



Licensing Services

Alcohol Policy Review 2023

Analysis of data and trends – Impact on Moray

Document owner: Research & Information Officers

Version: 0.6 (Final)

Date: 19/04/2023

Evidence for Licensing Board

Background

Alcohol is the nation's most used recreational drug. Like any intoxicating substance it has the potential to cause health and social harm that may be exacerbated by pandemics such as Covid-19. Licenses to sell alcohol were introduced in the 19th century (UK Public General Acts, 1872) making it compulsory to have a license to sell alcohol for consumption on or off premises (on-sale licenses e.g. pubs and off-sale such as supermarkets). Licensing legislation has undergone periodic revision and amendment (Gillan, 2011).

The latest revision is The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 came into force in 2009 as a result of the need to address the problem of increased deaths from alcohol misuse but balancing this against the rights of responsible drinkers (Christie, 2003). The Act enlarged the scope of licensing boards to govern the availability of alcohol by considering five licensing objectives:

1. Preventing crime and disorder
2. Securing public safety
3. Preventing public nuisance
4. Protecting and improving public health
5. Protecting children and young persons from harm

Licensing boards are required to publish a licensing policy every five years, the current policy expires in November 2023. The Board is also required to consider whether there is an over-provision of licensed premises and any saturation policy amended or removed. Licensing is in effect the local governance of alcohol availability, global factors such as minimum alcohol pricing and online sales are discussed later.

Evidence is key to effective licensing practice and this document draws together quantitative information from published sources, local agencies and presents analysis broadly under the five licensing objectives as well as findings from a survey of peoples' experience within the Licensing Board (Moray Council's) area. Comparisons with data from the last licensing review (Bennett, 2018) have been made where available to show change over time.

Qualitative information such as experience and expertise of the Board is out with the scope, but should complement this document.

Moray Overview

Rural areas of Scotland like Moray have a high proportion of alcohol licenses (Chart 0.1) relative to the permanent population. The Moray population is estimated at 96,410 in 2022 (NRS, 2022) with 366 liquor licenses¹ in force (gov.scot, 2022), approximately 3.8 licenses per 10,000 population. Licenses premises are situated predominantly in centres of population such as Elgin, Forres and coastal towns (Map 1). Some of the whisky distilleries are located outside of the towns.

¹ Disambiguation: "Alcohol license" and "liquor license" are synonymous, there is no distinction in the strength of alcohol when used in this context.

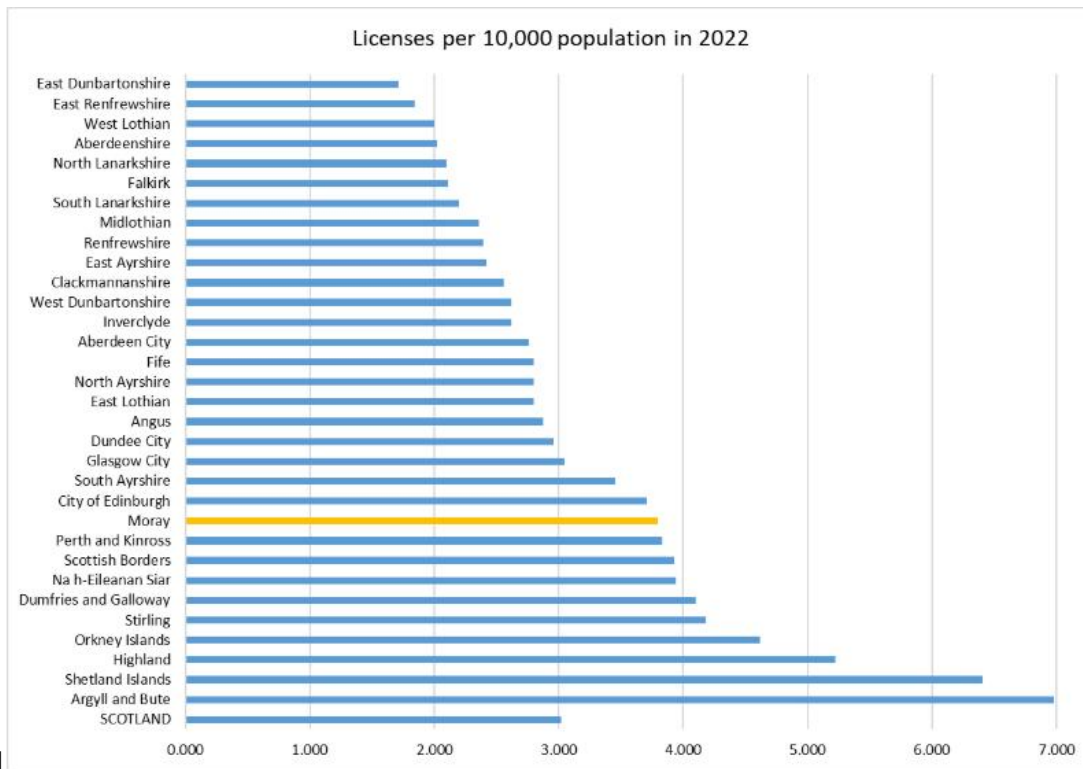
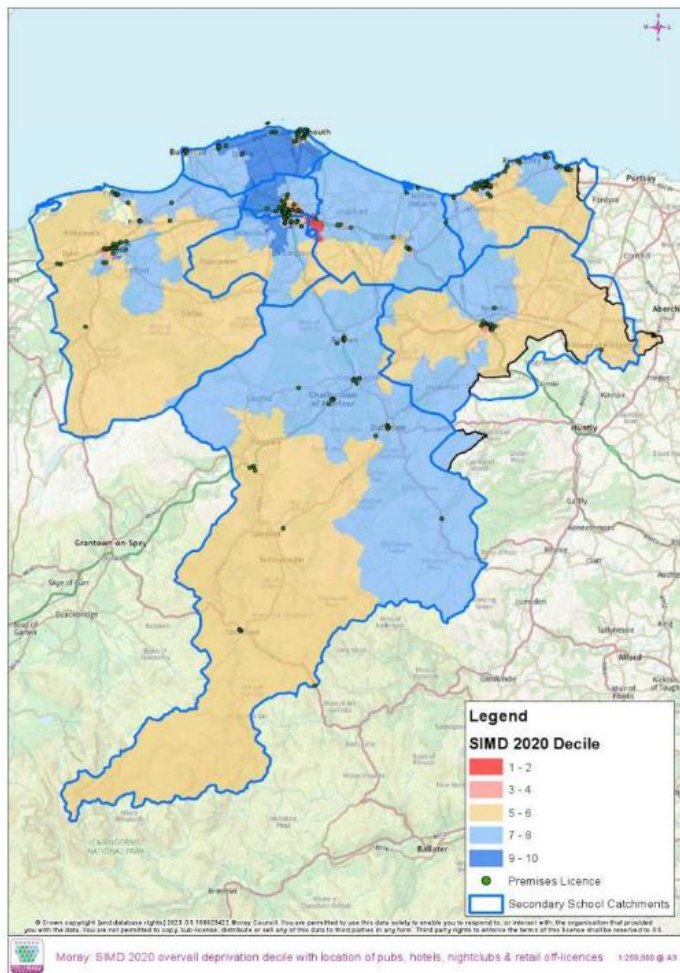


