees who had been reported
- Employees who had not been reported
4.4 Testing

Within the companies participating in the project only one presently operates a testing policy, and this company had only carried out the procedure on one occasion. Therefore, rather than evaluate the effects that alcohol testing has had on the workforce, this section aims to outline the future plans of companies, the reasons given for the introduction of testing, and to explore employees’ attitudes towards the introduction of testing.

4.5 Future plans to introduce testing

Of the 45 companies interviewed information was provided from 44 regarding the future possibility of introducing testing for alcohol. Nine of the company representatives indicated that future testing was on the agenda. Of these nine, four advocated random testing, a further three with-cause testing and one would have liked to introduce both. One company provided no information on this issue.

The reasons given for future implementation range from legislation such as the Transport and Works Act to being able to determine an employees ability to competently carry out his/her duties. This is illustrated by the following quotes from two of the companies intending to test in the future:

"If we did do testing it would purely be for 1) the occupational health side if we were treating somebody and wanted to make sure they were staying sober and 2) where somebody was really causing havoc and was obviously drunk....if we allow
someone to operate machinery, under the influence, we're failing under what we should be doing under the Health and Safety at work act."

"Well there are two reasons for it. First of all there's the general safety reasons which are quite important. But again it's down to the due diligence provisions of the [Transport and Works] Act."

The information provided by company representatives was inadequate for further analysis. There are a variety of reasons for this, although the main one tended to be that as testing was an issue for the future, the specifics of method of testing etc. had not been determined at the time of interview.

**4.6 Employee versus company information**

In the one company which currently carries out with-cause testing employees were asked if their company did so. From the 36 respondents only three were aware that testing was in fact implemented. It is obvious from this information that employees are not aware of the full extent of the alcohol policy in situ. In light of this fact, employee perceptions of testing in the companies who are considering introducing testing in future are examined, in particular, how likely such an introduction may be. It should be noted that two of the companies considering such a measure, felt the issue to be a sensitive one and therefore had the questions on testing excluded from the employee questionnaire. The table below shows the responses to the question "How likely do you think it is that such testing may be introduced in the future?"
Table 18: Employee perception of the likelihood of testing being introduced in companies considering such an action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>% (N = 185)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all likely</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very likely</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite likely</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.2% of employees think that testing is likely to be introduced in the future in firms which are currently considering such an introduction. A slightly different picture emerges regarding the perceived likelihood of the introduction of testing in companies not contemplating the introduction of testing.

Table 19: Employee perception of the likelihood of testing being introduced in companies who are not considering such an action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>% (N = 590)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all likely</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very likely</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite likely</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst there are clear similarities between the tables, a chi square test shows that there are statistically significant differences (p = .003). The difference arises due to the more frequent perception that the introduction of testing was likely in the firms where this was being contemplated; and a greater feeling that testing was unlikely in firms where such action was not being considered. However, despite these specific differences, overall the tables show that a majority of employees are not aware of
future plans by management, regardless of whether management intends to introduce testing or not. It is therefore more useful to look at employee attitudes to testing as a whole, rather than to determine if there is a difference in attitude between those employees in companies where testing is planned and where it is not.

The tables below present the data from all employees who responded to the questions on testing.

**Table 20: Employee attitudes to testing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think some form of drug or alcohol testing is necessary in your organisation?</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>1269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that testing would adversely affect staff/management relationships?</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>1264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that certain employees would be more likely to be tested than others?</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>1247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 21: Employee attitudes to the introduction of testing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No objections (%)</th>
<th>Mildly object (%)</th>
<th>Strongly object (%)</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What objections would you have, if any, to the introduction of testing?</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>1289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from Tables 21 and 22 above that the majority of employees (74.6%) do
not think that testing is necessary, and 68.4% think it would adversely affect management/staff relationships. Despite this belief only 35.5% would object to the introduction of testing.

The above tables show that employees attitudes towards testing are on the whole fairly negative. However, there are differences of opinion in management attitudes towards testing. This can be clearly illustrated by the following quotes from managers who are, and who are not, in favour of testing.

"I don't think even the union will like that [testing], although they won't be able to argue with it...I've now got contacts where they are using it, but it's a big change, and the ones who have issues with alcohol will not like it...and the fact that we know who they are - they're likely to be randomly selected...some of these things are current and some are future...testing will be implemented eventually"

Light Manufacturing Company

"As far as random testing - it's something I would like to do, but not just for alcohol. It would be very difficult to put in straight away. We would have to prove that we weren't using it as a means to filter people out of the company, rather than just a general health check."

Light Manufacturing Company

"We haven't as such [introduced testing], but it's certainly been discussed. It wasn't part of the formal policy when we put it into practice but we certainly haven't ruled out the prospect of testing people in certain circumstances. I think we might need to be more positive in terms of bringing in testing as a mandatory action in certain circumstances."

Light Manufacturing Company

"I think it's [testing] demeaning and it's something we would not contemplate"

Service Industry
"It’s not the intention to test anyone for alcohol or drugs. One of the things that was brought to the fore a while back was using a breathalyser on site. That was thrown out - I did not wish to see a breathalyser used..."

Heavy Manufacturing Company

"It’s testing not a feature at the moment at all, because I don’t believe that our control of the situation is so lacking that we would need to do something as radical as that"

Service Industry

4.7 Overview of the attitude data

Analysis of the attitude data by means of factor analysis showed that the original item set could be interpreted as being underlaid by two basic dimensions or ‘factors’. These factors concerned the potential detrimental effects of alcohol in the workplace, and the socially enhancing effects of alcohol. Using factor scores as the basis for comparisons between various criterion groups, it is seen that Factor Two concerning the socially enhancing effects of alcohol discriminates between groups in nearly every case (i.e. in all cases except sickness absence due to alcohol, and being reported for an alcohol-related offence). On the other hand, Factor One, which focuses on the possible detrimental effects of alcohol in the workplace appears to discriminate in a less general way, and is confined to comparisons between firms which have, or do not have, a written policy; between those who drink or do not drink at work; and between those who have felt the effects of alcohol at work and those who have not.

It is apparent that both factors have some discriminating value in a variety of contexts.

What is perhaps important from these findings is the suggestion that a general attitude
factor concerning the presumed socially facilitating effects of alcohol discriminates between a variety of desired and undesired workplace behaviours as well as, or even better than, a set of more concrete, focused and specific attitudes concerning the effects of alcohol on work performance. The implication is that any future workplace campaign which might be instituted with the aim of changing attitudes (the caveats involved in this approach have been mentioned at the start of this section) would be well advised to give serious consideration to the group of general social perceptions surrounding alcohol use rather than exclusively targeting specific workplace-related effects.

With respect to the introduction of testing, despite the fact that there are significant differences between firms contemplating, and not contemplating such a course of action, it appears that a large majority of employees feel that this is not very likely. This is the case even in firms where the introduction of testing is being contemplated. It was noted during the course of the research that companies were generally rather defensive about this issue and some firms would not even permit the issue to be raised. It appears that there is a degree of defensiveness on this issue which precludes its’ open discussion. If it is the case that the introduction of testing is likely to be eased by some preparatory groundwork and preparation, then this does not seem to be taking place to any great extent. Attitudes towards the introduction of testing were not especially positive. The majority view suggested that testing was not necessary and that it would adversely affect staff/management relationships. Furthermore, 35% of subjects indicated that they would object mildly or strongly to its introduction. It is also clear from conversations with management that views on the issue are mixed, and
that there is no general unqualified consensus in favour of testing, despite individual pockets of enthusiasm.
CHAPTER FIVE

5 WORKPLACE CULTURE

The present chapter seeks to draw the readers attention to a number of issues arising from the notion of workplace cultures. Aspects of such cultures are difficult to investigate through survey methods and their elucidation requires a degree of intuition based on principled qualitative observations. The existing workplace literature remains rather weak with respect to the investigation of workplace cultures, and the present chapter serves to highlight some of the issues involved.

The formal controls of a company include written policies on bringing alcohol into the workplace, drinking at work, or being drunk at work. These types of formal rules directly influence the availability of alcohol in the workplace. It has been suggested by Ames and Janes (1992) that within company cultural factors are important in contributing to what they term “the normative regulation of drinking” in the workplace. However, according to these authors such within company cultural factors also take into account the implicit understandings, usually unstated and frequently invisible, of what is acceptable behaviour; in other words, the unwritten rules.

It goes without saying that the investigation of unwritten rules presents a researcher with additional problems. Such informal controls are often more complex, operating differently and sometimes invisibly, depending upon occupational group or particular circumstances. Their nature also makes them more difficult to investigate directly;
their existence can sometimes only be inferred. Both the company and the workforce can have unwritten rules.

Informal controls or unwritten rules may either reinforce or undermine formal policy. Consequently they occupy a position with respect to company policy somewhere between ‘consensus’ and ‘conflict’. In some situations the employees may all but ignore company policy and conform to tacit unwritten rules. These might include solidarity with workmates even in the face of safety being breached, hiding alcohol for colleagues or locking up an inebriated colleague until the end of the shift so that he is not identified as being drunk. Such practices would be nearer the ‘conflict’ end of the dimension. At the other end of the dimension, where formal and informal norms are in accord, there is ‘consensus’. Total consensus and absolute conflict will be rare. The companies and their employees in this survey appear to lie somewhere between ‘conflict’ and ‘consensus’. The following section illustrates some contrasts between company policy and reported workplace behaviour. In a later section in this chapter a company with a higher degree of consensus will be discussed.

5.1 Employees social control

Two of the questions in the employee questionnaire concerned reports of action that an employee might take regarding a colleague’s alcohol problem. For each company the employees’ responses to these two questions carry an implicit message concerning the relationship between employee solidarity (employees social controls) and the company’s formal and informal controls.
These questions were:

a) If you considered that a colleague had an alcohol problem which was not affecting safety at work, how likely do you think you would be to report this to a senior member of staff?

b) If you considered that a colleague had an alcohol problem which was seriously affecting safety at work, how likely do you think you would be to report this to a senior member of staff?

The statistical importance of these questions has been discussed earlier in Chapter 3. However, it is observed that there were twelve companies where more than 50% of the employees reported that they were "Not very likely" or "Not at all likely" to report a colleague who had an alcohol problem if safety were not affected, thus indicating a possible conflict between the informal norms of employees and the interests of the company as a whole. All twelve are large companies, four are located in Scotland and in four of the companies the majority of those who completed the questionnaire were manual workers.

If safety was affected, a further reduction of between 21% and 57% in the numbers of employees who reported that they were "Not very likely" or "Not at all likely" to report a colleague who had an alcohol problem was observed. The direction of this shift is reassuring but this still leaves some 25% of employees in those companies who would be unlikely to report a colleague even if safety was affected. This demonstrates that in those companies, workers with an alcohol problem can rely on the support of most of her/his work mates if safety is not affected and continue to rely on some of her/his work mates even when safety is jeopardised. To close the gap between company and employee controls companies have to persuade their employees that they can report a colleague with confidence, knowing that a sympathetic and
helpful approach will be adopted by the company. The employees however, must be convinced that it is in the best interests of the company, the reporting employee and the reported colleague that this is done. Until that happens old patterns of worker solidarity in conflict with company controls will conspire to prevent problems being tackled. Companies with a large proportion of manual workers are more likely to find protective solidarity in the workforce.\(^5\)

5.2 Negative and positive attitudes to alcohol

While the adverse effects of alcohol consumption in the workplace are well documented it is important to remember that there are positive effects. It is well known that alcohol consumption can facilitate interpersonal behaviour in social settings (Critchlow, 1983, 1986; Leigh, 1990c; Reinman and Leigh, 1987). It appears that relationships within the workplace may also be enhanced by the use of alcohol. For example Davies (Davies 1981; Davies, Cochrane and Marini, 1978, Davies and Grant, 1982) reported that heavy drinking managers had a more favourable perception of their staff than did abstinent or light-drinking managers.

Among the companies who provided interview information in the present study, two differing groups were identified on the basis of the information obtained. These two groups were compiled in an intuitive fashion, on the basis of the apparent meanings in the interviews. Only one initial selection was made, and no subsequent re-assignment

\(^5\) Manual workers are less likely to report colleagues with drink problems even if safety is affected. Krusal-Wallis: corrected for ties: Chi-square = 170.8, p < .001 if safety affected.

Kruskal-Wallis one way anova corrected for ties: Chi-square = 216, p < .001.
was permitted. One group of companies was characterised by attitudes and procedures that strongly discouraged drinking of alcohol and either banned alcohol in the workplace or intended to do so in the future. In a second smaller group of companies there was no actual or proposed reduction in the availability of alcohol; the positive uses of alcohol were accepted with or without reservations.

These two groups of companies thus appear to provide rather different environments as far as alcohol consumption during working hours is concerned. In one alcohol is banned completely, or will be in the not too distant future, whilst in the other alcohol is looked on positively and even used as a management tool.

5.2.1. Interviews with nominated personnel in firms with a restrictive policy

During interviews with representatives of the companies with restrictive policies there was frequent reference to a “generational effect”: younger members of the workforce were seen as having attitudes to alcohol which differed from those of older members; changes in the drink driving laws were cited as helping to bring about this change. The need to take account of the Transport and Works Act, and Health and Safety legislation was mentioned by several respondents. There were disapproving references to previous workplace behaviour ranging from senior managers having cocktail bars and dispensing lavish workplace entertaining, to employees who left empty vodka bottles in their wake. It was clear however, that these and similar incidents are seen as part of the past and are very seriously disapproved of. Sports and social clubs which once flourished on site were described as having withered and died when alcohol was forbidden on site. These clubs were described as “having
been drinking clubs anyway”. Even special occasion Christmas parties where previously one drink each had been provided by the company are now dry. (Apparently non drinkers had donated their ‘ration’ to those who did drink with the result that machines were manned in the afternoon by some who were less than sober.) Reference was made to “fading norms of heavy drinking”. When representatives from these companies look to the future they express the hope for a total ban on alcohol for all employees in the workplace. There are clear indications from these and similar statements that the road ahead is dry as far as these companies are concerned.

