

# Supply of Alcohol to Young People Aged Under 18 Years

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report presents descriptive results from three Health Promotion Agency (HPA) surveys about the attitudes and behaviour around supply of alcohol to young people aged under 18 years. Most data presented here are from the combined results of the Attitudes and Behaviour toward Alcohol Survey (ABAS) 2013/14, 2014/15, and 2015/16. This report should be read in conjunction with ABAS Key Results: Young People Aged 15 to 24 Years.<sup>1</sup>

Data from two further surveys, the 2016 Health and Lifestyles survey (HLS), and the 2014 Youth Insights Survey (YIS), have been included to provide a more comprehensive picture around the supply of alcohol to young people aged under 18 years. Each survey asks questions about, or to, slightly different age groups of young people aged under 18 years.

### Key findings

- Compared with non-risky drinkers, a greater proportion of young people who are risky drinkers receive their alcohol from friends aged over 18. On the other hand, a greater proportion of non-risky drinking young people are given alcohol by their parents compared with risky drinkers.
- A greater proportion of young people who are risky drinkers reported having drunk alcohol without their parents' knowledge compared with non-risky drinking young people.
- Forty-three percent of parents with a child aged 16 years reported ever allowing their child to drink under their supervision (or under the supervision of another parent or caregiver).
- Seventy-four percent of people agreed permission must be gained from the parents of a young person aged 16 years before providing the young person with alcohol.
- On average, adults surveyed believed people should be 17 years old before being allowed to drink at home or in a restaurant under parental supervision, and 19 years old before being allowed to drink at licensed premises such as a bar or a pub.

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<sup>1</sup> *Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey 2013/14 to 2015/16: Key Results: Young People Aged 15 to 24 Years*. Found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

# INTRODUCTION

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The Health Promotion Agency (HPA) has a particular focus on reducing the alcohol-related harm to young people aged under 18 years. Understanding of the overall picture of attitudes and behaviour toward supply of alcohol toward young people will help to produce better evidence-informed policy and programmes.

Current HPA low-risk alcohol drinking advice to parents and caregivers of young people under age 18 is that not drinking alcohol is the safest option.<sup>2</sup>

## Background

The Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey (ABAS) shows that almost half of young people aged 15 to 17 years consume alcohol, some at levels categorised as 'risky' (Health Promotion Agency, 2017). Misuse of alcohol is associated with increased risk of adverse outcomes for young people, including motor vehicle crashes, injuries and deaths, crime, violence, sexual risk taking, mental health problems, and victimisation (Fergusson & Boden, 2011). There is also emerging evidence of adverse effects of adolescent alcohol consumption on the developing brain (Carson, 2015).

Under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012, young people aged under 18 years are not legally allowed to be sold alcohol. If alcohol is supplied, parental consent is required, and any supply must be done in a responsible manner. Social supply of alcohol is the provision of alcohol by parents, caregivers, friends, family members, and others. Social supply of alcohol is an important source of alcohol for young New Zealanders under 18 years of age. In 2012, 60% of New Zealand secondary school students aged 13 and over reported "parents buy, give, or let (me) take (alcohol) from home with permission", and 44% reported "friends give it to me" (The Adolescent Health Research Group, 2013).

HPA is interested in improving our understanding about how young people drink, including understanding attitudes and behaviour around social supply of alcohol to those aged under 18 years. Findings from the research presented here will be used to inform HPA advice and programmes that aim to reduce alcohol-related harm in our young people.

## This report

This report presents data on the attitudes and behaviour toward social supply of alcohol to New Zealanders aged under 18 years.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/advice-on-alcohol/low-risk-alcohol-drinking-advice>

Descriptive results from three HPA surveys are presented. Most data presented here are from the combined results of the ABAS 2013/14, 2014/15, and 2015/16. Data from two further surveys, the 2016 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS), and the 2014 Youth Insights Survey (YIS), have also been included. Data from multiple surveys were included to give a better understanding of the overall picture of attitudes and behaviour toward social supply of alcohol to young people.

