

# Shop servers experience of alcohol-related issues and interventions in socially contrasting areas

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Alcohol issues and spatial disadvantage

In recent decades, like the rest of the UK, Scotland has experienced a considerable rise in alcohol-related harms. For example, liver cirrhosis rates have risen sharply and are around double that of England (Leon & McCambridge, 2006). These problems are particularly concentrated in Glasgow, Scotland's largest city (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, 2011) where alcohol-related issues are so pronounced that they have been described as "some of the highest alcohol related death rates in the UK and in the Western world"<sup>1</sup>. Glasgow contains 35 out of the 50 most deprived areas<sup>2</sup> in Scotland (despite containing only around 600,000 of the country's 5 million inhabitants). Alcohol-related problems have disproportionately affected those living in deprived areas of the city. In Glasgow, alcohol-attributable hospitalisations rates are twice the Scottish national average and, the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city experience rates four times the levels recorded in more affluent parts (Hanlon et al, 2006; Leyland et al, 2007).

Many studies have examined these issues in other locations by looking for associations between alcohol availability (e.g. outlet density and alcohol-related problems). Increased density of alcohol outlets has been found to be associated with more instances of drunk driving (Jewell and Brown, 1995), pedestrian injury collisions (LaSaca et al, 2005), and violent assaults (Stevenson et al, 1999). Hay et al (2009) also found strong associations between proximity to nearest alcohol outlet and deprivation, with a greater access to outlets in more-deprived urban areas. However, in a review of the relevant literature, Livingston et al (2007) found that despite broad similarities in findings, the specifics of the relationships between outlet and alcohol-related violence vary from place to place and from study to study. One major gap in the literature identified by Livingston et al. was the underlying assumption that every alcohol outlet (within broad licence categories) is equivalent. Highlighting the importance of local context, a study conducted by this team (Ellaway et al, 2010) which looked at outlet density and deprivation in Glasgow, found that while some deprived areas in the city did have higher outlet density there were others that did not systematically follow this pattern (some of the most deprived neighbourhoods had the fewest outlets). How this non-linear inequity of outlet distribution affects retailers and consumers was unknown and suggested the need for further research, particularly with regards to alcohol purchasing patterns.

### 1.2 The growing influence of the off-trade

In Scotland and across the UK, there has been a movement by consumers away from the on-trade (i.e. pubs and nightclubs) sector and towards the off-trade (i.e. off-licences, shops and

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Linda de Caestecker, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Director of Public Health Medicine; <http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/tag/nicola-sturgeon-msp/> (accessed February 2012).

<sup>2</sup> As indicated by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009 (SIMD) (See methodology section for description of the SIMD).

supermarkets) (CamRA, 2007; Holloway et al, 2008; Withrington, 2007). In Scotland this shift has been more prominent. The estimated litres per capita of pure alcohol sold in Scotland between 2005 and 2009 has remained stable, however there was a decrease of 15% in on-trade and a rise of 8% in off-trade<sup>3</sup>, while in England and Wales there was a larger reduction of 22% in on-trade but only an increase in of 5% in off-trade<sup>4</sup>.

The reasons for this are linked to the affordability of alcohol from, and accessibility to, off-sales. Increase in availability has come from progressive liberalisation of the licensing regulation since the 1960s, promoting expansion and diversification in the retail supply of alcohol to the extent that the number of off-sales licences rose by 31% between 1980 and 1997 (MacNaughton & Gillan, 2011).

The growth in off-sales premises has created an increasingly competitive market place, contributing to the falling price of alcohol. Overall, off-trade beer is now 155% more affordable in real terms than it was in 1987, whereas on-trade beer is only 39% more affordable (Alcohol Statistics Scotland, 2011). Off-trade alcohol is also more price responsive than on-trade, and the above trends between sectors have been blamed on the major superstores selling alcohol below wholesale price in order to drive footfall and increase overall trade (Blunden, 2007; British Liver Trust, 2008; Human Factors Analysts Limited, 2007). The relatively more expensive on-trade prices, combined with recent government policies such as the prohibition of smoking in public places, or the banning 'happy hours' and 'two-for-one' offers, have also been cited as a reasons for the increasing practice of 'front-loading' i.e. consuming alcohol in a private dwelling (e.g. home) or in a public place (e.g. street) before attending an on-trade premise (e.g. Engineer et al, 2003; Glindermann et al, 2006; Borsari et al, 2007; Galloway et al, 2007), however a range of psycho-social factors (i.e. pre-dance socialising, loss of inhibition etc.) were just as important to some night-time economy (NTE) patrons as price differentials (Forsyth, 2010).

From public health and violence reduction perspectives, these trends are unwelcome for several reasons. For example, alcohol products that are sold almost exclusively by off-trade, such as super-lagers, white ciders, tonic (caffeinated) wine and other fortified beverages, have been identified as having negative health and social consequences by encouraging immodest consumption (Brain & Parker, 1997; 'Daniels Report', 2004; Forsyth et al, 1997; Galloway et al, 2007; Goodall, 2011; Hughes et al, 1997). On-trade consumption is measured in doses, within a purpose built (licensed) environment and is continually monitored by staff with a vested interest in preventing harm on premise. In contrast, off-trade purchases can involve large amounts of alcohol, with limited control over who drinks it or the consequences. For example, the off-trade is more likely to be the source of alcohol for under-age persons, whether through direct purchase by young people or via third-party (adult agent / 'shoulder tapping') hereafter referred to as proxy-buying (Boreham & McManus, 2003; Corbett et al, 2005; Forsyth & Barnard, 2000; Galloway et al. 2007; Human Factors Analysts

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<sup>3</sup> In Scotland, on-trade consumption levels decreased from 4.6 litres per capita in 2005 to 3.9 litres per capita in 2009. Off-sales rose from 7.4 litres per capita in 2005 to 8.0 in 2009 (Alcohol Statistics Scotland, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> In England and Wales, on-trade decreased from 4.1 litres per capita in 2005 to 3.2. Off-trade rose from 6.1 litres per capita in 2005 to 6.4 in 2009 (Alcohol Statistics Scotland, 2011).

