

Students and alcohol | 2020-21

Research into students' relationship with alcohol at institutions participating in Alcohol Impact

2020-21

**Delivered by SOS-UK
on behalf of NUS:**



50%

Before going to university **half** of young people surveyed **thought that students got drunk most of the time**



43%

Over two fifths of students regularly **drink at home** or a friends house **before going out for the night**

Half of students drink alcohol at least once a week

50%

38%

Over a third of students think **getting drunk** means they'll have a **good night out**

79%

of students agree that drinking and **getting drunk** is **part of university culture**

But... 81%

of students say they don't have to get drunk to have a good night out



www.nus.org.uk/alcoholimpact

nus
Alcohol
Impact

Contents

1. Introduction Objective, methodology and survey details	4
2. The respondents	6
3. Patterns and practices of alcohol consumption	9
4. Perceptions of alcohol consumption on campus	22
5. Impacts of alcohol consumption	26
6. Reducing impacts through responsible consumption	34

1. Introduction | Objective, methodology and survey details

This report presents research completed as part of the Alcohol Impact programme, delivered by SOS-UK on behalf of NUS. The programme is a whole-institution approach to responsible consumption of alcohol by students, involving action by local partnerships of students' unions, universities and community organisations. The programme includes an annual survey, designed to identify students' relationship with alcohol at participating institutions as well as providing a means for understanding changes in attitudes and behaviours.

A total of 1014 (weighted 1043) responses were achieved in 2020-21 through promotion of the survey locally by universities and students' unions. The survey was mainly promoted by universities and students' unions participating in the Alcohol Impact programme however participation in the research was also opened to other universities and students' unions wishing to gather data on their students' relationship with alcohol. A list of the institutions that the respondents represent is outlined overleaf.

Within the sample, women respondents were over-represented in comparison with figures gathered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency across the full Higher Education student population. The figures presented in this report have been adjusted to down-weight responses from women and up-weight responses from men to match the HESA figures. When reading the results, it is worth bearing in mind the characteristics of the respondents, outlined in the following chapter.

Variations between students with different characteristics, such as gender or nationality, are also drawn out throughout the report. Significant differences are reported where base size is greater than 30, and are valid at confidence level of at least 95%.

This report

This report presents the findings from the survey in the following areas:

- Patterns and practices of alcohol consumption;
- Perceptions of alcohol consumption on campus;
- Impacts of alcohol consumption; and
- Reducing impacts through responsible consumption

About Alcohol Impact

Alcohol Impact, managed and delivered by SOS-UK on behalf of NUS, is a whole-institution approach to responsible consumption of alcohol by students. It is a strategic framework and supported accreditation mark designed to bring the students' union and its partner institution together to create the conditions for a social norm of responsible alcohol consumption. The programme offers a mix of an innovative, institution-wide behaviour change approaches and interventions encompassing policy, procedure, campaigns, retailing, and accommodation. To achieve this, the programme encourages strong links with local stakeholders, extending the potential for impact and legacy. These approaches form the basis of the strategic framework for action, with achievements in these areas resulting in accreditation. For further information about Alcohol Impact please visit: sos-uk.org/project/alcohol-impact

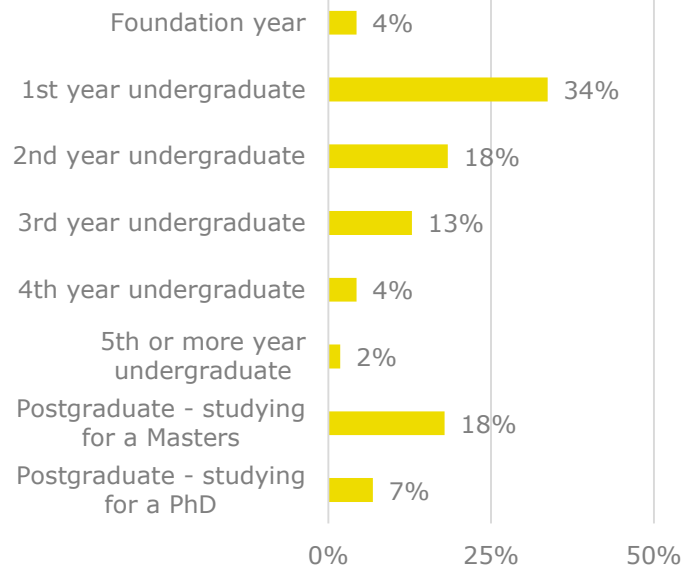
Acknowledgements

Thanks to the universities and students' unions taking part in Alcohol Impact for their efforts in publicising the survey to their students. And thanks also to the students who took part in the research, which helps to develop and improve the work of NUS and the Alcohol Impact partnerships in this area.