All references to 'young people' in this report refer to people aged under 18 years. In the ABAS, 'young people' refers specifically to those aged 15 to 17 years, and in the YIS to those aged 14 to 15 years.

## METHOD

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Analyses from three HPA surveys are presented in this report: the Attitudes and Behaviour towards Alcohol Survey (ABAS), the 2016 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS), and the 2014 Youth Insights Survey (YIS).

### ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ALCOHOL SURVEY (ABAS)

ABAS is a nationally representative survey of all usually resident New Zealanders aged 15 years and over about alcohol consumption patterns, alcohol-related behaviour, consequences of consuming alcohol, and attitudes.

For each survey, approximately 4,000 people aged 15 years and over were surveyed over four months (November, December, January, and February).

Households were stratified into telephone directory regions. A random sample of telephone numbers was generated from all number ranges found in the White Pages using a Random Digit Dialling (RDD) approach. The mode of the interview was Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

In 2016, the 2013/14, 2014/15, and 2015/16 ABAS datasets were combined. The results presented here are from the combined dataset, with a total of 12,206 respondents. A full description of each year's methods and the combined datasets methods can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

Comparisons over the three survey years were made. Where there were no significant differences across the survey years, the estimate provided in these results can be interpreted as an average estimate for the time period 2013/14 to 2015/16. Where there were significant differences across the survey years, caution needs to be taken in applying the estimate to the whole period 2013/14 to 2015/16.

### HEALTH AND LIFESTYLES SURVEY (HLS)

The Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS) is a biennial monitor of the health behaviours and attitudes of New Zealanders, first carried out in 2008. It has two components: a survey of adults aged 15 years and over and a survey of parents and caregivers of five to 16-year-olds.

The 2016 HLS involved face-to-face interviews with 3,854 adults (aged 15 years and over), including 1,160 parents and caregivers of five to 16-year-olds. The parents and caregivers were asked further questions about one randomly selected five to 16-year-old child in their household.



This report only includes data from respondents who were parents/caregivers of a child aged 10 to 16 years. The sample included 590 respondents, 71% of whom were female.

A full description of the 2016 HLS methodology and further HLS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

## YOUTH INSIGHTS SURVEY (YIS)

The YIS is a nationwide paper-based survey conducted in schools every two years, and is part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM).

The 2014 YIS was conducted with a sample of 2,919 Year 10 students. In this report, results are presented for only those Year 10 students who had ever drunk alcohol. This consisted of 1,611 students, or 55% of the total Year 10 sample. Ninety-nine percent of these students were aged 14 to 15 years old.

A full description of the 2014 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Results presented are weighted estimates to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population, and, for the YIS, the New Zealand Year 10 student population. For percentages and means, 95% confidence intervals are presented.

Logistic regression was used to compare responses between groups with 95% confidence intervals generated using jack-knife methods. When the outcome variable was continuous, linear regression was used. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to 5%.

Ethnicity groups are prioritised in the order of: Māori, Pacific, Asian, and Other/European.

Only statistically significant differences are reported.