Limited, 2007; Willner et al 2000). Several studies have also linked alcohol sourced from the off-trade to general offending committed by youths (Matthews et al, 2006) and violent crime (Forsyth et al, 2011; Richardson and Budd, 2003). In the extreme, consumption of alcohol sourced from the off-trade is more likely to be related to serious violence and even homicide (Navis et al, 2008; Norstrom 1998; Scribner et al, 1999).

### **1.3 The off-trade server as local alcohol expert**

Much research has been conducted in recent times assessing disorder in the night-time economy, including the role of, and problems experienced by, on-trade staff (e.g. Brennan et al, 2011; Graham et al, 2005; Hughes et al, 2011; Graham and Homel, 2008; Green and Plant, 2007), yet there is a dearth of research into this issue from an off-trade perspective (Jayne et al, 2006; Pattoni et al, 2007). Our research project builds upon an Alcohol Education Research Council (AERC) small grant funded project (Forsyth et al, 2007), hereafter referred to as the pilot study, which investigated the negative impacts of off-sales in communities (e.g. hazardous litter, see Forsyth and Davidson, 2009 and 2010). That research involved a small number of pilot interviews with shop servers ( $n = 8$ , six licensed) in one locality. These revealed, that in contrast to the stereotype often portrayed by the media (e.g. of unscrupulous operators selling to under-age persons and fuelling street-disorder) off-sales staff went to great personal lengths to reduce such harms in *their* community, and that shop premises had adopted a range of strategies to minimise these, tailored to local clientele (e.g. limiting quantity of certain problematic beverages to be sold per customer, or engaging in local Neighbourhood Watch schemes). Staff members also reported being the victims of alcohol-related violence and disorder themselves (Forsyth & Davidson, 2008).

Almost all of the interviewees in the pilot study reported that they felt under threat economically from the major-superstores' practice of deep-discounting alcohol and other products' prices. This is problematic because licensed local shops were often the only source of groceries for many disadvantaged residents, who were unable to access the major-superstores (i.e. the elderly, infirm, children, non-car owners). It was suggested that the major-superstores effectively pushed marginal customers towards local shops, making them dependent upon selling 'suspect' beverages ('Daniels Report', 2004:2) not stocked by the supermarkets to survive. Furthermore, local servers felt empowered to 'third-party-police' (TTP) local alcohol issues, in comparison to superstores, because they knew their clientele (e.g. ages, drinking patterns), regulars who could act as "an extra pair of eyes" (Forsyth et al, 2007:34) informing the shopkeeper of any potentially troublesome customers.

Ultimately, the pilot study inferred that from the shopkeepers' point of view, an alcohol licence can be a double-edged sword; whilst it may provide revenue essential for economic viability, especially in less-affluent communities, it may also attract undesirable customers, harming basic trade, perhaps increasing reliance on alcohol sales. Unlike on-trade staff (or major superstores with designated security) community shopkeepers are less likely to have security industry trained back-up to help them deal with such problems.

## 1.4 The current alcohol market and policy arena

Since the pilot study there have been several further developments of significance to the makeup and regulation of the alcohol market place. Regarding the former, in 2009, 'First Quench', the largest independent off-trade retail chain<sup>5</sup> in the UK, went into administration, forcing 373 stores to cease trading and selling off the rest of their 1,202 stores<sup>6</sup>. This year, for the first time supermarket beer sales are predicted to overtake pub beers sales<sup>7</sup> as pubs are reported to be continuing to close at almost 40 per day<sup>8</sup>. With their competitors in the on-trade and off-trade faltering, supermarkets have consolidated their dominance of the alcohol market and are left fighting with each other<sup>9</sup> in an increasingly aggressive market place<sup>10</sup>. Regarding the latter, the Scottish Government are in the process of introducing a raft of policies designed to tackle the alcohol-related issues that have been described as "the problem of our time [and] the major criminal justice, health and social issue in Scotland" by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice of Scotland, Kenny MacAskill. From the perspective of the off-trade industry, these have included: mandatory training for all sellers of alcohol; submission of detailed 'operating plans' to licensing boards (both measures from the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2009); restrictions on where alcohol is placed on the shop-floor; banning of price promotions encouraging increased alcohol purchasing (e.g. 'two-for-one' offers and '3 for £10'); alcohol product prices must not be varied within a 72 hours time period; and sellers are obliged to request to see personal identification for anyone suspected of being under the age of 25 ('Challenge 25') (all measures from the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010 which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2011). More recently, the now majority Scottish Nationalist Party government has proposed introducing a 'Minimum Unit Pricing' (MUP) policy and a 'Social Responsibility Levy' (SRL).

For these reasons our research was timely, as it was carried out shortly after the implementation of the 2005 Act (1<sup>st</sup> September 2009), during the time period when the 2010 Act was introduced (1<sup>st</sup> October 2011), and before the advent of MUP and SRL. With alcohol policy in Scotland going through a very interesting phase, this research contributes towards the "clear need to conduct research that builds a more robust evidential base for decision-making in Scotland" (Elvins, 2009:62) by examining an under-researched area of the alcohol market (i.e. the role of shop servers in the off-trade).

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<sup>5</sup> First Quench brands included; Threshers, The Local, Wine Rack, Bottoms Up, Victoria Wine, and Haddows.

<sup>6</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8345384.stm> (accessed February 2012).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/foodanddrinknews/8756037/Supermarket-beer-sales-overtake-pub-beer-sales-for-first-time.html> (accessed February 2012).