5.2.2 Interviews with nominated personnel in companies with a lax policy

Representatives from these companies made very different statements regarding company culture as regards alcohol. This is most easily illustrated with examples.

“We like to have a drink in a hotel with employees and students when a course is completed.”

“The company considers that employee solidarity is enhanced through celebrations with alcohol.”

“We have alcohol at presentations”.

“Alcohol with employees is seen as positive and morale boosting”.

“Alcohol helps with team building and social atmosphere”.

During interviews the positive aspects of alcohol consumption were clearly and explicitly acknowledged and there were no moves afoot to remove alcohol totally from the working environment.
5.2.3 Overview of impressions gained from interviews in firms with restrictive and lax policies

When the comments above are viewed in conjunction with the harder data gained through more structured methods it becomes apparent that the types of views expressed are not random, but do in fact relate at a general level to other data sets. Interviews in the restrictive firms related to a number of drinking variables in those firms, i.e. lower levels of reported drinking, fewer reports of the effects of alcohol at work, greater concern over safety-critical aspects of work etc. By contrast, the comments from those where policy was more lax were associated with higher levels of drinking both in total and during working hours (p = .021; p = .001). It is apparent therefore that alcohol-related behaviour in the workplace is not simply a consequence of norms, practices or beliefs imported into the workplace by shop-floor or non-management sections of the workforce. The views of those in management positions appear to be continuous with, and to reinforce, practices and beliefs revealed in other sections of the workforce. Whilst this does not necessarily mean that the drinking culture in a firm comes ‘from the top’ it clearly implies that a top-down process may be a component of a more lax overall cultural system.

As a check on the intuitive groupings derived from the interview data a number of significance tests were carried out in terms of basic drinking variables between the two groups so derived. T-tests indicate that there are significant differences between the lax and strict groups in terms of overall alcohol consumption (p = .021) and in terms of alcohol consumption during work hours (p < .001). These results suggest that the intuitive groupings have some reality. Chi square tests also indicate significant differences in absenteeism rates between the two groups, but once again
these results are somewhat challenging albeit in line with previous harder datasets. Alcohol-related absenteeism is significantly higher in the lax firms ($p < .001$) but overall absenteeism is unexpectedly higher in the strict firms ($p = .04$). If overall absenteeism is higher in firms where management adopts a strict attitude (in data notes one of the researchers described this group of firms as "neo-prohibitionist") the possibility exists that too strict or puritanical a regime may deter some workforce members from attending, or from reporting alcohol-related absenteeism. Previous work (Davies et al; op cit) suggested that managers with a more lax view of alcohol tended to have more positive views of the workforce. Can too calvinistic a climate have the paradoxical effect of reducing, or appearing to reduce, alcohol-related absenteeism whilst increasing absenteeism from other causes? Can some firms simply become unsociable places to work?

5.3 Contrast between company and employee reports

Whilst it appears that a number of management beliefs are continuous with the general drinking culture in a firm, a comparison of specific company policy measures with the responses of employees reveals that the details of policy frequently are not known to important sections of the workforce. The data suggest that there is not a perfect match between company regulations on the one hand and employee understanding and behaviour on the other; and that consequently there are some important failures of communication on these issues. This is illustrated by reference to three areas of company policy.
1. Does the company ban alcohol in the workplace?

In 13/15 companies reporting that they do not allow alcohol in the workplace, over 80% (mean 91.6%) of employees knew that alcohol was not permitted in the workplace. In two companies however, fewer than 80% of the employees (mean 46.2%) were aware that alcohol was not permitted in the workplace. With respect to this issue there is a reasonable match between company regulation and employee interpretation.

However, in 8 companies where there is no such ban, more than 50% (mean 61%) of employees state that alcohol is not permitted in the workplace, and more than 20% of the employees of 8 companies state that they do not know whether alcohol is permitted in the workplace or not. This demonstrates a clear mismatch between company regulation and employee understanding.

Finally, in 11 out of 13 companies where the company policy permits no alcohol in the workplace and 80% of employees are aware that there is no alcohol permitted in the workplace, 43/929 employees report drinking during working hours. This demonstrates a mismatch between company regulation and employee behaviour.

2. Is alcohol consumption forbidden during breaks?

In five companies employees may not go off site to drink at breaks. In two of these companies the percentages of employees who say that alcohol is forbidden during breaks is over 80%; in the other three this figure is 50% or less (lowest 23.5%).
In companies where employees may go off site to drink at lunch time, more than 54% of employees from 13 of these companies stated that alcohol is prohibited during breaks. On the other hand, in 3/5 companies where employees may not go off site, fewer than half the employees report that this is a regulation.

3. Is it company policy for business meetings to take place in licensed premises?

Data are available from both employees and management in 27 companies concerning whether or not this practice occurs. In 19 of the companies more than half the employees gave an answer which did not reflect actual practice. In 3/4 companies where the practice does not take place, more than half the employees (mean 75.7%) correctly indicated that it did not; but in 15 of the companies where the practice is used a majority of employees stated that it did not occur.

Overall these mismatches suggest that there are difficulties in communicating specific aspects of company policy with respect to alcohol to all sections of the workforce. It is also interesting to note that numbers of respondents who clearly are unaware of important aspects of policy failed to use the ‘don’t know’ response option, preferring to err on the side of the angels when in doubt. It is clear that the uncritical acceptance of employee statements about company policy may lead to error, and that in some cases a more favourable picture may emerge due to a general cultural tendency to present a positive image.
5.4 A case study

This chapter concludes with a brief examination of cultural factors in a particular industry, namely two international producers of alcoholic beverages. Interview data were obtained from both of these and questionnaire data from one. There were good reasons for selecting the alcohol production industry.

Firstly, since the central topic of this document concerns the impact of alcohol in the workplace and the role of alcohol and related policies in minimising negative effects, it seems appropriate to examine the extent to which those centrally involved have put their own house in order. If it were demonstrated that they had failed to do so, statements made by official organs of the licensed trade about the extent to which they take a serious and responsible attitude to alcohol problems in the workplace would have a somewhat hollow ring.

Secondly, a number of studies reported in 1978 and 1979 identified problems with alcohol consumption in the producing industry. Plant (1979) reported results from comparison of a biscuit manufacturer with an alcohol producer. Drinking was substantially heavier in the latter and Plant reported that a factor in the heavier levels of drinking observed was the high availability of alcohol within the producing industry. His data suggested that the producing industry was more likely to attract heavier and problem drinkers precisely because alcohol was more freely available. A study by Davies et al (1978) collected data from a large brewery. There was a problem at that time with drinking in the workplace, perhaps exacerbated by the
distribution of a free ration during working hours. In addition, important issues came
to light with respect to drinking amongst certain sections of management and amongst
delivery (drey) drivers. It was therefore of considerable interest to revisit an alcohol
producer.

5.4.1 Interview data
As far as the company environments are concerned neither is a dry site. There are
occasions when alcohol is available for employees; hospitality is offered to visitors
and the opportunity is given to potential clients to sample various products.
Coincidentally, both companies produce soft drinks which, similar to the alcoholic
drinks, are offered and/ or sold to commercial visitors and employees.

A number of statements made by company representatives appear to illustrate certain
informal company norms. For example:

"In the ........ business we have a responsibility and hopefully conduct
ourselves in a way that proves that”.

Statements such as the above appear to show an awareness of the special position of
the drinks trade. In addition the task of achieving sobriety is not seen as exclusive to
management:

"Everyone is responsible for a sober workforce”.

Energy and effort has gone into educating the workforce:

"Because we are the sort of company we are, the whole sort of issue of how
people drink and how they behave when they are working for the company and what
standards they set is important to us as well [as well as problem drinking], so its not
just the misuse its the whole question of drink and how it fits within or outwith the
company environment and how they feel about drinking".
"I think you do set yourselves different standards working for this company".

"Awareness in the company is so high that there is a decrease in alcohol abuse".

Both the company cultures emphasise moderation:

"Enjoying alcohol in moderation with friends, whatever, would be the norm".

"We are here to promote moderate drinking".

"...make it a sensible drinking policy rather than a policy for people with problems..."

There is a stress on individual personal responsibility

"...people have applied such stringent rules to themselves that comment has been made at times".

Overall there appears to be an acceptance of a degree of personal discipline in an environment where alcohol is part of the daily scene.

The companies however, are not trouble free. Theft by consumption is described in one company as a problem; this in the past included draining the barrel dregs of 400% proof spirit. The fact that alcohol is inevitably present in almost every part of the working environment also creates difficulties, though it is not generally freely available. The old dramming practice whereby a drink allowance was available for consumption on the premises has been replaced by an allowance which must be consumed outwith the workplace.
Finally, emphasis is laid on the approachability of management regarding alcohol problems. The point is made that

“If they [the workforce] think the problem will be helped, accepted in a non-critical fashion, certainly in the initial instance, then they will come and talk about it. If they think the initial reaction will be ‘WHAT?’, no-one will ever come”.

5.4.2 Questionnaire data

The following tables describe data from the employees from one of these two alcohol producing companies together with data drawn from all the other employees in the survey.

Table 22: Employee report of general drinking habits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of alcohol drunk per week</th>
<th>Percentage of employees from an alcohol producing company</th>
<th>Percentage of employees from all other companies</th>
<th>Chi-square and probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nil</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-20 units</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;30 units</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no significant differences between self-reported consumption of employees in the alcohol producing company and employees from other industries.
Table 23: Alcohol related behaviour which adversely affects the workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees who report that they:</th>
<th>Alcohol producing company (%)</th>
<th>Average of all other companies (%)</th>
<th>Chi-square and probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consume alcohol during working hours</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.26 .039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have felt the effect of alcohol at work</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had more than one day off sick, due to alcohol</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have been spoken to about behaviour re alcohol</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just under 30% of employees in the alcohol industry report having felt the effect of alcohol at work. This seems a high figure but is not significantly different from other industries. The same is true for reported days off sick due to alcohol and having been spoken to about workplace alcohol consumption. The only statistically significant difference in reported behaviour is that the employees from the alcohol producing firm report consuming less during working hours.

Table 24: Employee report of attitudes to alcohol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of employees who 'strongly agree' or 'agree'</th>
<th>Alcohol producing company</th>
<th>All other companies</th>
<th>Chi-square and probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is part of working life</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>21.21 .00000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol helps people get on</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol causes problems</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>5.31 .021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small amounts of alcohol do no harm</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol helps relieve stress</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is a threat to safety at work</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol reduces output</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of seven specific attitude items employees in the alcohol production company differ significantly from the rest of the sample on only two items. These concern the items “alcohol is part of working life” which was endorsed by nearly 33%; and “alcohol causes problems” which was endorsed by 82%. Responses to the first of these represent little more than a simple statement of fact. Responses to the second indicate a greater belief that alcohol can cause problems.

Table 25 below gives details of employee perception of the company attitude to alcohol problems.

**Table 25: Employee perception of company attitude and activities related to alcohol**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of employees who agree</th>
<th>Chi-square and probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol producing company</td>
<td>All other companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company is sympathetic to alcohol problems</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is company doing enough</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are employees alerted to problems</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would company help an employee with an alcohol problem</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>59.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does company provide helpful information</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all cases employees in the alcohol production company see company policy as significantly more positive than employees in other industries. The levels of significance are extremely high in some cases, with the numbers for the alcohol firm exceeding those of other industries to a marked degree.
The above summary suggests a picture of a workforce whose patterns of drinking are within the norm compared with other industries, and whose confidence in management with respect to alcohol problems is greater than in most other industries. Given the presence of alcohol throughout the working environment, and the nature of the data obtained in certain previous studies of this industry, the overall picture suggests a house which has made serious attempts to put itself in order. However, whilst 70.5% of the workforce reported an awareness that the company had a formal policy on alcohol, the fact that almost 30% did not suggests that the communication problems highlighted at a general level in a previous section are also pertinent to this company.

5.5 Overview of cultural factors

Whilst formal policies clearly have an important impact on workplace alcohol consumption, the importance of informal norms and rules in contributing to an overall alcohol culture or ethos is stressed. Where informal norms and rules conflict with formal rules it is unlikely that there will be an openness on the part of the workforce with respect to alcohol problems and their disclosure. In such circumstances it is likely that there will be a lack of trust between management and workforce.

Interviews with nominated personnel reveal that their statements and views form an integral part of the overall climate within which alcohol consumption takes place. Management views are thus part of a total system involving all sections of the workforce which sets the parameters for alcohol consumption in a particular firm.
There is evidence however, that formal policy on alcohol is sometimes not communicated effectively to all sections of the workforce, and of specific instances where the beliefs of the general workforce as to the nature of a policy are at variance with management policy statements.

The case study provides a brief description of an industry which appears to have made important improvements in its own alcohol policy. These developments are mirrored by increased confidence on the part of the workforce in the ability of management to deal with alcohol problems in a constructive fashion.
CHAPTER SIX

6 ALCOHOL POLICIES

In the following chapter extensive reference is made to the interviews carried out with nominated personnel in the 45 firms participating in the study. Where summary statistics are used to classify the nature and content of these interviews, the categories/classifications employed were derived from consensus ratings of three independent judges. Subsequently, selected quotations are used to illustrate the nature of the discourse supporting those classifications.