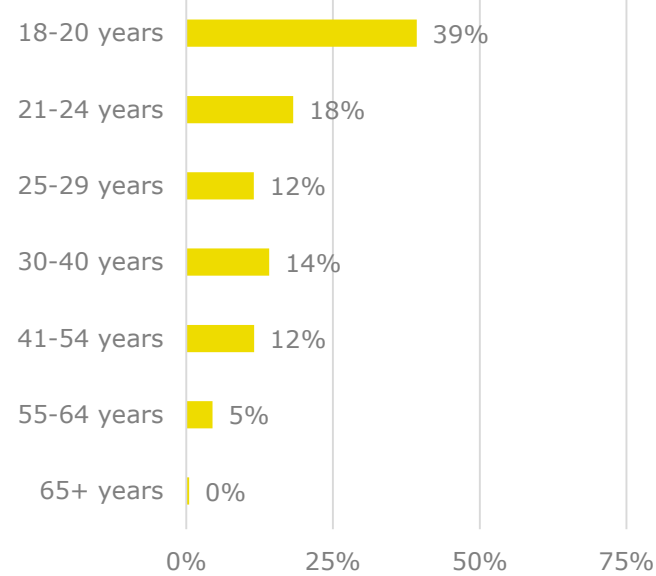
2. The respondents

Respondent demographics

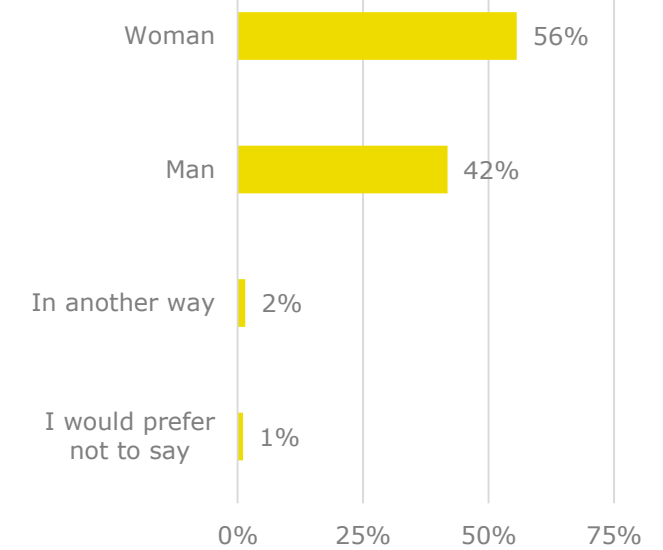
Year of study



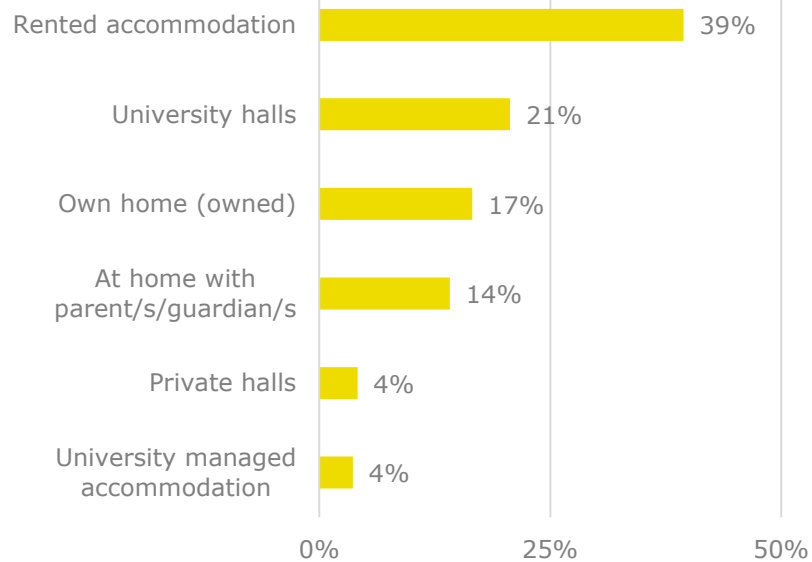
Age



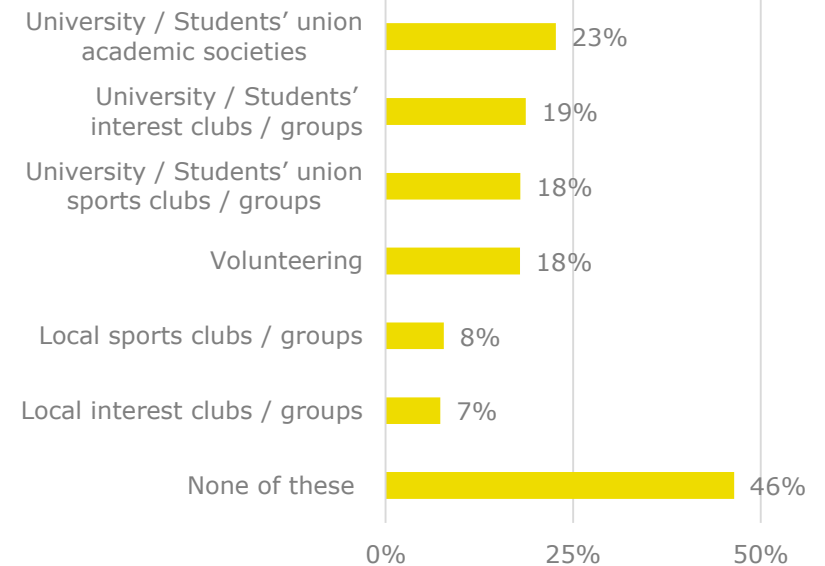
Gender



Accommodation type

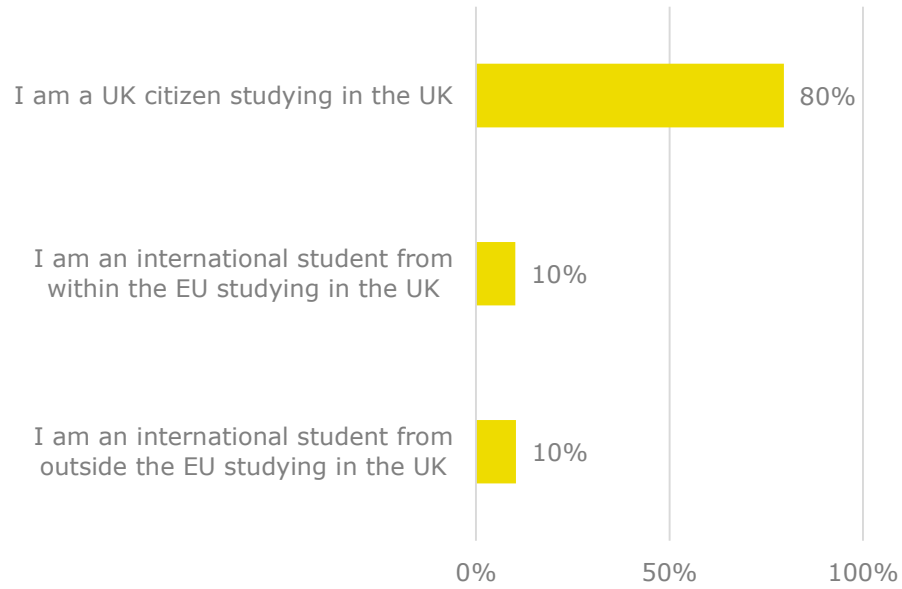


Interests and activities

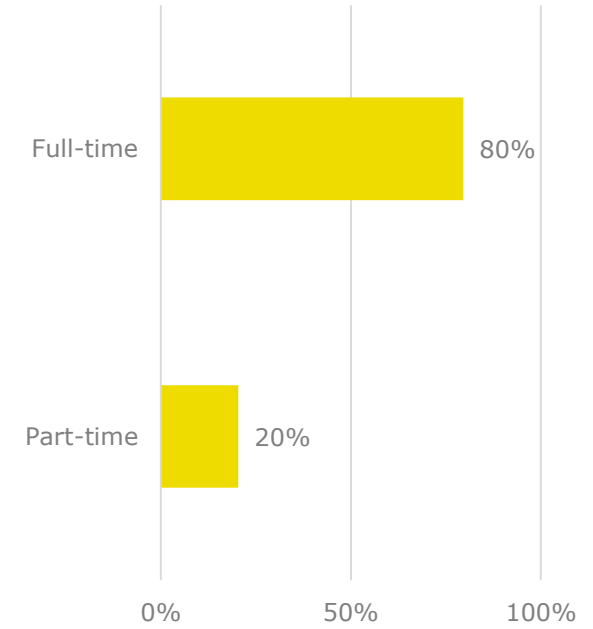


Respondent demographics

Nationality

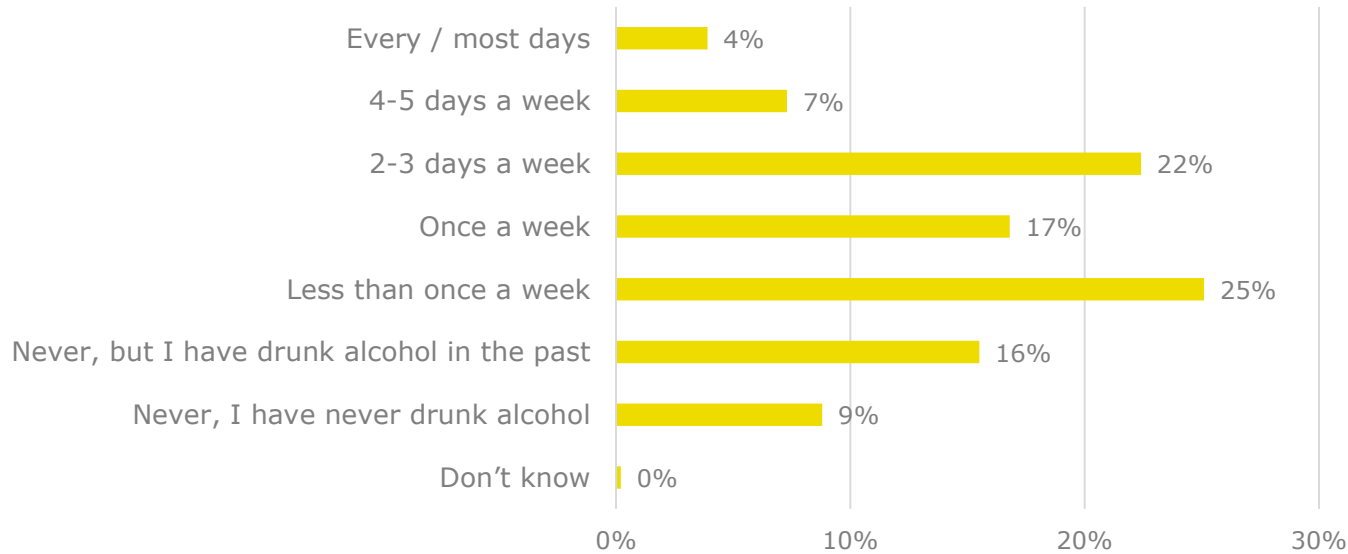


Study status



3. Patterns and practices of alcohol consumption

How often are students drinking?

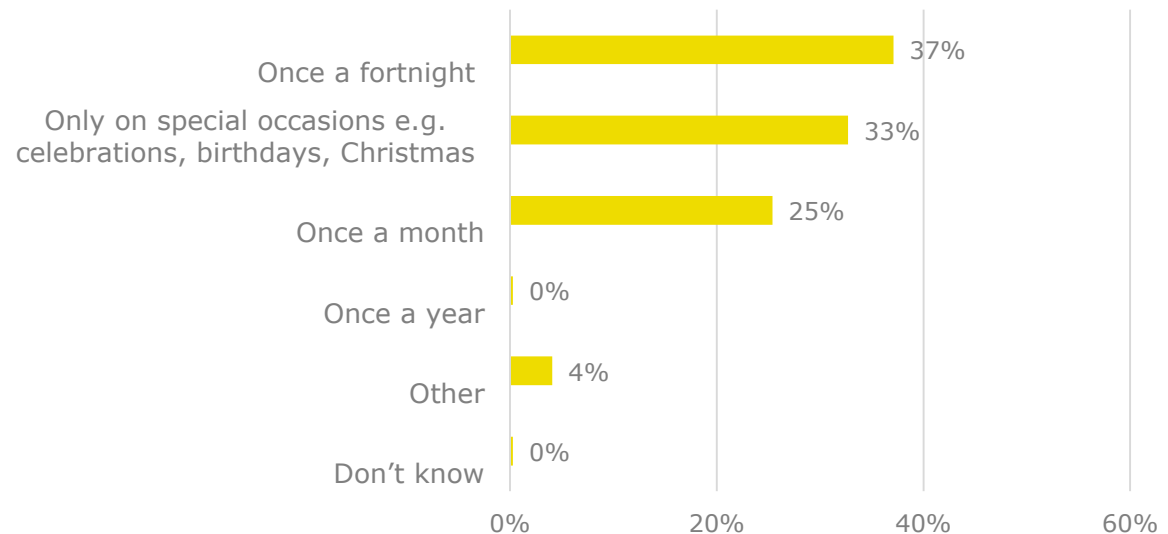


Respondents most commonly reported drinking alcohol less than once a week (25%, n=262) and in total half report drinking alcohol at least once a week (50%, n=525).

25% (n=253) report they don't drink alcohol (including those who have never drunk alcohol and those that have previously)

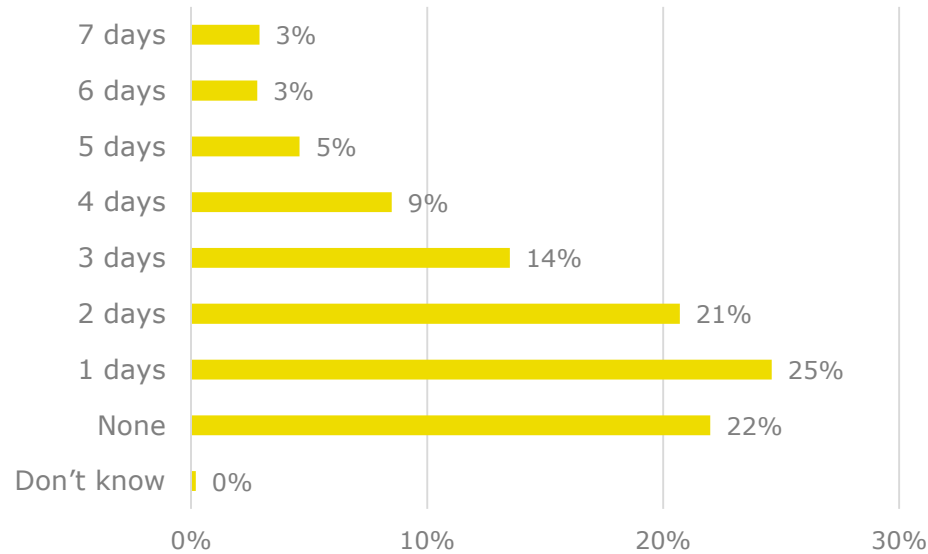
Q. How often, if at all, do you drink alcohol?
Weighted base: 1043 Balance: No response

Of those respondents saying they drink less often than once a week, over a third report they are drinking once a fortnight (37%, n=97) and a third only drink on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas (33%, n=86).



Q. You said that you drink alcohol less often than once a week, please tell us approximately how often you drink?
Weighted base: 262 Balance: No response and those who drink alcohol more often than once a week

How often are students drinking?

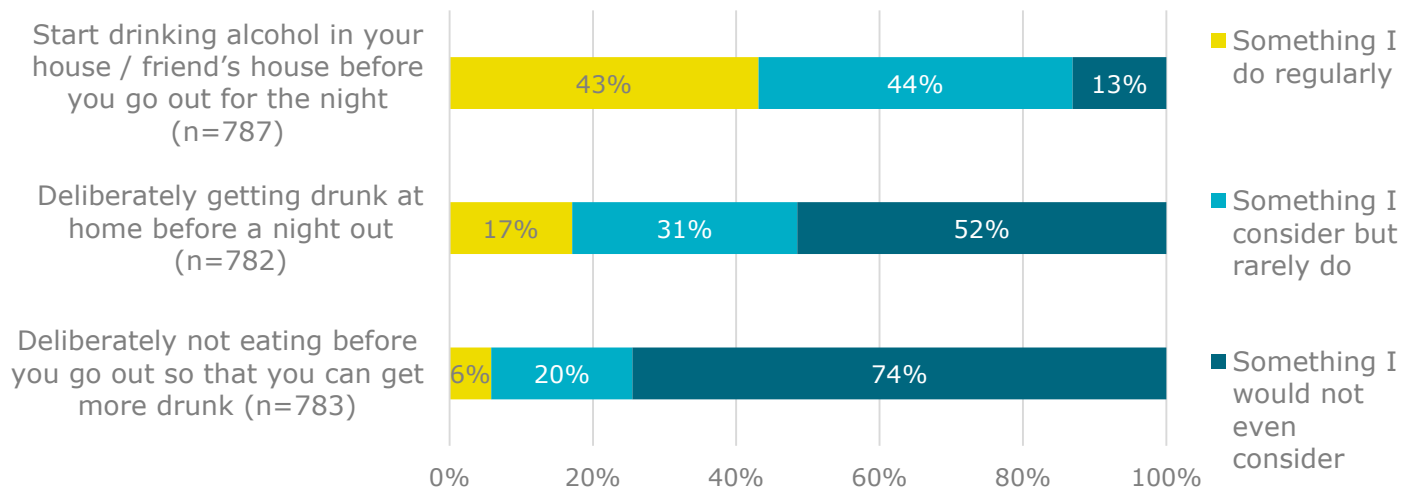


Respondents who drink most commonly reported drinking alcohol one day a week (25%, n=195) with 11% (n=82) drinking 5 days or more in the 7 days prior to completion of the survey.

One in five reported not drinking at all in the last 7 days (22%, n=173)

Q. Thinking about the last 7 days, on how many days over this period did you drink alcohol at all, either at home or elsewhere?
Weighted base: 790 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

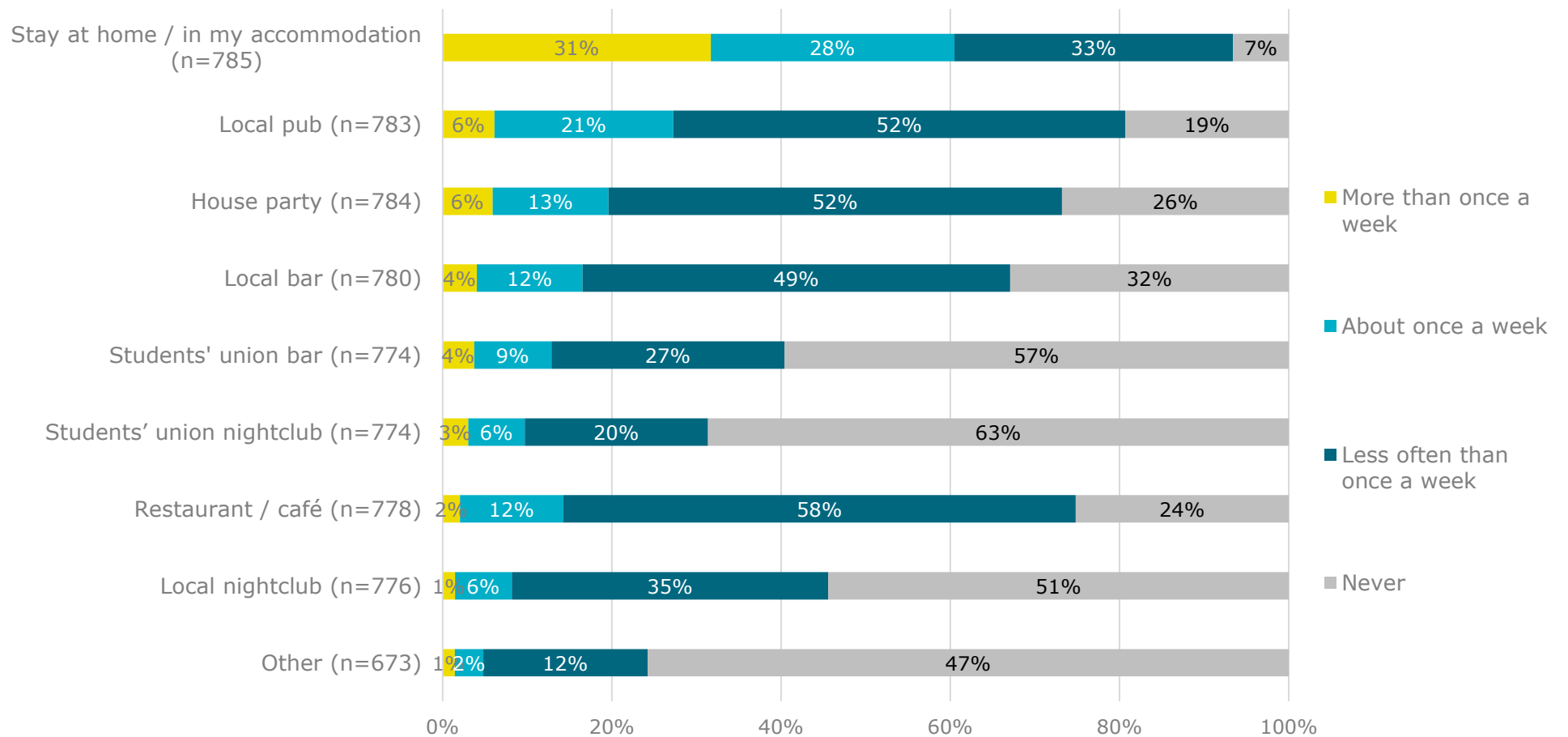
Pre-drinking



Respondents report pre-drinking as a common practice with 43% saying that starting drinking alcohol at home or at a friend's house is something they do regularly before a night out (n=339). 17% (n=134) say they regularly deliberately get drunk at home before a night out