## RESULTS

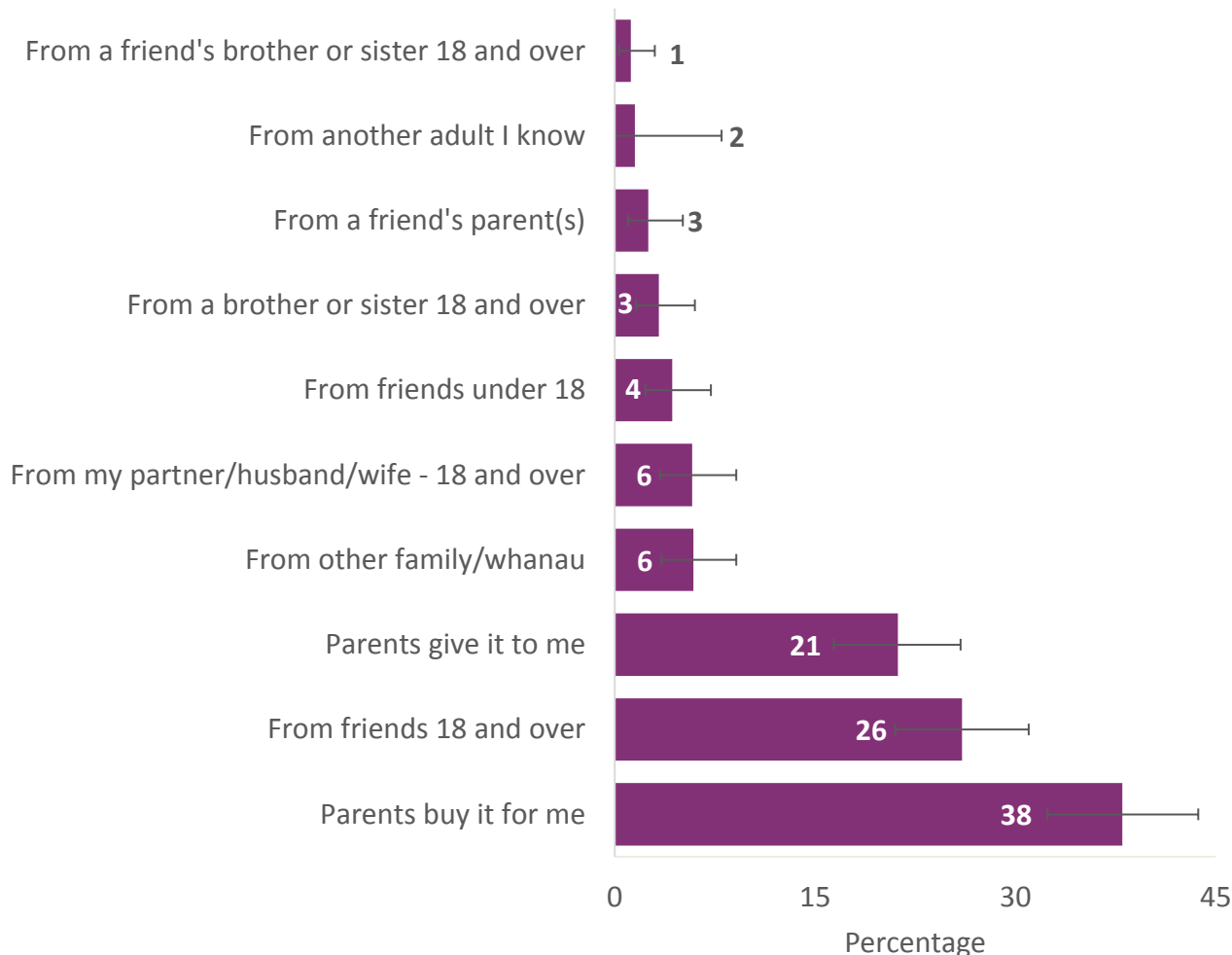
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### YOUNG PEOPLE'S USUAL SOURCE OF ALCOHOL

In the ABAS, young people aged 15 to 17 years who reported drinking alcohol in the past 12 months were asked to indicate their usual source of alcohol. Multiple answers were allowed.

Parents (59%) and friends/partners aged 18 years and over (32%) were the most commonly reported usual source of alcohol for young people aged 15 to 17 years. More than a third of young people reported that their parents buy alcohol for them (38%; [95% CI: 32, 44]), while a fifth reported that their parents give it to them (21%; 16, 26). A quarter reported that they get their alcohol from friends aged 18 and over (26%; 21, 31) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Top ten sources of alcohol for young people aged 15 to 17 years



Base: 15 to 17-year-olds who consumed alcohol in the past 12 months, n=710

Source: ABAS 2013/14 – 2015/16

There were significant differences in the usual source of alcohol between the following groups:

- A greater proportion of females (52%; 43, 61) reported being bought alcohol by their parents, compared with males (26%; 19, 32).
- A greater proportion of young people categorised as non-risky drinkers<sup>3</sup> reported being given their alcohol by parents (29%; 20, 38), compared with those categorised as risky drinkers (12%; 6, 19).
- A greater proportion of young people categorised as risky drinkers (37%; 29, 46) reported receiving their alcohol from friends aged over 18, compared with those categorised as non-risky drinkers (18%; 11, 26).