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.beerandpub.com/newsList\\_detail.aspx?newsId=332](http://www.beerandpub.com/newsList_detail.aspx?newsId=332) (accessed February 2012).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2055466/Alcohol-price-war-Supermarkets-offer-half-price-champagne.html> (accessed February 2012).

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.offlicencenews.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/12536/Supermarkets\\_slash\\_spirits\\_prices.html](http://www.offlicencenews.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/12536/Supermarkets_slash_spirits_prices.html) (accessed February 2012).

## **1.5 Aims and Objectives**

The present study aims address these issues from the perspective of those who are engaged in selling off-trade alcohol in the community. To date, the voices of this important group have been neglected in relation to their views on how alcohol problems (e.g. anti-social behaviour) and policies (e.g. MUP) are likely to affect their business prospects or the wellbeing of the communities which they serve. To accomplish these objectives a mixed methods approach was adopted. There were two components to this. Firstly, qualitative interviews were conducted with a sample of shopkeepers working in the most and least deprived parts of Glasgow city. Secondly a self-complete questionnaire was given out to all licensed community shops in the city and to a matched control sample of unlicensed stores. These methods will be described in detail in the next section.



## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Process used to identify shops

The pilot study was restricted to a small number of local convenience-stores in eight socio-economically homogenous (non-disadvantaged) social housing areas (known as 'schemes', total population 23,750) within a Scottish town, although a statistically significant area deprivation to alcohol-related incivility gradient (as measured by amount of alcohol-related litter) was still apparent. The present research is designed to build on this, by comprising a larger number of shops of various types, across the socially contrasting neighbourhoods of a major British city (Glasgow) known to experience high levels of alcohol-related health and social problems.

The initial phase of the present study involved the acquisition of databases from which to select relevant shop premises (both licensed and unlicensed), stratified by socially contrasting neighbourhoods. To these ends, firstly, a list of off-trade liquor licensed premises, with addresses (as of 2007), obtained from Glasgow City Council was consulted. This database had already been used by members of the research team (AE and AF) to conduct an audit of off-trade outlets in Glasgow (Ellaway et al, forthcoming). This audit provided the researchers with a baseline from which to measure variation in the resilience of such premises, across socially contrasting neighbourhoods, at a time when the retail sector has undergone economic stress.

Secondly, a control group of unlicensed premises was provided by another database listing 'general retail' outlets (grocers and newsagents / confectioners). A member of the research team (AE) had already used this database during an audit of local food provision (McDonald et al, 2009 & 2011). The off-trade licensed database contained 618 addresses. The 'general retail' database contained 683. However, at this stage it was not known how many of these premises were still operating as off-sales or would make suitable control premises, although it was anticipated that since 2007 shop closures may have been greatest in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Thirdly, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009 (SIMD 2009) was consulted to measure levels of deprivation. The SIMD is calculated from seven domains; "income" (weighted at 28% of the total SIMD score), "employment" (28%), "health" (14%), "education" (14%), "geographic access" (9%), "crime" (5%) and housing (2%). One of the seven indicators which make up the "health" domain is "hospital episodes related to alcohol use per person". Total SIMD scores were used to identify which addresses on the databases of licensed and unlicensed premises were located in deprived areas and non-deprived areas of Glasgow. This was done at Scottish data 'zone level', the key small area of statistical geography in Scotland, (Scottish Executive, 2004). Data zones are groups of Census 2001 output areas, with most containing populations between 500 and 1,000 residents (median population = 769). They reside within local government defined boundaries, and where possible, they have been shaped to respect physical boundaries and natural communities, have a regular shape and contain households with similar social characteristics. There are 694 data

zones within the boundary of Glasgow City Council, with a mean population of 832 (range 248–2243) and a mean area of 25.2 hectares.

Not all data zones contain a shop, and some contain several. For example, of the 694 zones within Glasgow, only 325 had at least one address on the licensed premises database. In the extreme, one data zone in Glasgow city centre contained 21 (off-trade) licensed addresses. Ranking data zones which contained addresses on these databases allowed the shops located within the most and least deprived neighbourhoods of the city to be identified (according to their SIMD score). In order to maximise shopkeepers' experience of alcohol issues in socially contrasting neighbourhoods, these most and least deprived data zone shops were then approached with a view to their participation in the in-depth qualitative interview phase of the research.

## 2.2 In-depth interviews

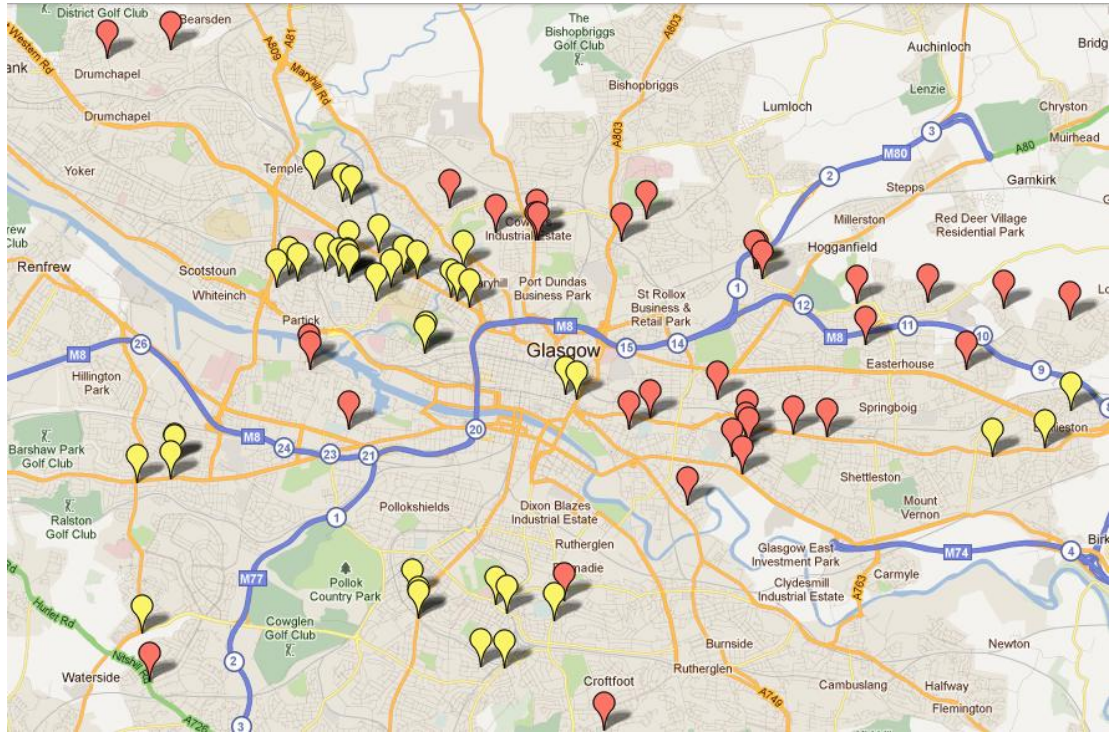
The study design aimed to recruit and conduct qualitative interviews with 36 shopkeepers, evenly divided between those serving the least and most deprived communities in Glasgow. This sampling strategy included both licensed (n=24) and unlicensed (n=12) shops, as is shown by Table 1.

