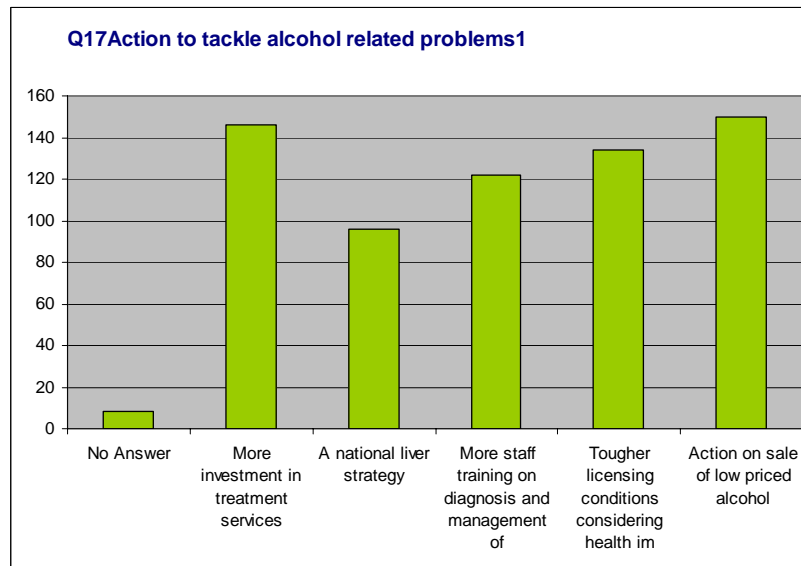


## Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of Nursing Survey on Alcohol Treatment Services

The survey asked gastroenterologists, hepatologists, acute physicians and nurses for their expert opinion on Government policy initiatives and national strategies to tackle alcohol related harm, the provision of service for people with alcohol related health problems and the scale of alcohol related health harms in their particular clinical environment. The questionnaire was sent to members of the between Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February and Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009

### Key Findings

- 73% felt action on low priced alcohol was needed to tackle alcohol related problems.
- 71% believed that greater investment in treatment services was needed.

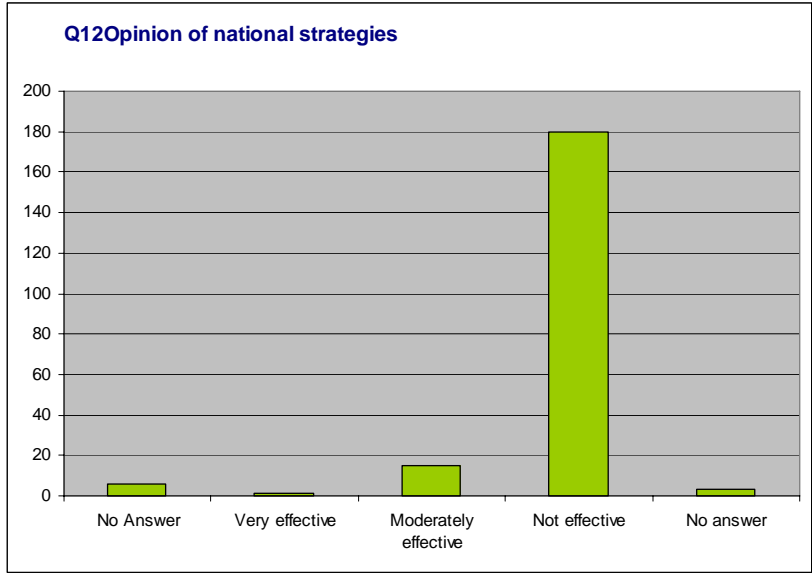


### Quotes from respondents

The action on low priced alcohol should take priority. Acting on the price would be more effective than on the availability itself. At high price alcohol will gain value and limit financial access to it. Warnings, such as on cigarette packaging - should be added on alcohol bottles and units of the drink should be mentioned, including the % of weekly 'allowance' (such as salt levels on food)".

"A standard price per unit would remove very cheap alcohol from the market and I believe would be very effective in reducing harm"

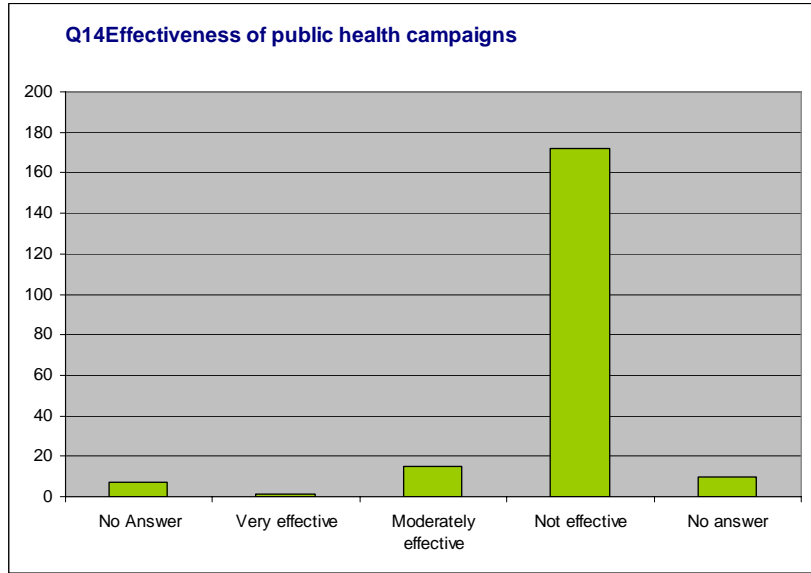
- 88% felt that the national strategies for reducing harm were not effective