6.1 Motivation for adopting a policy

The decision to formally adopt an alcohol policy within the workplace may be influenced by a number of factors. There may be a perceived need for a policy due to actual problems presenting themselves within the company; it may also be that in the light of evidence concerning the estimated prevalence of alcohol-related problems (often cited as 10% Roberts, Cyster & McEwan, 1988) some industries take a proactive view and attempt to counteract potential problems by means of a policy; or it may be that the impetus for adopting a policy is driven by external factors such as legislation (for example, the Transport & Works Act 1992; the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974).

Of the 45 companies from which personnel were interviewed in the present study, 29 had a formally written alcohol policy, or were in the process of updating an existing policy. A majority of the 29 companies have opted to adopt a policy in response to legislation, be it the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 or the Transport and Works Act of 1992.
"It is the due diligence provisions there, where if the executive don’t show due diligence in ensuring that the workplace is alcohol and drug free, then the executive themselves are rendered liable to punishment from the law”.

Some of the companies adopted policies in response to identified alcohol-related problems in the workforce.

"The issue was first raised by the trade unions, that alcohol could be problem. Probably because of past experiences with employees”.

Others developed an alcohol policy as a preventative measure which has been defined as good practice for the purpose of this report. Companies adopting a policy for reasons of good practice did not necessarily perceive problem drinking to be an issue within their company, but tended to hold the view that it is better to introduce policies before problems arise and therefore took a proactive approach to alcohol within the workplace.

"We understand that we must be employing a cross-section of society in all the places where we are and therefore it [alcohol problems] must apply to us...As an act of faith we have the policy and we provide things and we certainly believe that even where we don’t get any referrals that there are likely to be problems”.

"I think it [was decided to adopt a policy] because it was becoming generally accepted that companies should have a high standard in occupational health and employee welfare rather than actually being an alcohol problem”.

Those companies associated with the civil service and prison service developed their policies in response to national guidelines which they imposed regionally.

"We get our national information which is set out - conditions of service for staff. They've stated a policy on alcohol. What I decided to do [was] reinforce the national message and perhaps give it a local flavour”.

One company introduced a new policy because existing provisions were open to over-interpretation by staff and gaps were left in procedure. This information is provided in Table 26 which describes the most salient reason for a policy being introduced
although companies occasionally had more than one reason for adopting a policy (for example, a policy could have been mainly driven by legislation but could also be perceived as constituting good practice). It is clear that legislation is a primary motive.

**Table 26: Company reasons for introducing an alcohol policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for introducing policy</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified problems</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrally developed, imposed regionally</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal review of existing practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixteen companies did not have a policy in place. The reasons for not having a policy are described in Table 27 below.

**Table 27: Company reasons for not having a policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for not having a policy</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the process of introducing a policy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol not perceived as a problem</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal rules appear to be effective</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy would not be financially viable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol perceived as team building and morale boosting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from the above table that eight of those firms who did not have a policy were in the process of introducing one. The reasons given by these eight companies for introducing a policy were varied. Two reported introducing a policy in response to alcohol-related incidents on site. Three cited legislation as being the driving force behind the introduction of policies. Two firms had a variety of reasons for introducing a policy including legislation, alcohol-related problems, and external pressure. One company did not give reasons for introducing a policy. Certain of the external
pressures cited by two firms (see above) are clearly commercial in nature. They reported that it had become necessary to conform to certain standards of a contracting company in order to secure a contract from them. These standards include having an alcohol policy in place. The importance of having an alcohol policy in the workplace for a company hoping to procure contract work cannot be underestimated as not having a policy may be a factor which hinders companies in obtaining such work. This point is clearly emphasised by one of the companies.

"I think we find there's a better way of dealing with it having a formal procedure. The reason the procedure is being (I was going to say forced upon us, but that would be the wrong quote), the reason why we believe there is a need for a procedure is not brought about by alcohol misuse but by drug abuse - there will be situations in the immediate future, when as contractors to such places as Scottish nuclear sites, drug testing is part of the thing that we have to do to become contractors on that site. It's that road that's taking us down the road of looking at alcohol and drug abuse”.

Companies which already undertake subcontract work are also increasingly aware of the pressure to conform to the standards of the contracting company.

"As a subcontractor we have to have audits from the company that we're working for. They're very keen now more and more on the people policies rather than on the technical side”.

With respect to the eight companies who were not intending to introduce a policy in the foreseeable future (see Table 27 above) the following quotes provide an insight into their reasons for not doing so.

"We haven't considered it to be major problem, and in the couple of instances where it has arisen it's been detected... I think I'm an agnostic in terms of a written policy. I think I could be convinced and probably our experience of it with one of the individuals suggests that maybe we should have some sort of policy”.

"I think that bearing in mind the very few problems that we've had in the past, I think the informal rules have worked quite well to be honest".
"We've never had a problem with alcohol, drugs and we've often looked at going to the pub as being an advantage rather a disadvantage. We've looked at it really as a team building exercise, morale boosting, because there are times of the year when we've been really busy...and sometimes it's nice for all of us to get out together as a group and socialise".

6.2 Types of policy

Essentially an alcohol policy is a formal written statement which sets out procedures for addressing issues associated with alcohol misuse at work (Silcox, 1992), and often clearly states the employee and employer responsibilities as regards working practice and conduct relating to alcohol. The type of alcohol policy adopted by a company is dependent to a large degree upon the company's definition of an alcohol-related problem. The underlying company perception of how alcohol problems are developed and maintained has direct consequences for the way in which companies deal with employees who are suspected of misusing alcohol. Although a review of the literature suggests that there is substantial evidence for concluding that 'alcoholism' is not an illness (disease), a number of policies are based upon this assumption. This ensures that employees involved in misusing alcohol at work are given the opportunity of treatment and do not necessarily proceed immediately along disciplinary routes. However, treating the misuse of alcohol as an illness can also have the paradoxical effect of an employer having to retain a less productive employee and terminate the employment of staff who have been involved in an occasional incident after a party or celebration (see Hutcherson, Henderson et al., op cit., for a discussion of this issue). The difficult-to-sustain distinction between drinking as 'illness' and drinking as 'discipline-related' will also place a premium on the types of attributions and explanations offered by employees when rules or guidelines are breached. Alcohol policies are often not concerned with social drinking unless it has an impact upon the workplace. When it does so however, unless direct evidence can be produced to support the view that the employee has an ongoing drinking problem, disciplinary
measures can follow the one-time episode of drinking in the workplace. In such circumstances the functional value of such evidence is increased making it more likely that alcohol problems will manifest themselves within a disease framework when they arise (see Davies 1992 op cit, and 1996 in press). It is abundantly clear that this unfortunate side-effect of certain types of policy is well-known to some of the staff whose task it is to implement that policy.

"If [employees] come up and they tell the employee relations manager "I've got a drink problem", the ERM and the company are duty bound to offer these people help through the policy that we've got ..... What they have done, .....only in the last couple of weeks....., my own personal opinion was that people were trying to jump on the band wagon, and it was going to undo a lot of hard work that people like myself had put into the alcohol policy. They were saying, "Aye, I've got a problem", but they didn't have a problem. They were just caught drinking at their work".

"Everybody is getting a (....) copy of the policy...because ....some of them are still under the impression that if they got caught with a drink they couldn't get paid off. They can, and the policy states that clearly, so they're all going to get a copy...".

There are different types of alcohol policies in operation within the various organisations which participated in this study. Within Table 28 the term 'alcohol policy' refers to a formal written policy which also includes education or similar attempt to influence workplace culture; a 'mixed policy' may, or may not, be written down but includes elements of education or attempts at cultural change; an 'alcoholism policy' refers to a paper policy which is not supported by attempts to educate the workforce or to change workplace culture; and finally, 'alcohol-related procedures' refer to a situation where there is neither a written policy nor any education nor any attempt at cultural change, and where alcohol problems are dealt with on a piece-meal basis usually through sickness or absence procedures.
Table 28: Policy type by type of industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Type</th>
<th>Alcohol policy</th>
<th>Mixed policy</th>
<th>Alcoholism policy</th>
<th>Alcohol-related procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 28 above the distribution of policy types across industries does not depart significantly from chance or else there are insufficient cases to justify the use of inferential statistics. However it can be seen that in service and manufacturing industries policy types are distributed across all categories.

6.3 Advertising

Of the 29 companies who have an alcohol policy 22 have advertised this to employees, four have made no such attempt, and two (health-related) companies felt confident that employees and potential employees would already possess the relevant knowledge. One company declined to provide information on the advertising of their policy.

The way in which a policy is advertised has implications for the extent to which information about the policy is disseminated amongst employees. This may be of particular importance in the case of disciplinary action. Dismissal may be deemed unfair if, for example the employee had not been informed about the workplace rules, or if the rules had been changed without notice [e.g. Dairy Produce Packaging Ltd. v Beverstock (1981) IRLR 265]. It is therefore essential that a company not only has explicit rules detailing procedures to be followed in cases of alcohol misuse (see Employment Department, 1986; Bensted, 1988), but that these rules are publicised.
The 22 companies who advertised their policy did so in a variety of ways. Sixteen of the companies utilised a single way of publicising the policy while five used multiple methods and a single company did not specify the way in which their policy was advertised. Of the 16 companies which advertised their policy in a single way 25% did so via the staff handbook. Three companies raised employees’ awareness of the policy by sending out leaflets to staff members and a further 3 companies distributed the actual policy to all employees. Two companies used induction programmes to ensure that staff were informed of the policy, although from the interview it was not clear whether existing staff had been informed of the policy when it was originally implemented. One company advertised their policy by sending letters to all staff and another company in a similar vein sent a newsletter to staff which contained information about the policy. One company used a briefing session to explain the policy and 1 company had an awareness campaign to better inform employees of their policy.

None of the 5 companies who used multiple methods of informing the workforce about their policy combined more than two methods. Each company had a different combination: two used awareness campaigns in conjunction with either a briefing session or an article in the staff newspaper; another combined use of the staff handbook and leaflets about the policy; a further company used induction and terms and conditions of employment; and the remaining company used the staff magazine and noticeboards to raise staff awareness of the policy.

Table 29 below provides an overview of the various ways companies advertise their policies.
Table 29: Types of advertising by number of companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Advertising</th>
<th>Number of companies (N=22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handbook</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy distributed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing/ conference</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions &amp; Induction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper &amp; Awareness campaign</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing &amp; Awareness campaign</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine &amp; Noticeboards</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handbook &amp; Leaflet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not advertised</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Employee awareness of the policy

Policies are advertised with the aim of making employees aware that the company has a policy; to inform employees of the company position as regards alcohol in the workplace, be it chronic problem drinking or the occasional episode of inappropriate drinking; and also to encourage the identification of employees who have alcohol problems before these problems become a matter for disciplinary action.

Of the 22 companies who have a formal policy and who advertise that policy, 15 participated in surveying their employees. Within these 15 companies, 1467 employees were surveyed. In Table 30 below the various ways in which the 15 companies advertise their policy is cross-tabulated by employees’ awareness of that policy.
Table 30: Type of advertising by employees’ awareness of the policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of advertising</th>
<th>Yes, have a formal policy (%)</th>
<th>No, don’t have a formal policy (%)</th>
<th>Don’t know (%)</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handbook</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy distributed</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms and conditions &amp; Induction</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper &amp; Awareness campaign</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handbook &amp; Leaflet</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not advertised</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to shed further light on this issue a series of independent chi-square analyses was carried out to identify which of the advertising strategies significantly discriminated between employees who were aware of, or not aware of, the existence of a formal policy. For the purposes of this analysis, ‘no’ and ‘don’t know’ responses were categorised together as ‘unaware of a policy’. It should be noted that for this subgroup of firms who all had a formal policy, all ‘yes’ responses are correct (it has been pointed out in an earlier section that in the sample as a whole, numbers of respondents incorrectly reported being aware of a formal policy where none in fact existed.) The data show that all of the advertising strategies with the exception of induction procedures are capable of distinguishing between employees who are aware of, or not aware of, the formal company policy and accordingly one might conclude that they all make some contribution to the overall effect. A multiple stepwise regression indicates that the most important variables contributing to employee awareness of the policy are advertising through ‘handbook and leaflet’, ‘newsletter’
and ‘leaflet’ (for the purposes of this analysis ‘leaflet’ and ‘handbook plus leaflet’ are treated as separate variables). However, the overall level of prediction produced by these three variables is not particularly high ($r = .184$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, whilst the general picture is positive, it must be of some concern that firms making no attempt to advertise their formal policy amongst the workforce also show a small, but statistically significant effect of no advertising. A subsequent logistic analysis confirms that whilst ‘no advertising’ is not an important predictor it nonetheless discriminates as well as a number of the other variables in this analysis ($p = .028$) which might have been expected to discriminate on an a priori basis.

It is clear that the routes by which information is disseminated about company policy are various, little understood, and do not map easily on to official routes of dissemination. It may be that accurate knowledge and acceptance of a formal policy requires some time to develop, and requires a number of specific grass roots incidents to occur, and be resolved, before trust and confidence develops. Such successful in vivo demonstrations may perhaps have as much impact as more official routes of dissemination; in other words a policy may need to self-advertise and make it’s own positive publicity in addition to being advertised through more formal routes. If a policy is to be understood, therefore, it must be seen to be operating, rather than as merely more information on pieces of paper.

6.5 Implementation

The possession of a formally written alcohol policy does not guarantee its implementation. In broad terms implementation of a policy would include i) adherence to the procedures set out in the policy itself, rather than operating on the basis of informal understanding ii) procedures and guidelines for the identification of actual and potential alcohol-related problems and iii) training of staff to enable them
to identify employees with either potential or actual problems related to alcohol. These three issues are dealt with below under separate sub-headings.