## DRINKING WITHOUT PARENT/CAREGIVER KNOWLEDGE

From the YIS, 56% [95% CI: 53, 59] of Year 10 students who had ever tried alcohol reported having drunk alcohol without their parents/caregivers knowing about it.

There were significant differences between the following groups:

- A greater proportion of Māori young people reported having drunk alcohol without parent/caregiver knowledge (67%; 62, 72), compared with European/Other young people (53%; 49, 56).
- A greater proportion of young people categorised as risky drinkers<sup>4</sup> reported having drunk alcohol without parent/caregiver knowledge (75%; 72, 79), compared with those categorised as non-risky drinkers (44%; 41, 47).

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<sup>3</sup> In HPA surveys, risky drinking is conservatively defined as drinking five or more drinks on any one occasion for those aged 15 to 17 years. In the ABAS, young people were defined as risky drinkers if they consumed this amount in the past 4 weeks.

Note this definition of “risky drinking” is higher than the HPA’s low-risk alcohol drinking advice for an occasion (see <http://www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/advice-on-alcohol/low-risk-alcohol-drinking-advice>).

<sup>4</sup> In the YIS, young people were defined as risky drinkers if they consumed five or more drinks on any one occasion in the past 30 days.

## SUPERVISION OF DRINKING

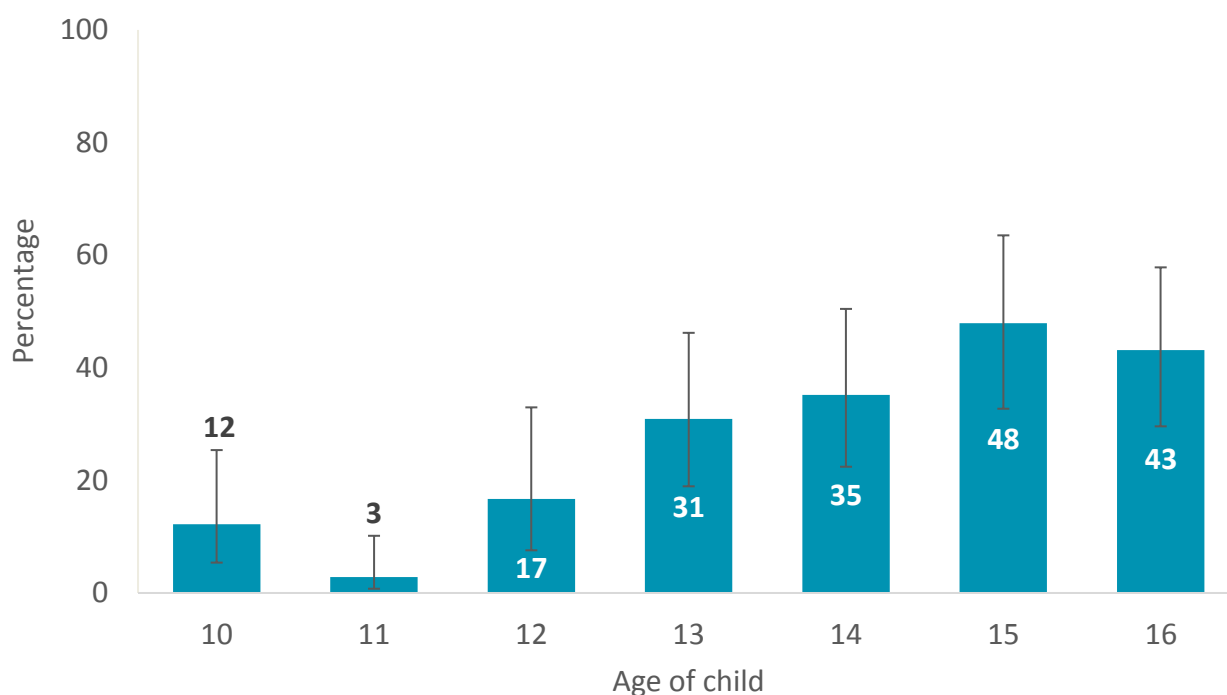
Parents and caregivers surveyed in the HLS with a child aged 10 to 16 years were asked whether they had ever “allowed [their child] to drink under the supervision of either them or another parent/caregiver”. No definition was provided for “allowed to drink” or “supervision”; respondents defined this for themselves. Further, no description was provided for ‘drinking alcohol’, and may include a range of behaviours including sipping or tasting someone else’s drink to allowing full drinks to be consumed.