Q. Do any of the following describe your drinking behaviour?
Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response and non-drinkers

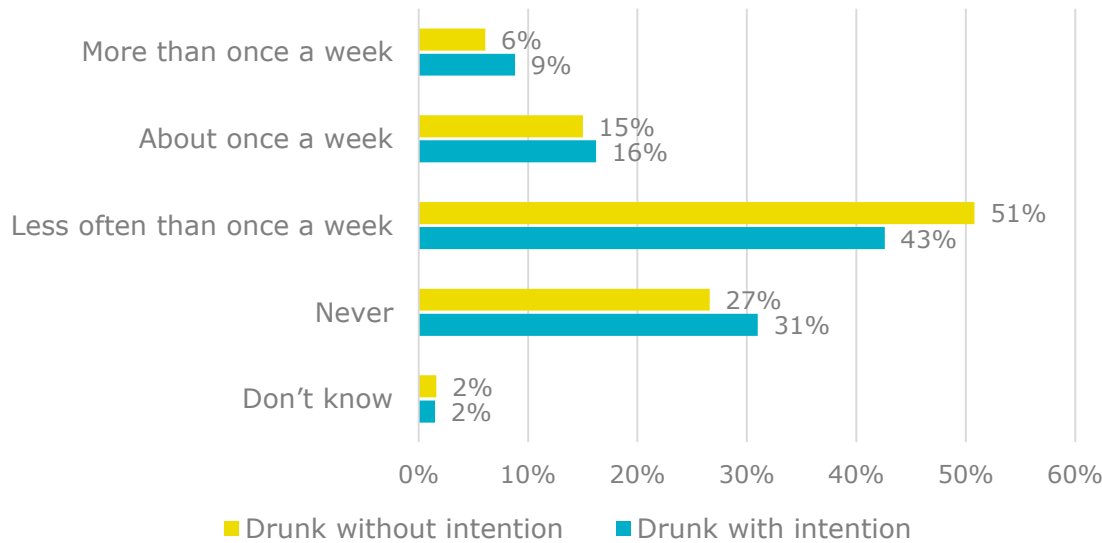
Where are students drinking and how often



Around a third of respondents who drink (31%, n = 245) report drinking at home/in their accommodation more than once per week, with slightly fewer drinking there about once a week (28%, n=222). Local pubs are visited about once a week by 21% (n=162).

Q. If you are drinking, how often do you tend to drink in each of the following places?
Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response and non-drinkers

How often are students getting drunk?



Respondents most commonly report drinking to get drunk less often than once per week (43%, n=336). A sixth of respondents report drinking alcohol with the deliberate intention of getting drunk about once per week (16%, n=128). 9% report purposefully drinking to get drunk more than once per week (n=69).

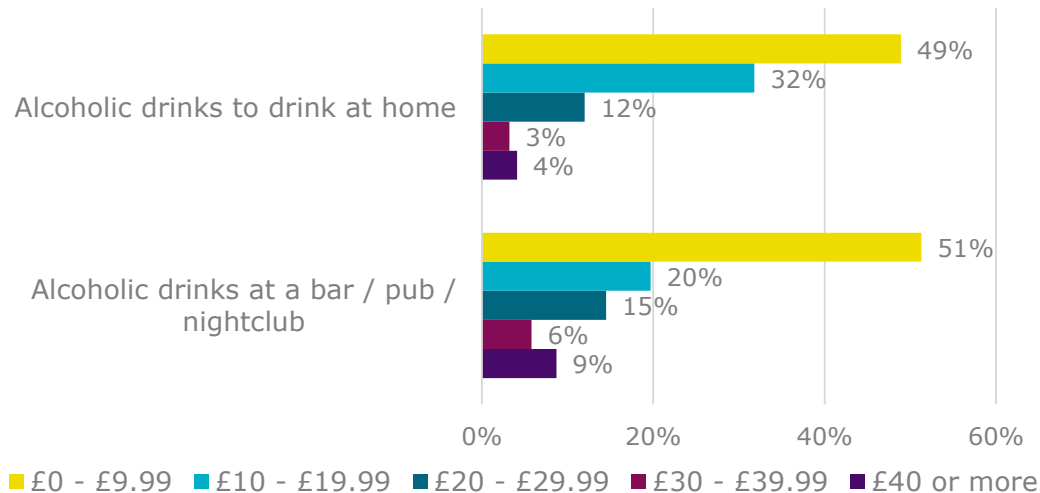
A fifth (21%, n=167) of respondents report drinking without the intention of getting drunk, but end up getting drunk anyway at least once a week.

Q. Approximately how often do you drink alcohol with the intention of getting drunk / drink alcohol without the intention of getting drunk but end up getting drunk anyway ? Weighted base: 790/790 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Spending on alcohol

Respondents were asked to provide an approximate figure for their spending on alcohol, both to drink at home and whilst at bars, pubs and nightclubs per week.

In both categories, spending up to £9.99 is the most commonly reported spend on alcohol in a typical week - 49% (n=375) report spending this amount on drinking alcohol at home, and 51% (n=376) report spending this amount at bars, pubs or nightclubs. It is worth considering the 'volume' of alcohol that this spend might translate to in the different contexts when reading these results.



£11.96
average spend

£10.00
median spend

£13.69
average spend

£10.00
median spend

Q. In a typical week, how much do you spend on the following items? Weighted base: c730 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

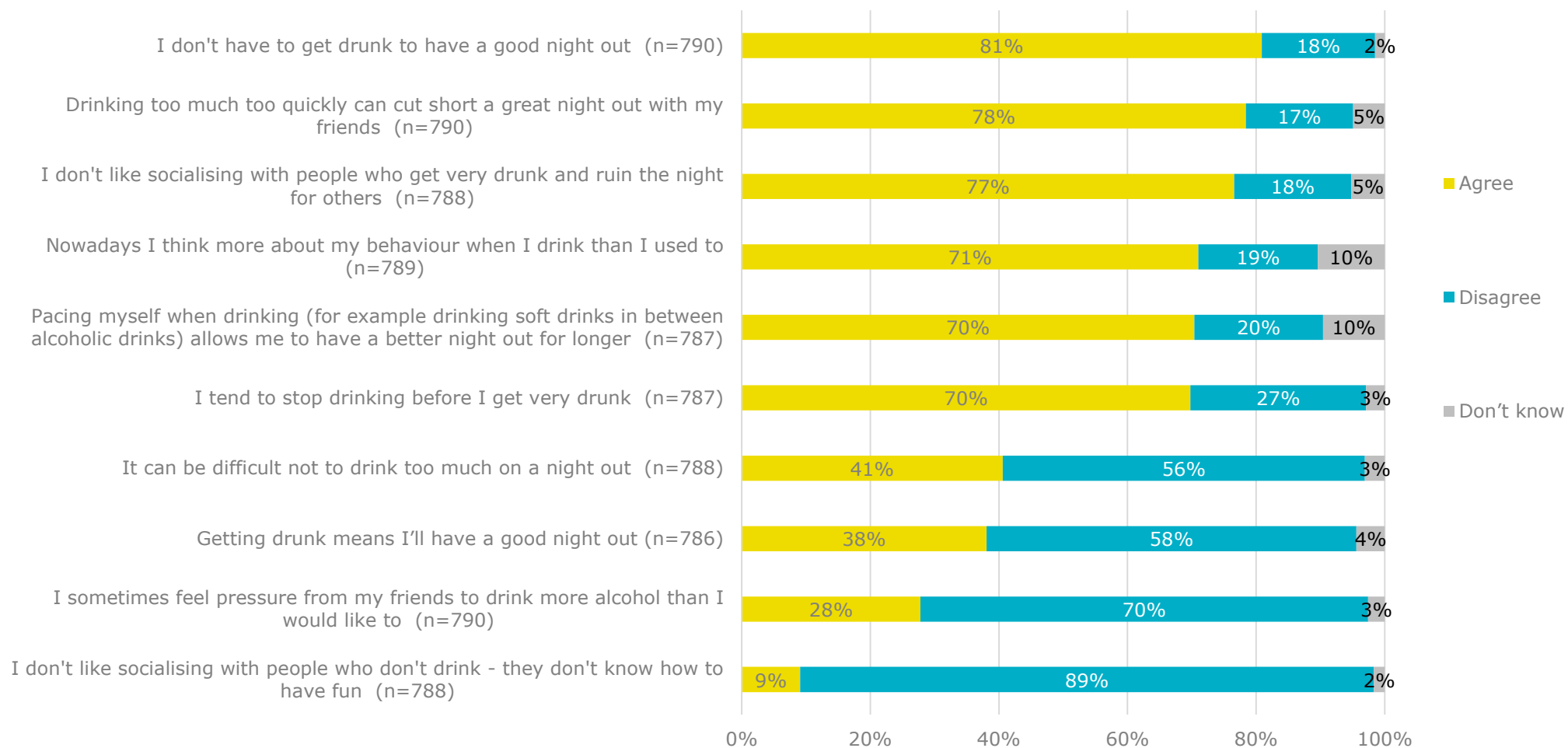
What are students drinking, and how much?

Respondents show a preference for spirits with the most common drink reported being drunk in the week prior to completing the survey being double measures of spirits. The average number of drinks consumed in the 7 days prior to the survey is 7.8, equating to 12.8 units.

Type of drink	Average number of drinks consumed in the 7 days prior to survey completion, per type of drink	Average number of units consumed in the 7 days prior to survey completion, per type of drink
Bottles of regular strength beer, bitter, lager or cider (e.g. Carling or Bulmers, ~1 unit)	1.0	1.0
Pints of regular strength beer, bitter, lager or cider (e.g. Carling or Bulmers, ~2 units)	0.7	1.4
Bottles of strong beer, bitter, lager or cider (e.g. Stella Artois or Scrumpy Jack, ~1.7 units)	0.3	0.6
Pints of strong beer, bitter, lager or cider (e.g. Stella Artois or Scrumpy Jack, ~3 units)	0.3	0.9
Small glasses of wine (125ml, ~1.5 units)	0.3	0.4
Medium glasses of wine (175ml, ~2.1 units)	0.6	1.3
Large glasses of wine (250ml, ~3 units)	1.1	3.2
Glasses of fortified wine or vermouth (e.g. sherry or port (not wine), ~1 unit)	0.1	0.1
Single measures of spirits or liqueur such as whisky, gin, vodka, etc. (with mixer or without i.e. shots, ~1 unit)	1.4	1.4
Double measures of spirits or liqueur such as whisky, gin, vodka, etc. (with mixer or without i.e. shots, ~2 units)	1.9	3.7
Bottles of pre-mixed drinks such as Bacardi Breezer, Smirnoff Ice, WKD etc (~1.5 units)	0.2	0.3
<i>Total average drinks consumed in 7 days prior to survey completion per person</i>	<i>7.8</i>	
<i>Total median drinks consumed in 7 days prior to survey completion per person</i>	<i>5</i>	
<i>Total average units consumed in 7 days prior to survey completion per person</i>		<i>12.8</i>
<i>Total median units consumed in 7 days prior to survey completion per person</i>		<i>8.45</i>

Q. And still thinking about the last 7 days, how many of each of these types of drink have you consumed, either at home or elsewhere? Base: 594 Balance: no response, not asked of those who said they have never drunk alcohol or if they have it was in the past, excludes those who indicated they had not drunk in the 7 days prior to survey completion