**Quotes from respondents**

“The strategies are good, but they are shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted. It’s reactionary not forward planned. The problem of youth binge drinking has been steadily worsening over years, particularly after alco-pops came out but the government adverts to counter it have only been around for the last year - over 10yrs later. The supermarkets selling cheap booze have been doing so for at least 10 years, and the government still haven't stopped it”

- 84% of respondents thought that public health campaigns were not effective

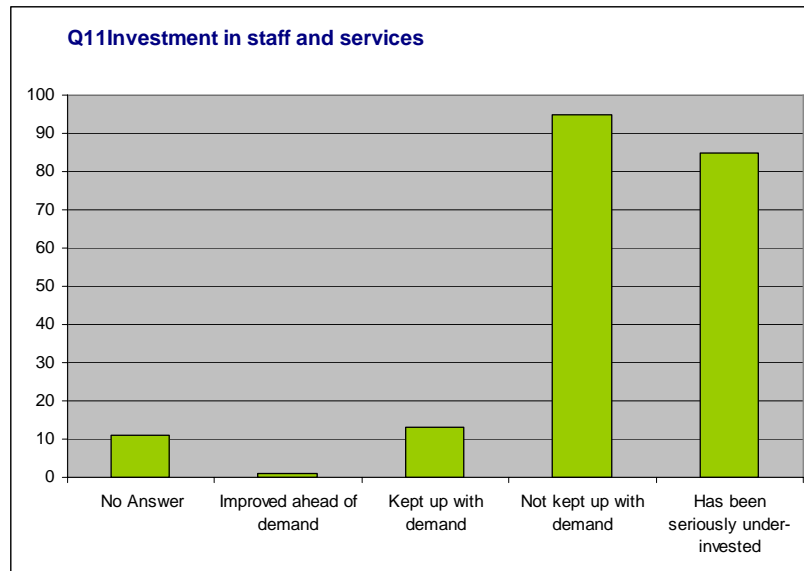


**Quotes from respondents**

“Education is generally ineffective, and tends to reduce the alcohol consumption of those who are drinking the least. Price increases and licensing restrictions are effective and reduce consumption amongst those who drink the most and those

most vulnerable to the social and medical harms of drinking but strategies repeatedly ignore this. The brewing lobby exerts a disproportionate influence over public policy

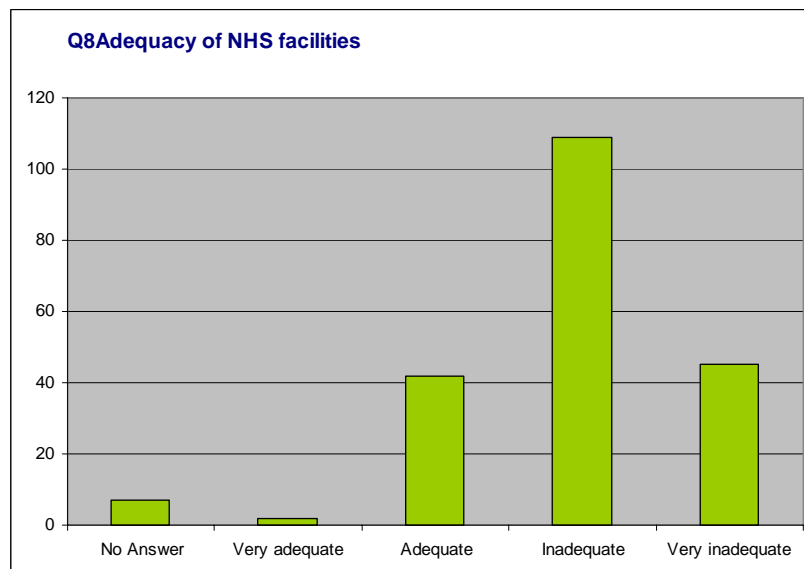
- 88% of the clinicians surveyed said funding in staff and services had not kept up with demand or that services were suffering from underinvestment



### Quotes from respondents

“For the past 3 years the DoH has been asking the PCTs to act on the alcohol problem. Unfortunately, speaking from my own experience, it's been difficult to engage the PCT. It's a case of 'them and us' - the commissioners act as if secondary care wants to extract as much money from the PCT rather than work in co-operation with secondary care to tackle the problem”