Chart 0.1

Source: Scottish Government, National Records of Scotland

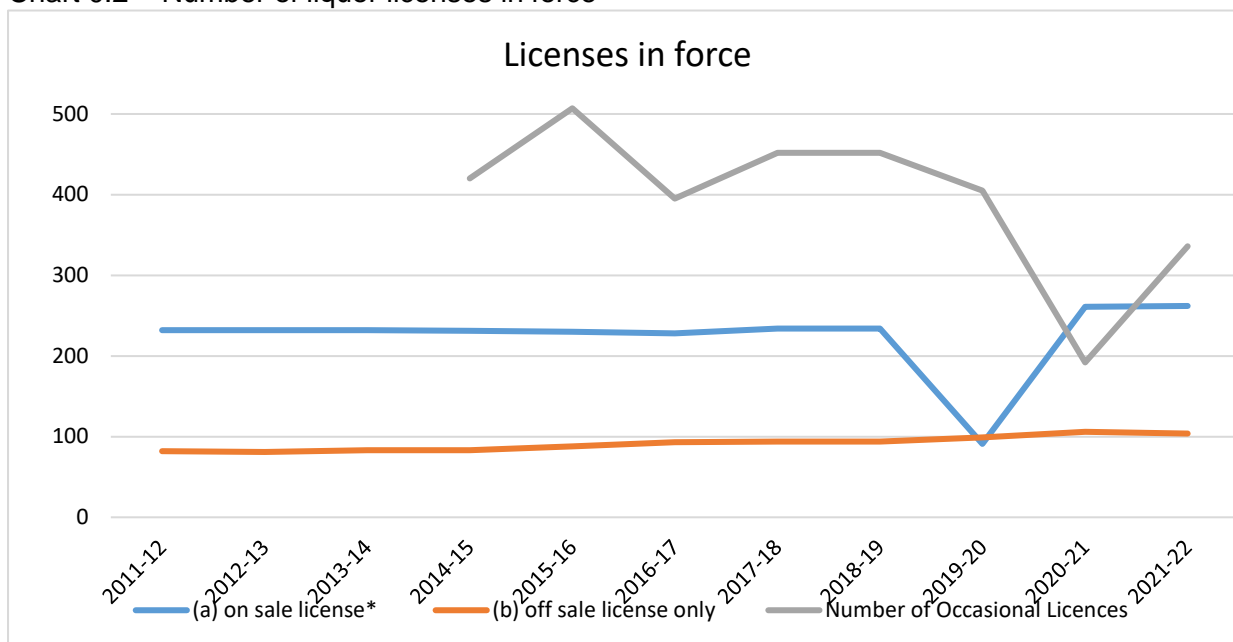
Map 1



Source: Moray Council

Despite on-sale licenses being affected by Covid-19 lockdowns, licenses granted for both on and off-trade have steadily risen. Occasional licenses have peaked twice in 2015-16 and 2018-19 perhaps coinciding with perceived confidence in the economy in those years, however the long term declining trend perhaps reflects increasing costs of hosting events and the impact of the pandemic (Chart 0.2).

Chart 0.2 – Number of liquor licenses in force



Source: [Scottish Government](#)

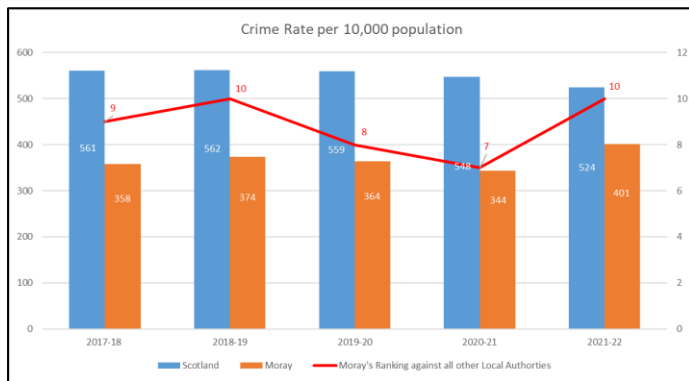
Moray at a Glance – Latest Data (with 5 year trend and comparison if available)

Off Sale Licenses 104(↑) (increase of 11% from 2017/18)	On Sale Licenses 262(↑) (increase of 12% from 2017/18)	Crime Rate (per 10,000 population) Moray 401 (↑) Scotland 524 (↓) Moray ranked 10 th lowest in Scotland	Violence & Aggression (linked to Licensed Premises) 118(↓) (37% decline from 2017/18)
Domestic Abuse Crime (inv. alcohol or drugs) 45%(↓) (down from 57% in 2017/18)	Accidental Dwelling Fires (inv Substance Misuse) 11%(↑)	Alcohol related ASB calls to Police 90 (↓) (60% decline from 2017/18)	Alcohol related hospital admissions (per 100,000 population) Moray 456 (↓) Scotland 610(↓)
Moray ranked 9th lowest in Scotland for alcohol related hospital admissions	Alcohol specific deaths (per 100,000 population) Moray 14 (↓) Scotland 21 (-)	727 active clients with Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership 37% seeking help solely due to alcohol misuse (↑)	Alcohol related hospital admissions 11-25 year olds (per 100,000 population) Moray 276.65 (↓) Scotland 255.19(↓)

1. Preventing Crime and Disorder

Over recent years, overall crime rates in both Moray and across Scotland have been in decline². In 2021-22, recorded crime spiked in Moray against a continued national fall however Moray remains ranked as one of the top ten low crime local authority areas in Scotland. (Chart 1.1)

Chart 1.1



Substance misuse can be associated with many problems across our communities and remains a significant factor in crime and disorder incidents. In Moray, partnership working is an integral part of the strategy aimed at tackling substance misuse fuelled violence and promoting responsible drinking through robust drug and duty of care policies.

Examples of Crime and Disorder in relation to Licensing Policy include, underage drinking, drunkenness, drink driving, illegal supply or possession of drugs and violence and aggressive behaviour. Over the past five years, recorded incidents linked to these issues have remained relatively static in Moray with the exception of Drugs Possession which has fallen from 39 charges per 10,000 population in 2017/18 to 29 in 2021/22. (Charts 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4)

Chart 1.2

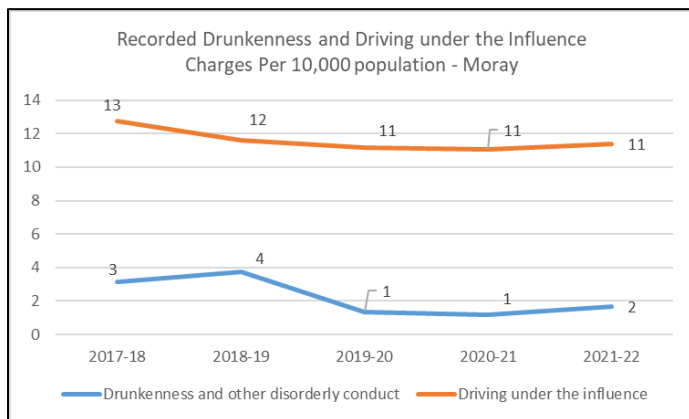
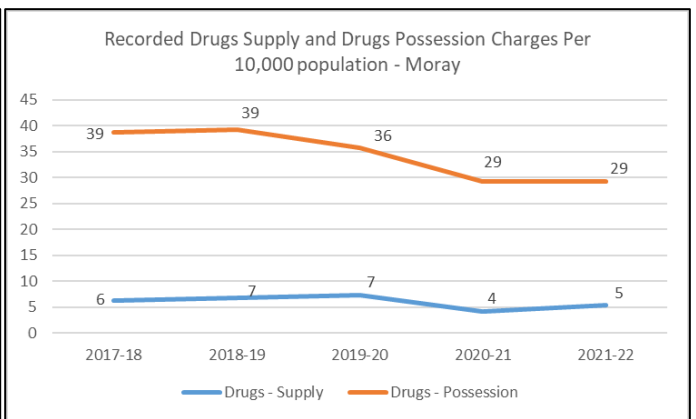
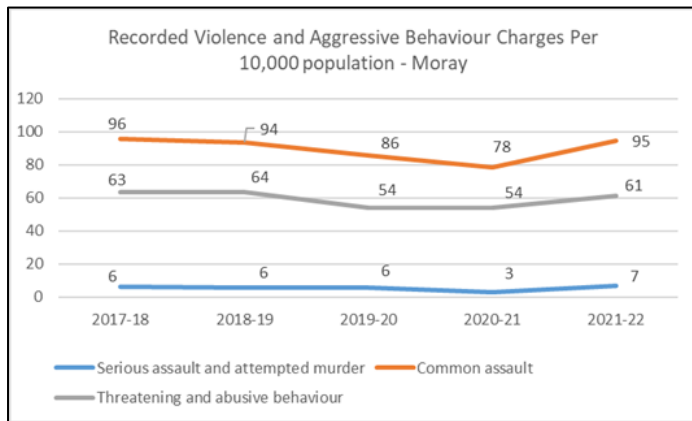


Chart 1.3



² Recorded Crime in Scotland 2021-22 (published June 2022) - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2021-2022/documents/>

Chart 1.4



NB- Breach of the Peace charges not included in Chart 1.4 as not listed within the Recorded Crime 2021-22 data

Looking at charges linked to licensed premises, the impact of Covid-19 restrictions during 2020/21 can clearly be seen with minimal charges recorded that year. Over the past five years, Drug charges have fallen by 22% from 416 to 326, mostly due to the decline in those charged with Possession (see Chart 1.3). During the same period, the percentage of drug supply and possession charges linked to licensed premises have fallen to just 2% with only 5 charges in Moray in 2021/22. All were recorded within the Elgin Inspector Area. (Charts 1.5 and 1.6)