6.5.1 Adherence to procedures

Whether a policy is adhered to or not is difficult to measure. In order to answer this question, interviewees were asked whether the policy was implemented and functioned as intended. The following quotes highlight the various difficulties that have arisen for those responsible for implementing a policy within the workplace.

"It's still actually quite difficult to persuade management that that's the time to intervene - that that's maybe the earliest indication of an alcohol problem. [appearing inebriated at work] At the moment sometimes management will say the guy's just made a mistake, so they don't involve us. It doesn't necessarily mean we are being involved as much as we should at the moment."

"...the statement which said that if you're under the influence of alcohol in work that's a disciplinary problem, although in practice it's not done because they know perfectly well that people are intoxicated and they don't treat it as a disciplinary situation they send them home till they recover."

"I'm not sure how thoughtful people are about it [implementing the policy]. I think some of the personnel management side with the welfare side, may lean to the view that the chap has got a problem and we should really be trying to help him, but we are also aware that the line managers have a job to get done and they are the people who may well take the other view that "this guy is always hitting the booze"... and really all they are concerned about is "is he fit today or isn't he". I'm pretty sure that the line management are not so sympathetic in that respect. Having said that, we in the personnel side and possibly even in senior management, suspect that junior management do not always pick up people - they turn blind eyes possibly at times although it's painfully obviously going to affect health and safety at work."

"There a few members of management who are completely against an alcohol policy, who say it shouldn't be dealt with in that kind of way, that they should just be sacked."

From the above statements it is clear that actual working practice does not always reflect policy. It is evident that at least in some companies management are reluctant to tackle the issue of alcohol misuse at work as has been recommended by the policy.
6.5.2 Identifying procedures

The procedures used to identify alcohol-related problems in the workplace and the ability of staff to detect them are important if the policy is to work. Therefore clear identifiable procedures for detecting actual or potential problems may prevent a situation from deteriorating into disciplinary measures. Some policies attempt to enhance the likelihood of employees being identified (either by colleagues or self-referral) by making it explicit that the company will (at least in cases not related to discipline): treat all information as confidential; not discriminate against the employee on the grounds that they are misusing alcohol; and, where possible, retain the employee at the same grade. Placing the emphasis on assistance rather than disciplinary action may encourage colleagues to play a more active role in the identification of problem drinkers, as it reduces the necessity for problems to be ‘covered up’ or kept hidden from management.

The identification procedures employed by the companies participating in the study were examined and categorised according to the clarity of the guidelines used to identify alcohol-related problems within the workplace. It should be emphasised that this information is qualitative being taken from the transcripts of interviews and therefore relies on the interviewees’ knowledge of the policy and procedure for identifying problems. ‘Clear procedures’ were regarded as those which set out defined guidelines on how to identify alcohol-related problems within the workplace, this included knowing the signs and symptoms to look for. These covered poor attendance and absence, time keeping, performance, abnormal behaviour, smelling of alcohol, frequent hangovers and problems with personal hygiene. ‘Vague procedures’ have no identified guidelines but rather rely on the discretion of supervisors or managers to notice problems through performance or absence (indicators which may or may not be related to alcohol) and tend therefore to adopt an individualistic approach. Companies with ‘no procedures’ had no method of identifying problems in the workplace.
Of the 29 companies with an alcohol policy 12 were found to have clear procedures, a further 11 had vague procedures and 5 had no procedures for identifying problems. A final company did not provide any information on this issue. Of the 16 companies without an alcohol policy, two had clear procedures for identifying problems, 10 had vague procedures and two had no procedures. A further two companies did not provide any information about the procedures used to identify problems.

An example of ‘no procedures’ is given in the following quote, where the onus is placed on the individual to seek their own sources of help.

"Not set ways [of identifying problems] no - our policy says employees are strongly advised to seek help from the personnel department, medical centre.”

6.5.3 Training of Staff

It is also important to have trained staff to be able to identify the signs and symptoms which surround alcohol misuse, as recognition of an actual or potential problem is the first step in implementing the policy. Of the 45 companies interviewed 19 had trained their staff. This was separated into training for managerial staff/supervisors and for the workforce as a whole. Seventeen companies had trained managers and supervisors and only one company had trained all their staff in identifying the signs and symptoms associated with alcohol misuse in the workplace. One company stated that training was undertaken but did not elaborate on the type of training or which category of staff received the training. Five companies had not undertaken training of their staff, however intended to do so in the future, and a further 5 companies had not trained staff and made no reference to future training. Sixteen companies did not provide information on training staff to recognise the symptoms of alcohol misuse. These data are summarised in Table 31 below.
Table 31: Staff training by companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff training</th>
<th>Number of companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/ Supervisors</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future plans to train</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No training</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The training of staff in the recognition of alcohol misuse at work may circumvent potential problems and lead to a healthier and better informed workforce. This may increase employee awareness of the problem and also enable smooth implementation of the formal alcohol policy by laying out clear guidelines for line managers and supervisory staff to follow. Hence it becomes clear in which situations and under which circumstances a manager would be required or expected to act, and thereafter which actions should be taken. However, it has been recognised by at least one of the companies interviewed that training in recognition of the signs and symptoms of alcohol abuse/ misuse should be an ongoing concern for the company.

"I have a short video then I talk about alcohol - how to recognise it and what treatment is available... But it's not repeated. The problem is it's not repeated, so if somebody's been working for the company for 10 years they've forgotten all about it, and if they ever move into a management position they've forgotten what the early warning signs are of people with alcohol problems."

6.6 Differentiating between the chronic and occasional drinker

The distinction between problem and non-problem drinking is an important one as it may affect the way in which a company deals with its employees. The differentiation of problem and non-problem drinkers creates an immediate difficulty for any organisation in that there is no universally accepted method to distinguish between those employees who may be regarded as requiring assistance under the alcohol policy's terms and those who do not warrant help and proceed immediately down the
disciplinary route. Such a situation can lead to employees claiming that they have an alcohol problem when this is not the case in an attempt to avoid disciplinary action. Despite this difficulty and the different ways of dealing with the problem and occasional drinker, the majority of companies interviewed in this project do make a distinction between the two types of behaviour.

Of the 45 companies interviewed 30 do make a distinction between problem and occasional drinking. Of these 21 had an alcohol policy and 9 did not. Thirteen companies provided no information regarding their practice. Only two companies did not make the distinction between the chronic and occasional drinker and neither had a policy. This information is provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol policy</th>
<th>Distinguish between problem and occasional drinking</th>
<th>Do not distinguish between problem and occasional drinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 30 companies who do distinguish between problem and occasional drinking 24 deal with the occasional drinker via disciplinary procedures while the problem drinker may have disciplinary measures suspended or held in abeyance. This is the case when a chronic problem is either suspected or admitted and the problem drinker subsequently agrees to undergo treatment to address the problem. If the problem is rectified then it is often the case that the record of the disciplinary action is removed from the employee’s record. In the case of occasional inappropriate drinking an employee does not always immediately proceed along the disciplinary route. This would depend on the nature of the work, the seriousness of the incident and the regularity of the occurrence.
"The policy does not apply to members of staff who because of excessive indulgence in alcohol on random occasions behave in a manner contrary to...that would be treated under the disciplinary procedure."

"The actual alcohol related policy does make a distinction between recognising somebody that has a drink related problem and is willing to accept help...and those employees that have the odd day off on a Friday or a Monday but in fact it isn't really a problem. Normally I think what most managers would do in the first instance is try and speak to the employee informally...If that didn't work then the employee would be taken through the disciplinary procedures."

However some companies do not deal leniently even with first time occasional drinking offences. When the rules surrounding alcohol are clearly set out for employees, the repercussions of an occasional instance of inappropriate drinking may be instant dismissal. One company policy clearly states ‘any employee found on company premises under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs or in possession of alcohol without permission will be liable to dismissal’.

"A regional managing director visited [a local branch of our company] and at first sight there didn’t appear to be any staff, the lights were on and the doors were open. He walked in and there was nobody at the counter and so he walked into the back room and all of the staff were drinking wine. All the staff were dismissed on that occasion."

In 3 of the companies the decision as to problem or occasional drinking was made by the medical profession. In these companies the employee is referred for assessment and depending on the outcome they are either offered help or are involved in the disciplinary procedures.

"We would normally rely on the medical profession. That’s normally the starting point and then once we know the extent of the illness or problem we can then deal with it on its merits."

"Clearly it would be a medical decision as to whether somebody had a dependency or whether it was occasional drinking. We would not be making any judgements here as to the likely background shall we say of an alcohol problem of an individual."
The reason for relying on the medical profession is often that management feel ill-equipped to distinguish the nature and extent of the problem themselves, or feel that the medical profession has more experience in this area. However, the problems arising from a purely medical definition have been highlighted in a previous section and in Hutcheson et al (op cit).

6.7 Perceptions of effectiveness

The evaluation of an alcohol policy is an important endeavour in that it can also provide information about the policy’s effectiveness. Effectiveness can be evaluated in financial terms (for example does the alcohol policy provide a ‘value for money’ service); in terms of employees awareness and knowledge of issues surrounding alcohol; the effectiveness of the types of intervention on offer; and in terms of quasi-experimental before-and-after comparisons of a number of personnel and production indicators identified as important by the company.

The HEA (1989; see also, 1992) states that: ‘Evaluation should be seen as an integral part of the introduction of an alcohol policy within the workplace…any policy not subject to continuous monitoring, assessment and evaluation risks becoming obsolete’. However, the evaluation of workplace policies on any level appears to be an area often overlooked by companies. Of the 45 companies interviewed only 4 have assessed the effectiveness of their policy. In all cases the evaluation of the success of the policy has been based on the number of referrals made to agencies and the proportion of those referrals who continue in employment. The percentage of referrals maintaining employment vary from 25% to 80%. Only two of the 45 companies were able to provide the number of referrals made in the past year and the numbers of employees still employed. Of the 2 who were able to provide this information 1 company reported having referred 21 employees for treatment in the previous year. Twenty of those referred employees kept their jobs. In this sense the policy could be
regarded as effective in terms of being good for the employee. However, it should be noted that all 20 employees were still undergoing treatment. Economic concerns for the company include consideration of such issues as time off to attend treatment leading to decreased productivity and increased sick pay, which, due to recent legislative changes, the employer now has to bear. The other company which provided figures stated that 4 out of 5 employees who had been referred for treatment in the last year had maintained employment although this company did not indicate the average length of time employees spent in treatment. A third company stated that their policy had not been fully integrated but appeared to be successful. They reported a 75% success rate but did not specify what was meant by ‘success’.

It is apparent that the rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of alcohol policies in the workplace is in its infancy. It also bears repeating that few firms appear to collect data of a type that would make such rigorous evaluation possible.
CHAPTER SEVEN

7 AGENCY CASE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the types of services companies receive from alcohol agencies.

7.1 Methodology

Fifty four alcohol agencies were selected to take part in the study. They were selected from the Alcohol Services Directory (Alcohol Concern 1995) on the basis of geographical location; and the fact that they actively sought to provide input to workplace alcohol policies. The alcohol agencies surveyed were located in the same geographical areas as the companies surveyed in the main study, and represent all (at the time of carrying out the research) the alcohol agencies providing services related to workplace policies from those areas. Of the 54 agencies selected, 31 completed and returned the questionnaire, a return rate of 57%. Table 33 shows the return rate distribution:

Table 33: Location of the responding agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of agencies</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Counties, England</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands, England</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West, England</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East, England</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East, England</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders, Scotland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central belt, Scotland</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North, Scotland</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While this gives a relatively broad UK distribution, it is not intended to be representative of the distribution of alcohol agencies throughout the UK.

A covering letter and a postal questionnaire were distributed to the selected alcohol agencies (see Appendix 3). The questionnaire was designed to investigate three broad areas:

1. Services provided
2. Service access
3. Service structure

7.2 Service provision

7.2.1 Services provided

Identifying what services are provided by alcohol agencies is crucial for companies who are developing and implementing workplace alcohol policies. Table 34 indicates the types of services that are provided by the alcohol agencies. It is clear that most of the alcohol agencies surveyed provide a comprehensive range of services to companies. These services are directed at both the employer and the employee. Services to the employer would normally include consultation regarding the development and implementation of alcohol workplace policies, staff training and alcohol awareness education. Services provided directly to the referred employee would include assessment, counselling and alcohol education.
The following table lists the types of services provided followed by the percentage of agencies who provide these services.

**Table 34: Percentage and number of agencies providing various services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services provided by alcohol agencies</th>
<th>Percentage (n=31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>100% (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>93.5% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>93.5% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>93.5% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of employee drinking problem</td>
<td>93.5% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>83.9% (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example policies</td>
<td>71% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment for drinking problem</td>
<td>67.7% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee visiting alcohol agency</td>
<td>64.5% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention strategies</td>
<td>54.8% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures for company to make assessment</td>
<td>51.6 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>41.9% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor visiting company</td>
<td>38.7% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-patient service</td>
<td>32.3% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-care</td>
<td>19.4% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice on testing</td>
<td>16.1% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential service</td>
<td>9.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood tests</td>
<td>6.5% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates the range of services provided by the agencies surveyed; most agencies provided several services. Clearly the provision of assessment and counselling, advice and information and education and training are in high demand as over 90% of the agencies surveyed reported providing these types of service. Few agencies reported providing residential services or direct health-care (9.7% & 19.4% respectively) nor was there much indication that agencies provided either blood or urine tests (6.5%) or advice on testing to companies (16.1%).
Agencies frequently provided consultancy to companies regarding the development and implementation of workplace alcohol policies. 83.9% of the agencies reported providing direct advice and information on a consultancy basis to companies; example policies were provided by 71% of agencies; and 51.6% of agencies provided information regarding overall assessment procedures.