**Table 1: Number of interviews by neighbourhood and shop type**

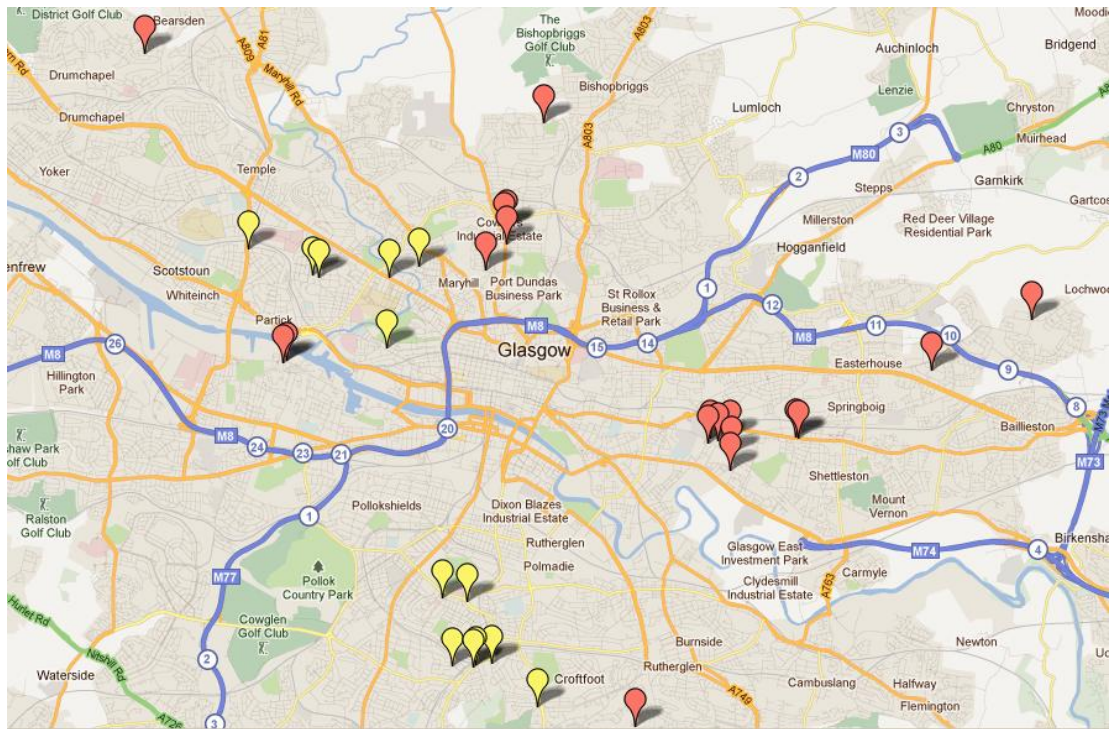
Neighbourhood	Shop Type	Licensed Convenience-store	Unlicensed Convenience-store
Most Deprived		12	6
Most Non-deprived		12	6

These most and least deprived shops were not evenly spatially distributed across the city. Map 1 and Map 2 highlight the location of the licensed shops and unlicensed shops respectively that were identified as representing the most and least deprived communities in Glasgow. On these maps, a dark/red indicator marks a shop premises located in one of the most deprived data zones, a light/yellow indicator marks a shop located in one of the least deprived data zones. Note that for reasons of anonymity double the number of shops that actually participated is shown on these maps.

**Map 1: Licensed shops identified as being located in the most/least deprived areas of Glasgow city**



**Map 2: Unlicensed shops identified as being located in the most/least deprived areas of Glasgow city**



**Key:**

- Non-deprived
- Deprived

From Maps 1 and 2 it can be seen that both deprived and non-deprived shops were concentrated in certain districts of the city (particularly in the 'east end' and 'west end' respectively). In order to achieve a more diverse sample, when an individual data zone contained more than one shop, only one interview would be conducted to represent that data zone. Also, where more than one shop was present in a data zone, independent stores or shops, which were part of a 'symbol' group (e.g. Spar) that had not already participated in an interview, were prioritised over those from which another branch had already provided an interview at the level of deprivation concerned.

As in the pilot, recruitment was via a researcher (ND) visiting each selected shop in turn, during times when business tends to be slower (i.e. mid-morning or early afternoon). The researcher invited staff present to participate. Interviews took place there and then, or were scheduled at a later time / place of the participants' choosing or permission (this could entail several visits). Interviews at licensed shops were conducted in blocks of six at opposing ends of the deprivation spectrum (i.e. six interviews were conducted in the most deprived areas, then six in the most non-deprived, then six in the most deprived, six in the most non-deprived) until the total of twelve had been reached, with the same pattern repeated for the unlicensed shops (i.e. three interviews were conducted in the most deprived areas, then three in the most non-deprived, then three in the most deprived, three in the most non-deprived) until six had been reached at each extreme.