Overall, 28% [95% CI: 23, 34] of these parents/caregivers reported allowing their child to drink under the supervision of either them or another parent or caregiver. Almost half of parents with children aged 15 or 16 years reported allowing their child to drink under supervision (see Figure 2).

There were significant differences between the following groups:

- A greater proportion of European/Other people (40%; 31, 49) reported allowing their child to drink under supervision, compared with Māori (20%; 14, 28), Pacific (6%; 3, 12), and Asian (10%; 3, 26) people.
- A greater proportion of parents/caregivers with older children reported having allowed their child to drink under supervision (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2: Percentage of parents/caregivers who say they or another parent/caregiver have supervised their child drinking, by child’s age*



Base: Parents and caregivers surveyed in the HLS with a child aged 10 to 16 years, n=590

Source: 2016 HLS

## ATTITUDES TOWARD SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL TO UNDER 18s

The following two sections report on attitudes toward supply of alcohol to young people.

### **Attitudes toward supplying a party attendee aged 16 years with alcohol**

All ABAS respondents (aged 15 years and over) were asked to consider the following situation:

*James is a 16 year old high school student that is attending a party where there will be a range of people – similar aged youth through to other parents and other adults.*

Responses to the following statements about this situation used a five-point scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. In this report, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses have been combined to an overall 'agree' category.

#### ***Parental permission for alcohol supply***

Overall, 74% [95% CI: 73, 75] of people agreed that it is “absolutely necessary that James’ parents give permission to those who provide him with any alcohol”. There were no significant differences across the three survey years.

There were significant differences between the following groups:

- A greater proportion of females (76%; 75, 77) agreed, compared with males (72%; 71, 73).
- A greater proportion of European/Other people (77%; 77, 78) agreed, compared with Māori (73%; 71, 75), Pacific (59%; 56, 62), and Asian (62%; 59, 65) people.
- A greater proportion of people aged 25 to 44 (76%; 75, 78) and 45 to 64 years (77%; 76, 79) agreed, compared with those aged 18 to 24 years (70%; 67, 73).
- A smaller proportion of those categorised as risky drinkers<sup>5</sup> (74%; 72, 76) agreed, compared with those categorised as non-risky drinkers (79%; 78, 80).

#### ***Alcohol consumption at a party with parents’ knowledge***

Overall, 40% [95% CI: 39, 41] of people agreed that “it would be acceptable for James to drink a couple of beers if his parents or caregivers knew there was alcohol at the party”.

A greater proportion of people agreed in 2015/16 (45%; 44, 47), compared with 2013/14 (37%; 35, 38) and 2014/15 (37%; 36, 39).