7.2.2 Service access

It is important that the process by which companies gain access to alcohol agencies is clearly understood and that employees are not deterred from attending due to complex referral procedures. In order to facilitate such a process companies have to be in possession of accurate information about agency procedures. Accordingly agencies were asked whether they advertised their services to local companies. Positive answers were received from 61% (19) of the agencies. The remaining 39% (12) did not advertise their services to industry in any way. This may leave some companies unaware of what is available in their locality.

A question examining source of referral revealed that alcohol problems are channelled through a number of routes by different companies.

**Table 35: Source of referral**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of referral</th>
<th>Percentage (n = 31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company Personnel Department</td>
<td>87.1% (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Occupational Nurse</td>
<td>67.7% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Doctor</td>
<td>51.6% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Union</td>
<td>22.6% (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table indicates that there are a variety of referral sources although the personnel department, occupational health nurses and company doctor deal with the bulk of referrals to outside agencies.

After agreement to counselling has been reached a decision has to be taken as to where this counselling would take place. Table 36 below provides an overview of the location where counselling etc. would normally take place.

Table 36: Location of sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage (n=31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol agency</td>
<td>96.8% (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company premises</td>
<td>29.0% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees home</td>
<td>16.1% (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 36 shows that there is a degree of flexibility on the part of agencies with regard to where they will provide services for employees. The majority (96.8%) make premises available for counselling yet some recognise that both employees and employers may be under certain obligations and are willing to work either at the companies premises or in the employees’ home.

The alcohol agencies were also asked to identify the number of companies they had worked with regarding workplace alcohol policies. One agency located in Paisley (South West, Scotland) reported working with ninety-five different companies in relation to workplace alcohol policies. Just under 20% of the other agencies had worked with more than 10 companies, while 80% had worked with 10 or fewer companies.
7.2.3 Service structure

How a service operates is also crucial to companies when they are investigating the feasibility of working closely with outside agencies. Alcohol agencies report that a counselling session lasts anything from 50 minutes to two hours and the length of a course of counselling can range from 5 to 52 weeks. Tables 37 and 38 give a breakdown of the reported session timings and full duration of treatment.

Table 37: Duration of counselling sessions 5 non-responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration (in minutes)</th>
<th>Percentage (n=31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>9.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>58.1% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>3.2% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>6.5% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>6.5% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 38: Length of a course of counselling 5 non-responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (in weeks)</th>
<th>Percentage (n=31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 8</td>
<td>16.1% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - 12</td>
<td>22.6% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 26</td>
<td>38.7% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 - 52</td>
<td>6.5% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information in the above tables gives an indication that there is flexibility regarding the duration of individual counselling sessions and of treatment. A number of agencies reported that the time spent working with an individual employee depended on the needs of the individual as they arose.
Agencies were asked to provide information on how they reported back to companies.

Agencies based their feedback on agency attendance and client progress (it should be noted that agency estimates of client progress are not standardised and are sometimes subjective).

**Table 39: Agency feedback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of companies routinely receiving reports</th>
<th>Frequency of attendance reports n = 31</th>
<th>Frequency of progress reports n = 31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>9.7% (3)</td>
<td>12.9% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
<td>19.4% (6)</td>
<td>25.8% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11% - 25%</td>
<td>3.2% (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26% - 50%</td>
<td>6.5% (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51% - 75%</td>
<td>3.2% (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76% - 100%</td>
<td>38.7% (12)</td>
<td>51.6% (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 non-respondents 3 non-respondents

There is clearly little consistency regarding reporting back to companies on either the attendance or progress of an individual employee. The reasons for this are unclear but a number of agencies did record that the issues surrounding confidentiality created some difficulties. This was by no means a universal barrier however, as 80.8% of agencies reported that they would routinely provide this information should it be requested. A small number of agencies reported that they negotiated three-way service agreements among the employer, the employee and themselves, the alcohol agency, as part of each individual’s treatment package. This very effectively resolves any conflict between employee confidentiality and the employer’s need for feedback.
Companies negotiating with outside alcohol agencies will be looking for value for money in relation to purchasing services. Alcohol agencies generally receive funding from a variety of sources; from central and local government, and health and social work authorities. However, in relation to funding counselling sessions for employees, 3.2% of agencies reported that they would look to the employees to fund their own counselling and 32.3% expected the company concerned to fund the counselling sessions.

Agencies were asked to report how they saw consultative work with industry, which relates to policy development and implementation, being funded. Again, agencies reported a variety of funding sources though 29.0% expected the company to provide some funding.

7.3 Overview of service provision

Alcohol agencies provide wide ranging services to industry although a sizeable minority of agencies do not advertise their services. A majority are prepared to provide consultative services to industry and counselling services to employees. Agencies operate mainly from their own premises but a number do visit companies and employees when requested. Feedback is available to companies on employees progress with counselling but this is not often requested and there are sometimes problems with confidentiality. Funding is by local and national government and health bodies but fees for consultation and counselling are charged by some agencies to the employer or the employee.
CHAPTER EIGHT

8 DISCUSSION

The report aims to shed light on the broad phenomenon of alcohol consumption in the workplace from a number of different directions. Information is presented from those in management, from those comprising the general workforce, from those who provide alcohol services to industries, from members of both sexes, and from a broad spectrum of different jobs and occupations. In methodological terms the study is also equally broad ranging. The evidence presented ranges from statistically precise comparisons between selected groups in terms of quantitative questionnaire data through to less structured and more intuitive accounts based on the discourses of those in management and administrative positions. Certain parts of the data base are strong and comprehensive. There is reliable and consistent data from workforce questionnaires concerning various behaviours in the workplace, and on associated attitudes. On the other hand, the report reveals that other kinds of data still remain rather difficult to come by. In particular, there is a dearth of information from firms concerning hard outcome variables such as production rates, quality, wastage rates and other indicants of on-the-job performance. This uneven spread in the data available indicates that a number of issues surrounding alcohol use in the workplace are still sensitive. This is illustrated most clearly in Chapter One which gives details of the procedures used to contact firms. The data show that a majority of firms remain unwilling even to take part in a venture such as the present one. Furthermore, even amongst those firms who are willing to take part in this exercise, there was no easy uniformity in terms of their consensus. Certain firms were unwilling to permit the collection of particular types of data. A number of firms, for example, were extremely unhappy about questions regarding the introduction of testing in the workplace. Presumably there was a fear that industrial relations issues of a difficult nature might be sparked by such a venture. In a similar way, a majority of firms were
reluctant to permit the kind of in-depth examination of drinking behaviour that is possible by means of retrospective diary reports. Finally, it was noted in Chapter One that a degree of individual negotiation was required with firms due to a number of objections being raised to particular parts of the questionnaire. In order to ensure comparability between industries, therefore, parts of the questionnaire consist of questions which are not ideal from a research point of view but which comprise the best questions available in the light of the varying and disparate objections raised by firms in the sample. The first conclusion, therefore, is that the investigation of alcohol in the workplace remains a sensitive endeavour. Whatever happens in different companies and firms with respect to alcohol consumption during working hours, it is apparent that few firms live easily with this situation. It is also apparent that in some firms workforce culture with respect to alcohol does not always reflect management perceptions and goals.

With respect to the data on self-reported consumption, there is a natural tendency to suppose that because of the sensitivity of the issues involved there may be a bias towards conservative reporting amongst many respondents. In order to shed more light on this possibility comparisons were made between the mean category scores in the sample and national data on alcohol consumption. The most recent statistics available to us come from the Scottish Council on Alcohol who obtained data on consumption directly from the Brewers Society Statistical Handbook. According to these data the mean per capita consumption amongst adults aged 15 and over consists of 106 litres of beer, 1.6 litres of spirits and 12.8 litres of wine. Whilst these are coarse categories and there are variations in strength, as well as quantities served, a very rough approximation suggests an annual per capita consumption of somewhere between 600 and 700 standard drinks (units) per year. This equates to a mean weekly consumption per capita of something between 11.5 and 13.5 units. In terms of the present data set the mean weekly alcohol consumption in terms of category scores is 2.61. It will be recalled that according to the scoring system adopted in this project,
Category 1 represents consumption of zero units. Category 2 represents consumption of 1 to 10 units and Category 3 of 11 - 20 units. Consequently a mean category score of 2.61 places the mean units consumed per week well into the region 11 - 20 units. Given that the data are normally distributed overall and under an assumption of equal distribution within categories, a score of 2.61 would represent a consumption of between 15 and 16 units per week. Consequently the suspicion that the data on overall alcohol consumption may be subject to a conservative bias is not strongly supported by these data. Indeed, according to our method of calculation the mean amounts of alcohol reported as consumed tally rather well with figures obtained from other sources by other means. We may therefore say that the basic data on self-reported consumption appear to have some credibility. This fact adds support therefore to the reports of drinking during working hours, insofar as we can say that the questionnaire elicited credible and reliable responses in general terms. It remains possible that questions about drinking during working hours are subject to a specific response bias. Nonetheless, the fact that under-reporting is not a major feature of the entire data base gives weight to the answers reported in specific instances.

Drinking data were obtained concerning total consumption during the week and consumption per week during working hours. There are observed significant differences between different work categories in terms of consumption both in terms of total weekly consumption and consumption during working hours. In particular manual workers stand out as heavier consumers of alcohol. Closer investigation reveals that this effect is modified by gender; amongst manual workers heavier drinking is primarily characteristic of the male sections of that workforce. Heavier drinking is also found amongst those working in Arts and Media where the data suggest a heavier drinking effect which may apply to both sexes.

There are also relationships between reported consumption, salary and sex. Whilst the data clearly show that females drink significantly less than males, certain
intriguing relationships require closer investigation. There is some evidence from this study that whilst beyond a certain point male higher wage earners drink the same or even less than other males, an opposite picture may obtain for females. There is an indication that higher paid females in management or administrative jobs and in academic and related professions may consume rather more than is typical for other women. Furthermore, the data suggest that this effect, were it to be borne out by further studies, might be seen as a pattern of drinking during working hours by women which is continuous with a more general heavier drinking pattern. By contrast amongst males alcohol consumption in the workplace does not appear to be a straightforward continuation of a general overall drinking pattern though it may be for certain occupational groups (e.g. manual).

In addition to consumption data respondents also answered a number of questions about the experience of alcohol-related problems in the workplace. These data show that there is a widespread awareness of alcohol problems. Employees are aware of colleagues whose work is impaired by alcohol from time to time and important numbers are also of the opinion that a colleague or colleagues may have an alcohol problem. Furthermore, 34.4% of the workforces reported having personally experienced occasions on which their work performance was affected by alcohol. Taken together, the prevalence data and the awareness data suggest a picture of alcohol consumption in the workplace as a phenomenon which is commonly experienced and widely known; which is experienced personally by respondents from time to time; but it does not give the impression of workforces which are regularly, widely or chronically impaired by alcohol consumption.

The data on absenteeism are particularly noteworthy since the implications run contrary to a number of popular stereotypes. Furthermore, the picture emerging from the prevalence data in this study are replicated in a more striking form by a comparison between high and low drinking firms. The data show that self-reports of
alcohol-related absenteeism are more frequent amongst those who drink more heavily, or during working hours, and in firms where alcohol consumption is heavier. Analyses of these data show a relationship between reported consumption and alcohol-related absenteeism. However, the data for the entire sample show no important relationship (in fact a slight negative relationship) between overall rates of absenteeism and alcohol consumption. The conclusion therefore that alcohol is responsible for an increase in absenteeism base rates has to be qualified somewhat in the light of these findings. The data imply that absenteeism rates overall are no different or perhaps even slightly lower amongst those who drink during working hours than amongst those who do not. Thus whilst certain workforces or workforce sections may suffer more frequently from alcohol-related absenteeism, the overall rates of absenteeism in this group do not appear to be significantly different from absenteeism amongst other sections of the workforce. The conclusion from these data is that whilst alcohol clearly contributes to absenteeism statistics it is not the major contributor to those statistics. The current data suggest that there are a number of reasons for not attending work which affect all sections of the workforce and that alcohol consumption is only one of these. It may be that in the workplace environment highly visible and possibly notorious cases lead to the popular postulation of general trends which are not supported by the data in the present study. We should point out, however, that if the present data are taken to imply that members of particular sections of a heavy drinking workforce are liable to turn up for work whether they have hangovers or not, this is itself a problematic issue. Work performance may be impaired without any observable effect on absenteeism rates.

The data permitted comparisons between eight heavier drinking and eight lighter drinking companies according to certain selection procedures. In this comparison small firms were excluded and the two groups of eight were selected so that there were no significant differences between them in terms of gender, age or the type of work respondents carried out. Data from the interviews with management and
administrative staff indicate differences in the opinions expressed in the high and low groups. The discursive information suggests that the method used correctly identified companies where heavy alcohol consumption was an issue and another group where it was less so. A factor analysis of the data showed that the most important difference between these firms lay in terms of a factor relating to prohibition of alcohol on the premises, prohibition of alcohol during breaks, a no-alcohol clause in the contract of employment and the possession of a formal policy on alcohol consumption. From the point of view of this discussion it seems of prime importance that the possession of a formal alcohol policy did not in itself discriminate markedly between heavier and lighter drinking firms. The major components of the discriminating factor, in conjunction with a formal policy, were three quite clear and specific rules of thumb which were applied in the lighter drinking firms but not in the heavier drinking firms. We suggest that such highly visible local rules are possibly at least as effective in establishing a heavier or lighter drinking culture than the possession of a formal alcohol policy per se. The data also suggest a number of other discriminating factors of lesser importance including the belief that heavier drinking firms were likely to take a less sympathetic approach to employees with problems of alcohol consumption, more likely to have a policy which was seen as applying to some sections of the workforce but not to others, more occasions on which a blind eye might be turned, more tolerance to expenses claims for alcohol and more likely to conduct business in pubs or licensed premises.

