

**HERMAN GOLDSTEIN  
AWARD APPLICATION  
2010**

***Submitted by  
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***OPERATION FIRST STRIKE  
Interventions for preventing underage drinking  
(Stop & Educate)***

**SUMMARY**

*Research shows that many adolescents start to drink at very young ages. In 2003, the average age of first use of alcohol was about 14, compared to about 17 1/2 in 1965. People who reported starting to drink before the age of 15 were four times more likely to also report meeting the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives. In fact, new research shows that the serious*

*drinking problems (including what is called alcoholism) typically associated with middle age actually begin to appear much earlier, during young adulthood and even adolescence.*

*Children who begin to drink at a very early age (before age 12) often share similar personality characteristics that may make them more likely to start drinking. Young people who are disruptive, hyperactive, and aggressive often referred to as having conduct problems or being anti social as well as those who are depressed, withdrawn, or anxious, may be at greatest risk for alcohol problems. Other behaviour problems associated with alcohol use include rebelliousness, difficulty avoiding harm or harmful situations and a host of other traits seen in young people who act out without regard for rules or the feelings of others.*

*In a recent survey of 10,000 15 - 16 year olds undertaken in the United Kingdom, 90% drank and 40% of these usually binged on alcohol.*

*There has been a rise in underage drinking throughout the country and*

*already studies have identified that this behaviour is having a substantial effect on the public health care system and will continue to do so if something is not done to curb this frequent behaviour.*

*Whilst drinking alcohol it is clear that this induces anti social behaviour and was an issue for Hessle and its community, it is also important that the effects on the individual's health was also a major concern for the Hessle neighbourhood team.*

*As a result of these common problems within Hessle a decision was made to tackle this issue in the attempt to alleviate anti social behaviour and also educate those persons 'binge drinking' habits.*

## **WHY DO ADOLESCENTS DRINK?**

*Alcohol is the drug of choice among youth. Many young people are experiencing the consequences of drinking too much, at too early an age. As a result, underage drinking is a leading public health problem in this country.*

*Each year, approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking;*

*When a youth drinks they tend to drink intensively, often consuming four to five drinks at one time, known as “binge“ drinking.*

*Yet drinking continues to be widespread among adolescents, as shown by nationwide surveys as well as studies in smaller populations.*

### **WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?**

*The current society of thought for all persons appears to include alcohol in their lives. This culture is one that most certainly affects most adults*

*who can consume alcohol legally.*

*Parents without knowledge or thought do in fact pass this culture down to their children in a classic psychological conditioning style. Most adult's normal working week tends to be Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Each Friday after their working week it appears to be the normal sequence of events to get drunk at least once over the weekend. That process is mirrored by their children at the end of a schooling week.*

*Hessle is a small town and has a whole range of retail outlets. These include local supermarkets which are licensed to sell alcohol along with local 'off licence' premises. The availability of alcohol in the village is easily accessible for all at most times of day and night.*

*Whilst restrictions are in place for proprietors of such retail stores to check for identification when selling alcohol and it is a legal requirement to do so, it is clear that youths will convince and adult*

*(aged 18 and over) to purchase the alcohol on their behalf.*

*Children will acquire alcohol albeit illegally or by deception and together, generally in groups will drink throughout the evening and will consume so much alcohol that it can be both dangerous to their health and will induce anti social behaviour. The communities do suffer at the hands of youths engaging in these activities.*

*This culture has increasingly become an issue for our small town and the youth were regularly engaging in drinking alcohol. The current law enforcement allows officers to seize alcohol from any young person found to be in possession or drinking alcohol. However it stops at this point and it was found that this did not appear to be enough for them to stop. The young persons were simply repeating their actions as their only fear was to have their alcohol taken away from them. Exclusion zones for alcohol are in force in Hessle, however the young persons had learned to avoid these areas. The findings also highlighted the fact that this culture did in fact revolve around the end of schooling week and*

*especially those last day of term dates. In other words a day to 'celebrate'.*

*Another important factor which became apparent was that parents of young persons were not being informed of their activities.*

*Locally Hessle has suffered the results of underage drinking and this is shown in the analysis which highlights calls for service for anti social behaviour.*

*This initiative is aimed to **Stop** and **Educate** both the adolescent community of Hessle and their parents.*