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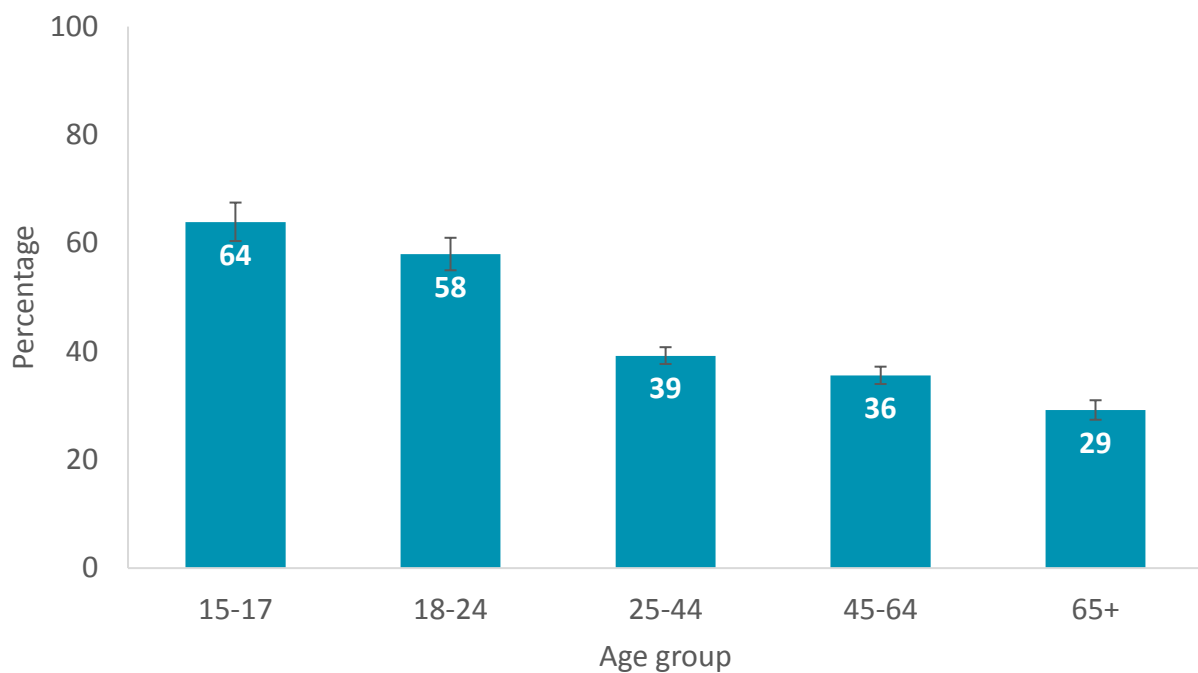
<sup>5</sup> HPA conservatively defines risky drinking as drinking seven or more drinks on any one occasion for those aged over 18 years.

Note this definition of “risky drinking” is higher than the HPA’s low-risk alcohol drinking advice for an occasion (see <http://www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/advice-on-alcohol/low-risk-alcohol-drinking-advice>).

There were significant differences in levels of agreement between the following groups:

- A smaller proportion of females (38%; 37, 39) agreed, compared with males (42%; 40, 43).
- A greater proportion of Māori (44%; 42, 47) agreed, compared with European/Other people (42%; 41, 43). A smaller proportion of Pacific (32%; 29, 35) and Asian (28%; 25, 31) people agreed compared with European/Other people.
- A smaller proportion of people aged 25 years and over, agreed compared with those aged 18 to 24 years. A greater proportion of those aged 15 to 17 agreed compared with those aged 18 to 24 years (see Figure 3).
- A greater proportion of those categorised as risky drinkers (57%; 55, 59) agreed compared with those categorised as non-risky drinkers (41%; 40, 42).

*Figure 3: Percentage of people who agreed or strongly agreed that it is acceptable for James to drink a couple of beers at a party if his parents/caregivers knew there was alcohol*