A further difference between heavier and light drinking firms emerged in terms of employees’ responses to questions concerning how they would deal with alcohol problems amongst colleagues. In the lower drinking firms there was a greater willingness to bring such problems to the attention of management and a greater degree of confidence that if this were done a productive and sympathetic treatment would ensue. In both groups of companies, however, there was a greater likelihood that an alcohol problem would be brought to the attention of management if a safety
issue was involved. However, employees in the heavier drinking companies rate their own types of work as less safety critical than did members of the workforce in the lower drinking firms. Unfortunately, the data do not enable us to tell with any certainty whether these ratings of the safety critical nature of work are entirely social perceptions or have any substance in reality. We can say with some certainty that in heavier drinking companies problems of alcohol consumption are less likely to be brought to the attention of management and that in those companies the workforce is less likely to report being involved in safety critical work. The relationship between alcohol consumption, policy implementation and the nature of the work being carried out clearly needs to be examined in closer detail. We cautiously feel, however, that these perception data may be borne out by facts. A question concerning safety-critical work covered by specific legislation also discriminated between the two groups of firms. Consequently it may well be that there is in fact a relationship between the informal degree of tolerance for alcohol in the workplace and the type of work being carried out.

On this issue it remains only to note that personal reports of having felt the effects of alcohol whilst at work, having noticed colleagues feeling the effects of alcohol and believing that a colleague might have a drink problem, also discriminated significantly between high and low drinking firms. Paradoxically, however, whilst employees in the heavy drinking firms were more likely to report that the organisation was not doing sufficient to address the issues of alcohol misuse, people in those same firms were less likely to feel that a formal alcohol policy was necessary. There was no difference between high and low drinking firms in terms of their response to questions about necessity for compulsory testing.

It is clear that the attitudes of management and administrative staff as revealed in our semi-structured interviews are for the most part continuous (i.e. appear strongly related to) patterns of heavier or lighter consumption in the workplace. The data from
the interviews suggest that attitudes of management and administrative staff which are more lax and laissez faire with respect to alcohol issues are frequently reflected in heavier consumption amongst the workforce in that company. By contrast more restrictive attitudes by administrative and managerial staff appear more frequently associated with lower levels of consumption amongst the workforce. Whilst a number of problems with the investigation of workplace culture are acknowledged we feel that there are grounds for seeing the whole problem from a 'systems' perspective. Whilst clearly employee groups who are recruited from a particular social background may bring drinking cultures into the workplace with them to give a bottom up effect, management attitudes towards drinking are clearly involved in an opposite role and help to shape the overall company culture with respect to alcohol in a top down fashion. They may even in some sense provide the background or setting against which patterns of workplace alcohol consumption develop. However, comparison of the interview data with certain subsets of the employee data also reveal the presence of specific firms where workforce norms run contrary to management norms and expectations. This imbalance clearly needs to be addressed before any coherent policy on alcohol or related issues can be put in place. A case study indicates that the careful implementation of a policy can have a beneficial effect on workforce behaviour and attitudes.

In terms of motivation for adopting alcohol policies, a single factor was cited by a majority of those who were interviewed. Implementation of an alcohol policy appears to be most frequently driven by legislation. Whilst this is clearly a salutary and beneficial effect of legislation we have some misgivings about the extent to which a policy which comes into being for such reasons alone will be effectively implemented. At the end of the day, for effective intervention, an alcohol policy must be about people, problems and ways of finding solutions. We feel that policies which come into being solely or primarily as a response to legislation and a defence against possible litigation are unlikely to have certain desirable features unless other goals
and aims are also taken on board as important motivators. The fact that many policies appear to be driven by extrinsic motivations may go some way to explaining why a number of policies in the present study appear to be invisible to large sections of the workforce or to exist as paper documents with minimal evidence of effective implementation.

With respect to type of policy, there is a central key issue which requires careful consideration but which the current report is unable to resolve. This concerns the distinction in a number of policies between alcohol consumption seen as voluntary, rule breaking, and therefore a disciplinary matter; and alcohol consumption seen as non-volitional, addicted, and therefore a disease manifestation. It must be of some concern that in the academic and research literature on alcohol and addiction problems, the notion of addiction as a straightforward disease has become progressively more and more embattled over the last decade. Indeed many of the most significant recent pronouncements see alcohol consumption as a response to a variety of factors: in behavioural terms, as a reinforced behaviour; as a response to specific environmental cues; as a socially constructed pattern of explanation; or as a response to social pressures and situations; as well as a function of ethanol ingestion. In the light of these alternative theoretical perspectives the original Jellinek notion of alcoholism as a single disease entity is no longer considered an adequate description in most circles. It is therefore of some considerable concern that within a number of the alcohol policies examined in the present study a straightforward contrast between alcohol use as a disease, and as a voluntary act, plays a central role. We have indicated from certain of our transcripts that those responsible for implementing policies are frequently aware of the ways in which such a distinction can be abused. We are also concerned about the practical implications of holding certain people responsible for a pattern of behaviour, and holding others not responsible, on the basis of evidence which may not be adequate to support such a distinction. Where this distinction is a central feature of a policy we can only express the opinion that this is a
backward step and not in line with contemporary thinking on substance misuse problems.

This issue must also be of concern to a number of agencies providing services to industry for those with alcohol problems. A number of such agencies (for example, Councils on Alcohol in Scotland) have within the last decade taken on board the difficulties of distinguishing between alcoholism (the disease) and alcohol use (the form of recreational volitional behaviour). The realisation that monolithic use of the term “alcoholism” no longer effectively describes the variety and range of problem alcohol consumption patterns led to a change at a national level in agency titles. They became Councils on Alcohol where previously they had been Councils on Alcoholism. It is apparent from contacts with agencies that the straightforward perception of alcohol use as a disease no longer sits comfortably with many agencies. We are concerned therefore that agencies may find themselves in the difficult position of having to provide services for firms whose view of the “condition” is at variance with the one that the agencies themselves work to. If it is the case that progress in perceptions of alcohol-related problems by service providers are not reflected in the policies of those to whom they provide a service, a maximally effective outcome is unlikely to occur. It may also be the case that the definition of alcohol problems enshrined in particular industry’s policy places strong constraints on the range of agencies and services to it can have access.

A last point with respect to alcohol policies relates to the unsatisfactory nature of dissemination and advertising of the nature of such policies amongst workforces in firms where such policies exist. The data suggest that lines of communication on these matters are sometimes not as effective as they might be. It is not clear from the existing data whether modes of dissemination, like some of the policies themselves, exist more as paper rules than as matters of fact. Whatever the case such lines of dissemination clearly require closer investigation and in some cases a thorough
overhaul. We also feel that the way a policy is seen to be working may be at least as effective in bringing certain features to the workforces' attention as more passive routes of information dissemination. If it is the case that to some extent alcohol policies self-advertise via their own visible operations this may possibly be another reason why paper policies which are rarely or fragmentarily implemented have a limited impact on the workforce.

Finally, a questionnaire study of alcohol-related attitudes amongst the employees in the firms in the present study showed that their answers to a number of issues surrounding alcohol use in the workplace could be best subsumed under two general factor headings. The two underlying factors identified were: (a) a group of specific attitudes towards the detrimental effects of alcohol on work performance and (b) a group of attitudes concerning the socially enhancing effects of alcohol. Whilst the results show a number of detailed relationships two clear themes emerge from the data set. Firstly, there is general agreement that alcohol is detrimental to work performance. This general agreement seems to exist more or less independently of personal levels of alcohol consumption, type of work performed, or any other major variables. On the other hand, beliefs about the socially beneficial and enhancing effects of alcohol showed relationships to alcohol consumption. In general terms those who were more likely to drink were more likely to endorse statements attesting to the socially enhancing effects of alcohol. The implications of this from an intervention point of view are of interest since they are counter-intuitive. If an education campaign about the effect of alcohol in the workplace were to be devised there might be a natural tendency to concentrate on facts about the relationship between alcohol consumption and its effect on work performance. It is apparent from these data that such an educational approach would be largely a waste of time. Workforces are already of the opinion that alcohol consumption has exactly such a detrimental effect on work performance. By contrast the discriminating attitude set concerns a much more broadly based group of social perceptions about the beneficial
or non beneficial effects of alcohol. It appears therefore that any industrial campaign aiming to provide information which would impinge on the alcohol consumption of workforces would do well to focus on the possibly more deeply embedded general beliefs about the socially beneficial effects of alcohol, its social appropriateness in different settings and a variety of such broadly based beliefs. By contrast presenting a package which focused on the effects of alcohol on work performance will probably be of limited effectiveness since attitudes on this issue are already of the desired type. Consequently alcohol consumption at work cannot be seen as a simple response to lack of information or inappropriate attitudes. It appears to have more to do with the failure to implement an existing attitude due to the presence of a more deeply ingrained set of attitudes about social appropriateness of alcohol use in different settings.

8.1 Conclusions

On the basis of the present data set we conclude that:

1. The consumption of alcohol in the workplace is a localised and regular problem rather than a broadly based chronic problem.

2. Certain firms and certain groups of employees show patterns of alcohol consumption in general and patterns of alcohol consumption during working hours that differ from other groups. Male manual workers appear to be the highest consumers both overall and during working hours. If a lower paid workforce with an established norm of heavy drinking is recruited there is a greater likelihood that such problems will intrude into the workspace. Other groups of interest concern certain sections of the sample whose consumption is higher than others of the same sex. The position of more highly paid women invites some further investigation.
3. Whilst alcohol-related absenteeism is widely reported, and is more of a problem in heavier drinking than in lighter drinking firms the data suggest that there is no simple overall relationship between alcohol use either in general or during working hours and absenteeism. It seems likely that whilst heavier drinking employees are more likely to experience alcohol-related absenteeism, the overall level of absenteeism in this group is no higher than in other groups not reporting alcohol-related absenteeism.

4. A finer grained view of the data shows variability between firms both in terms of the extent of drinking, the type of policies in place and the degree of implementation. In general terms it appears that more lax and tolerant attitudes on the part of management are associated with higher levels of consumption: also that this set of circumstances is more likely to arise in industries and firms where the work carried out is seen as less safety critical. This raises the problematic issue of whether alcohol policies should have basically the same overall set of constraints and requirements in the interest of fairness or whether it is reasonable that varying standards should apply in different workplaces according to the type of work carried out. The heavier drinking of those in Arts and Media is a case in point.

5. A majority of policies seem to have been put in place as a response to external pressures. These include legislation, but also the need for firms to fall into line with perhaps larger companies to whom they contract. We feel that in such circumstances there is a danger that policies will have a prime goal of meeting the requirements of external agencies rather than of meeting the needs of employees.

6. There is a lack of data from firms concerning the degree of policy implementation and the outcomes of specific interventions. The data from agencies suggest that even amongst those firms that make referrals it is unusual for firms to seek information about outcome. Frequently there do not even appear to be
centralised records. Whilst workplace policies appear to serve a variety of functions, (see point 11) there is nonetheless a need for independent external evaluation of the extent of implementation of alcohol policies and of their effectiveness in leading to successful treatment outcome, as opposed to their usefulness in achieving other goals.

7. There is a paucity of data on hard outcome variables from all firms including such things as production rates, wastage rates, quality variation, and other indicants of performance from all sections of the workforce. Given this lack of data we feel it may be premature to make claims that policies would translate into immediate economic gains.

8. Whilst possession of an alcohol or related policy is one of the discriminators between high and low drinking firms, it is not the strongest. This is not surprising, given that the prime motive for most firms in implementing such a policy appears to have little to do with the nature of any problems they experience at a local level. It is notable that the best discriminators between high and low drinking firms were the presence and implementation of a number of specific and visible ad hoc disciplinary rules.

9. Most policies seem based on the need to distinguish between alcohol use as a disease and alcohol use as a volitional type of behaviour for which people may be held responsible. This distinction is one which has gradually fallen out of favour with many agencies as increasing evidence has accumulated suggesting that the view of alcohol misuse as a disease has a number of shortcoming. It appears therefore that firms for the most part require their service providers to operate in an area where distinctions are made between types of alcohol use which may not be shared by the agency providing services.
10. There are clear difficulties in many of the firms in the present study with both disseminating and the implementation of alcohol policies.

11. There are a number of additional issues which have a strong philosophical basis. Whilst paper policies may state particular aims and goals it is evident that from a management and administration perspective policies appear to be multi-purpose: to assist in the securing of further contracts; to provide a back stop in case of litigation; to improve employees' health; to increase the economic viability of a firm; or all these things. There needs to be public discussion to prioritise these goals as an aid to policy development.

12. With respect to the contentious issue of testing in the workplace there are clearly mixed views. Views on testing do not appear to discriminate clearly between management and administration in heavier or lighter drinking firms nor between the workforces in those firms. On the other hand, it is clear from some of our transcripts that there is an enthusiasm for the introduction of testing in some quarters, particularly where safety critical work may be involved. With respect to testing we can only conclude that there is no great groundswell of support for its implementation. On the other hand, there are very strong reasons why such a testing procedure should be implemented in certain specific industries where alcohol-related work performance is simply unacceptable, e.g. transport, aerospace engine manufacture, etc. The issue of fairness and equability across work types is clearly a thorny issue in this context.