Chart 1.5

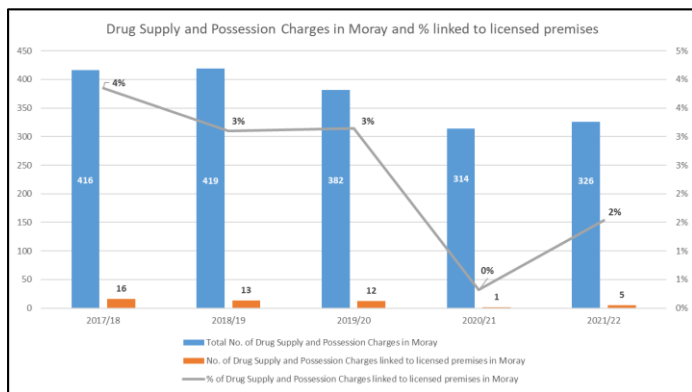
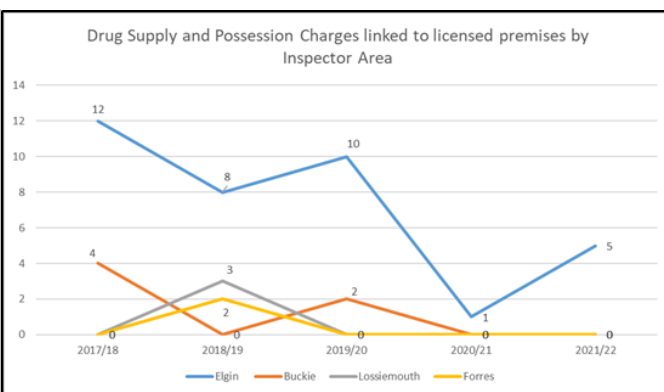


Chart 1.6



Source: Police Scotland

Despite an overall increase of 4% for Violence and Aggressive Behaviour, the proportion linked to licensed premises has fallen since 2017/18 from 13% to 8%. The largest decline has been recorded in the Lossiemouth Inspector Area where charges have dropped 91% from 46 in 2017/18 to just 4 in 2021/22. Elgin is the only Inspector area to record an increase in the past five years; up 19% from 64 charges in 2017/18 to 76 in 2021/22. (Charts 1.7 and 1.8)

Chart 1.7

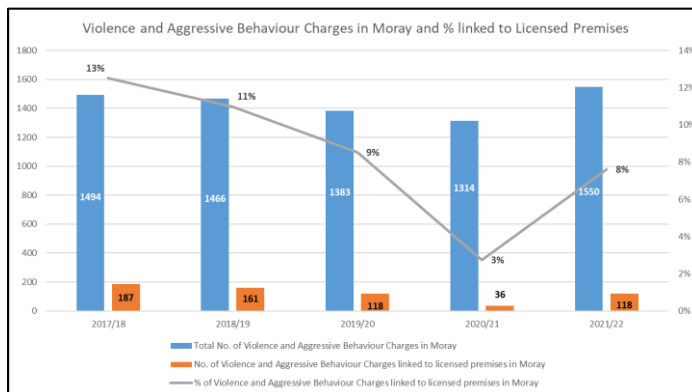
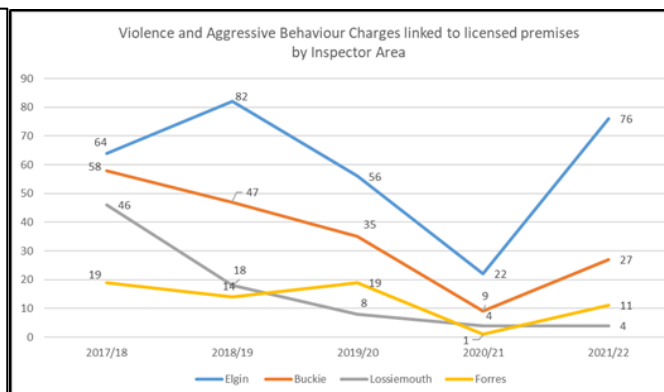


Chart 1.8



Source: Police Scotland. Charges include; Serious and Common Assaults, Threatening or Abusive Behaviour and Breach of the Peace

In a similar trend seen nationally, Domestic Abuse incidents in Moray have steadily increased over the past five years, with the highest rates coinciding with Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions in 2020/21. (Chart 1.9) At the same time, the proportion of incidents that resulted in the creation of a crime report in Moray has declined from 58% in 2017/19 to 49% in 2021/22. (Chart 1.10) Compared to 2017/18, the proportion of Domestic Abuse crime reports tagged as involving alcohol or drugs has fallen from 57% to 45%. (Chart 1.11)

Chart 1.9

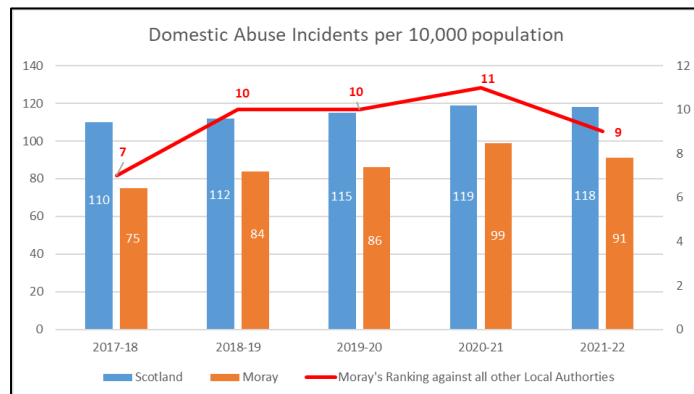
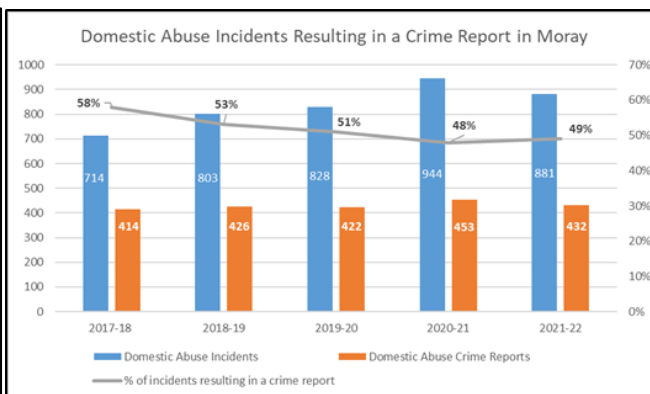
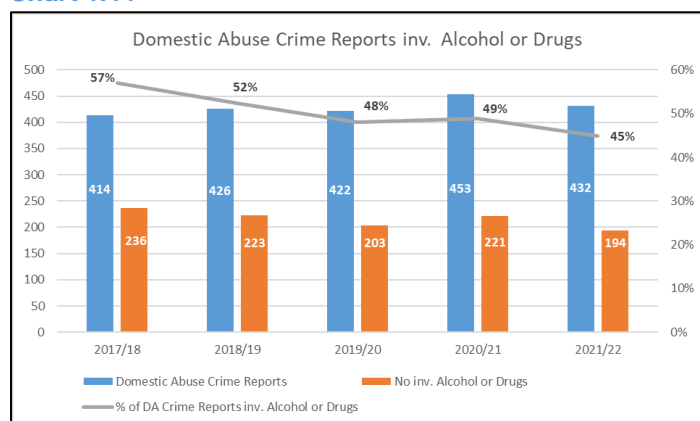


Chart 1.10



Source: Domestic Abuse Statistics 2021/22 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-recorded-police-scotland-2021-22/documents/>

Chart 1.11



Source: Domestic Abuse Statistics 2021/22 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-recorded-police-scotland-2021-22/documents/> and Moray Community Safety Partnership

Summary of crime and disorder in Moray:

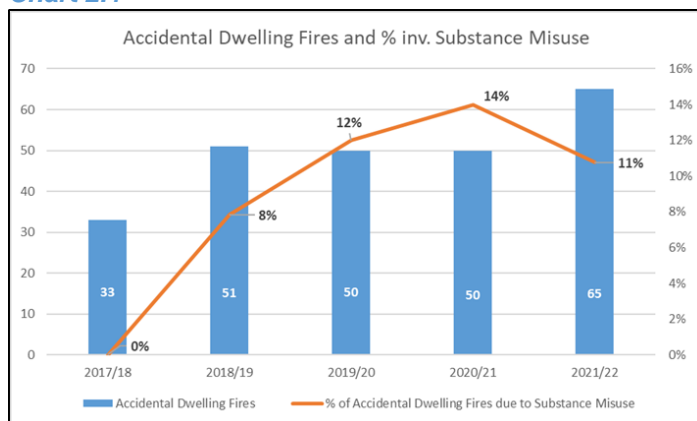
- Relatively low rates of crime, ranked 10th against other local authorities
- Charges of Drunkenness, Driving under the Influence, Violence and Aggression per 10,000 population have remained relatively static over last 5 years
- Reduction in charges for Drug Possession per 10,000 population over same period
- Slight increase in Violence and Aggressive Behaviour charges during 2021/22, low percentage of charges linked to licensed premises
- In line with national trends, increase in Domestic Violence incidents per 10,000. Moray ranks 9th lowest against other local authorities
- Around half of incidents of Domestic Violence result in a crime report, with around half of those involving alcohol or drugs

2. Securing public safety

Examples of Public Safety issues linked to licensed premises include; unsafe premises/areas, accumulation of glasses and litter and non-compliance with other regulatory requirements e.g. fire safety and health and safety. It can also relate to behaviour that leads to unintentional harm and antisocial behaviour.