Base: Adults 15+ years, n=12,206  
Source: ABAS 2013/14 – 2015/16

### ***Supply of alcohol by an older adult or a peer***

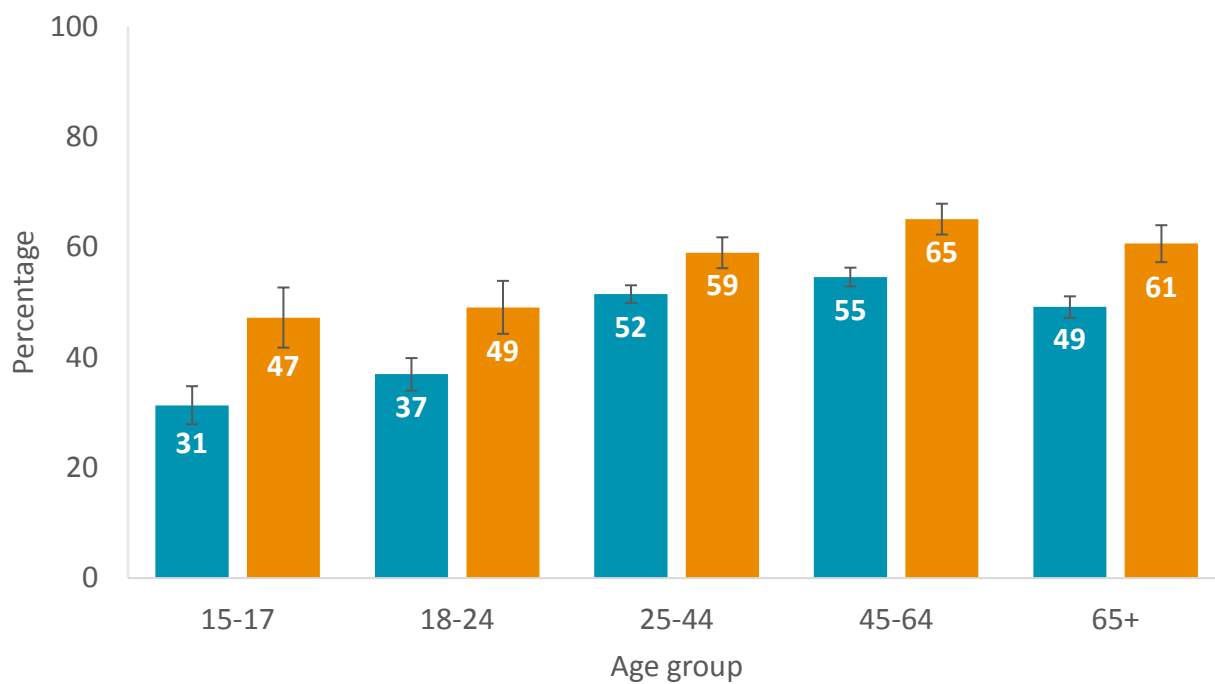
Overall, 49% [95% CI: 48, 50] of people agreed that “it would be wrong for an older adult to give James a couple of beers”. Fifty-nine percent (58, 61) of people agreed that “it would be wrong for someone of a similar age to give James a couple of beers”.

A greater proportion of people agreed that it would be wrong for an older adult to give James a couple of beers in 2015/16 (51%; 49, 53) compared with 2013/14 (48%; 46, 50) and 2014/15 (49%; 47, 50).

There were significant differences in levels of agreement between the following groups:

- A greater proportion of females (52%; 51, 54) agreed that it would be wrong for an older adult to supply alcohol compared with males (46%; 44, 47). This result was the same for supply of alcohol by peers (Females: 62%; 60, 65; Males: 56%; 54, 58).
- A smaller proportion of Māori people (45%; 43, 47) agreed that it would be wrong for an older adult to supply alcohol compared with European/Other people (49%; 48, 50). A greater proportion of Pacific people (56%; 52, 59) agreed compared with European/Other people. A greater proportion of Pacific (64%; 59, 69) and Asian (64%; 59, 69) people agreed that it would be wrong for a peer to supply alcohol compared with European/Other people (59%; 57, 61).
- A greater proportion of people aged 25 years and over agreed that supply of alcohol by an older adult or a peer was wrong compared with those aged 18 to 24 years. A smaller proportion of those aged 15 to 17 agreed that it would be wrong for an older adult to supply alcohol compared with those aged 18 to 24 years (see Figure 4).
- A smaller proportion of those categorised as risky drinkers (40%; 38, 42) agreed that it would be wrong for an older adult to supply alcohol compared with those categorised as non-risky drinkers (51%; 50, 51). This pattern was the same for supply of alcohol by peers (Risky drinkers: 46%; 42, 50; Non-risky drinkers: 62%; 60, 65).