## **FINDINGS**

*The neighbourhood team at Hessle would patrol the town using high visibility patrols and make observations. Alcohol seizures from the*

*adolescent groups became a concerning factor as it was clear that these type of seizures were increasing.*

*Binge drinking is a problem within the adolescent community in Hesse.*

*This behaviour had been monitored using alcohol seizure figures and from officer on high visibility patrols. (See figures - when available)*

*The findings were that underage drinking appeared to be habitual on certain evenings of the week, usually Friday and Saturdays. The persistent issues around anti social behaviour and other various minor crime and incidents involving the adolescent community did have a common denominator which is alcohol.*

*This problem was also identified by the rise in calls for service for anti social behaviour. The age range for those involved in these activities is quite specific in that they are generally aged between 13 years and 17 years. Having identified the age range, the head master from the local high school was invited to participate in the project and welcomed this*



*approach.*

*Identifying adolescents at greatest risk can help stop problems before they develop. This project is felt to be an innovative, comprehensive approach to prevention and education.*

### **WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS?**

*Whatever it is that leads adolescents to begin drinking, once they start they face a number of potential health risks. Although the severe health problems associated with harmful alcohol use are not as common in adolescents as they are in adults, studies show that young people who drink heavily may put themselves at risk for a range of potential health*

*problems.*

***Brain Effects***—*Scientists currently are examining just how alcohol affects the developing brain, but it's a difficult task. Subtle changes in the brain may be difficult to detect but still have a significant impact on long-term thinking and memory skills. Add to this the fact that adolescent brains are still maturing, and the study of alcohol's effects becomes even more complex*

*Research has shown that animals fed alcohol during this critical developmental stage continue to show long-lasting impairment from alcohol as they age. It's simply not known how alcohol will affect the long-term memory and learning skills of people who began drinking heavily as adolescents.*

***Liver Effects***—*Elevated liver enzymes, indicating some degree of liver*

*damage, have been found in some adolescents who drink alcohol. Young drinkers who are overweight or obese showed elevated liver enzymes even with only moderate levels of drinking.*

***Growth and Endocrine Effects***—*In both males and females, puberty is a period associated with marked hormonal changes, including increases in the sex hormones, estrogen and testosterone.*

*These hormones, in turn, increase production of other hormones and growth factors, which are vital for normal organ development. Drinking alcohol during this period of rapid growth and development (i.e., prior to or during puberty) may upset the critical hormonal balance necessary for normal development of organs, muscles, and bones.*

*Having this knowledge and studies to hand it was decided that the local doctor would be a great asset to this project.*

**THE THEORY**

***To Stop and Educate both Parents and children***

***And the***

***Interventions for preventing underage drinking***

*The theory was to have the partners together in one venue and to allow the child and their parents to take advantage of their knowledge and advice in a professional capacity*

- *To highlight and educate the health risks and the effects of alcohol.*
  
- *To highlight to parents their children's behaviour and also the lack of knowledge of what their child is actually doing.*
  
- *To reduce calls for service for alcohol related incidents and anti social behaviour.*
  
- *To offer parents and opportunity to seek help and assistance if required with alcohol issues and their children. This was possible as the professionals were in one venue at the same time*

## **THE METHOD**

*Operation First Strike is aimed at both children and their parents.*

*In order to implement this initiative the neighbourhood team involved their partners.*

*On an evening in July 2009, police and partners gathered in a local*

*town hall. Our partners included:*

**Local Doctor**

*Offered advice and education of the detrimental effects of alcohol and their health.*

**Clinical Team Educator – Paramedic**

*Offered advice and education of a factual nature drawing on their experiences of alcohol and underage drinkers found on the street. The educator could also offer advice of the effects of alcohol and their health.*

**Accident and Emergency Nurse (specialist is substance misuse and alcohol)**

*Offered advice and education on the medical systems and procedures when entering the A & E department. They would speak about the*

*effects and treatment required i.e. pumping out stomachs. They also educated the youths on alcohol abuse and its effects.*

### **Headmaster of local high school**

*Being the headmaster of the local high school he was able to offer advice regarding the individual's capabilities at school and their current school grades. He could reassure and motivate them regarding their education and stress that using alcohol is not the way forward.*

### **Substance misuse officer**

*Factual advice on the effects of alcohol and also offer professional counseling and assistance for those with a long term alcohol issue.*