According to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, impairment due to alcohol or drugs was suspected to have been a contributing factor in 14.6% of all accidental dwelling fires in Scotland in the last ten years to 2021/22³. In Moray, data since 2017/18 shows an increase in the involvement of alcohol or drugs in these fires, peaking at 14% in 2020/21; perhaps due to Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time leading to more substance misuse in the home. (Chart 2.1)

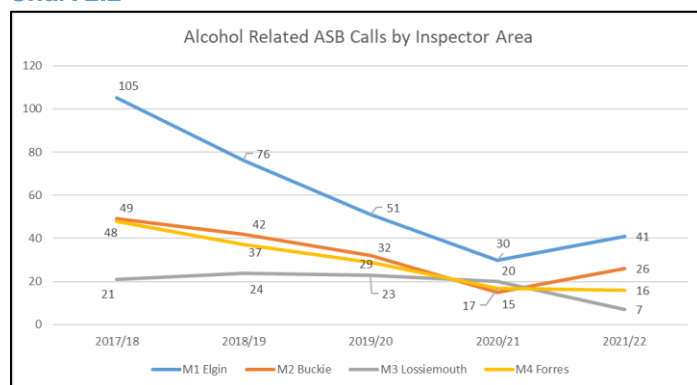
Chart 2.1



Source: Moray Community Safety Partnership

Alcohol related Anti-Social Behaviour calls recorded by Police have decreased by 60% over the last five years from a total of 223 to 90. The Inspector Areas of Lossiemouth and Forres both continued to record a decline in 2021/22. (Chart 2.2). Unfortunately, due to a change in Police systems, data linking these calls to licensed premises is not available.

Chart 2.2



Source: Police Scotland

Summary of securing public safety in Moray:

- Impairment due to alcohol or drugs contributing to approximately 11% of accidental dwelling fires in Moray 2021/22, below the estimated national ten year average of 14.6%
- 60% less alcohol related anti-social behaviour calls to Police compared to 2017/18

³ Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics (Scotland) 2021-22

3. Preventing public nuisance

This is considered as the environmental health of licensed premises⁴ as distinct from licensing objective (1) although in a sense it is about minimising the possibility of escalating situations to crime and disorder. Alcohol may cause people to feel more relaxed but chemical changes in the brain can lead to more negative feelings and hostility towards one another. People need to feel safe on and around licensed premises through prevention of nuisances like litter, threatening behaviour, and excessive noise and safe exit in an emergency (for example on-sale premises having trained members of staff responding individuals requiring help). During 2018/19 four noise complaints were received by Legal and in the three years since no complaints were recorded.

There is little quantitative data available that could relate to these licensing objectives, therefore perhaps fair to infer that in itself indicates there is no significant issue in Moray. Enquiries to the Council's Environmental Health department revealed there have been 14 complaints over the last five years for licensed premises (Chart 3.1) it may be that some have tenuous links to alcohol consumption.

Chart 3.1 - Complaints to Environmental Health

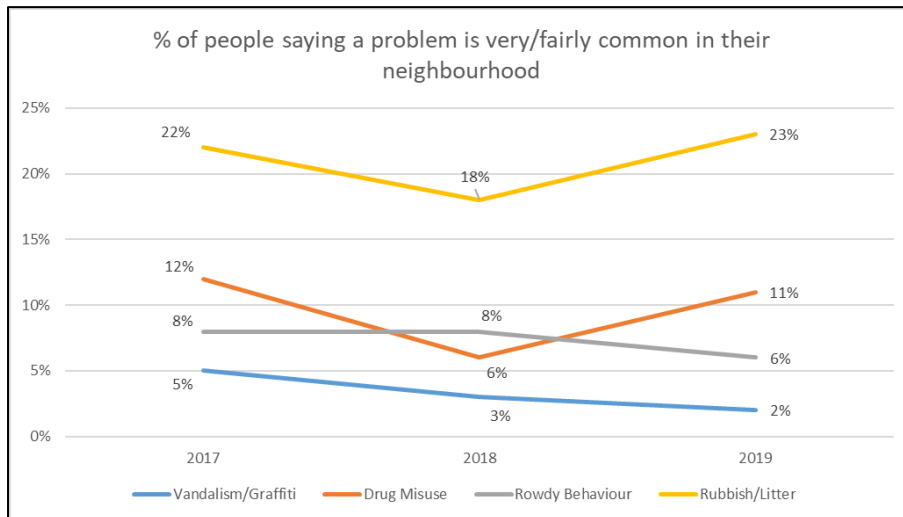
Trader	ASB Date	ASB Type
Portknockie Bowling Club	28/11/2022	Dog Fouling
New Jimmy Chung	28/03/2022	Seagulls
Scotmid	26/03/2022	Fly Tipping
Asda Store	06/12/2021	Fly Tipping
Cluny Bank Hotel	18/06/2021	Fly Tipping
The Beach Bar	22/05/2020	Fly Tipping
A & K McKenzie	09/05/2019	Graffiti
Orrin	19/02/2019	Dog Fouling
St Andrews	22/03/2018	Dog Fouling
Innes House	22/02/2018	Fly Tipping
Pinz Bowling Ltd	18/08/2017	Rowdy Behaviour
Scotmid	20/07/2017	Neighbour Disputes
(None stated)	19/05/2017	Youth Disorder
Coulard Inn	16/05/2017	Neighbour Disputes

Source: Moray Council

Due to Covid-19, there was no Scottish Household Survey undertaken in 2020/21. From data that is available, issues around Vandalism/Graffiti and Rowdy Behaviour fell between 2017 and 2019. Despite a decrease in 2018, by 2019 both Drug Misuse and Rubbish/Litter were perceived to be as common a problem as they were in 2017. (Chart 3.2).

⁴ Alcohol Focus Scotland considers only on-sales premises (AFS Resource 3, n.d.)

Chart 3.2



Source: Scottish Household Survey

Summary of preventing public nuisance in Moray:

- Low levels of anti-social behaviour complaints linked to licensed premises

A key for charts below. Unless otherwise stated “Comparator” means “compared to Scotland as a whole” and the colour scheme follows that laid out in ScotPHO:

- Better than comparator
- Not different to comparator
- Worse than comparator
- No differences can be calculated

4. Protecting and improving public health

This section looks at trends in Moray concerning health and wellbeing of individuals where alcohol is involved, using the data sets relating to:

- Alcohol-related hospital admissions
- Hospital admissions during the Covid era
- Alcohol-specific deaths
- Excessive, harmful and ‘binge’ drinking
- Alcohol treatment programmes