Interviews were recorded with participants first being assured of confidentiality both verbally and by providing an information sheet (see Appendix 1). They were then asked to give verbal consent to their participation and provided with a consent form (see Appendix 2) for written consent. Participants were informed that they need not answer any question they did not wish to, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Interviewees received £20 recompense for their time given over to participation.

A topic guide sheet was used to ask interviewees a series of semi-structured open-ended questions about their / the shop's experience of alcohol-related issues (see Appendix 3). Topics covered by the interview were chosen via consultation with the Project Advisory Group (PAG) and included items tailored specifically towards licensed and unlicensed shops (e.g. why the latter did not sell alcohol). The length of interviews varied, from well over an hour to eight minutes. Average length of interview for shop workers in licensed shops was 34 minutes and 20 minutes for unlicensed shops.

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher who conducted this fieldwork (ND), entered into the qualitative data analysis package NVivo and analysed them using the systematic methodology of grounded theory analysis. Each interview was initially coded to provide a descriptive summary of the text. These codes were then developed and analysed further to establish the emerging themes, concepts, and keywords. From this, a hierarchical coding 'tree' structure was formed, with overarching categories subdivided into sub-categories. At this stage codes were renamed, merged or even discarded. Once the themes and concepts were established, the axial coding was performed to build connections within categories, and between categories and sub-categories.

During visits to addresses to recruit potential interviewees, it became clear that many premises on the databases had either ceased trading or were not operating as community off-sales or convenience stores. For example, the most deprived address listed on the licensed premises database was the gift shop of a major football stadium, and the second most deprived address had closed down. This particular shop had been part of the Haddows off-sales chain, all 43 of which located within the city of Glasgow had ceased trading since 2007. The full extent to which off-sales premises on the 2007 database were no longer operating as such by late 2011 was to become apparent during the survey phase of the research.

### **2.3 Shop survey**

The survey phase of this research aimed to deliver a short questionnaire (two sides of A4) to every community off-sales outlet in Glasgow. To maximise response rates the questionnaire was kept brief and covered a subset of the issues raised during the in-depth qualitative interviews which it was felt warranted further quantitative investigation. The content and layout of this questionnaire was decided in consultation with the Project Advisory Group (PAG). Items on this questionnaire asked respondents about their shop, customer base, any problems which they might experience while at work, and for their views on alcohol issues (see Appendix 4). There were two versions of the questionnaire. The first included items for licensed premises only, such as questions about the role that alcohol product sales played at the shop or their views on recent licensing policy (e.g. asking about their experience of a recently introduced 'two-for-one' offers ban, see Introduction section 1.4). The second version was tailored towards unlicensed shops (e.g. asking about their reasons for not selling alcohol, again informed by interview findings). After consulting with the PAG, it was decided that in order to maximise the response rate from off-sales premises, questionnaires should be hand delivered to licensed shops by the researchers (thus also allowing the full extent of off-sales closures within the city to be quantified). After one month, licensed shops which had not responded to the hand delivered questionnaire were sent a reminder postal questionnaire.

The survey materials comprised a letter addressed to the shopkeeper with an information sheet which explained the purpose of study, confidentiality and informed the shopkeeper or other appointed server on how to complete the questionnaire (see Appendix 5). A stamped addressed envelope was provided for its return. In effect the respondent who filled in each questionnaire was anonymous (no identifying details such were recorded), however it was always possible (indeed necessary) for the research team to know the location (data zone) of the shop which each completed questionnaire represented.

Hand delivering questionnaires allowed the researchers to audit the 618 addresses on the licensed premises database, so that only local community off-sales, still operating as such, were included in the final sample. By this method only 271 (43.9%) premises out of the 618 listed were found to be eligible for inclusion in the study. This figure was derived by excluding those premises which had ceased trading since 2007 (n=131) comprising shops which were currently lying vacant (n=87, mainly



dedicated off-sales), premises which had changed their use or were no longer selling off-trade alcohol (n=29) and instances where the whole building or area had been demolished or redeveloped (n=13). There were also two cases where an address on the database had merged with an adjacent property to form a larger single unitary shop.

It is of course possible that new liquor licensed shops, not on our database, may have begun trading since 2007. However, during fieldwork both interviews with shopkeepers and our own observations indicated that any new off-trade outlets were more likely to be supermarket chain premises than locally run independent small businesses.

Other premises were excluded because, although licensed to sell alcohol, they were not operating community off-sales. These comprised alcohol wholesalers (n=23), caterers (n=23), chemists (n=6), bookmakers (n=2), service stations (n=11), gift shops (n=18), department stores (n=5, e.g. Debenhams) and supermarkets (n=84, including the four 'majors' i.e. Tesco n=11, Sainsbury's n=8, Morrison's n=7 and ASDA n=5). This premises-type, their scale and selling practices proved to be an important topic with those interviewed. For the purposes of this research, supermarkets are further distinguished from eligible community shops by whether they offered counter service only (included in the sample) or a row of checkouts (excluded from the sample). By this rule of thumb, two 'symbol' group shops which would otherwise have received a questionnaire were excluded.

A final group of stores which was not included in the survey comprised the one remaining chain of off-sales stores still operating in Glasgow (which claims to be 'Scotland's largest independent Off Licence and Convenience Stores'). During the interview phase of the project, this chain store's head office opted not to participate in the research (the only instance where this happened during the whole study). This chain had 44 addresses on the licensed database of which 36 appeared to still be in operation, and a further 8 of which appeared to have either merged into larger stores or ceased trading. Although their refusal to participate was disappointing, it was also felt that, because of the demise of the other off-sales chains that had been operating in the city in 2007 (the year of the pilot study) their inclusion may have biased the sample by constituting a group of outliers. Indeed, according to the SIMD, this chain's stores were not uniformly distributed throughout the city, in that they tended to be located in areas with elevated levels of deprivation and alcohol problems in comparison to the rest of Glasgow (see Table 2).