Drinking attitudes and behaviours



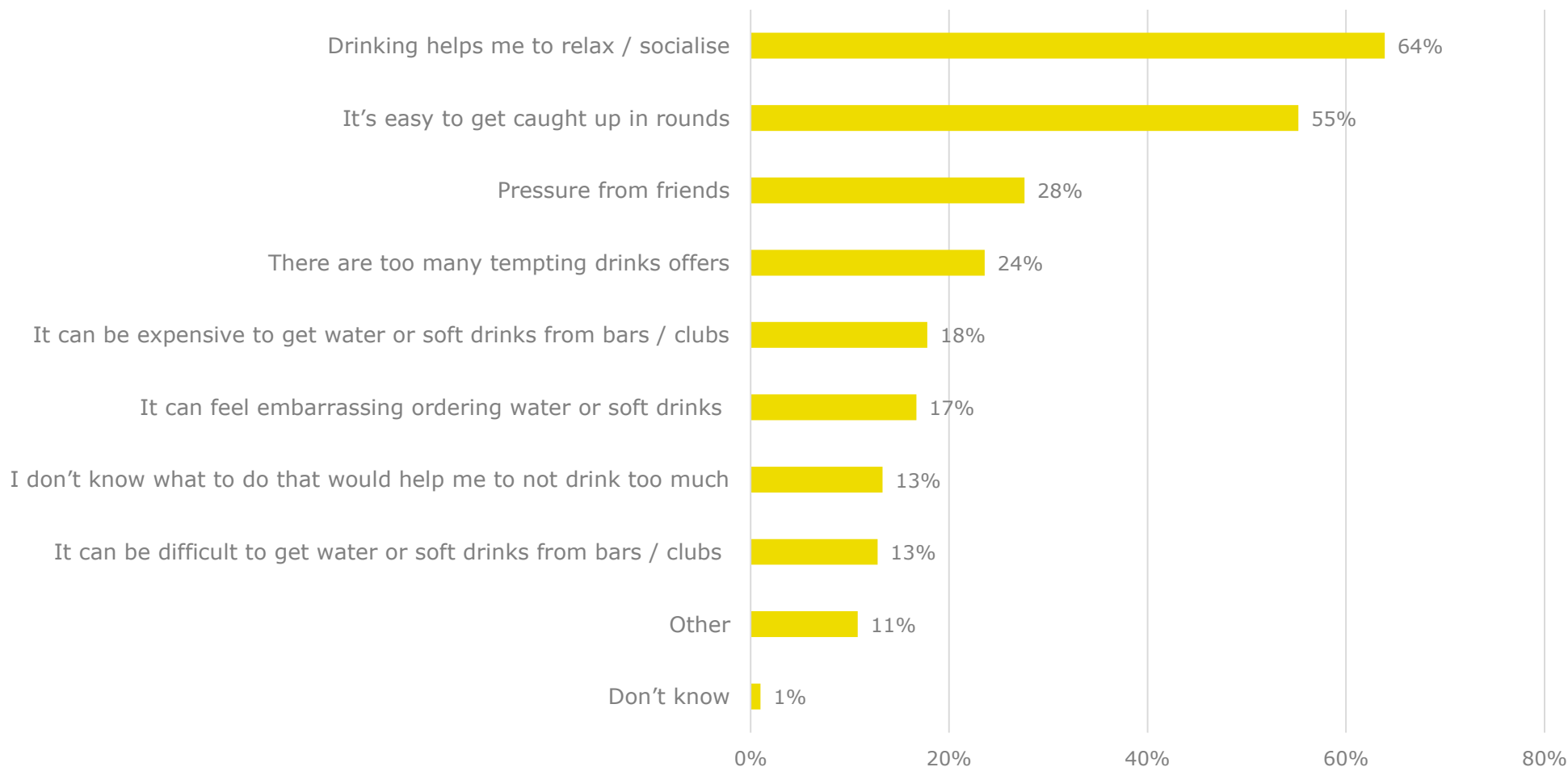
The majority agreed that they didn't have to get drunk to have a good night out (81%, n=790).

Around three quarters all agreed that drinking too much too quickly can cut short a great night (78%, n=790), that they don't like socialising with people who get very drunk (77%, n= 788), and that they now think more about their behaviour than before (71%, n=789).

Over a quarter say that they sometimes feel pressure from their friends to drink more alcohol than they would like to (28%, n=790).

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response

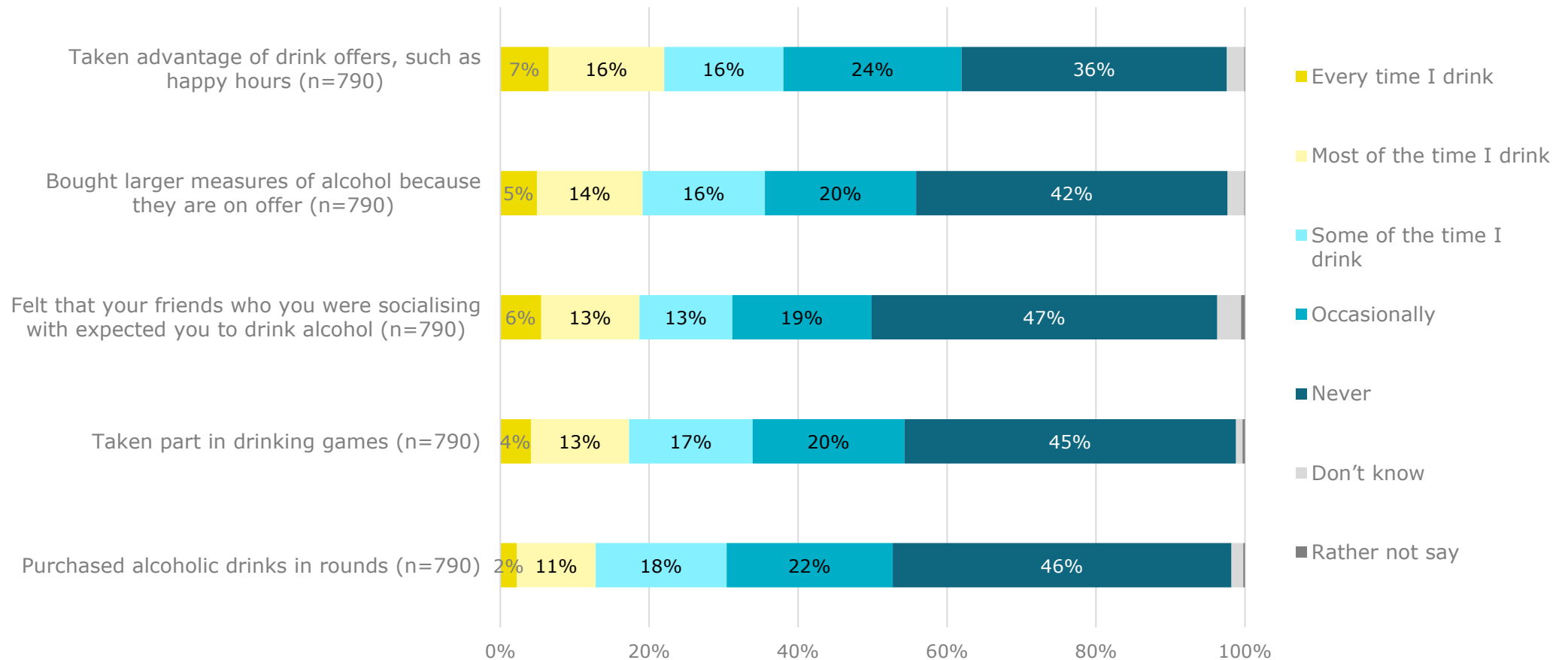
Drinking attitudes and behaviours



When the 41% of respondents who indicated they found it difficult not to drink too much on a night out were asked why, the most selected answer was that drinking alcohol helped them to relax / socialise (64%, n=204). The practice of buying drinks in rounds was also identified by over half (55%, n=177).

Over a quarter of those who found it difficult not to drink too much on a night out put this down to pressure from their friends (28%, n=88).

Drinking games and buying drinks



Two in five say they take advantage of drink offers such as happy hours (23%, n=174) or buy larger measures of alcohol because they're on offer (19%, n=151) every or most of the time they drink.

Similar numbers felt their friends expected them to drink alcohol (19%, n=147)

17% (n=136) respondents report taking part in drinking games either most or every time they drink alcohol.

Purchasing drinks in rounds is common to 13% of respondents (n=100) who report buying alcoholic drinks in this way every or most times they drink.

Q. Thinking about your time at university within the last term, please tell us how often you did each of the following...
Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response

Variations in alcohol consumption and practices

Further analysis of the survey data has shown significant differences in practices between different groups of respondents. The key differences identified include:

Differences by gender

- Women respondents are more likely to report drinking alcohol less than once a week compared to men respondents (30% compared with 19%); drinking to get drunk more than once a week is also less likely among Women respondents with 5% of women respondents agreeing to this, compared to 14% of men respondents.
- Getting unintentionally drunk less than once a week is more likely among women respondents than men (55% compared with 45%).
- Men respondents are more likely to report visiting their students' union bar than women respondents (6% visit more than once a week compared with 2%).
- Men respondents are more likely to drink at home more than once a week than women respondents (20% compared with 14%).
- Women respondents are more likely to report never purchasing drinks in rounds than men respondents (52% women compared with 36% men); Men respondents are more likely to report purchasing drinks in rounds occasionally 26% compared to 20% women.
- Women respondents are more likely to buy larger measures of alcohol most of the time when on offer than men (17% women compared with 11% men); but men are more likely to take advantage of drink offers such as happy hours some of the time, with 20% men compared to 13% women.

Differences by campus type

- Respondents at institutions that can be classified as large city-based campuses are more likely to agree that they sometimes feel pressure from friends to drink more than they would like (48% compared to 28% at a rural campus)
- Respondents at medium sized campuses are most likely to say they never take part in drinking games (61% compared to 21% living on rural campuses)

Differences by study status

- Respondents studying full time are significantly more likely to report regularly getting drunk at home before a night out than respondents studying part time (19% compared to 8%).
- Respondents studying part time are more likely to say they never visit their students' union bar or nightclub compared to full time respondents (eg 90% part time respondents never visit the students' union bar compared with 49% full time respondents).
- Part time respondents are more likely to report never drinking with the intention of getting drunk than those studying full time (50% part time respondents compared with 26% full time respondents).
- Part time respondents are also more likely to say that they never take part in drinking games, take advantage of offers such as happy hours or buy drinks in rounds (e.g. 81% part time respondents never take part in drinking games compared with 35% full time respondents).

Variations in alcohol consumption and practices contd.

Differences by interests and activities

- Respondents who are part of university/students' union sports clubs are more likely to report regularly starting drinking at home before going out for the night (61% compared with 43% in university / students' union interest clubs / groups and 31% in local sports clubs).
- Respondents who are part of a university/students' union sports club are least likely to never take part in drinking games, with only 16% compared to 56% of those who are part of a local interest club or group.

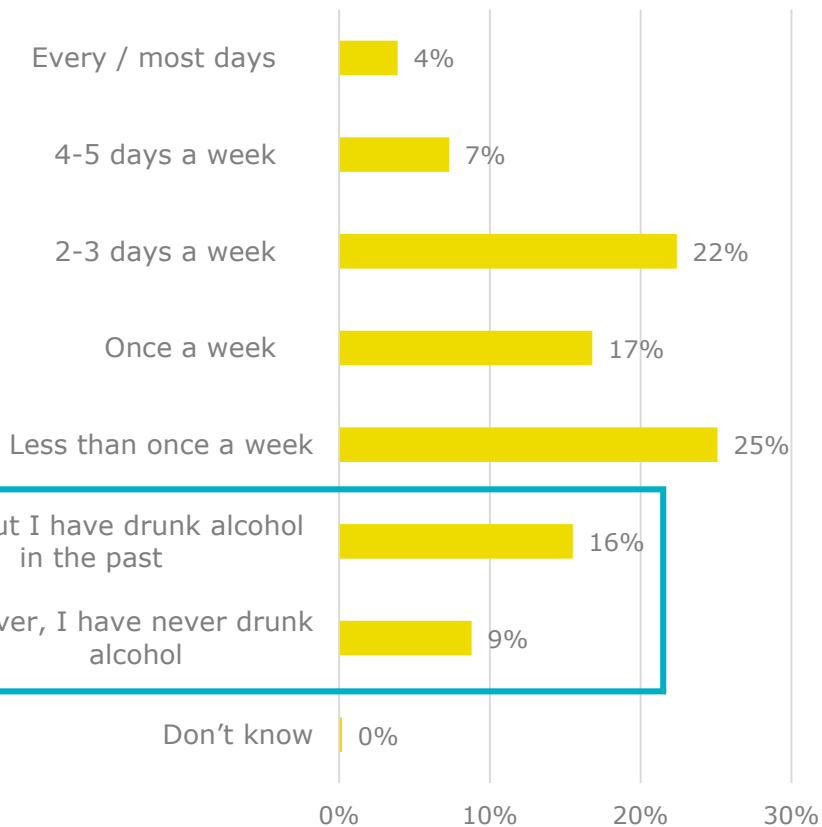
Differences by nationality

- Respondents from outside the EU are more likely to report never drinking alcohol than those from the EU or UK (28% non-EU compared with 7% UK and 3% EU).
- Respondents from outside the EU are least likely to report regularly drinking alcohol at home or at a friend's house before they go out for the night compared with international respondents from the EU or beyond (24% compared with 49% EU and 44% UK).
- Respondents from outside the EU are least likely to never take advantage of drink offers such as happy hours (21%, compared to 37% of EU respondents and 37% of UK students); non EU students are also least likely to agree that their friends expected them to drink alcohol, (29% non EU respondents compared to 47% UK respondents and 54% EU respondents).
- EU respondents are least likely to agree that they feel pressure from friends to drink more alcohol than they would like to. 17% of EU respondents chose this option, compared to 29% UK respondents and 33% non EU students.
- Respondents from the EU are more likely to disagree strongly (68%) that they sometimes feel pressure from friends to drink more alcohol than they would like to, compared to 41% of non EU students and 46% of UK respondents.