Alcohol-related Hospital admissions

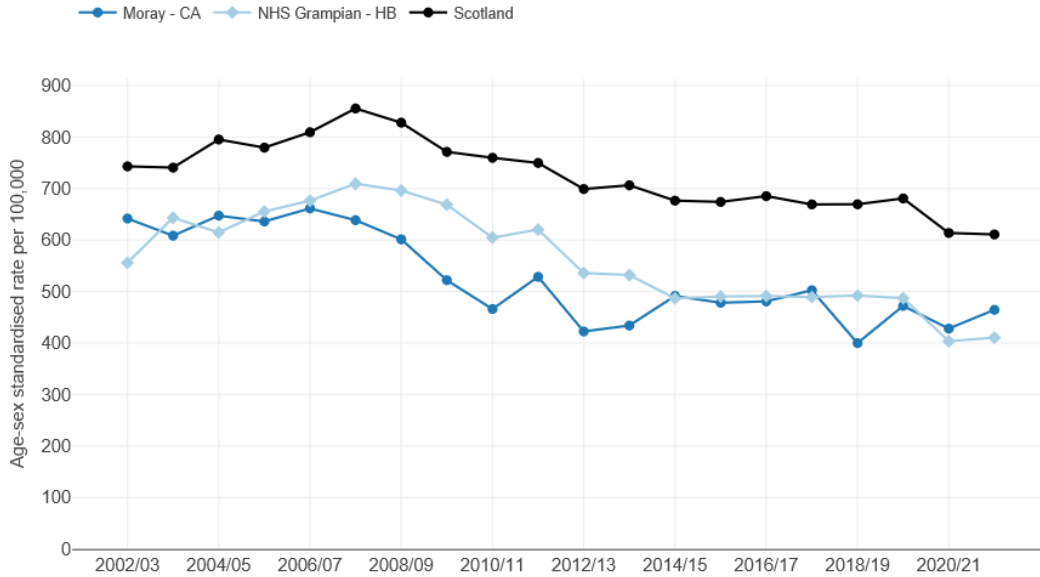
In the last 20 years there has been a decreasing trend in alcohol-related hospital admissions; largely Moray is in line with the NHS Grampian rate and both are below the Scottish rate. (Chart 4.1). Applying an age-sex standardised rate allows comparison and shows that in 2021/22, Moray had 464 alcohol-related hospital admissions per 100k population (numerator - 450), in line with NHS Grampian but significantly below the national average and ranked 9th lowest against all 32 local authorities. (Chart 4.2).

Data allows analysis across intermediate geographies that make up Moray which are worth considering (Chart 4.3). There is variation in the number of admissions per 100k population between areas with the majority below Moray and national averages. 2021/22 data shows that Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove & Pinefield had 998 alcohol-related hospital admissions per 100k population (numerator - 36). Using Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) trend data on rates of age-sex standardised alcohol-related hospital admissions, the following intermediate geographies ranked consistently in top five across Moray over the 5 year period to 2021/22:

1. Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove & Pinefield
2. Elgin Bishopmill East & Ladyhill
3. New Elgin East

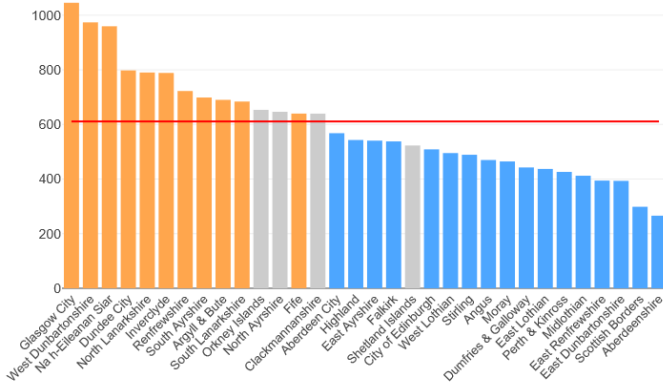
Data zones within these communities feature in the most-deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 quintiles in Scotland, factors that may influence the high rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions.

Chart 4.1 – Alcohol-related hospital admissions (age-sex standardised rate per 100,000)



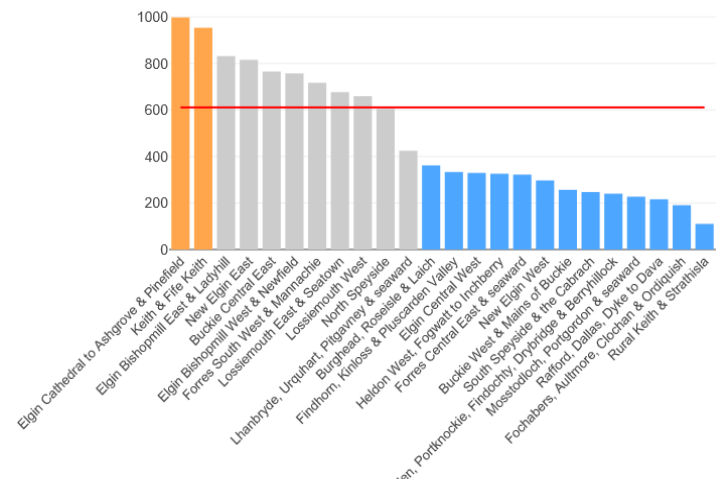
Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Chart 4.2 – Alcohol-related hospital admissions – 2021/22



Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Chart 4.3 – Alcohol-related hospital admissions 2021/22

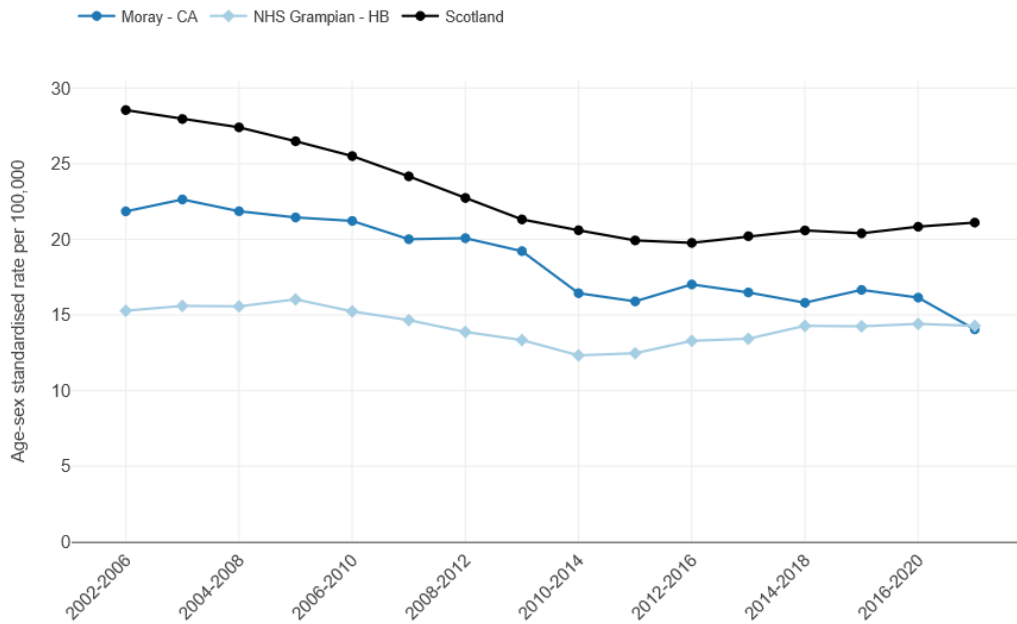


Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Alcohol-specific deaths

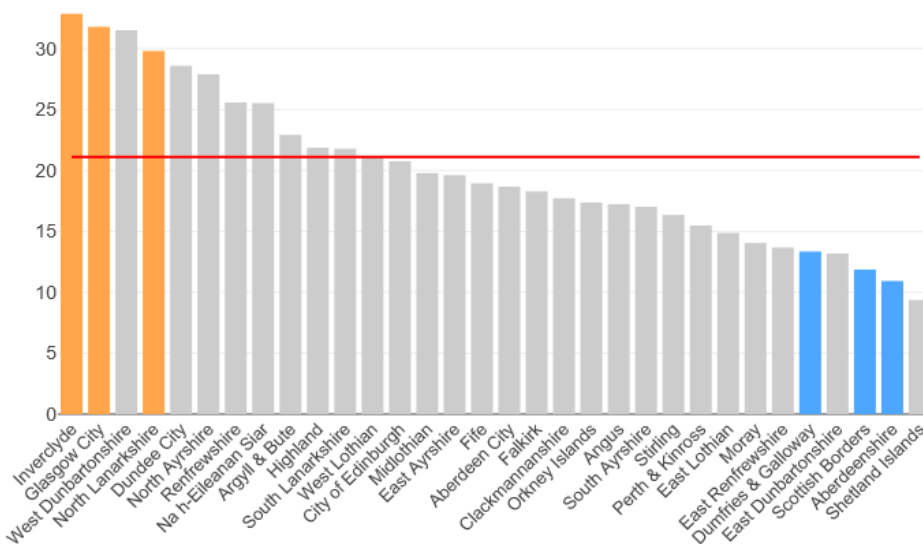
This is defined as deaths directly resulting from alcohol misuse (ONS, 2021). Calculated over a 5-year rolling average and reported as an age-sex standardised rate per 100,000 population to allow comparison, Moray shows a decreasing trend (Chart 4.4). During 2017-2021, on average there were 14.05 alcohol-specific deaths per 100,000 population in Moray, below the national rate of 21.11 and 7th lowest against all other local authorities (Chart 4.5). The five year average rate has decreased from 16.4 per 100,000 population in 2012-2016 (Bennett, 2018, p. 30). To add context, based on a 3-year rolling average, age sex standardised per 100,000, deaths from all causes (all ages) in Moray for the period 2019-2021 was 1028.7. Alcohol-specific deaths remain more prevalent in males than females.