Thus the final 271 shop premises eligible for inclusion in the survey were all either local independent community off-sales (often named after the proprietor, e.g. 'Grace Brothers Licensed Grocer' or the locality e.g. 'Glasgow Central Off Sales') or were part of 'symbol' groups of convenience stores (e.g. Spar). The ways in which the licensed premises eligible to receive a questionnaire (hereafter referred to as the community off-sales) compared with the excluded licensed addresses above, in terms of area characteristics (as measured by SIMD data zone) is shown by Table 2.

**Table 2: Off-sales outlets and deprivation measures**

Premises Type	n	Mean SIMD Score	Mean SIMD rank	Mean Alcohol Hospitalisation rank	Mean Crime domain rank
Eligible shop / community off-sales	271	36.5	1804	1771	1648
Vacant / Shut down	87	37.3	1915	1715	1599
No longer off-sales	29	34.1	1973	1716	1249
Redeveloped area	13	43.2	1101	573 **	991 *
Merged premises	2	56.6	458	616	769
ANY CEASED TRSADING	131	37.5	1825	1585	1449
Supermarket	84	35.7	1979	1882	1267 *
Service Station	11	30.8	2174	2403	1695
Bookmakers	2	48.9	1908	1861	543
Gift shop	18	39.8	1695	1183	771 **
Department Store	5	38.3	1347	756	240 *
Chemist	6	40.0	1353	1572	692 *
Caterers	23	28.7	2559	2057	1833
Wholesaler	23	49.4 **	880 **	728 **	802 **
ANY NON-COMMUNITY SHOP	172	37.1	1852	1668	1198 ***
Non-participating Chain store (all)	44	51.8 ***	865 ***	917 ***	1188 *
Non-participating Chain store (open)	36	51.3 ***	868 ***	903 **	1231

Mean difference compared to community off-sales by t-test, \* p = 0.01, \*\* p = 0.01, \*\*\* p = 0.001

From Table 2 it can be seen that the mean SIMD score of shops eligible for the community off-sales survey was 36.5, which corresponds to a mean data zone rank of 1804 out of the 6505 data zones in Scotland. This was to be expected because Glasgow contains the greatest concentration of

deprivation in the country. The corresponding data zone ranks for alcohol hospitalisations rates and crime rates were similarly elevated.

Independent t-tests were conducted to compare the mean SIMD scores for the data zones of the 271 community off-sales with the other categories of address on the licensed premises database. From these, unexpectedly, the 131 outlets which had ceased trading were no more (or less) likely to have been located in areas of deprivation. This was true for both vacant shops and those which had changed use, however licensed address which been located in redeveloped (demolished) areas were significantly more likely to have had locally elevated levels of crime ( $t=2.298$ ,  $df=14$ ,  $p=0.037$ ) and alcohol-related hospitalisation ( $t=2.639$ ,  $df=282$ ,  $p=0.009$ ) according to the SIMD 2009.

There were also no differences between the 271 community off-sales and the 172 licensed addresses excluded as non-community shops in terms of total area deprivation or alcohol-related hospitalisation, however these were significantly more likely to be located in data zones with a higher crime ranking ( $t=3.331$ ,  $df=570$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). This finding is explicable because many of these excluded addresses (i.e. supermarkets, department stores, chemists, and especially gift shops) were located in central places, such as the city centre, where there is a much higher crime rate than is found in residential communities (e.g. the data zone with 21 licensed address was ranked number 1 for crime among Scotland's 6505 data zones by the SIMD 2009, holding 6 supermarkets, 2 gift shops, 2 department stores, a caterer and a chemist). Alcohol wholesalers differed from the other addresses on the database, in that compared to community off-sales, these were more likely to be located in deprived areas, having a significantly higher total SIMD score ( $t=3.014$ ,  $df=26$ ,  $p=0.006$ ), SIMD data zone rank ( $t=2.706$ ,  $df=292$ ,  $p=0.007$ ) and alcohol-related hospitalisation ( $t=3.034$ ,  $df=292$ ,  $p=0.003$ ) or crime ranking ( $t=2.955$ ,  $df=292$ ,  $p=0.003$ ). This distribution seemed to be because such premises (including various cash n' carry warehouses, distillers, a bottling plant and a brewery) were located in industrial neighbourhoods.

Surprisingly, the group of excluded licensed addresses that differed most from shops surveyed was the shops in the off-sales chain which did not wish to participate in the research. According to the database of licensed premises we consulted, the addresses of stores in this chain were statistically significantly more likely to be located in more deprived data zones ( $t=4.558$ ,  $df=58$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), with a higher deprivation rank ( $t=3.714$ ,  $df=313$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), higher alcohol-related hospitalisation rank ( $t=3.356$ ,  $df=313$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) and a higher crime rank ( $t=2.169$ ,  $df=313$ ,  $p=0.036$ ) according to the SIMD 2009. In other words, the distribution of the shops in this chain was heavily skewed towards the parts of the Glasgow experiencing the most problems (i.e. even within a city which as a whole suffers from elevated levels of alcohol-related problems). This was true for deprivation and alcohol-related hospitalisation measures even when their stores which had ceased trading or merged were considered.

It was hoped that despite high number of non-applicable addresses in the licensed premises database, and the large number which had ceased trading, a sample of around 100 completed questionnaires could be achieved. As a control group it was hoped to achieve a sample of around 50



completed questionnaires from comparable unlicensed shops. To this end, after completion of the community off-sales survey, a control sample of comparable community shops was obtained by recruiting similar but unlicensed shops operating within Glasgow.