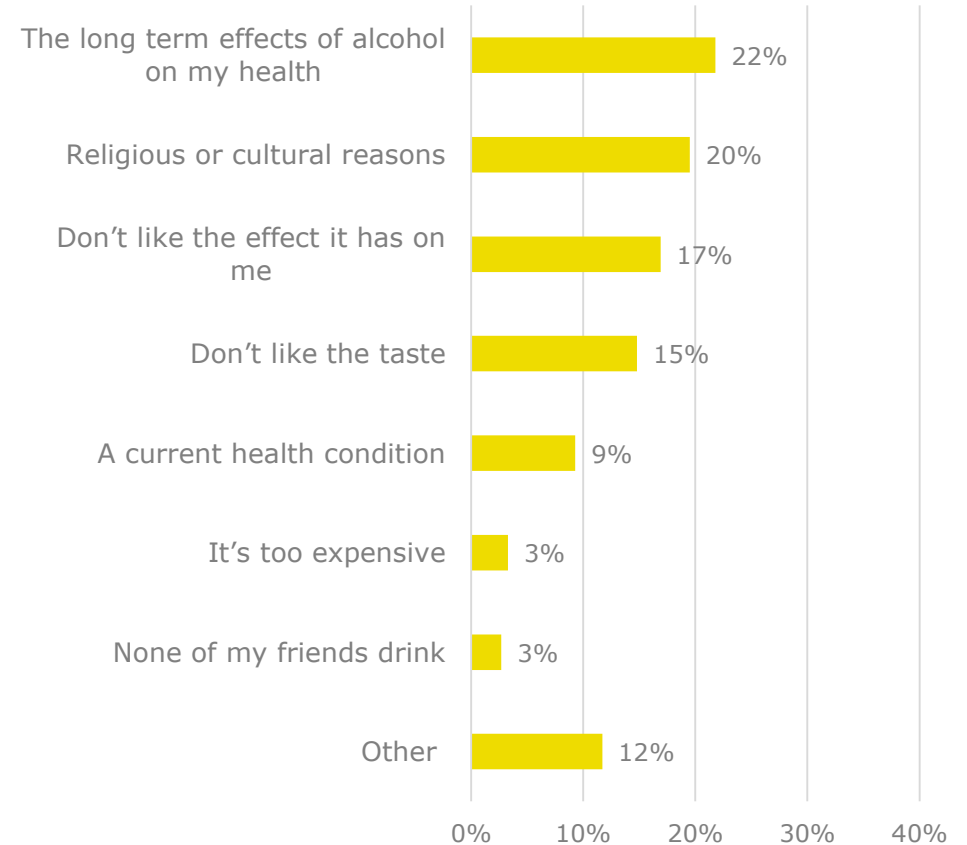
Non-drinkers

25% (n=253) of respondents report that they do not currently drink alcohol, including those that have never drunk alcohol, and those who have in the past.

The most common reasons given for not drinking alcohol, by those who have never or who have stopped drinking, are because of the long term effects of alcohol on health (22%, n=55), and religious or cultural reasons (20%, n=49). Just under a fifth each report not drinking as a result of personal experiences or tastes (17%, n=43, don't like the effect alcohol has on them 15%, and n=37 don't like the taste). Other reasons noted by respondents for not drinking alcohol include current health conditions, cost and because their friends don't drink.



Q. How often, if at all, do you drink alcohol?
Weighted base: 1043 Balance: No response

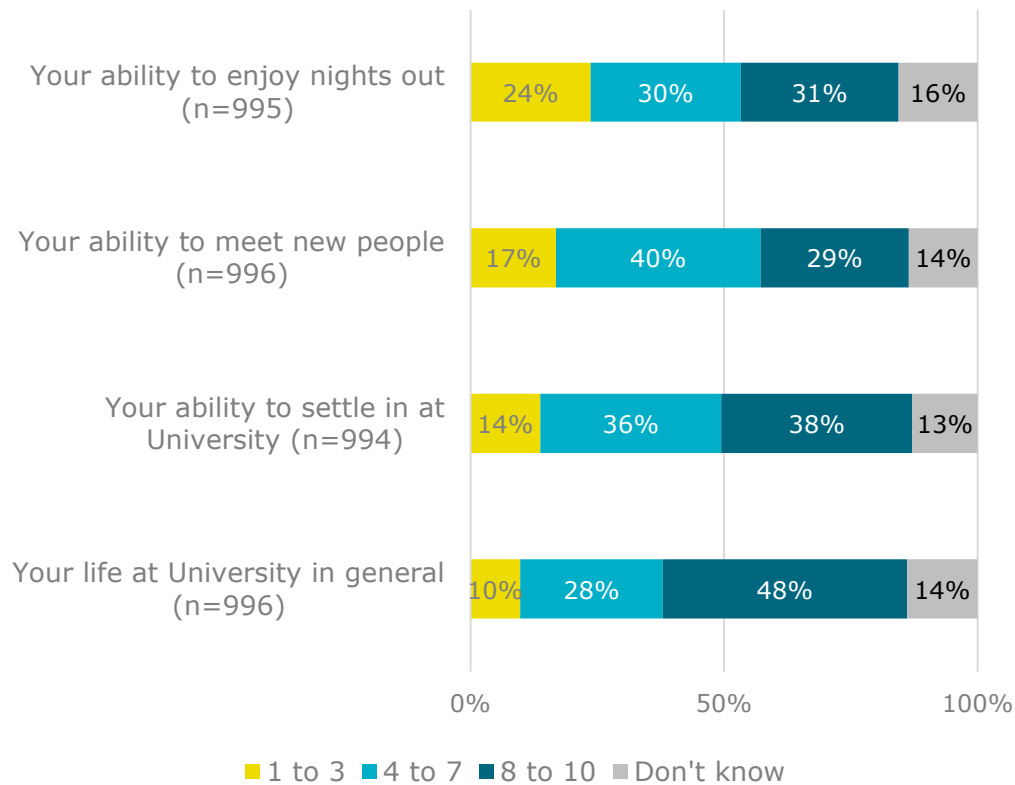


Q. What would you say is your main reason for not drinking, or stopping drinking, alcohol? Weighted base: 253 Balance: No response

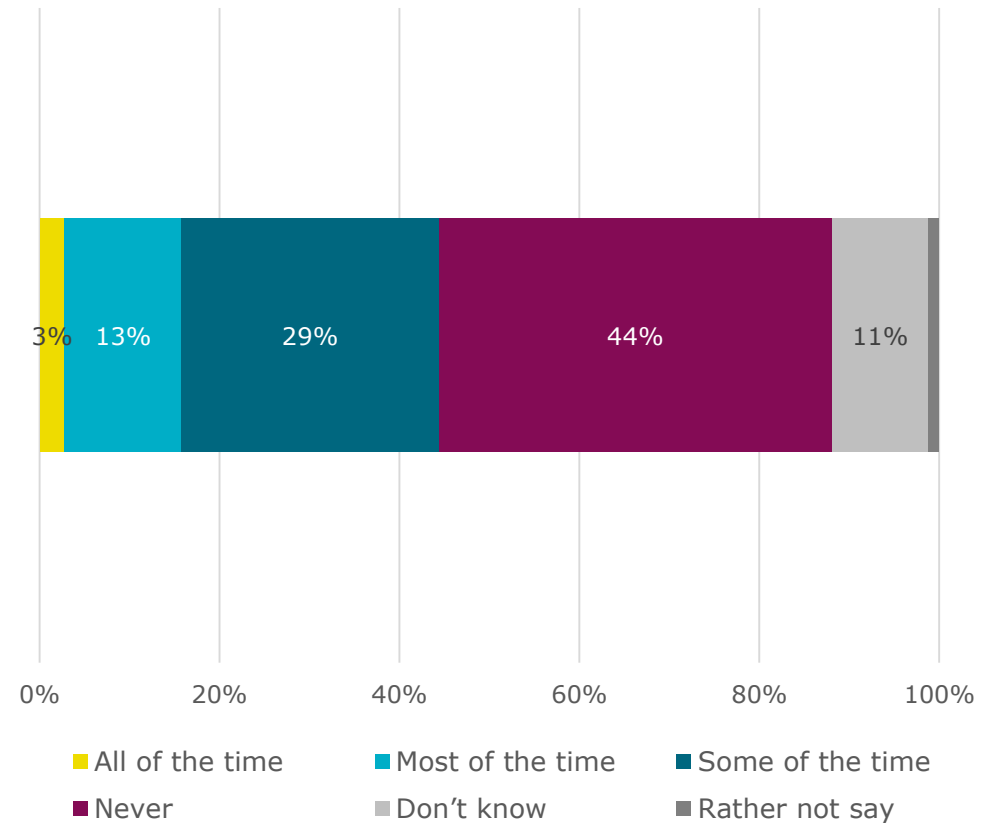
Non-drinkers

Reflecting on the influence of not drinking on their life at university, respondents reported that not drinking had a positive influence on their life at university in general (48%, n=122 selected 8-10, where 10 equals a very positive impact). Not drinking was seen as having the greatest negative impact on their ability to enjoy nights out with 24% (n=60) saying that this had a negative effect (1-3 out of 10 where 1 is a very negative impact). 17% (n=43) said that not drinking has had a negative effect on their ability to meet new people.

3% of non-drinkers report feeling that their friends expect them to drink all of the time when socialising (n=7), however the largest proportion of respondents report never feeling an expectation from their friends to drink alcohol (44%, n=110).



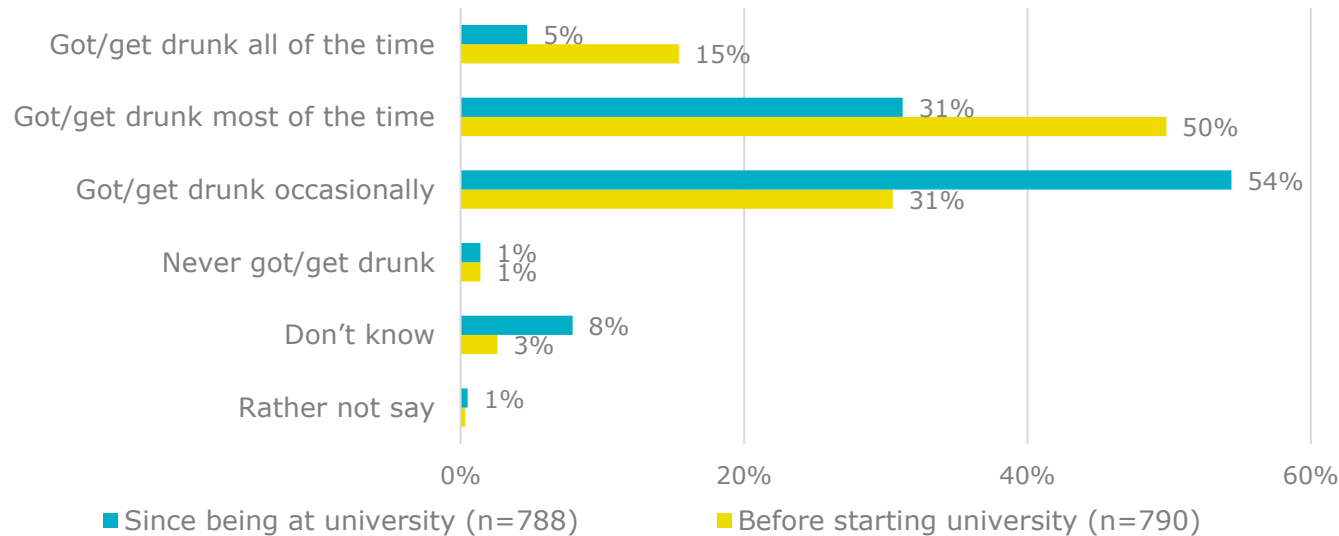
Q. On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 = a very negative impact and 10 = a very positive impact, how do you think that not drinking alcohol has impacted on the following? Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response



Q. Thinking about your most recent university term, when you were socialising with other students, how often did you feel that your friends expected you to drink alcohol?
Base: 252 Balance: No response

4. Perceptions of alcohol consumption on campus

Perceptions of student drinking and getting drunk



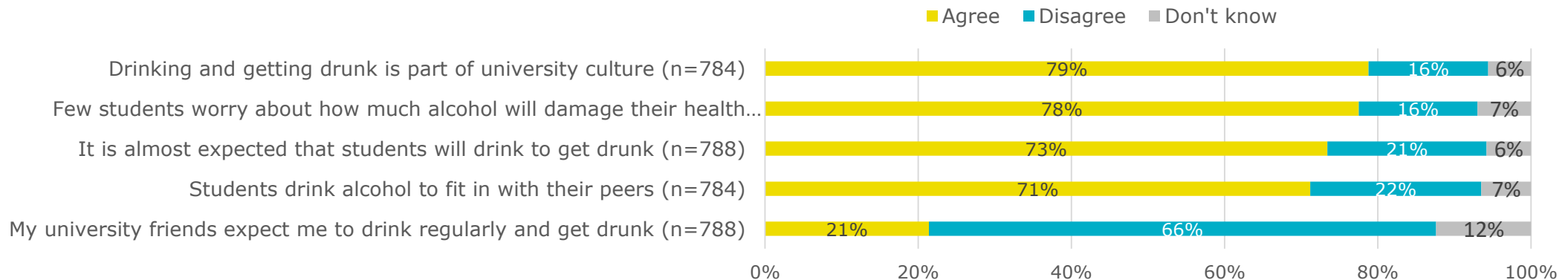
Half of respondents report that prior to starting university they believed that students got drunk most of the time (50%, n=393). A sixth believed that students got drunk 'all of the time' (15%, n=121).