Chart 4.4 – Alcohol-specific deaths 2002-2021 (5 year rolling average)



Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Chart 4.5 – Alcohol-specific deaths 2017-2021 (5 year rolling average)



Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Excessive, harmful and ‘binge’ drinking

Excessive drinking is defined as consuming more than 14 units of alcohol on a week on a regular basis, risking damage to health (NHS UK). Harmful (high risk) drinking is defined as a pattern of alcohol consumption causing health problems directly related to alcohol (NICE, 2011) including psychological problems such as depression, alcohol-related accidents or physical illness such as acute pancreatitis. There is no agreed definition of “binge drinking” (NHS Health Scotland, 2017) but usually refers to excessive consumption on a single occasion. Data for excessive and binge drinking is published at an NHS Health Board level and reported over a 4-year average.

Across NHS Grampian, 16% of females are reported to consume alcohol in excess of weekly limits in years covering 2013 to 2021, in line with the national average whereas between 28%-33% of males are reported to consume alcohol in excess of weekly limits over the same period, below the national average of 32%-

35%. The percentage of males consuming alcohol in excess of weekly limits nationally and to a greater extent across NHS Grampian has decreased over the period. NHS Grampian is ranked one of the lowest when viewed against all Scottish health boards (Charts 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11).

Chart 4.8
Percentage of females exceeding weekly alcohol consumption limits (rank)
(4 year rolling average 2017-21)

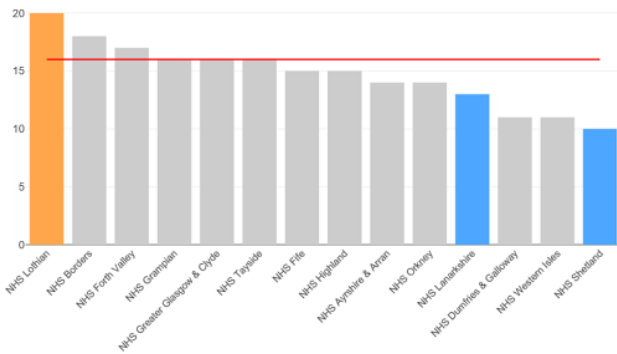


Chart 4.9
Percentage of females exceeding weekly alcohol consumption limits (trend)
(4 year rolling average 2017-21)

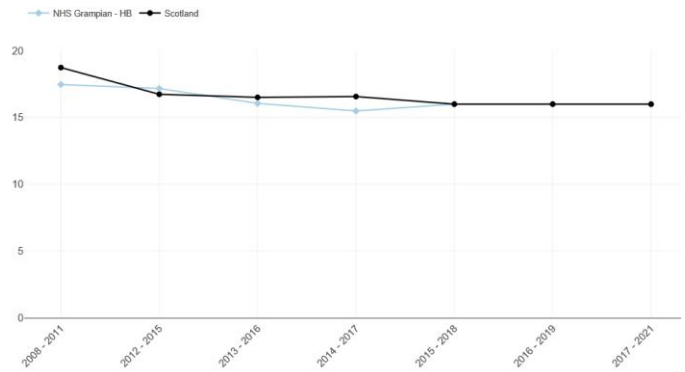


Chart 4.10
Percentage of males exceeding weekly alcohol consumption limits (rank)
(4 year rolling average 2017-21)

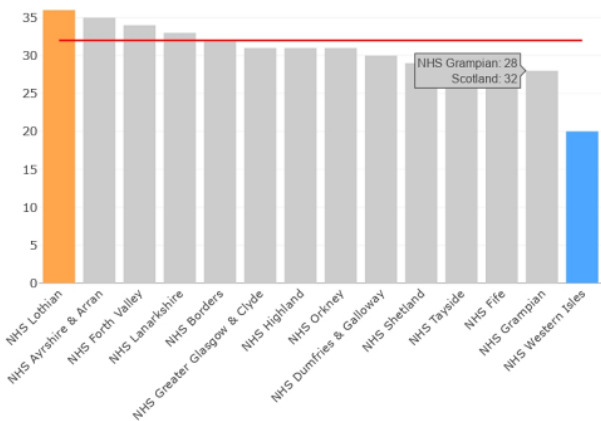
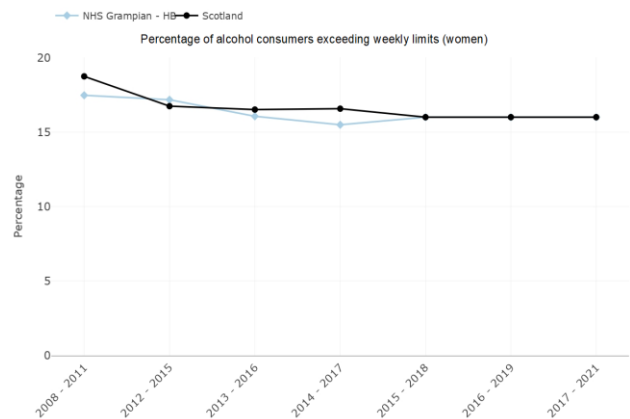


Chart 4.11
Percentage of males exceeding weekly alcohol consumption limits (trend)
(4 year rolling average 2017-21)



Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

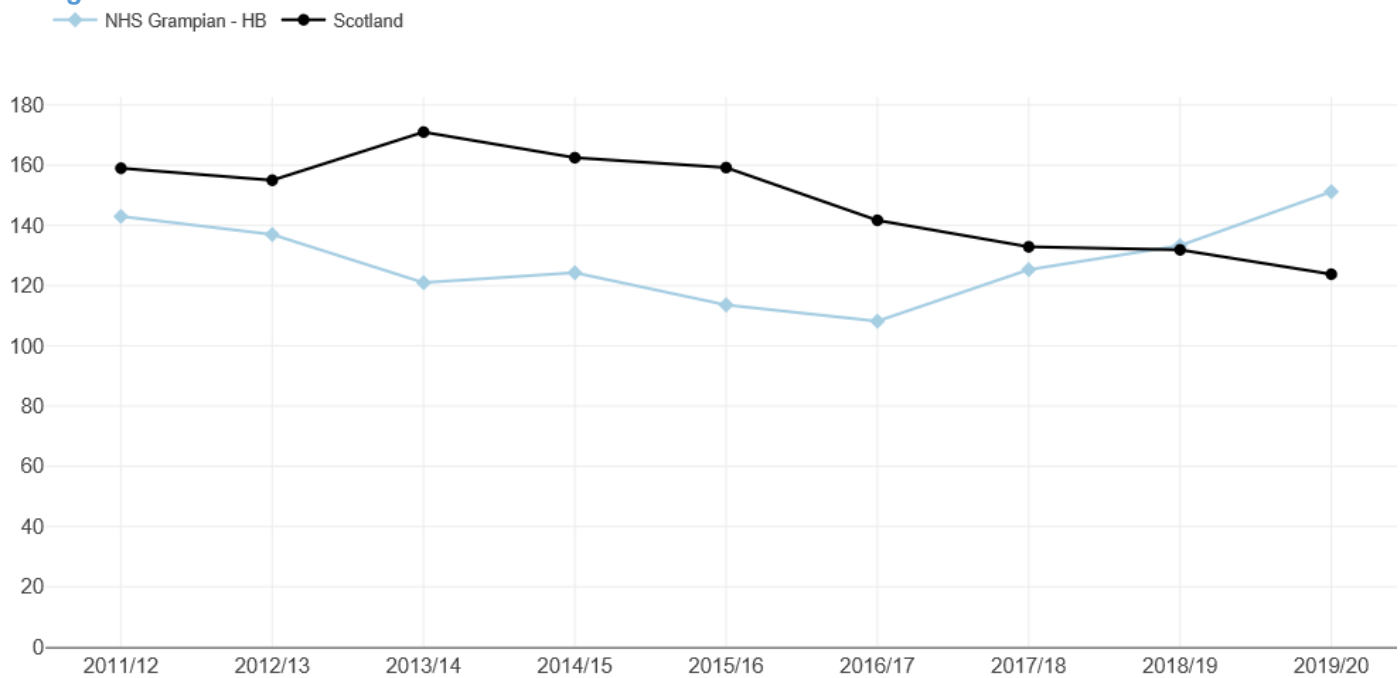
Alcohol treatment programmes

A large number of research studies show that Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs) provided in primary care settings can reduce alcohol consumption for periods of up to a year among people who are drinking at hazardous or harmful levels, but who are not dependent upon alcohol. Brief interventions are not overly complex and can be delivered by professionals in a range of health and social care settings. The basic principle of brief interventions is that the individual is the expert on what is right for them and the responsibility for change lies with that individual.