13. Workforce attitudes, when factor analysed, appeared to fall into two clusters a) attitudes concerning the effect of alcohol on work performance; and b) a broader set of attitudes about the social benefits and appropriateness of alcohol consumption. Only the latter differentiated between high and low drinking workforces. We conclude therefore that any educational programme aimed at addressing the problems of
alcohol in the workplace should focus on a broad set of cultural beliefs about alcohol. Conversely, focusing on the communication of messages about the specific effects of alcohol in the workplace may largely be a waste of time, despite its intuitive appeal, since the idea that alcohol affects work performance is accepted throughout the workforce.

14. Finally, in a more general sense we conclude that there needs to be discussion amongst employees as to what constitutes a good firm. Is a good firm one which meets its production quotas? Is a good firm one which gives priority to the needs and problems of its workforce? Is a good firm simply one where everyone is sober all the time? Whilst we realise that in the real world economic viability determines whether a firm exists or not data from some of our interviews suggest that we must give serious consideration to the possibility that drinking during working hours is an inevitable component of some types of work but not others. We are concerned about the high rates of drinking in Arts and Media but we accept that individuals involved in creative jobs may require a different work lifestyle than those involved in more safety critical or precise operations. We conclude with a quote from a manager in one of the firms to whom we spoke.

“*When I was a shop steward in our machine shop we had three people who always went off on a Monday afternoon and always went off on a Friday afternoon. On every occasion we would say ‘this is your final warning, there’s no more’ and on one occasion when they left I said ‘Les, this is a bit silly, you know, every time you get them in it’s their final warning, are you ever going to sack them’. And he said ‘No because I get more work out of those three people on a four-day week than I do off some people on a five-day week’.*”

We also encountered a situation during pilot work for this project when we asked questions about testing to a firm which in the end did not take part in the study. With respect to the testing issue we were told that if testing were introduced in a particular
office involved, the person would lose some of his best and most creative employees at a stroke.

There are clearly jobs, occupations and circumstances in which consumption of any kind of alcohol during working hours is unacceptable. There are other work situations where the same broad statement would be more difficult to justify. Consequently alcohol policies may need to take into account the details of context in which they are applied. This may mean that rational policy of this type would result in different degrees of tolerance to alcohol consumption in different work contexts. For this reason alone it seems essential that (a) policies take into account the varying nature of such contexts and (b) that at time of employment these requirements are specifically spelled out to employees through their contracts.
REFERENCES


Health Education Authority (1989) Guidelines for local authorities on the development, implementation and evaluation of an alcohol policy for their staff. London: HEA.


APPENDIX 1a

Interview schedule for companies with an alcohol policy

The list of questions below is intended to be an exhaustive list which identifies all areas which we are interested in. We include all these questions so that we do not ‘spring’ questions on you which you have not had an opportunity to consider. It is anticipated that the answers to these questions will be elicited in an informal manner and not necessarily in the order they are presented below.

Company background

1. How many people work in your company?
2. What type(s) of work does the company undertake?
3. How is your company structured?

History of the company alcohol policy

1. Do you consider alcohol to be an important issue for your company?
2. Who were responsible for writing the policy?
3. When did the company first implement an alcohol policy?
4. Why did the company decide to adopt an alcohol policy?
5. When you first considered an alcohol policy was there any negotiation and consultation internally and/or with external organisation? (e.g. Unions or an Alcohol Council).
6. Has your company at any time believed that it has any problems associated with employees’ alcohol consumption? Could you briefly describe the problems?
7. Can you briefly outline the company alcohol policy? (Please can you provide a copy for our reference.) Does this include:
   • Pre-employment screening?
   • Procedures for identifying problems?
   • Education?
   • Testing?
   Any other major components?
8. Does your company have smoking or other health-related policies?
9. What, if any, are company views on the nature of alcohol dependence?
10. Does your company make any distinction between problem and occasional drinking?
11. How have you advertised to your employees the company rules and procedures surrounding alcohol use?

Alcohol in the workplace

1. What are the drinking ‘norms’ for employees of this company?
2. Is drinking permitted at any time at the workplace? If so, when and which group of employees? (e.g. Sales staff, Senior management)
3. Can your employees buy alcohol at work? If so, where and when?
4. Do any of your employees go off-site to drink alcohol at lunchtime?
5. Does your company ever conduct business meetings such as ‘business lunches’ in pubs or licensed premises? If so, is alcohol permitted?

**Day to day running of the company alcohol policy**

1. Do any employees have a special responsibility for implementing the policy?
2. How have you advertised the policy to your employees?
3. Do you educate your employees about alcohol-related issues?
4. Do you refer employees with alcohol problems to an external agency or organisation? (e.g. an Alcohol Council).
5. If you liaise with an external agency or organisation, how and why did you decide to use that particular organisation?
6. Who pays for your employees to be counselled or treated for their alcohol problems, if you liaise with an external organisation?
7. Does the policy appear to run in practice as was intended?
8. Have you encountered any problems implementing the policy?

**Future of the company alcohol policy**

1. Have you future plans for educating the workforce about the alcohol policy, and/or alcohol?
2. Have you any plans to bring in testing? If so, what type? (e.g. random, with-cause, breath, blood or urine)
3. Have you any plans to bring in pre-employment screening?
4. If the policy were to be revised, what would you like to change?

**Relevant company statistics**

1. Has the company made any attempt to monitor levels of drinking amongst employees?
2. What kinds of evidence do you believe would be useful in assessing the impact of alcohol on the company? Which of these can be realistically monitored?
3. Has the company made any attempt to assess the costs associated with inappropriate drinking, including quality of life costs?
4. Has the company made any attempts to assess the effectiveness of the policy (including the outcomes from employees who have been dealt with under the terms of the policy)?
5. Does your company record personnel data on computer, what data is included? For instance, absence, accidents and productivity.
6. Would it be possible for our project to confidentially assess (neither naming the company nor the personnel) in an attempt to ascertain if any of these measures are indicative of underlying alcohol problems, or could be useful in assessing the effect of alcohol policies?
Logistical aspects of the questionnaire phase of the project

1. If it is agreeable to your organisation; how would we best proceed with administering a general questionnaire in the company? Postal, self-completion at work, self-completion at home?
2. Could you advise us on the groups of employees to target with the questionnaire?
3. What specific information would your company like to see coming out of this research project?
APPENDIX 1b

Interview schedule for companies with no formal alcohol policy

The list of questions below is intended to be an exhaustive list which identifies all areas which we are interested in. We include all these questions so that we do not ‘spring’ questions on you which you have not had an opportunity to consider. It is anticipated that the answers to these questions will be elicited in an informal manner and not necessarily in the order they are presented below.

Company background

1. How many people work in your company?
2. What type(s) of work does the company undertake?
3. How is your company structured?

Company procedures for alcohol-related problems

1. Do you consider alcohol to be an important issue for your company?
2. Has your company at any time believed that it has any problems associated with employees’ alcohol consumption? How did you detect this?
3. Can you briefly outline the general procedures your company adopts towards alcohol in the workplace.
4. Do you believe these procedures are cost effective?
5. Does your company have smoking or other health policies?
6. What, if any, are company views on the nature of alcohol dependence?
7. Does your company make any distinction between problem and occasional drinking?
8. How have you advertised to your employees the company rules and procedures surrounding alcohol-use? Where are these rules located (e.g. staff handbook, contract of employment)

Alcohol in the workplace

1. What are the drinking ‘norms’ for employees of this company?
2. Is drinking permitted at any time at the workplace? If so, when and which group of employees? (e.g. Sales staff, Senior Management)
3. Can your employees buy alcohol at work? If so, where and when?
4. Do any of your employees go off site to drink alcohol at lunchtime?
5. Does your company ever conduct meetings such as ‘business lunches’ in pubs or licensed premises? If so, is alcohol permitted?

Day to day running the company procedures relating to alcohol in the workplace

1. Do any employees have a special responsibility for implementing procedures relating to alcohol?
2. Have you advertised any procedures relating to alcohol problems to your employees; if so how?
3. Have you educated your employees about alcohol-related issues?
4. Do you refer employees with alcohol problems to an external agency or organisation? (e.g. an Alcohol Council).

5. If you liaise with an external agency or organisation, how and why did you decide to use that particular organisation?

6. Who pays for your employees to be counselled or treated for their alcohol problems, if you liaise with an external organisation?

7. Do the procedures appear to run in practice as they were intended?

8. Have you encountered any problems implementing procedures dealing with alcohol-related problems?

**Future developments**

1. Have you any plans to bring in testing for alcohol and drugs? If so, what type? (e.g. random, with-cause, breath, blood or urine).

2. If the procedures were to be revised, what would you like to change?

3. Have you any plans to develop a specific written alcohol/drugs policy? Will this include:

   - Pre-employment screening?
   - Procedures for identifying problems?
   - Education?
   - Testing?
   - Any other major components?

4. Have you plans for educating the workforce about alcohol or company policy towards alcohol?

**Relevant company statistics**

1. Has the company made any attempt to monitor levels of drinking amongst employees?

2. What kinds of evidence do you believe would be useful in assessing the impact of alcohol on the company? Which of these can or could be realistically monitored?

3. Has the company made any attempts to assess the costs associated with inappropriate drinking including quality of life costs?

4. Has the company made any attempts to assess the effectiveness of the policy (including the outcomes from employees who have been dealt with under the terms of the policy)?

5. Does your company record personnel data on computer, what data is included? For instance, absence, accidents and productivity.

6. Would it be possible for our project to confidentially assess (neither naming the company nor personnel) in an attempt to ascertain if any of these measures are indicative of underlying alcohol problems, or could be useful in assessing the effect of alcohol policies?

**Logistical aspects of the questionnaire phase of the project**

1. If it is agreeable to your organisation; how would we best proceed with administering a general questionnaire in the company? Postal, self-completion at work, self-completion at home?
2. Could you advise us on the groups of employees to target with the questionnaire?
3. What specific information would your company like to see coming out of this research project?
Appendix 2  Employee questionnaire

ALCOHOL IN THE WORKPLACE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of a U.K. wide research project funded by the Department of Employment, the Health Education Authority, the Portman Group and the Alcohol Education and Research Council and investigates a number of issues relating to alcohol and the workplace. The views and opinions of a large number of employees are being solicited, and you have been randomly selected to participate in this project.

We are interested in obtaining information about your behaviour with respect to alcohol and work and also your company's procedures and rules. It is hoped that the results from this study will provide a detailed picture of all issues surrounding alcohol and work from both employer and employee perspectives.

We would therefore appreciate your cooperation in completing the questionnaire and returning it directly to the Centre for Applied Social Psychology at Strathclyde University (a stamped addressed envelope is provided). We wish to stress that the questionnaire is completely anonymous, and any information you provide cannot be traced back to you. If you do not want to answer a question, please leave it blank and move on to the next question.

THERE IS NO NEED TO WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS FORM. NONE OF THE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS CAN BE TRACED BACK TO YOU AND NO-ONE FROM YOUR COMPANY WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THESE QUESTIONNAIRES.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ AND COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE IS ATTACHED TO THE BACK OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO ENABLE YOU TO RETURN IT DIRECTLY TO US.
### ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR LIFESTYLE

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<th>Q.2 Sex:</th>
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<td>over 55</td>
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<th>Q.4 How much do you earn a month before tax?</th>
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<td>Live with a partner</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>□ 8 Over £2000</td>
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<th>Q.5 Which category best describes the work that you do?</th>
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<td>See Table ?? for a list of each Companies job categories.</td>
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<td>6-8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 8 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.7 How many children / dependants do you have living with you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q.9 About how many units of alcohol do you drink during a *typical* week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 units</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10 units</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 units</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 units</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 units</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 units</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 units</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60 units</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.10 How many of these units do you drink on your statutory days off (i.e. weekends, holidays etc.)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All of them</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of them</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of them</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of them</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.11 Are you aware of the recognised safer drinking levels for men and women?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>意识</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If YES, please specify in units per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.12 If YES, do you believe these levels are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Too high</th>
<th>Too low</th>
<th>About right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do you believe this to be the case?

Q.13 How many units of alcohol do you think you could consume before you would be over the legal limit for driving?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 units</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 units</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 units</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11 units</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ units</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.14 How many units of alcohol do you think you could consume and still drive *safely*?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 units</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 units</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 units</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11 units</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ units</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DRINKING AT WORK

**Q.15** During a **typical** week how much alcohol do you drink whilst at work, including lunch and other breaks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 units</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10 units</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 units</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 units</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 units</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40 units</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.16** How do you feel your drinking generally compares to the people you work with?

- I drink more: 1
- I drink less: 2
- I drink the same: 3

**Q.17** Have you ever felt the effects of alcohol whilst at work?

- No: 2
- Yes: 1

**Q.18** If YES, how often would you say this has happened?

- Most days: 1
- A few times a week: 2
- About once a week: 3
- About once a month: 4
- Less than monthly: 5

**Q.19** Have you ever noticed a colleague feeling the effects of alcohol whilst at work?

- No: 2
- Yes: 1

**Q.20** If YES, how often would you say this has happened?

- Most days: 1
- A few times a week: 2
- About once a week: 3
- About once a month: 4
- Less than monthly: 5

**Q.21** Do you believe any of your colleagues to have a drinking problem?

- No: 2
- Yes: 1
**ALCOHOL IN THE WORKPLACE**

Q.22  Do you think that, in your workplace:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is part of working life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol helps people get on with each other at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol causes problems at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small amounts of alcohol do no harm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol should be freely available at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol helps relieve stress.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol is a threat to safety at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use reduces work output.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use reduces work quality.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's OK to drink heavily at lunchtime if you have a desk job and don't have to drive or operate machinery.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company takes a sympathetic approach to employees who have problems dealing with alcohol.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

**Q.23** About how many days off sick have you had in the last year (Please do not include days off sick related to pregnancy)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.24** How many of these days off sick would you say were due to alcohol consumption?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.25** How important is safety in your job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.26** How often would you say you, your customers or your colleagues are put at risk because of drinking?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.27** Do you do a safety critical job which is covered by any specific piece of Government legislation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.28** If YES, has your company sent you a letter notifying you of this legislation and its consequences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.29** If YES, did you-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and understand the letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the letter without understanding it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not read the letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q.30 My organisation.............

