

Granton Youth Street Drinking in Focus



This summary presents the findings of a consultation with young people in Granton exploring their views, attitudes and experiences of street drinking. Using a Streetwork methodology in order to gain the most representative sample of young people in Granton, the survey was carried out in 2010-2011. The results reveal that young people in Granton tended to drink inside at house parties or in the fairly large number of young tenancies. Most young people were seen heading towards parties at friend's houses. Alcohol was frequently being purchased by older siblings or friends for under-age drinkers. Young people held fairly strategic views about under-age drinking and felt that by drinking inside as opposed to outside, they were minimising risk. The shops at Granton Road frequently attracted groups of young people keen to see who was passing and as a focal point for finding out where parties were being held. In many ways Granton was the most difficult area to engage with young people using street-work as a methodology.

What do young people in Granton think about street drinking in their area?

This summary presents the findings of a consultation with young people in Granton exploring their views, attitudes and experiences of street drinking. Using a Street-work methodology in order to gain the most representative sample of young people in Granton, the survey was carried out in 2010-2011. The results reveal that young people in have a varied attitude towards street drinking, many preferring not to actively engage with the phenomena. A significant number of underage young people however see drinking every weekend as “normal”, and the biggest risk as being getting caught by parents or the police. The survey also produced results which show an increasing trend towards young women actively engaging in drinking, particularly at parties. However the survey showed that in Granton the phenomenon of street drinking was not widespread and that there was a fairly lengthy tradition of underage parties held at tenancies in the community. It was often reported that these parties could occasional get out of hand and result in fighting or anti-social behaviour.

This survey was carried out by a team of Street-workers from North Edinburgh Street-work and Alcohol Development Workers from The Junction and funded by Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Comic Relief. No expectations were raised in the consultation and the partner organisations adhered to the strictest ethical standards of engagement.

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Introduction

Granton ([Scottish Gaelic](#): *Baile nan Granndach*) is a district in the north of [Edinburgh](#), [Scotland](#). Granton forms part of Edinburgh's waterfront along the [Firth of Forth](#) and is, historically, an industrial area having a large harbour. Granton is part of Edinburgh's large scale [waterfront regeneration programme](#).

Granton first appears on maps in the 17th century relating to the now demolished Granton Castle^[1]. The name also appears in Granton Burn, which now runs through [Caroline Park](#) down to what was Granton Beach. The name is presumed to come from Grant's Town or Grant's Dun (hill).

Telford College is located in the [Granton](#) area of North [Edinburgh](#). Telford College is one of the most popular colleges in Scotland and is the largest college in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Granton comprises the areas known as **Royston** and **Wardieburn**, as well as Crewe. There is one primary school, Granton Primary School, the other local school Royston Primary having closed in 2010. There is no local high school, young people having to travel either to Trinity Academy, Broughton High School and Craigrayston. The community centre Royston Wardieburn Community Centre is in the process of being renovated

The [Edinburgh Waterfront](#) scheme is bringing about the redevelopment of [Leith](#) and Granton. The gasworks site spread over 110 acres (0.45 km²), is to be redeveloped as the Forth Quarter, a mixed use development of housing, offices, local services, a park, and the new campus for [Telford College](#). The area was master planned by [Foster and Partners](#), although the individual 'plots' will be separately designed by other architects. As part of the redevelopment, the main storage building of

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the [National Museums of Scotland](#) opened in Granton 1996. It does not serve a publicly accessible museum function. A new reception and conservation building was built at its entrance in 2005.

North Edinburgh Street-work initiative is a discrete franchise of Granton Youth Centre Ltd. and currently deploys 4 street-work teams across North Edinburgh in the districts of Trinity, Muirhouse, Pilton and Granton. NES finds it useful to make the following distinction for the benefit of those who do not fully grasp the definition of street-work

*“**Outreach work** is part of most youth workers’ jobs. Most paid staff who work in buildings have an area/locality brief. Many workers do some outreach in the community to encourage young people to take part in the groups and activities taking place in the centres, and to use the services on offer.”*

*“**Street-work** differs from outreach work in that workers and young people recognise that coming in to a centre may not be immediately appropriate so they choose to build relationships and plan work outside in the community.”*

Street-work (or sometimes known as detached work) can be an important part of a comprehensive youth work strategy, and should not be seen as a ‘knee jerk’ response to political or social pressure, be it concern about crime figures, drugs or other disturbance (although it is often more effective in making contact, forming relationships and addressing the behaviour of some of the disaffected young people involved in such issues). It is complementary to other approaches, including centre based provision, project work and outreach work, and a method of providing social education to young people who may not otherwise have access to youth services.

The underlying principles and philosophy of street-work are to accept young people as they are. Young people who gather on street corners etc. are often viewed as a threat to the community or at risk to themselves. Detached work does not label or judge in this way – workers do not condemn young people because of their behaviour, but they do not condone it either, and will constructively challenge young people about their behaviour, attitudes and perception of self and others.