- Over 75% say that NHS services for treating patients with alcohol related problems are inadequate

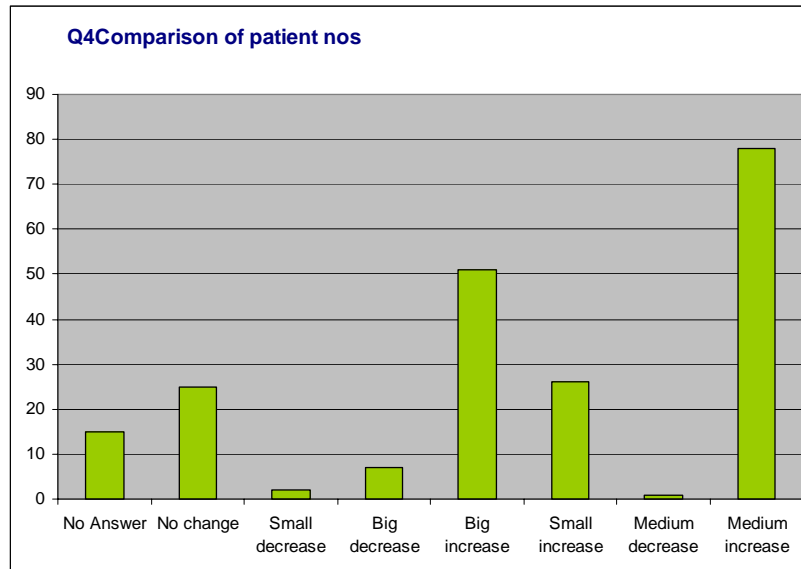


## Quotes from respondents

Services are often in rough areas and combine alcohol with drug users and only our patients who have hit rock bottom will go - those with some concept of themselves as respectable people are very reluctant to attend and would much prefer to have input in hospital or through their GP. There is very little contact between services and young drinkers as they often do not use any health services until they get injured, depressed, pregnant or and STI.

We need walk in centres where the public (not patients) can attend to receive brief interventions coupled with awareness campaigns about alcohol safe limits and the presence of the walk in centres for alcohol advice. Prevention is better than cure.

- Over 75 % say they have seen an increase in the number of patients they are now seeing for alcohol-related health problems compared to 10 years ago.

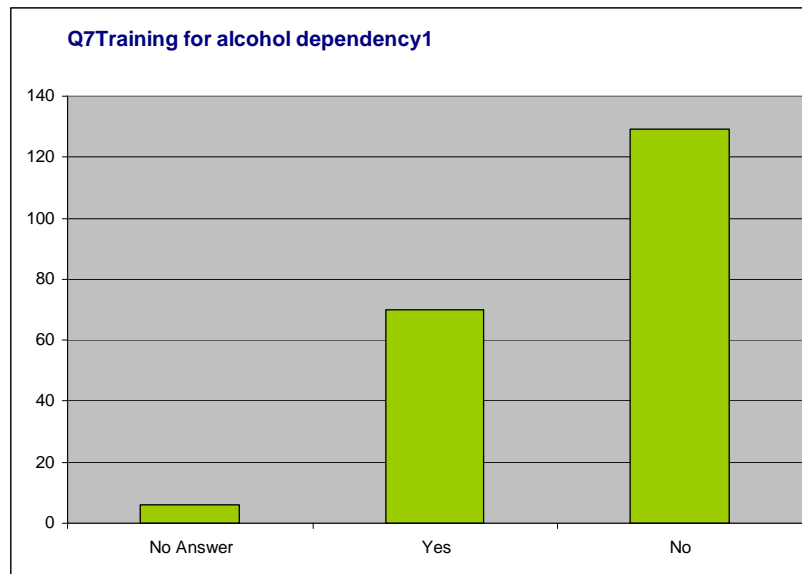


## Quotes from respondents

Drinking alcohol regularly seems now accepted as normal in society it seems, hence few think that they may have a problem and 'slip into' the problem often unaware.

Lots of young people are unaware of the danger. People often consider themselves as social drinkers not alcohol addicted patients. Alcohol problem is not accepted as a serious disease which needs complex treatment and social care.

- 70% say that they have received no training to recognise and assess alcohol related problems or dependency



### Other interesting results

- 60% of respondents stated that they screen for alcohol related problems
- Opinions varied on the causes behind the increase and some pointed to a myriad of causes. Social context was seen to be the most important with binge drinking, drinking at home and drinking to excess becoming more acceptable.
- 86% say they are aware of support services in the community
- 81% thought that if alcohol was more expensive, there would be a decrease in consumption.
- 90% believed that all alcohol products should be labelled with unit information and sensible drinking guidelines
- Many said that it was more common to see people developing problems at younger ages and there had been an increase in the number of women being admitted.