### **Anti social behaviour officer**

*Offered advice on the local authority procedures and monitoring of anti*



*social behaviour and what impact that would have on the individual.*

**Police officer**

*Who offered advice also on anti social behaviour and the likelihood of possible crimes being committed whilst under the influence of alcohol.*

*The officer also informed the youths about the effects their behaviour is having on the community and residents.*

## **OPERATION FIRST STRIKE IN PRACTICE**

*Numerous local officers conducted their patrols in the known target areas which had been highlighted during previous high visibility patrols and alcohol seizures.*

*Youths were found to be consuming alcohol in groups and subsequently detained.*

*An officer was dedicated to contacting parents when alerted by the patrol officers and parents are contacted via telephone. Parents were*

*then requested to attend the local town hall.*

*Children were then conveyed to the Town Hall to be greeted by an officer who would obtain relevant details for our juvenile liaison department..*

*Once Parents arrive both parent and child were then placed in the carousel system with a panel of partners or specialists and they then have the opportunity to discuss personal issues if required.*

*Parents and children during this time are offered advice, educated by the doctor on health and effects of alcohol, discussed schooling issues and grades by the head teacher and advised by the substance misuse officer along with the anti social behaviour officer and their roles along with police and educating regarding possible criminal offences and prospects of crimes being committed whilst in drink.*

## **THE SUCCESS STORY AND CONCLUSION**

*Throughout this project local officers gathered intelligence regarding the sale of alcohol to minors. Children would inform the partners of how the alcohol was acquired. This included local retail premises that were clearly selling the alcohol to minors.*

*The youths also informed the partners of regular drinking events in the area and identified individuals who would always acquire the alcohol.*

*Youths identified to the partners that they believed they had a problem with alcohol and they were subsequently referred by the substance misuse officer for help.*

*Parents were amazed of exactly what their children were doing when not in their control or care. Parents were also alerted to the fact that their children had told them lies as to their whereabouts.*

*Most importantly the feedback from the youths was very positive as it was clear none of the youths had ever considered the possible consequences of their alcohol intake and effects on their health.*

**Alcohol related anti social behaviour in Hessle**

**9 months either side of July 2009**

The below table shows the total number of calls for service for the 9 months prior to July 2009 and after July 2009. The periods represent 273 days and 274 days respectively and so can be compared.

<i>Incident type</i>	<i>Nov 08 to July 09</i>	<i>July 09 to Mar 10</i>	<i>% change</i>
<i>All ASB</i>	<i>534</i>	<i>471</i>	<i>- 12</i>
<i>All ASB - youth</i>	<i>240</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>- 3</i>
<i>All ASB - youth and alcohol qualifiers qu qualifiers</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>-23</i>
<i>All ASB - both youth and alcohol</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>-27</i>
<i>% Asb - youth</i>	<i>44.9</i>	<i>49.7</i>	<i>11</i>

% Asb - alcohol	9.7	8.5	<b>-13</b>
% Asb - both youth and alcohol	4.1	3.4	<b>-0.7</b>

*As can be seen, the number of Anti social behaviour incidents or calls for service in the period after July 2009 has seen a 12% reduction in Anti social behaviour as compared with the period before July 2009.*

*The number of incidents or calls for service with alcohol qualifiers has fallen by 23%.*

### **Summary**

*The percentage of Anti social behaviour incidents or calls for service has reduced by 12% in the 9 months since July 2009 compared with 9 months before July 2009.*

*The total number of incidents attributed to youths and alcohol has fallen by 27%. This is a clear indication that youth and alcohol related anti*

*social behaviour in Hessle has fallen since the initiative began.*

## **THE FACTS**

*Local youths are now aware of the initiative and alcohol issues with youths appear to have reduced.*

*This problem solving exercise is now an ongoing initiative and will be repeated periodically. The theory behind this has two points.*

*I) To allow the community to be fully aware of the neighbourhood team's actions and realise that this is ongoing.*

*II) To catch the younger children growing up in good time to prevent any long term alcohol problems.*



***However we believe;***

*“You may not stop every child from meeting alcohol but we can make every attempt to educate them, therefore allowing them to make a very important informed decision”*

### **REPEAT OPERATION**

*This operation was repeated on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010 which was the last day of school term. The youths on this operation were requested to complete a questionnaire which was deemed to be an improvement from 2009's operation. This questionnaire was aimed at gathering further intelligence regarding the habits of under age drinkers.. (See appendix 1) All persons completing this questionnaire were under the age of 17 years. The youngest being 15 years of age.*