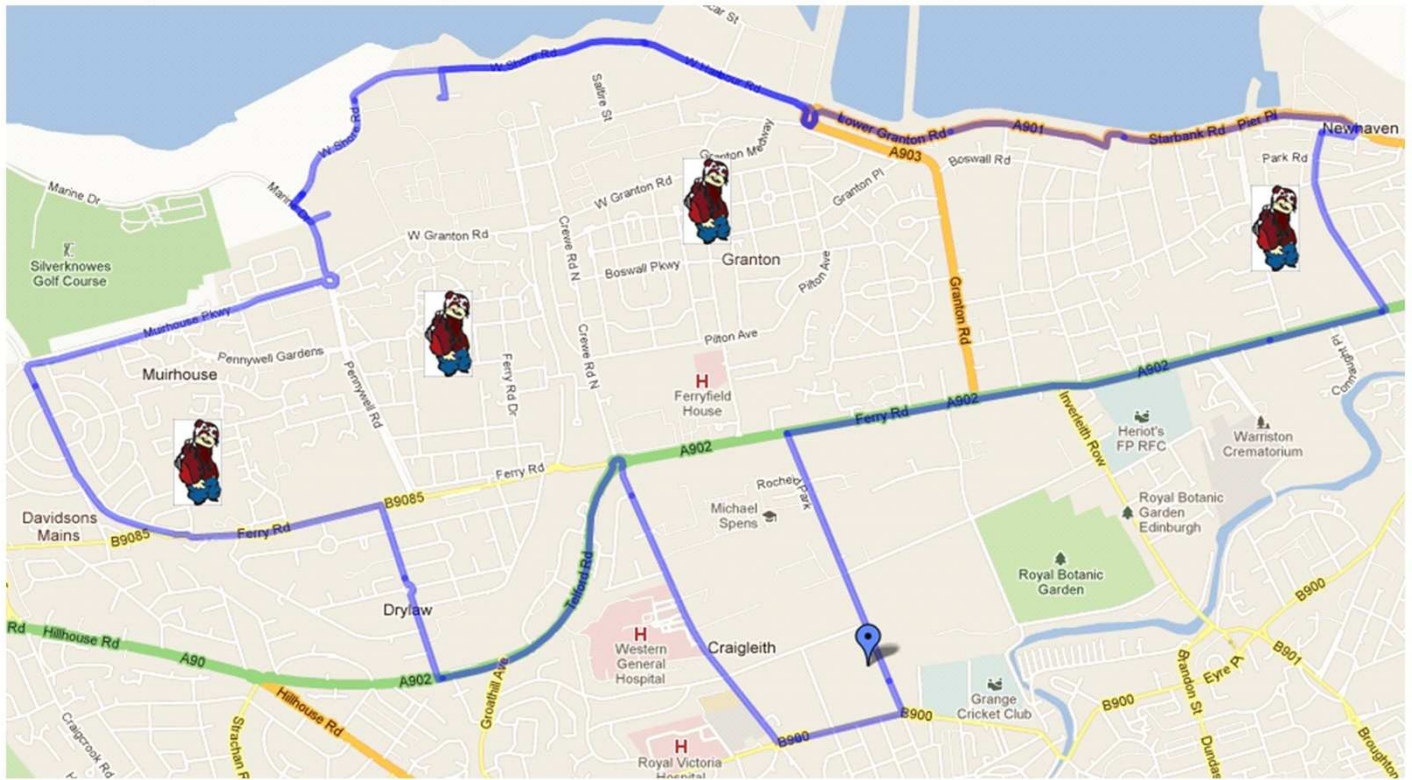
The basis of the relationship between worker and young people is mutual acceptance and parity – a negotiated relationship in which traditional notions of adult power and authority play no part. This makes it a very good tool for engaging with young people and getting open honest responses from them.

Street-work in North Edinburgh

North Edinburgh Street-work team deliver 2 units of Street-work per week across the four areas that make up north Edinburgh’s Forth Ward. The areas include Trinity, Pilton, Muirhouse and Granton. As part of the initial stages of the project, the four teams were engaged in establishing the young people’s perceptions and experiences of street-drinking. This established our baseline data which will later be used to measure the impact of the project and chart any potential changes in the attitudes and behaviour of Forth’s young street drinkers.

In Granton the majority of young people surveyed were near to the Granton Primary School or in the grounds.

North Edinburgh Street-work - Area Coverage



The consultation

The consultation engaged with **19** young people aged 11-16 over a period of 6 weeks between 2010-2011. Of those young people **9** were male and **10** were female. **10** of those young people surveyed went to Broughton High School, and the rest attended other local schools. All of the young people surveyed identified as coming from the Granton district of North Edinburgh. **4** young people were aged 11-12, **12** young people were aged 13-14, **2** young people were 15, and **1** was aged 16.