‘Some people may start taking a ‘nightcap’ to help them get to sleep during a stressful time in their life. After a while, the size of the nightcap may begin to increase, and they may start to find that they are waking up in the middle of the night and finding it difficult to get back to sleep. They may be completely unaware that their alcohol consumption could actually be contributing to their wakefulness, and they might be willing to cut down if this was explained to them. It would rarely make sense for someone drinking alcohol at this level to attend a specialist service’.

ABIs are delivered in accordance with the Local Delivery Plan (LDP) Standard guidance set and agreed between the Scottish Government and NHS Boards to provide assurance on NHS Scotland performance. The ABIs indicator is expressed as a number and percentage of target at a Health Board Level. In the period 2019/20, 10,066 ABIs were delivered throughout NHS Grampian, a 13% increase from the number reported in 2018/19 and 151.2% of the target set. The trend shows the percentage of ABIs delivered against target has steadily increased since 2016 against a decreasing national trend perhaps suggesting an increased need across Grampian being met by embedded interventions within health and social care settings.

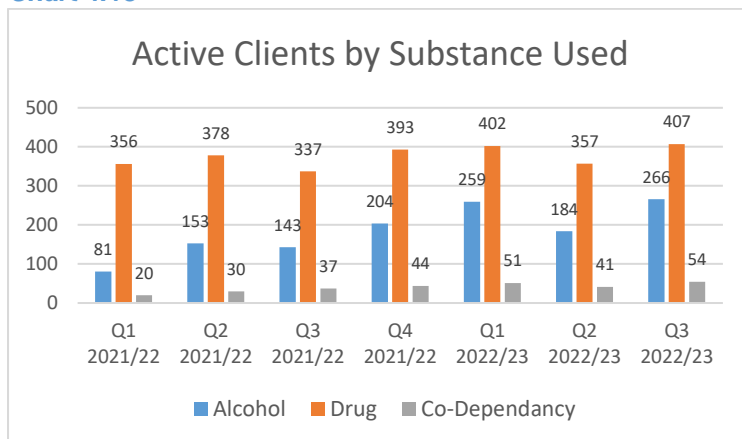
Chart 4.12
Alcohol brief interventions delivered as a percentage of target



Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

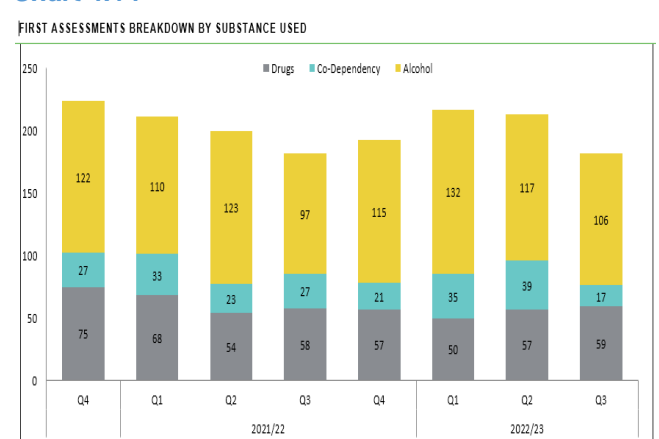
The Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership (MADP) is a multi-agency partnership established to respond to national strategies on alcohol, drugs and volatile substances. The purpose of the MADP is to reduce the impact of problematic alcohol and drug used on individuals, families and communities by co-ordinating the work of the statutory and third sector agencies and by developing and implementing strategies for tackling alcohol and drug problems at a local level.

Chart 4.13



Source: Moray ADP

Chart 4.14

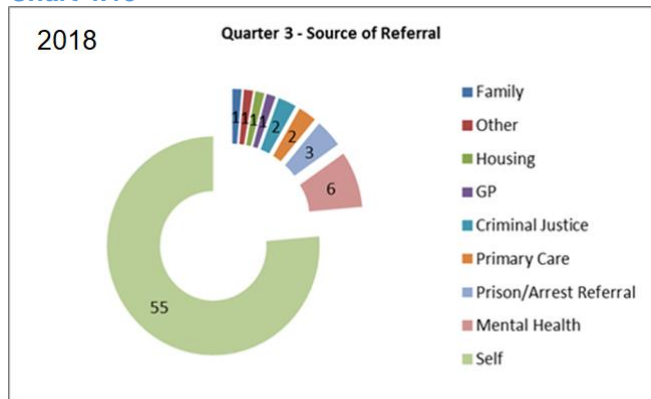


Source: Moray ADP

Data from Moray ADP⁵ (Chart 4.13) shows the number of clients engaged with services and the number of first referrals by substance (Chart 4.14). The number of clients seeking support for drugs is significantly above the number seeking support for alcohol, both show an increasing trend.

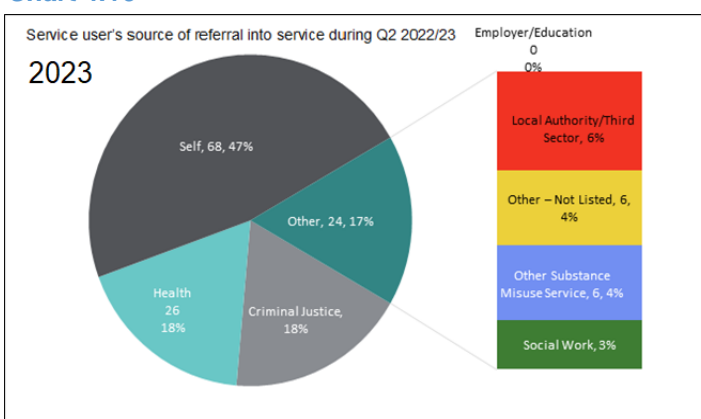
Self-referral is the most common method of referral with the proportion self-referrals having decreased from 55% in 2018 to 47% in 2023 (Chart 4.15 and 4.16). Lower numbers during 2021 reflect availability of services during the pandemic.

Chart 4.15



Source: Moray ADP

Chart 4.16



Summary of protecting and improving public health in Moray:

- Decreasing trend in alcohol-related hospital admissions rate. Moray ranked 9th lowest against all Scottish local authorities
- Decreasing trend in alcohol-specific deaths. Moray ranked 7th lowest against all Scottish local authorities. Greater prevalence in males than females
- Increasing trend in number of clients in specialist alcohol and drug service in Moray (Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership)

5. Protecting children and young persons from harm

Young people are at greater risk of alcohol-related harm than adults. Alcohol use in teenage years is related to health and social problems (nhs.gov.uk, 2022) and there is an effect on children of parents with alcohol dependency. Thankfully, the first decades of the 21st century have seen declines in the alcohol consumption of young people nationally.

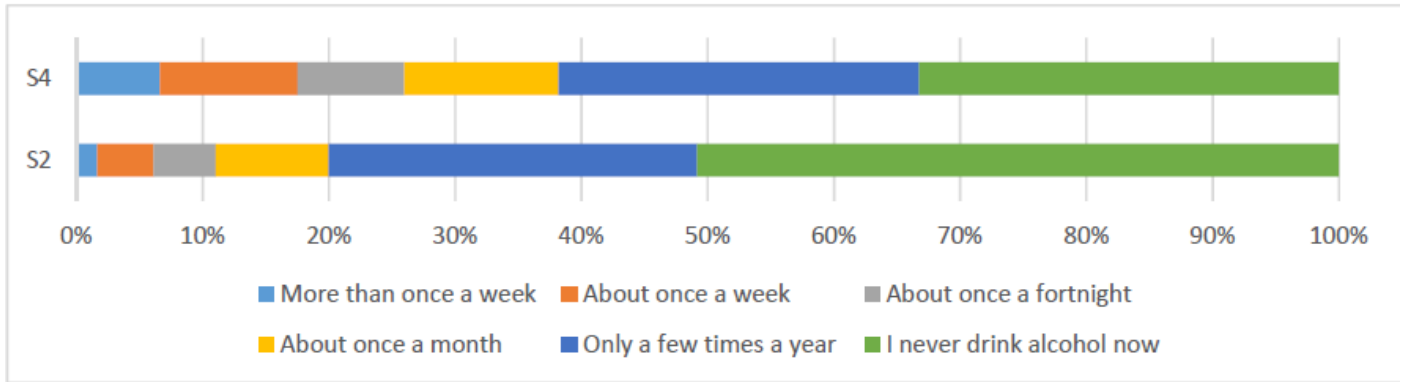
In a recent Schools Health and Wellbeing Census (HWBC), used to inform the Moray Children and Family's Service Plan 2023-28, the S4 year group were asked about alcoholic consumption. 58% of pupils reported having ever had a whole alcoholic drink and 20% reported getting drunk at least once per month. 38% reported usually getting their alcohol from home, 19% from a friend and 15% from a relative, the rest declined to answer the question.