The database of 683 'general retail' addresses was reduced to 266 unlicensed community shops by removing premises similar to those excluded from the licensed database, such as supermarkets, department stores, caterers, and gift shops. Thus, like the community off-sales sample, the control group comprised (only) either local independent community shops (often named after the proprietor, e.g. 'Grace Brothers Newsagent' or the locality e.g. 'Glasgow Central Grocer') or were unlicensed members of 'symbol' groups of convenience stores (e.g. Spar). The potential number of unlicensed controls surveyed was subsequently reduced to 250, when 15 were found to have ceased trading and one was found to be currently operating as an off-sales outlet.

Whereas the intention of the licensed premises survey was to maximise the number of community off-sales shops participating (i.e. completing a questionnaire) in this research, the aim of the unlicensed survey was to produce a comparison group of shops which most closely resembled those in the licensed sample (i.e. a control group). Thus the recruitment strategy for these differed. Firstly a questionnaire was posted out to all 250 applicable addresses. The questionnaires returned were then compared with the off-sales sample, with the intention that should these two data sets differ significantly (i.e. in terms of deprivation) a targeted selection of unlicensed shops would receive a hand delivered questionnaire to equalise their pattern of responses, so that the licensed and unlicensed samples did not differ by neighbourhood type (i.e. by total SIMD deprivation score).

To explore these issues the remainder of this report is structured into five chapters. Chapters three, four and five are the findings from the qualitative data gathered during the semi-structured interviews. Chapter six is the findings from the quantitative data obtained from the survey. Chapter seven draws together some conclusions and implications from synthesising the findings from the previous chapters.

### 3. Findings Part I: Community issues

#### 3.1 Customer base

The majority of interviewees stated that their customer bases were primarily derived from the local area (i.e. within short walking distance):

*We are a convenience store, so we're not set up, and we never will be the weekly shop for our customers, so it mainly is just top-up shopping. We do have some of our customers, maybe with some of the offers that we have running, who will maybe take three or four bags away, but that is few and far between...the biggest focus area for ourselves is confectionary, crisps, soft drinks and off-sales, then cigarettes as well (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*I try to focus on the basics in here. What I try to do is keep bulk stuff, like what people cannae [can't] carry from supermarkets, like they will come in here and buy the big bottles of milk and your big bottles of juice, instead of carrying it all the way from the supermarkets. At the more convenient end of the market, if they need anything in the morning, cereals or something quick where you would dive into your nearest shop, that's the kind of things I do (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Passing trade, non-permanent residents (tourists or students), and destination shoppers (i.e. those who come specifically to the shop from other areas) were also described, though to a lesser extent than local people. The role of the shops in their area varied, being described as being anything from “the only off-sale in the scheme [social housing area]”, “stuff for the pensioners”, “newspapers for the morning passing trade”, “deli products”, and “general convenience”. Operating times varied, from those operating primarily during day-time (e.g. 7am to 6pm) to those operating later in the evening (e.g. 10am to 10pm). Most interviewees claimed to know a majority of their customers (e.g. they recognised the customer’s face, knew their name, what products they regularly bought etc.):

*The vast majority of the customers we do know them because we are in a community, basically. There is passing trade, but I would say the vast majority of our customers are regular customers and we do know them and a large proportion we know by name as well and can have pleasant conversation with them (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*Here, I know everybody. There is nobody that I don't know (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

The perception of how embedded the shop was and how important it was to the community is more subjective and harder to measure. However, most shop workers believed that they played an important role in their area:

*I think it's a really important role actually, especially in this area. This shop has been here for years and years and years. Most of the older customers that come in have been here when they were children, so it's quite an important role within the community (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

In some instance, the shop and its staff had been in their area for decades with many of these workers living and growing up in the community that they served, forging personal relations with many of their customers:

*We've been here for so long that we've seen them grow up... it's more like family now... when we first open the shop they called my dad by his name and now they call him dad! [laughs] I think up here all the customers are all friends and family so it doesn't matter who comes in, everybody knows everyone up here. Then they all know [name of other shop worker] because she's [been raised here] for fifty years! [laughs] (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

### 3.2 Alcohol-related sales

For the licensed shops, the importance of alcohol with regard to direct profit varied, making up anything from 10% to 98% of total sales in the shops where interviews were conducted. However, interviewees in shops where alcohol was ancillary to the other products on sale (i.e. representing less than 50% total sales), alcohol was still often described to be “essential” due to the ‘interconnectedness’ of alcohol sales to other products; when customers would purchase other grocery products at the same time as purchasing alcohol. For example, in one shop alcohol sales only directly contributed 17% of their total sales, yet alcohol was deemed indispensable:

*They come to buy alcohol, they buy the paper, buy the milk, soap, cigarettes. When they come to buy the cigarette they must have their can of beer. When they come to the Post Office they get their can... it is all interconnected (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

As the statement above demonstrates, selling alcohol brings with it direct and indirect increased sales. However, many shops are unlicensed. There were several structural and agency based reasons given by interviewees in unlicensed shops for not selling alcohol, the overwhelming reason cited was that it contravened religious (Muslim) beliefs:

*Due to my father; he's always been against selling drink, religious sort of thing. So due to that I've never wanted to apply for a licence (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Other reasons given for choosing to be unlicensed included; perceived difficulties with, and the cost of, the licensing application process; the perception that there were too many licensed premises in the area already; a social and / or moral rejection to alcohol; and the perception that selling alcohol brings with it inherent anti-social behaviour towards staff. However, despite not selling alcohol, some unlicensed shops reported indirectly benefitting from alcohol-related purchases:

*Saturday morning with their hangovers they come in for their juice and their hangover cures (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

*You've got the two pubs as well; when people are out having a drink they come in here and you get them coming in and out (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