There is a shift when respondents have started university, with over half stating that in their experience students get drunk occasionally (54%, n=429) and 5% saying that their peers get drunk 'all the time' (n=37)

Q. Before arriving at University did you believe that students...
Weighted base: 790 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Experiences of alcohol consumption culture at university

Many respondents expect alcohol to feature heavily within the culture of their university. The majority respondents agreed to some extent that drinking and getting drunk is part of university culture in their experiences (79%, n=784), and three quarters agreed that it is almost expected that students will drink to get drunk (73%, n=579). Respondents report few students worry about how much alcohol will damage their health. (78%, n=608). Although 71% (n=559) agree that students drink alcohol to fit in with their peers, only 21% (n=168) agreed that their friend expect them to drink regularly.



Q. Thinking specifically about drinking alcohol at university, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: (in brackets) Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Variations in perceptions of peer drinking practices

Further analysis of the survey data has shown significant differences in practices between different groups of respondents. The key differences identified include:

Perceptions of student drinking practices before starting university

- Women respondents are more likely to believe that students got drunk 'all of the time' before starting university than men respondents (18% compared with 12%).

Perceptions of peer expectations

- Men respondents are more likely to agree that their friends expect them to drink alcohol regularly and get drunk than Women respondents (27% men respondents feel their friends expect them to drink every time compared to 17% of women respondents).
- Respondents living in university halls are more likely to agree that their friends expect them to drink alcohol regularly and get drunk (31%, compared to 10% in private halls, 6% in university managed accommodation, 17% at home, 22% in rented accommodation and 14% living at home.)
- Non EU students are least likely to say their peers never expect them to drink alcohol (29%, compared to 47% of UK and 54% of EU respondents).

Experiences of peer pressure

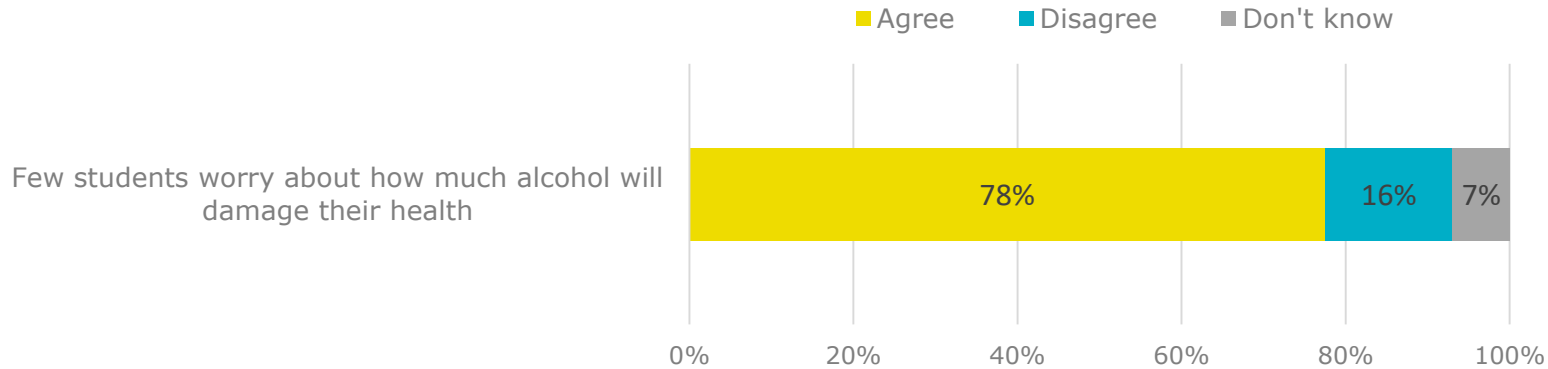
- Non EU respondents (33%) are more likely to agree they feel pressure from their friends to drink more alcohol than they would like to compared to UK (29%) and EU respondents (17%).

Experiences of alcohol consumption culture on campus

- UK students are also more likely to think that drinking to get drunk is part of university culture than international respondents (89% UK respondents compared with 66% EU respondents and 69% non-EU respondents).
- EU students are least likely to agree that students drink alcohol to fit in with their peers (56%, compared to 72% UK and 80% non EU respondents)

5. Impacts of alcohol consumption

Impacts: Health and social wellbeing

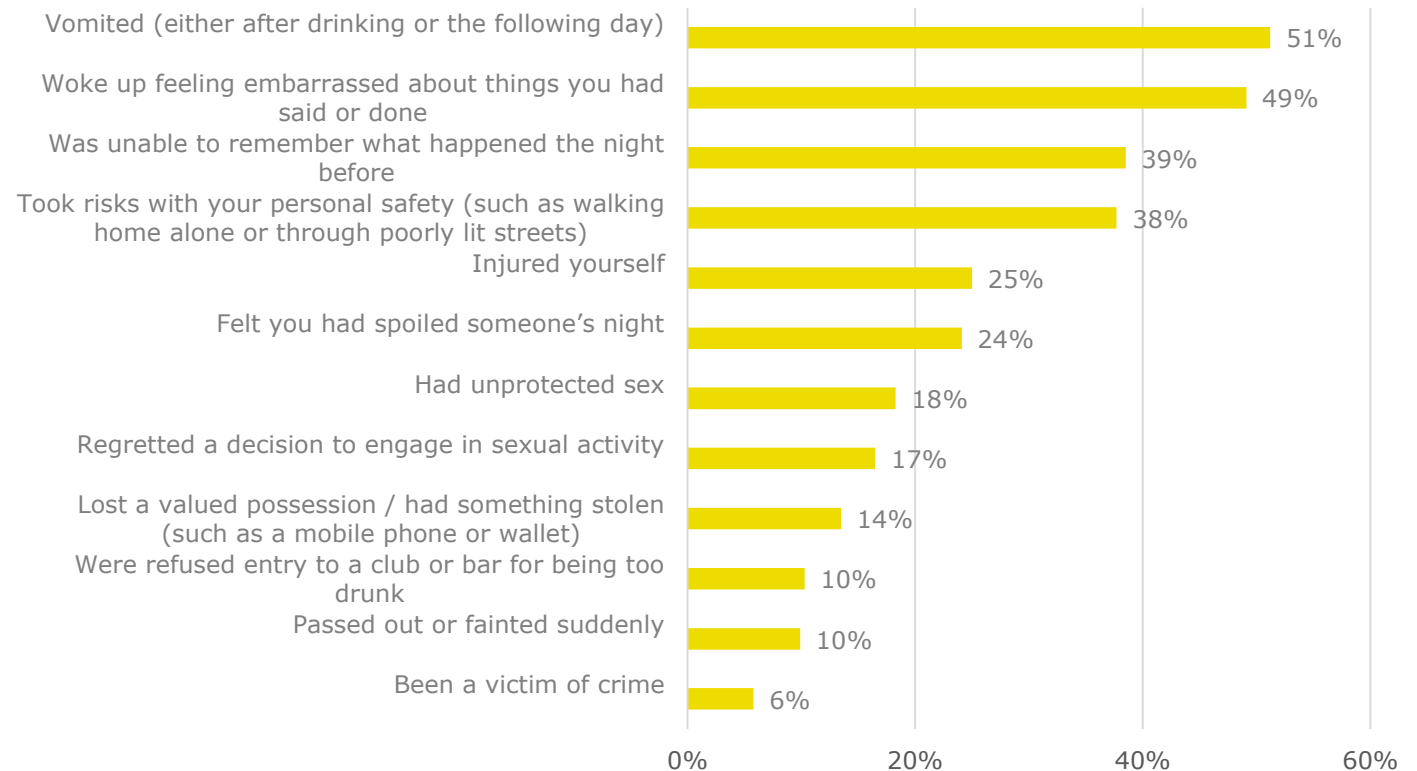


Respondents show a lack of concern about the impacts of alcohol consumption, with 78% (n=608) agreeing that few university students worry about how much alcohol will damage their health.

Q. Thinking specifically about drinking alcohol at university, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: 785 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

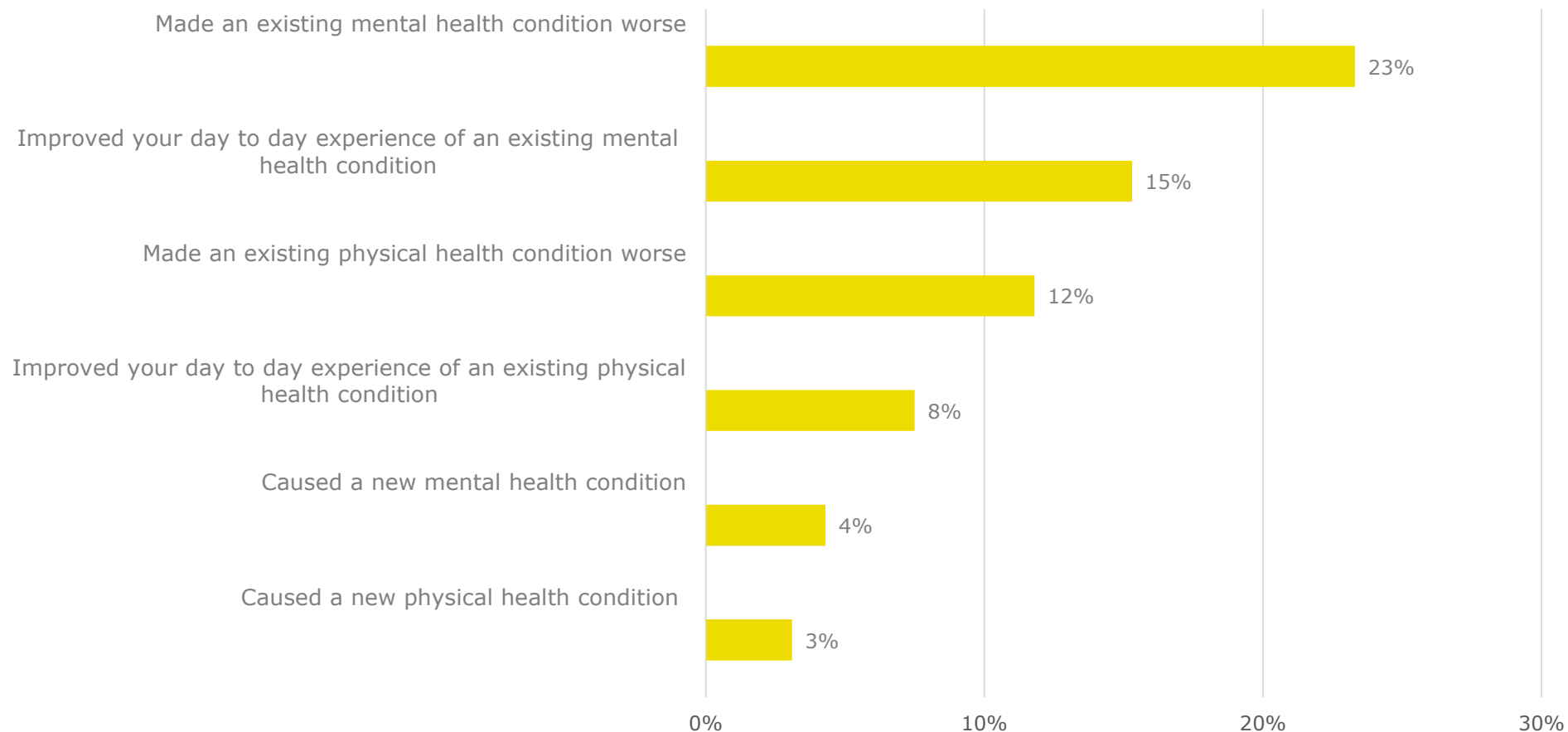
The most commonly experienced reaction in terms of health is vomiting (51%, n=403), either whilst drinking or the following day.

Respondents also report impacts on their social, mental or physical wellbeing, with half either feeling embarrassed about things they had said or done whilst drinking alcohol (49%, n=387), being unable to remember what had happened the night before (39%, n=304) or that they had taken risks with personal safety (38%, n= 297).