*The results and findings of this questionnaire are as follows:*

*The questionnaire provided the following evaluations:*

***100% - Stated that they all drank with persons of the same sex.***

***90% - Stated that they have suffered with a 'hangover' in the last 12 months by consuming too much alcohol.***

***90% - Fully admitted to consuming alcohol, more than just a sip.***

***50% - Claimed they only drank alcohol on special occasions (this special occasion would include the last day of school term)***

*The questionnaires also revealed that alcohol was obtained by the*

*following methods:*

***Requesting strangers over the age of 18 years to purchase it on their behalf.***

***Parents gave them it.***

***The alcohol was obtained by taking it from home without knowledge of their parents***

*The amount of alcohol seized from persons under the age of 18 on this operation was 70 cans of beer (lager) quantities of bottles of wine and vodka.*

*Operation First Strike has proved a successful event having conducted this twice and will continue to be repeated.*

***Police Constable 1101 Tracey Chaney***

APPENDIX 1

DRINKING QUESTIONNAIRE

**You are invited to complete this questionnaire on a voluntary basis. You do not have to provide your name, however your answers will be valued by the Hesse Team. The aim of this questionnaire is to enable us to have better understanding of underage drinking.**

**Firstly please state your age .....**

**1. Have you ever had an alcoholic drink – that is, a proper drink, more than just a sip?**

*Please carefully CIRCLE the answer that best describes you.*

**YES                      NO**

**2. How often have you had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 MONTHS?**

*Please carefully CIRCLE just ONE letter for the answer e.g. a that best describes you.*

1. Not at all
2. Just on special occasions
3. Less than once a month
4. Once or twice a month
5. Once a week
6. 2–4 days a week

7. 5–6 days a week
8. Every day

**3. In which of the following places do you usually drink?**

*Please TICK the answer in the box that best describes you for each of the places*

1. Home
2. Home of other relatives
3. At parties
4. Pub or wine bar
5. Night club
6. Park or street
7. Other\*

\* Please write in where:

**4. Who do you usually drink with?**

*Please TICK the answer in the box that best describes you for each of the people*

1. Group of friends – same sex as you
2. Brothers or sisters
3. Other family, inc. parents
4. On my own
5. Boy or girl friend

6. Other— please say who:

**5. . Have you ever felt very drunk in the past 12 MONTHS?**

*Please carefully CIRCLE the answer that best describes you.*

**YES            NO**

**6. How often have you felt very drunk in the past 12 MONTHS?**

*Please carefully CIRCLE just ONE letter for the answer e.g. a that best describes you.*

1. At least once a week
2. Several times a month
3. Once or twice a month
4. Every couple of months
5. Less often
6. Not at all

**7. In the last 12 MONTHS, have you had a hangover after drinking too much alcohol?**

*Please carefully CIRCLE the answer that best describes you.*

**YES            NO**

**8. How often have you had a hangover in the past 12 MONTHS?**

*Please carefully CIRCLE just ONE letter for the answer e.g. a that best describes you.*

1. At least once a week
2. Several times a month
3. Once or twice a month
4. Every couple of months
5. Less often
6. Not at all

**9. When you drink, how do you mostly get the alcohol?**

*Please TICK the answer in the box that best describes you for each*

Never Hardly ever Sometimes Usually

– Rarely –

2. My parents give it to me
3. From home without my parent knowing

4. Friends bring it from their home

5. I buy it\*

6. Friends who are under 18 buy it

7. Friends who are over 18 buy it

8. I ask a stranger to buy for me

9. Other way –please say how:

\* Please write in here where **you** usually buy alcohol

**10. In the last 12 MONTHS, which of the following, if any, have you done *during or after drinking*?**

*Please carefully CIRCLE the answer that best describes you.*

1. Got into a heated argument    **YES**    **NO**

2. Got into a fight                **YES**    **NO**

3. Broken, damaged or destroyed something that did not belong to me  
**YES**                                **NO**

4. Taken something that did not belong to me    **YES**    **NO**

5. Missed school, college or work                **YES**    **NO**

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION AND TIME***

***PC 1101 TRACEY CHANEY  
NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER  
PEELER HOUSE  
HESSLE***