The HWBC also asked S2 and S4 pupils how often they usually drink alcohol, a much higher proportion of pupils in S4 report drinking alcohol compared to S2. Only 32.3% of S4 pupils report that they never drink, compared to 49.3% of S2 pupils. At the other end of the scale, 6.4% of S4 pupils report drinking more than once a week compared to 1.5% of S2 pupils (Chart 5.1). There is a clear gender divide with more than twice as many male pupils drinking more than once a week compared to their female counterparts.

⁵ At the time of writing, the Moray ADP website is down for maintenance/update and reports are being reformatted, information comes directly from the MADP office.

Chart 5.1

“How often do you USUALLY have an alcoholic drink?”



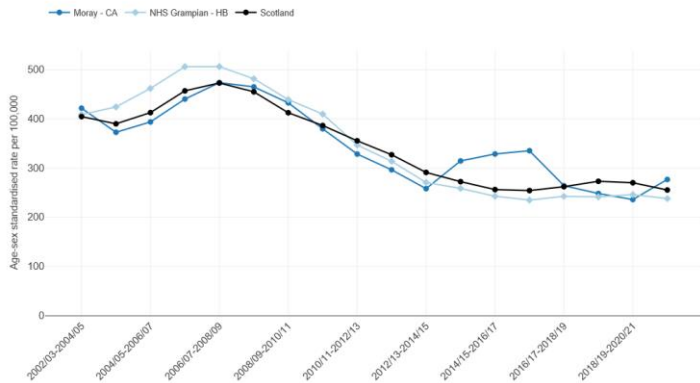
Source: Schools Health & Wellbeing Survey 2022

As mentioned earlier, alcohol consumption can lead to acute health problems, including hospitalisation. Standardised rates of alcohol-related hospital stays for 11-25 year olds show that Moray’s data fluctuates markedly, but trend data shows an overall reduction in admissions. (Chart 5.2 and 5.3)

Chart 5.2

Alcohol-related hospital admissions, aged 11-25 years

Age-sex standardised rate per 100,000

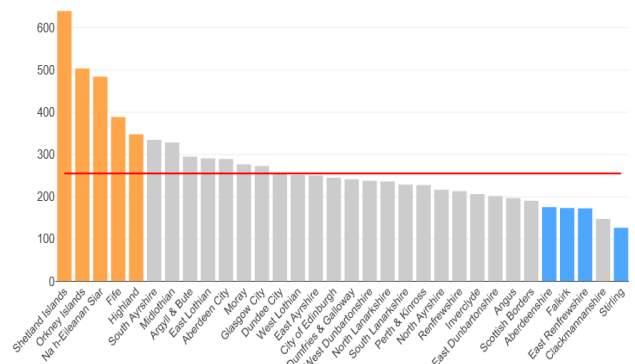


Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Chart 5.3

Alcohol-related hospital admissions, aged 11-25 years

Council areas compared against Scotland - 2019/20-2021/22



Source: Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO)

Child Protection

In more recent years, the most common concerns recorded for those on the Child Protection Register are domestic abuse, parental drug use, parental mental health and neglect. The rate of Child Protection Case Conferences where parental alcohol misuse (with or without drug misuse) has been identified for children on the register is gathered and expressed per 10,000 population aged under 18 years to allow comparison. In the snapshot taken in July 2021, the rate of 4.97 per 10,000 population was reported for Moray, just above the national average of 4.89. (Chart 5.4 and 5.5)

Chart 5.4

Child protection with parental alcohol misuse

Council areas compared against Scotland - 2021

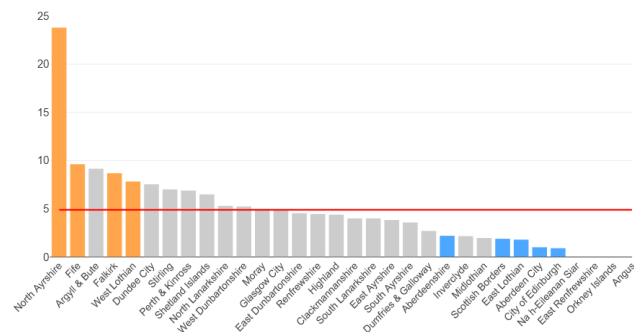
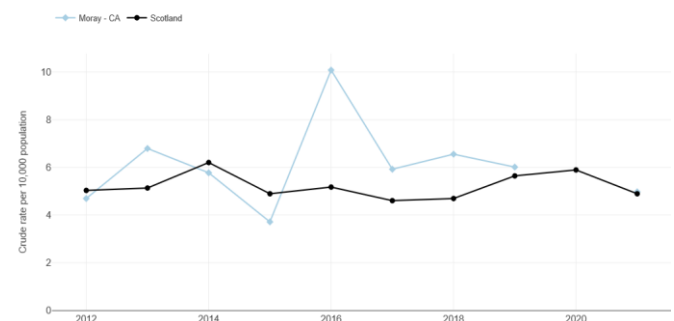


Chart 5.5

Child protection with parental alcohol misuse

Crude rate per 10,000 population



Summary of protecting children and young persons from harm:

- 6.4% of S4 pupils report drinking more than once a week compared to 1.5% of S2 pupils
- Overall decreasing trend in alcohol-related hospital admissions, aged 11-25 years. Moray ranked 11th highest against all other local authorities
- Decreasing trend in rate of child protection registrations where concern relates to parental alcohol misuse

6. Other factors and limitations of data

Online sales

Goods purchased online are increasing and internet sales of alcohol are no exception. This accelerated over the pandemic as more time was spent at home. Selling of alcohol online requires a licence that may have been issued by a Licensing Board in a different Local Authority. The only data for alcohol sales exists at nationwide level (SHAAP, 2021) and this appears to be limited to sales from licensed premises within Scotland. No regulated system or mechanism yet exists for capturing online sales.

Minimum Unit Pricing

Alcohol is much more affordable today than in the past (AFS, n.d.). The Scottish Government introduced the MUP of 50 pence per unit of alcohol on 1 May 2018 (gov.scot, 2022) in an attempt to have positive impacts on the health system as well as making sure alcohol is sold at a sensible price. Reports on the effectiveness of MUP vary. A study carried out by Public Health Scotland in collaboration with the University of Glasgow shows a net reduction in total per-adult sales of alcohol of 3% in the three years following MUP reflecting a 1.1% fall in Scotland compared to a 2.4% increase in England and Wales. Public Health Scotland reports little impact on alcohol-related crime (PHS, 2021), a 13.4% reduction in deaths and a 4.1% reduction in hospital admissions by the end of 2020 (Wyper G, 2023).

Restrictions on alcohol advertising

The Scottish Government recently published a consultation paper about restricting the advertising of alcohol (gov.scot, 2022) which closed in March 2023. Proponents argue that public health benefits and better child protection will result (WHO, 2022) much like restrictions on marketing tobacco products in the latter part of the 20th Century whilst others argue that it will have a negative impact on the drinks industry and claim audiences will find ways around the new rules (Ferrie, 2023).

7. Licensing Review Survey

As part of the public consultation on the Licensing Review, a survey was shared with members of the public and the licensed trade on issues around overprovision, the impact of licensed premises and policy on the 5 Licensing Objectives. This survey remains live however a snapshot of responses at the beginning of May has provided some key points.

Most people believe there is currently the right amount of both on and off sale premises in Moray and that licensing hours are just right. Most also stated licensed premises did not contribute to crime and disorder, public safety issues or public nuisance. A common suggestion for influencing public health was for better promotion or subsidising of non-alcoholic drinks.

A high proportion agreed children should be permitted to enter on sale premises provided rules in place were followed while a 10pm curfew was considered by most as just right. More outdoor or family areas were common suggestions for promoting tourism with a number of responses stating that to encourage this there should be less restrictions and 'red tape' around hours and the provision of entertainment.

Further analysis will be undertaken when the survey is closed to responses.

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