...prohibits alcohol on company premises.

...prohibits alcohol consumption during breaks.

...provides alcohol-free food facilities.

...allows expense claims for alcohol consumption.

...incorporates a no-alcohol clause into the contract of employment.

...tests employees for alcohol.

...conducts meetings or business in pubs or licensed premises.

...allows entry to licensed premises while in uniform.

...prohibits carrying drink while in uniform.

Q.31 Does your organisation have any formal policy on alcohol consumption?

Yes  □ 1

No   □ 2

Don't know □ 3

Q.32 Do you feel a formal policy is necessary?

Yes  □ 1

No   □ 2

Don't know □ 3

Q.33 Are there certain groups of employees in your company to which the rules on alcohol consumption do not seem to apply (i.e. temporary staff / non-safety critical staff)?

Yes □ 1

No □ 2

(Please specify)____________________

Q.34 Are there any special occasions (i.e. Christmas, birthdays, retirements etc.) when you think a 'blind eye' might be turned to a breach of the company rules on alcohol by your colleagues and / or supervisor?

Yes □ 1

No □ 2

(Please specify)____________________
**YOUR COMPANY'S RESPONSES TO ALCOHOL RELATED ISSUES**

Q.35 Do you think that your organisation is doing enough to address the issue of alcohol misuse?
- Yes  
- No

Q.36 Has your organisation alerted its members as to the problems of alcohol in the workplace?
- Yes  
- No  
- Don't know

Q.37 If you answered YES, how did your organisation put across such information? (Please tick all that apply)
- Posters or leaflets at work  
- Seminars or courses at work  
- Letters from the company  
- Other
(Please specify)_________________

Q.38 How helpful / informative did you find this information with regard to your understanding of problems relating to alcohol in the workplace?
- Very informative  
- Informative  
- Quite informative  
- Not very informative  
- Not informative  
- Can't remember

Q.39 Have you been trained in the recognition of symptoms of drug and alcohol use and / or misuse?
- No  
- Yes
(Please specify)_________________

Q.40 Do you think that your company would provide help or treatment for an employee with an alcohol or drug related problem?
- Yes  
- No  
- Don't know
Q.41 Does your organisation engage in random (or ‘with cause’) testing for alcohol?

Yes □ 1  
No □ 2  
Don't know □ 3

Q.42 If NO, how likely do you think it is that such testing may be introduced in the future?

Not at all likely □ 1  
Not very likely □ 2  
Don't know □ 3  
Quite likely □ 4  
Very likely □ 5

Q.43 Do you think that some form of alcohol testing in your organisation is necessary?

Yes □ 1  
No □ 2

Q.44 Do you think that testing for alcohol levels adversely affects (or would adversely affect) staff / management relations?

Yes □ 1  
No □ 2

Q.45 Do you think that certain employees are (or would be) more likely to be tested than others?

No □ 2  
Yes □ 1  
(Please specify)____________________

Q.46 What objections would you have, if any, to the introduction of such testing?

I would have no objections □ 1  
I would mildly object □ 2  (Please specify)____________________
I would strongly object □ 3  (Please specify)____________________

Q.47 If your company tests for alcohol, or if random testing for alcohol were introduced, are you (or would you be) worried that one day you might be found to be ‘over the limit’?

Yes □ 1  
No □ 2
**QUESTIONS ABOUT SPECIFIC INCIDENTS**

Q.48 How often do you speak to colleagues about problems you believe to be of an alcohol-related nature (i.e. hangovers, lateness, appearance, hygiene etc.)?

- Very often □ 1
- Quite often □ 2
- Sometimes □ 3
- Not very often □ 4
- Never □ 5

Q.49 If you considered that a colleague had an alcohol problem which was seriously affecting safety at work, how likely do you think you would be to report this to a senior member of staff?

- Very likely □ 1
- Quite likely □ 2
- Don’t know □ 3
- Not very likely □ 4
- Not at all likely □ 5

Q.50 If you considered that a colleague had an alcohol problem which was not affecting safety at work, how likely do you think you would be to report this to a senior member of staff?

- Very likely □ 1
- Quite likely □ 2
- Don’t know □ 3
- Not very likely □ 4
- Not at all likely □ 5

Q.51 Have you ever been spoken to (formally or informally) about your behaviour in relation to alcohol (i.e. by a colleague or supervisor)?

- Yes □ 1
- No □ 2

Q.52 Have you ever been reported or disciplined at work for an alcohol-related offence?

- Yes □ 1
- No □ 2
Questions 53-58
Imagine that the people described in the following examples are members of staff within your company / organisation. After reading each example select the most LIKELY of the list of possible actions which you think describes the action(s) that your company / employer would take. Then select the action(s) that you personally believe to be the most appropriate in each case.

Henry, an employee who drove a vehicle as part of his job, was often absent from work. On further investigation by his manager, he was found to have been drinking a large quantity of alcohol in the evenings after work.

Q.53 As a result of this behaviour which of the following action(s) do you think your company would take? (Please only tick the box(es) that is(are) most likely rather than those actions which would be used in exceptional circumstances).

a) No action would be taken. □ 1

b) The manager would give Henry an informal warning which would not be noted as a disciplinary offence on his record. □ 2

c) Henry would be advised to seek advice on his alcohol consumption. □ 3

d) Henry would be referred under the alcohol policy for advice and possible treatment for his alcohol problem. □ 4

e) Henry would be given a written or final warning over his misconduct. □ 5

f) Henry would be dismissed by the company. □ 6

g) Some other action. (Please write brief details below) □ 7

Q.54 What in your personal opinion is the most appropriate action(s) (from the list above) that should have been taken regarding Henry?

a) □ 1  b) □ 2  c) □ 3  d) □ 4  e) □ 5  f) □ 6  g) □ 7
Marion, an 18 year old employee, turned up for work under the influence of alcohol and directly caused an accident. The company records for Marion showed that there was no medical evidence of her being a problem drinker.

Q.55 As a result of this behaviour which of the following action(s) do you think your company would take? (Please only tick the box(es) that is(are) most likely rather than those actions which would be used in exceptional circumstances).

a) No action would be taken. ☐ 1

b) The manager would give Marion an informal warning which would not be noted as a disciplinary offence on her record. ☐ 2

c) Marion would be advised to seek advice on her alcohol consumption. ☐ 3

d) Marion would be referred under the alcohol policy for advice and possible treatment for her alcohol problem. ☐ 4

e) Marion would be given a written or formal warning over their misconduct. ☐ 5

f) Marion would be dismissed by the company. ☐ 6

g) Some other action. (Please write brief details below) ☐ 7

Q.56 What in your personal opinion is the most appropriate action(s) (from the list above) that should have been taken regarding Marion?

a) ☐ 1  b) ☐ 2  c) ☐ 3  d) ☐ 4  e) ☐ 5  f) ☐ 6  g) ☐ 7

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At an end of year examination of sickness records, John an office worker, was found to have had an excessive amount of time off for what appeared to be relatively trivial complaints which his manager considered were probably due to alcohol. When questioned about these absences, John claimed he was an "alcoholic" and that these days off were part of his "sickness".

Q.57 As a result of this behaviour which of the following action(s) do you think your company would take? (Please only tick the box(es) that is(are) most likely rather than those actions which would be used in exceptional circumstances).

a) No action would be taken. □ 1

b) The manager would give John an informal warning which would not be noted as a disciplinary offence on his record. □ 2

c) John would be advised to seek advice on his alcohol consumption. □ 3

d) John would be referred under the alcohol policy for advice and possible treatment for his alcohol problem. □ 4

e) John would be given a written or final warning over his misconduct. □ 5

f) John would be dismissed by the company. □ 6

g) Some other action. (Please write brief details below) □ 7

---

Q.58 What in your personal opinion is the most appropriate action(s) (from the list above) that should have been taken regarding John?

a) □ 1 b) □ 2 c) □ 3 d) □ 4 e) □ 5 f) □ 6 g) □ 7

Q.59 If you have any further information concerning alcohol and work you feel may be relevant to us which has not been covered by the questionnaire please write this on the back of the questionnaire.
THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. COULD YOU PLEASE RETURN IT IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED.
APPENDIX 3

Alcohol agency questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a UK-wide research project funded by the Department of Employment, The Health Education Authority, The Portman Group and the Alcohol Education and Research Council and investigates a number of issues relating to alcohol and the workplace. The views and opinions of a large number of employers and employees are being solicited. Further to this we are looking at the types of services offered to employers and employees as part of the company’s responses to their Alcohol Policies.

We would therefore appreciate your co-operation in completing the questionnaire and returning it directly to the Centre for Applied Social Psychology at Strathclyde University. (A stamped addressed envelope is provided). We wish to stress that the results of the questionnaire will be incorporated into the main body of the project’s findings and will be used for no other purpose. If you do not wish to answer a particular question, please leave it blank and move on to the next question.

IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR AGENCY TO BE NAMED OR ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE REPORT WE WILL RESPECT YOUR WISHES.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to read and complete this questionnaire.

The questions below are intended to be an exhaustive list that identify all areas that we are interested in. We would be grateful if you could answer as many as you feel are relevant.

1. Name of agency........................................................................................................
   Telephone number.................................................................................................
   Contact person...........................................................................................................

2. What type of service(s) do you provide for alcohol workplace referrals?
   □ 1 Residential
   □ 2 Out-patient
   □ 3 Consultant visiting company
   □ 4 Employee visiting consultant
   □ 5 Other..............................................................................................................(please specify)
3. What service(s) does your agency provide?

  □ 1  Information
  □ 2  Advice
  □ 3  Education
  □ 4  Training
  □ 5  Counselling
  □ 6  Groupwork
  □ 7  Health-care
  □ 8  Other......................................................(please specify)

4. At what time is the service provided?

  □ Mon  am  To  pm
  □ Tues am  To  pm
  □ Wed  am  To  pm
  □ Thurs am  To  pm
  □ Fri  am  To  pm
  □ Sat  am  To  pm
  □ Sun  am  To  pm

5. How many full, part-time and volunteer counsellors are employed by your agency?

  Full-time.............  Part-time..........  Volunteers..........  

6. Do you advertise your service to industry?

   □ 1  Yes  □ 2  No

7. What intervention(s) do you provide to industry for their employees experiencing difficulties with their alcohol use?

   □ 1  Assessment
   □ 2  Treatment
   □ 3  Prevention
   □ 4  Other......................................................(please specify)

8. How is the workplace referral scheme funded?

   □ 1  Client
   □ 2  Employer
   □ 3  Other......................................................(please specify)
9. How are referrals made to your agency from industry?

☐ 1 Trade Unions
☐ 2 Company's personnel department
☐ 3 Company doctor
☐ 4 Company's occupational health nurse
☐ 5 Other........................................................................(please specify)

10. Where does the service take place?

☐ 1 At your agency
☐ 2 At the company's premises
☐ 3 At the employee's home
☐ 4 Other........................................................................(please specify)

11. What is the maximum duration of an individual workplace counselling session?

12. What is the average length of time you expect to work with a workplace referral?

☐ 1 Less than 2 weeks      ☐ 2 2 - 4 weeks
☐ 3 5 - 8 weeks            ☐ 4 9 - 12 weeks
☐ 5 13 - 26 weeks          ☐ 6 27 - 52 weeks
☐ 7 Over 12 months..........(please specify)

13. What percentage of companies do you routinely provide with information?

☐ Attendance report
   ☐ 1 Less than 10%
   ☐ 2 11% - 25%
   ☐ 3 26% - 50%
   ☐ 4 51% - 75%
   ☐ 5 76% - 100%
   ☐ 6 None

☐ Progress report
   ☐ 1 Less than 10%
   ☐ 2 11% - 25%
   ☐ 3 26% - 50%
   ☐ 4 51% - 75%
   ☐ 5 76% - 100%
   ☐ 6 None

14. Would you provide the above information if asked?

☐ 1 Yes      ☐ 2 No

15. Does your agency advise companies on alcohol policies?

☐ 1 Yes      ☐ 2 No
16. If yes, what form does the above advice take?

- 1  Example policies
- 2  Assessment procedures
- 3  Addiction services
- 4  Other..................................................(please specify)

17. How is the alcohol policy advice funded?

- 1  Central Government
- 2  Local Government
- 3  Health Authority
- 4  Company
- 5  Other..................................................(please specify)

18. About how many organisations have you given alcohol policy advice to?

19. Do you provide information about alcohol testing?

- 1  No
- 2  Yes  (If yes, please tick the appropriate box/es)

- 3  Random
- 4  Pre-employment screening
- 5  With-cause
- 6  Breath testing
- 7  Blood testing
- 8  Urine testing
- 9  Other..................................................(please specify)

20. Who do you refer companies to for testing to be carried out?

21. Would you like to make any further comments?

(please use the reverse side of this sheet)

The results of this survey will be included in the final report of the Alcohol in the Workplace Project. Would you wish for your agency to have named status in that report?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No

Thank you for your co-operation.
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