Q. People react differently and experience different consequences when drinking alcohol. Please indicate if any of the following things have happened to you in the last term as a result of drinking alcohol. Base: c.788 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Impacts: Health and social wellbeing

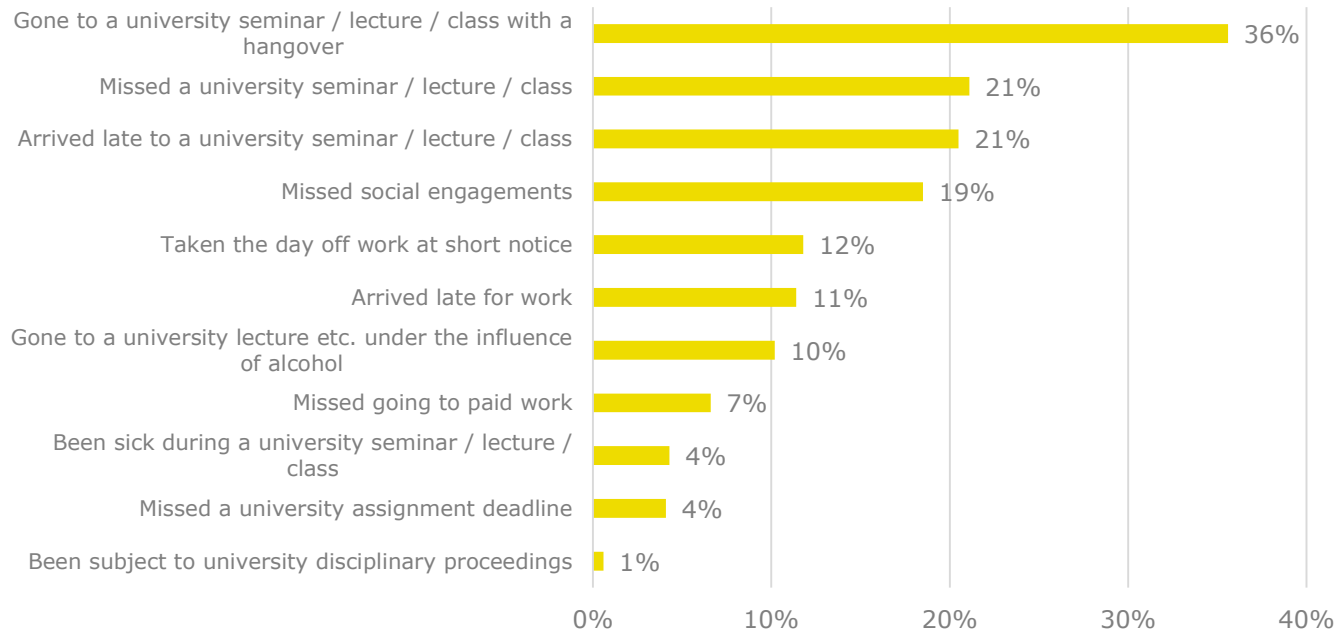


A quarter of respondents admitted that drinking alcohol had made an existing mental condition worse (23%, n= 183), and a further 12% (n=93) had made an existing physical health condition worse.

A sixth of respondents (15%, n=121) reported that drinking alcohol had improved their day to day experience of an existing mental health condition, and 8% (n=59) reported an improvement of their day to day experience of an existing physical health condition.

Q. People react differently and experience different consequences when drinking alcohol. Please indicate if any of the following things have happened to you in the last term as a result of drinking alcohol. Base: c.787 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Impacts: Study and paid work



Respondents to the survey reported an impact on their educational experience, with a third reporting to have gone to a seminar / lecture / class at university with a hangover (36%, n=280). A fifth (21%, n=161) reported arriving late to or missing a seminar/lecture/class as a result of alcohol consumption.

Less common is missing paid work (7%, n=52) or university assignment deadlines (4%, n=33).

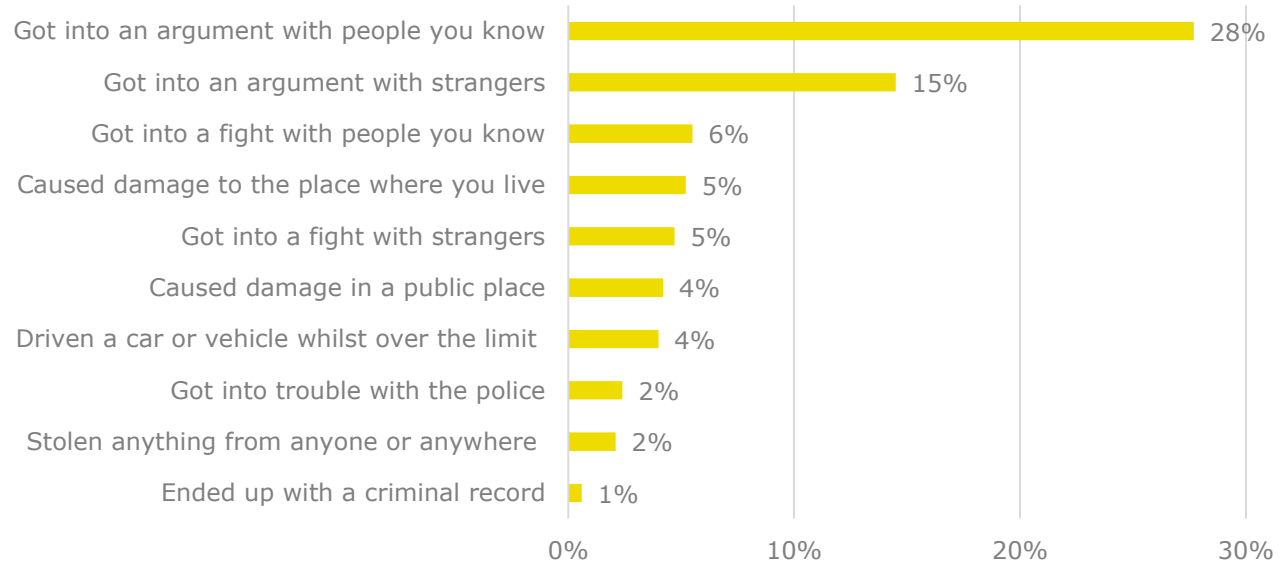
Q. People react differently and experience different consequences when drinking alcohol. Please indicate if any of the following things have happened to you in the last term as a result of drinking alcohol?
Weighted base: c.786 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Impacts: Crime and antisocial behaviour

The research was also designed to gain an assessment of levels of experience of crime and anti-social behaviour, either as a victim or a perpetrator.

For those that did identify as a perpetrator of crime or anti-social behaviour, the most common experience reported was getting into arguments, either with people they know (28%, n=218) or with strangers (15%, n=114). 6% (n=43) also reported escalating these arguments with people they knew into fights, and 5% (n=37) got into fights with strangers. A similar percentage of respondents also reported causing damage to where they live (5%, n=41).

A low percentage of respondents report that these experiences had translated into getting in trouble with the police (2%, n=19) and even fewer have resulted in respondents gaining a criminal record (<1%, n=5).

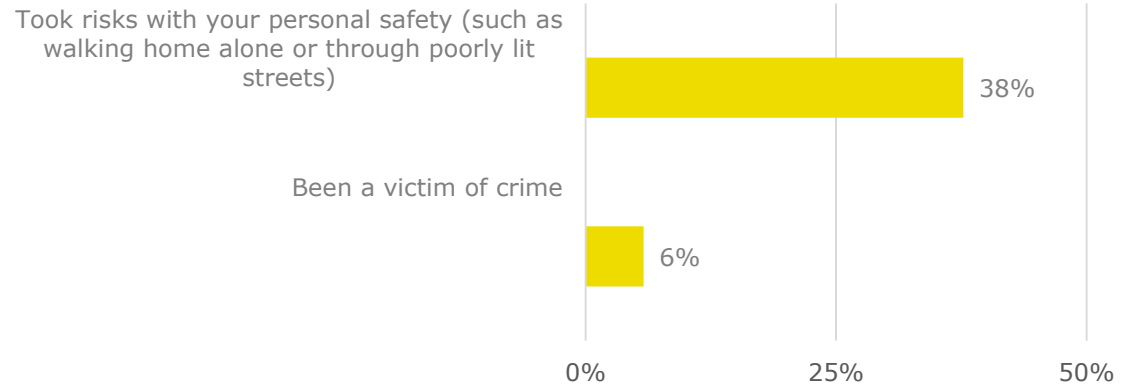


Q. People react differently and experience different consequences when drinking alcohol. Please indicate if any of the following things have happened to you in the last term as a result of drinking alcohol.
Weighted base: c.786 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Impacts: Crime and antisocial behaviour contd.

Respondents report behaviour as a result of alcohol consumption which may leave them more at risk of becoming targets for criminality with two in five (38%, n=297) reporting that they have taken risks with their personal safety such as walking home alone.

Around 1 in 20 reported being a victim of crime (6%, n=46).



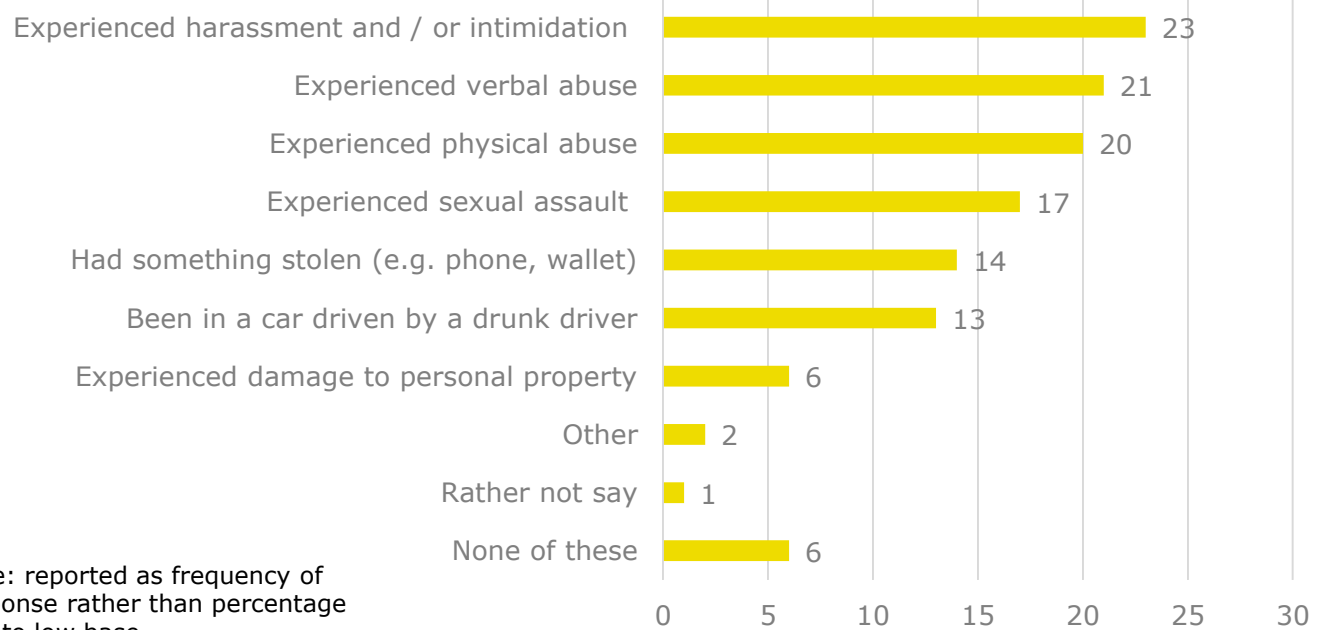
Q. People react differently and experience different consequences when drinking alcohol. Please indicate if any of the following things have happened to you in the last term as a result of drinking alcohol?

Weighted base: c.788 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Of the respondents who identified as a victim of crime, the most frequently reported experience is harassment and/or intimidation (n=23).

Two fifths also report experiencing verbal abuse (n=21), or physical abuse (n=20). Approximately a third experienced sexual assault (n=17), or having something stolen (n=14)

12 'victims of crime' reported their experience to the police, however two thirds (n=30) did not report their experiences to anyone.



Note: reported as frequency of response rather than percentage due to low base

Q. You indicated that you have been a victim of crime when you have been drinking alcohol. We'd like to know more about your experience of being a victim of crime. Please indicate if any of the following things have happened to you in the last term when or after you have been drinking alcohol.

Weighted base: 46 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Impacts: differences by respondent characteristics

Further analysis of the survey data has shown significant differences in practices between different groups of respondents. The key differences identified include:

Health and wellbeing

- Respondents who are in full time education are more likely to report not being able to remember what happened the night before compared with those respondents in part time education (41% compared to 28%).
- Large city campus respondents are also more likely to report not being able to remember what happened the night before (61%) compared to medium (35%), rural (38%) or collegiate campuses (31%).
- Women respondents are more likely to report feeling embarrassed about things they had said and done than Men respondents, (52% compared to 44%).
- Women respondents are more likely to have injured themselves (28%) than men respondents (20%).

Paid work and study

- Men respondents are more likely to report arriving late to a seminar, lecture or class as a result of alcohol consumption than women respondents (24% compared with 18% respectively have missed a commitment).
- Those who drink every/most days are more likely to report attending a university seminar/class/lecture with a hangover (68%) compared to 46% for those who drink over 4-5 days, 43% for those drinking every 2-3 days and 40% for those drinking once a week.