Figure 4: Percentage of people who agreed or strongly agreed that it would be wrong for either an older adult or a peer to supply James with a couple of beers at a party



- It would be wrong for an older adult to give James a couple of beers
- It would be wrong for someone of similar age to give James a couple of beers

Base: Adults 15+ years, n=12,206 (older adult), n=4,200 (peer)  
Source: ABAS 2013/14 – 2015/16 (older adult), ABAS 2015/16 (peer)



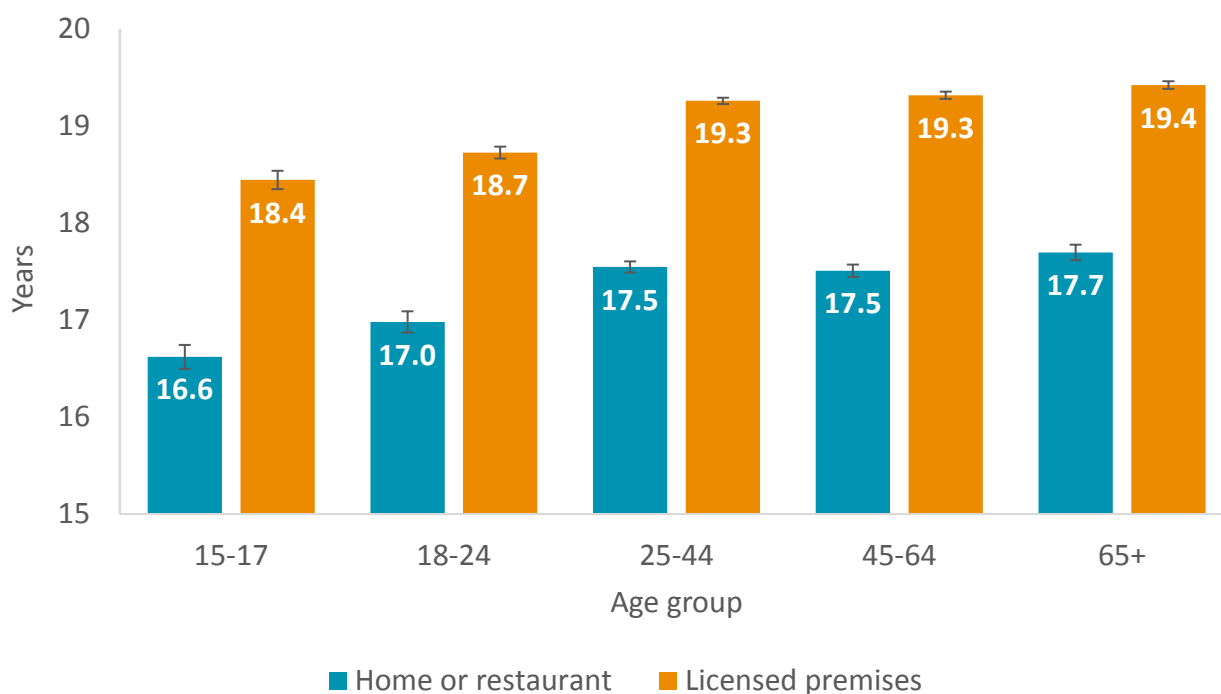
## Attitudes toward acceptable drinking age

On average, ABAS respondents believed that people should be 17.4 years old [95 CI: 17.41, 17.47] before they were allowed to drink at home or in a restaurant under parental supervision, and 19.2 years old (19.18, 19.22) before they were allowed to drink at licensed premises such as a bar or a pub.

There were significant differences between the following groups:

- Females believed people should be slightly older before being allowed to drink at home or in a restaurant under parental supervision (17.52 years; 17.48, 17.57) or in licenced premises (19.27 years; 19.24, 19.30) compared with males (17.35 years; 17.30, 17.40; and 19.12 years; 19.09, 19.15 respectively).
- People aged 25 years and over believed people should be older before being allowed to drink both at home or in a restaurant under supervision, and at licensed premises, compared with people aged 18 to 24 years, while those 15 to 17 years believed people should be younger in both cases (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Average age respondents believed people should be before they are allowed to drink at home or a restaurant under supervision, or at licensed premises



Base: Adults 15+ years, n=12,206

Source: ABAS 2013/14 – 2015/16

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