Pattern of Young People's street drinking

Frequency of street drinking

A major theme that emerged from the consultation was that young people were often quite reluctant to engage with street drinking. **11** young people were emphatic about stating that they had never engaged with drinking outside (though most admitted to drinking indoors), the vast majority being in the younger age groups. **2** occasionally engaged in street drinking and **3** reported that it was a frequent act.

Perceptions of street drinking

Opinion was divided into positive and negative reasons for street drinking. The overwhelming majority of those who *admitted* engaging in outdoor drinking were positive. Also much of their opinion was shaped by attitudes to friendships and developing relationships with peers.

7 young people positively identified street drinking as being with friends which was a “cool” thing and “it’s a laugh”. Many made reference to not being allowed or able to drink at home, where the watchful gaze of parents was problematic for them.

“people might drink outside because they might just think it’s cool and want to fit in with others” 14 year old girl

Older young people who didn’t drink in the streets associated the group that did as being **hard-core** and frightening;

“people can become aggressive towards others drinking on the street” 14 year old boy

“I would rather drink at someone’s house...there’s always a party going on” 15 year old girl

Many young people made reference to the fact that there seemed little to do in the area, or that they were bored and met on the streets or in houses to drink and be sociable and let their hair down (in fact the same reasons that adults might report on the reasons why they drink).

Young people who did engage in regular drinking did so regularly and for largely sociable reasons and in particular in Granton because they didn’t have access anywhere indoors. They did not perceive themselves as having problems.

Access to Youth Provision

7 young people did not/had not accessed any youth provision. **8** had accessed or had accessed youth provision in the past, with the majority identifying dancing and Granton Youth Centre, (GYC), and a few naming sports groups/classes etc.

There were no significant differences between access to provision and street-drinkers and non street-drinkers, and therefore no conclusions can be drawn.

Young People's Perception of the risks of street drinking

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The survey revealed a distinctive split in the perception of the risks of street drinking.

Young people actively engaging in street drinking saw the risks as predominantly about getting attacked or raped.

When asked what they the risks may be drinking outside they would respond by saying;

"taken advantage of" 14 year old girl

"rape....peodofiles" 12 year old girl

Other risks were about the risk to personal safety from others including having an accident or *"getting hit by a car"*.

Young People's views on how to reduce risks

Again the survey revealed a compelling split in views about reducing the risks of street drinking with the (predominantly younger) non street drinkers being much more vehement about not drinking and espousing a "just say no" approach to risk reduction.

"don't drink underage" 12 year old girl

And even more likely, a straightforward *"don't drink"*.

Most young people from this area spoke about being safer by drinking inside,

"we only drink inside (we already do this)" 13 year old girl

On the other hand, many of the cohorts, particularly those who admitted to occasional or frequent street drinking had a keen sense of harm reduction with regard to risks. All spoke about being amongst friends and watching out for each other. The most popular responses from this group was about not *"drinking outside"* 7, and this was answered by the majority of the rest of the group by drinking inside.

Young People's Alcohol Consumption

The cohort sampled had a wide ranging experience of drinking alcohol. Some drank often and frequently whilst reassuringly the majority of young people drank very occasionally (2) or never (11). About 3 young people indicated that they drank frequently and had a high regular consumption (<20 units).

The most popular drinks included; **vodka, cider, wkd, and lager.**

Often young people reported on combining their drinks especially with WKD, which was the most popular drink of choice.

When asked about the most they had ever drunk on a night out, some (<6) reported binge drinking huge quantities of alcohol. 2 stated that they couldn't remember! People were most likely to binge drink on vodka and cider.

How young people think the Street-work team can help

Those young people who reported that they did not engage with street drinking were less likely to see or feel that the Street-work team was a really helpful or useful resource for them. Those who did report to frequent or occasional street drinking found that overall they valued the reassurance provided by the team. Some of the responses were very positive;

"can help others and show them that drinking is not cool"

"talk to you about the risks of drinking"

"they are good support and play games and do things to help"

Those that did not spend much time on the street felt that they had little need for street-work, or in fact any intervention.

Conclusions

Young people in Granton are flanked on one side by an area of urban deprivation but on the other by an area of affluence. Like many of their peers they fear violence and territorialism. The young people we met are generally responsible, resourceful, and enthusiastic and seem keen to engage with street-workers and alcohol workers.

The results of the Granton Youth: Street Drinking in Focus survey would seem to indicate that young people in Granton drink for much the same reason as adults, to enjoy the company of friends and to be sociable. However there are a small hard core of young people for whom binge drinking is a frequent and sometimes risky occurrence, and for this group of young people the street-work team provides a vital and valuable connection to the adult world for who many of these young people yearn to escape.

The street-workers in turn have learned to respect the young people they work with and the need for "distance" in order to engage with them on their terms. The involvement of alcohol workers from the Junction has allowed us to deliver Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs) specifically targeted at young people, and customised for this work on the streets with young street drinkers.

The Street-work Team

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The Junction Team

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For further information

For further information pertaining to this report or for any specialist request concerning statistical data, or a further breakdown of data, please contact: Granton Youth Centre Ltd.

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