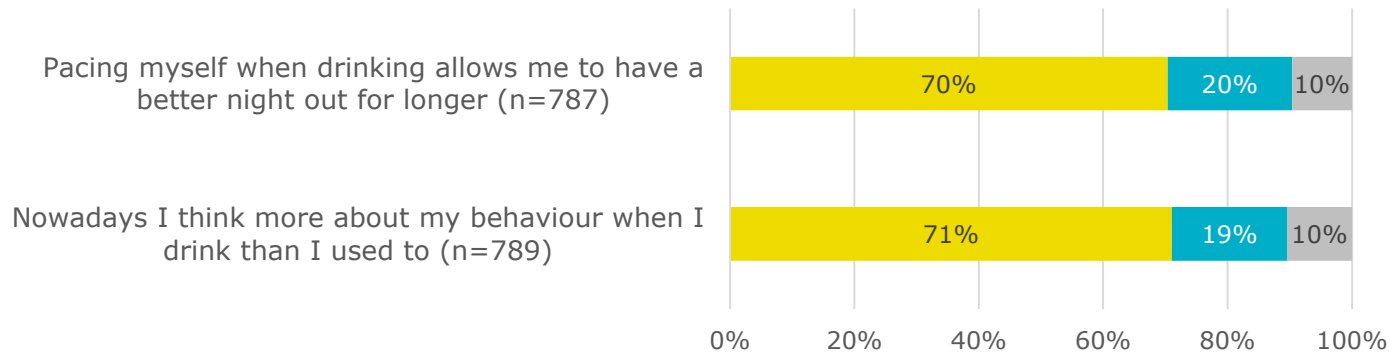
Effect on health

- An improvement in the day to day experience of an existing physical health condition was more likely among men respondents with 11% reporting an improvement, over 5% of women respondents.
- Non EU respondents were more likely to have experienced a change in an existing mental health condition, with 31% reporting an improvement, compared to 14% each of UK and EU respondents.

6. Reducing impacts through responsible consumption

Personal coping strategies

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know



Survey respondents reported taking steps to limit their drinking, with almost three quarters (71%, n=561) reporting that 'nowadays they think more about their behaviour when they drink than they used to', and also that 'pacing themselves when drinking (e.g. drinking soft drinks in between alcoholic drinks) allows them to have a better night out for longer' (70%, n=554).

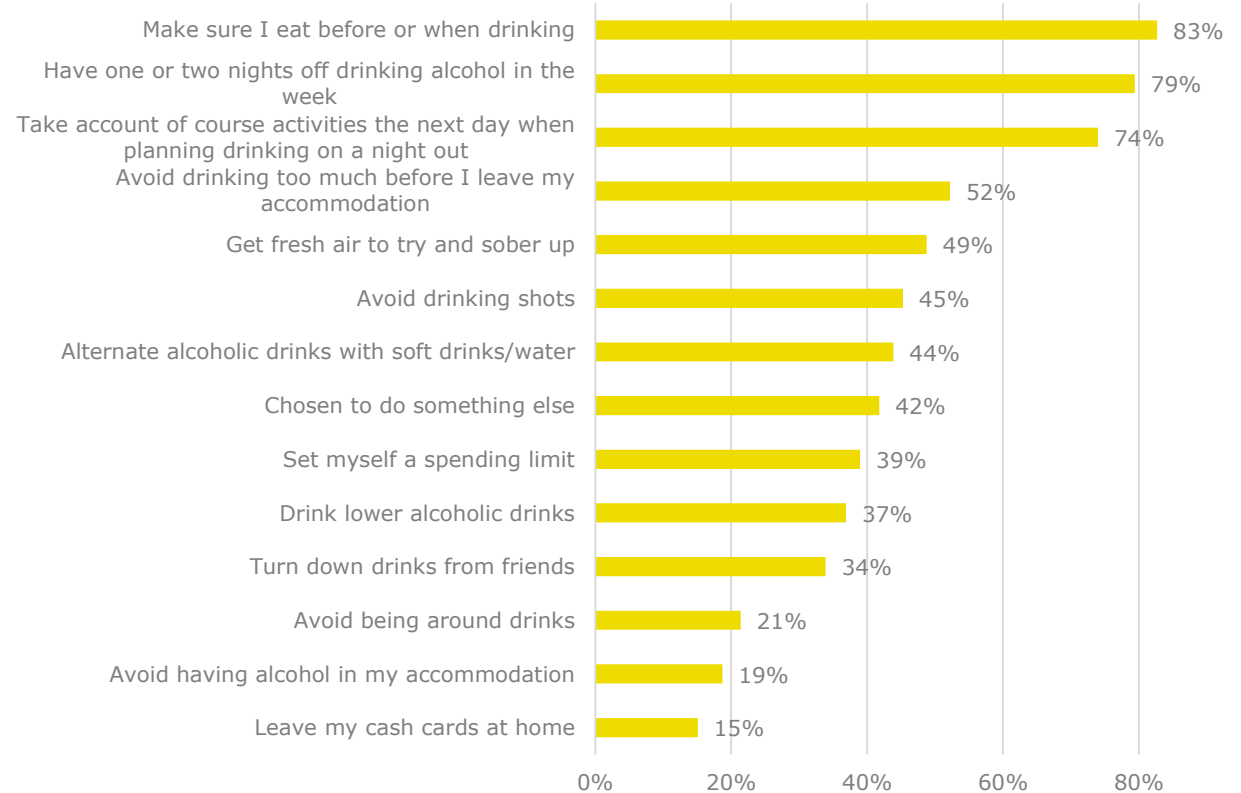
Q. Thinking specifically about drinking alcohol at university, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response and non-drinkers

The two most common practices amongst respondents include making sure they eat before or when drinking (83%, n=649) say this is something they do regularly, and having one or two nights off drinking in the week (79%, n=623 say this is something they do regularly).

Three quarters of respondents (74%, n=581) report that they have taken into account their course activities when planning a night out, however, the success of this approach should be questioned, with around a fifth reporting to have missed university commitments as a result of drinking alcohol. Respondents also revealed using financial mechanisms to control their drinking, such as setting a spending limit (39%, n=307) or leaving cash cards at home (15%, n=118).

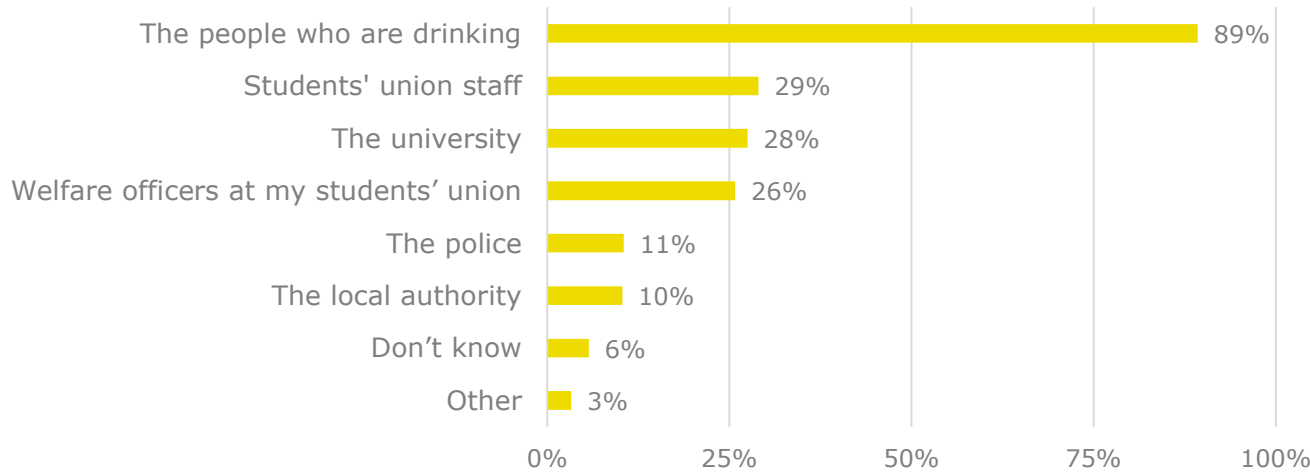
Particular drinking habits or ways of drinking are also avoided, for example avoiding drinking too much before leaving their accommodation (52%, n=411) or avoiding drinking shots (45%, n=356). Despite acknowledging that taking part in rounds can lead to over-consumption, only around a third of respondents report regularly turning down drinks from friends to control their drinking (34%, n=266).



Q. Here are some things people have said they do to control their drinking and avoid getting too drunk. Have you tried any of these? [Something I do regularly]

Weighted base: c.785 Balance: No response and non-drinkers

Promoting responsible consumption



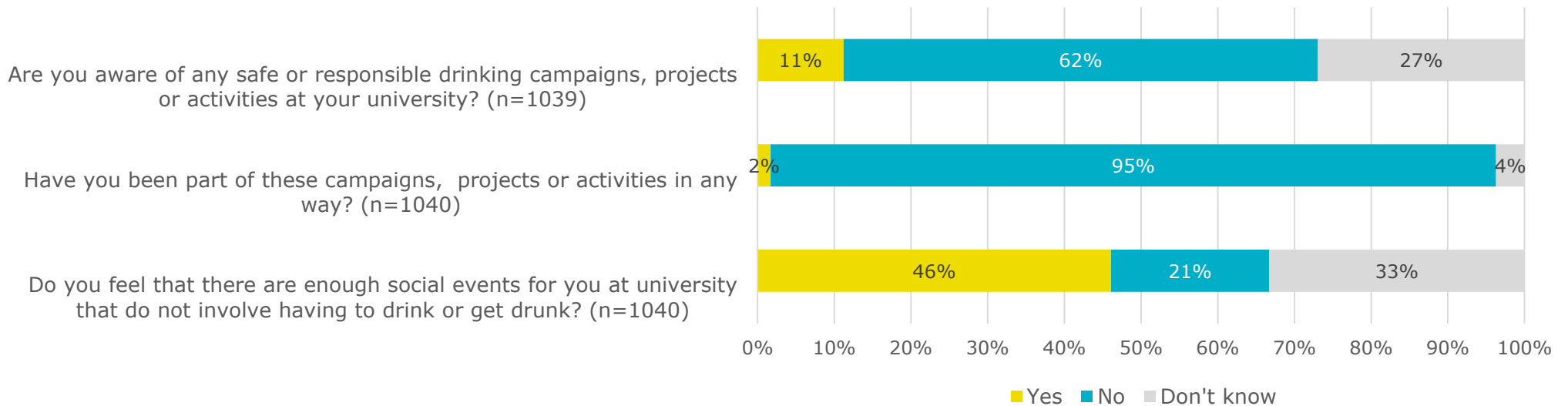
The survey also asked students for their views on how responsible alcohol consumption could be promoted at their university.

Respondents overwhelmingly believe people who are drinking should be responsible for drinking safely (89%, n=929). Around a quarter of respondents see a role for students' union staff to promote safe drinking (29%, n=302) and the university (28%, n=286).

Q. Who, if anyone, do you think is responsible for safe drinking at university?
Weighted base: 1040 Balance: No response

6 in 10 respondents say they aren't aware of safe or responsible drinking campaigns, projects or activities at their university (62%, n=642). Only 2% (n=18) report taking part in campaigns, projects or activities focused on responsible drinking.

Half of respondents are happy with the level of provision of social events at university that do not involve drinking or getting drunk (46%, n=480), however a quarter are not satisfied with current provision (21%, n=214).



Q. Are you aware of any safe or responsible drinking campaigns, projects or activities at your university?
Weighted base: (in brackets) Balance: No response

Responsible consumption on campus: differences by respondent characteristics

Further analysis of the survey data has shown significant differences in practices between different groups of respondents. The key differences identified include:

Differences by respondent characteristics

- Women respondents are more likely to agree that they avoid having alcohol in their accommodation - 22%, compared to 15% of men respondents.
- Women respondents are more likely to agree they have a few nights off alcohol a week with 86%, compared to 71% men respondents.
- Lower alcohol drinks are also a strategy favoured by women with 41% agreeing this is something they do regularly, compared to 32% men respondents.
- Those who drink less than once a week are more likely to avoid being around drinks with 34% compared with 13% of those who drink every day, 12% of those who drink every 4-5 days, 14% of those who drink every 2-3 days, and 18% of those who drink once a week.
- Men respondents are more likely to say they would not even consider leaving their cash cards at home with 29% compared to 19% of women respondents.
- Avoiding drinking shots is something women respondents are more likely to do compared to men respondents (49%, compared to 40%); turning down drinks from friends is also more likely among women respondents (39%) than men respondents 28%; and women are also more likely to avoid drinking too much before leaving their accommodation, an option chosen by 57% compared to 45% of men respondents.
- Women respondents are more likely to make sure they eat something before or when drinking with 86% choosing this option, compared to 79% men; and are also more likely to alternate alcoholic drinks with soft drinks or water (48%, compared to 38%.)
- Respondents who drink every day are most likely not to take into account their course activities for the following day, with 17% agreeing to this, compared to less than 6% of respondents from all other drinking frequency categories.
- Choosing to do something else is favoured by 48% women, with only 35% men agreeing with this option; and conversely doing something else was is least likely with 18-20 year olds who do this, compared to over 40% of all other age categories.

alcoholimpact.nus.org.uk

For further information about Alcohol Impact please contact:

Tracy Lumb, Senior project manager – wellbeing

Tracy.Lumb@sos-uk.org

For further information about this research please contact:

Rachel Drayson, Head of research and impact

Rachel.Drayson@sos-uk.org