### 3.3 Alcohol consumption in Scotland

For most interviewees, there was a perception that alcohol was an issue in Scotland. The most common belief expressed was that many of these issues were the result of personal choices made by individuals. Interviewees frequently mentioned the entrenched Scottish ‘drinking culture’ personified by starting drinking at a young age and a propensity to binge drink. A common

perception among interviewees was that supermarkets were the cause of many of the alcohol-related issues in Scotland, as opposed to the local convenience store industry, as supermarkets were the main source of cheap alcohol:

*I think going into a supermarket and buy three cases of beer for 18 quid is wrong. They are sending out the wrong kind of message to undesirables to go in and to buy alcohol. They will get three boys together, £6 each, then they have three cases of beer. If they come in here they buy six for a fiver [£5], they only get six cans, they are not getting 18 or 40 odd bottles of alcohol. So, if they are drinking 40 bottles of alcohol between three guys... they are going to get rowdy and cause anti-social behaviour. They are the ones who are causing the trouble, whereas here if they know it's six for a fiver. If the supermarkets can keep it at that kind of price range then that will be ok. Ok, they might be 40p cheaper than us and compared to other corner shops but not as cheap as 30p a bottle. That is just ridiculous. A bottle of water costs 65p, a bottle of beer costs you 30p. They've got to do something with the supermarkets, big time, because I think this where the last 10, 15 years... corner shops, I'm not going to say they don't sell cases of stuff, but they are very far and few people buying case; they go to the supermarkets. Joe Bloggs on the street wants a bottle of wine or six cans, watch the football on the TV, he doesn't want 24 bottles on the table, Joe Bloggs wants 24 bottles of drink because he wants to cause trouble (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*That's where we're all going wrong and the booze prices are too cheap, walking into ASDA and they've got all these mad offers on (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Some of the other agents highlighted by interviewees as promoting this culture included; the loose alcohol licensing laws making alcohol more available and cheaper; the stringent alcohol licensing laws making alcohol more desirable due to its forbidden nature; bad weather; and boredom:

*Alcohol isn't a disease; it's self-inflicted (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*Don't make the country feel guilty for having a drink...everybody is allowed to have a drink, don't tell them they can't do it. Give them a break and loosen up a wee bit... because we have been so hounded, 'don't do this, don't do that, you can drink alcohol, you can't buy it after 10'... the government almost promote excessive drinking (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*There is nothing here for kids, that's why they're turning to drink, you know? Got nothing to do, so it's drink, drugs, stupid things. If there was a community thing or a leisure centre or something thing like that they could improve the area (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Interviewees often held up European countries as examples of how other drinking cultures were more civilised than Scotland's:

*Countries like Italy, or wherever, who can sit and have three bottles of wine with dinner, whereas you wouldn't really have that with your dinner, you would have that as a binge. So over there they are having about the same amount of alcohol but it's not having the same anti-social effect because they're spreading it out and we're condensing it (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*I just think we drink far too much sometimes... you can go to Spain, you can go Italy and they have five, six glasses of wine with their dinner but you don't see anybody half naked running about the streets with knives and this kind of stuff (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

### **3.4 Alcohol consumption in their neighbourhood**

Interviewees in deprived and non-deprived shops both described customers' purchasing practices to be price responsive (i.e. alcohol products that were cheaper or were offered on a discounted price were more likely to be purchased):

*We've got people that are coming in, you know, and they will specifically come in for it, they are respectable people, they are not alcoholics by any manner of means, but they know we've got the offer on and we've got people that come in and stock up as well. So yeah, that's a very popular seller and some of the wines that we do have on offer are very keenly priced and so we like to try and offer that. The beers as well, we have a lot of multi-buy deals as well (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

In non-deprived areas, experience of customers with alcohol-related issues / problems was generally infrequent. Such was the rarity of the encounters with such individuals that several of the interviewees were able to provide specific examples of these contacts:

*We had a lady who, not your typical alcoholic maybe; she was coming in and buying champagne and £20 bottles of wine everyday but she did start coming in pretty drunk, she would get a little lary [aggressive] with the other customers, bumping into things, knocking things over and eventually we had to bar her. That was more for her own sake than any problems she was causing us (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

However, interviewees in deprived areas commented that there was a much higher tendency for customers to favour low price / high alcohol by volume (ABV) products with the specific intention to get "under the influence fast and cheap". Shop workers in deprived areas reported having more first-hand experiences of those with alcohol-related issues:

*In this area almost everybody drinking! And some of the regular customers they drink a lot every day.... they just drinking, drinking, drinking all day... I don't think anybody can control this problem in this area. It is traditional over here that everybody drinking, everybody smoking! You cannae control them (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Interviewee's opinions varied over where their role as purveyors of alcohol was in relation to alcohol-related issues of their customers varied. For most, by adhering to the laws and regulations of the sale of alcohol, they were absolved of any responsibility from any negative aspects of alcohol consumption by their customers:

*I'm a business man, end of the day business is business and it doesn't matter who you sell to as long as they are over the age. Social aspect is not my problem, as shopkeeper mine's is just to make money other than to kids... I'm not there to tell Joe Bloggs 'you can't drink'. I've got a licence for them to buy drink so my aim is to make business and at the end of the day make money and if I was in a deprived area I still would sell alcohol (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*Guilt? No I don't because to be honest it's the person who is responsible. I'm firm believer that too much of anything is bad for you... it's your responsibility to watch what you're doing, you know what I'm trying to say? The government doesn't feel guilt; they allow it. I mean, they are worried about cigarettes and printing all these pictures on cigarette packets of people with their guts hanging out, and all that because it's no good for you. But why don't they ban cigarettes? It would solve all the problems but they don't because they make too much money on the tax (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

However, in deprived areas where alcohol issues are more prevalent, there were some interviewees who expressed a personal distress at seeing the negative effects of alcohol on their customers:

*Someone who has never touched it before comes in and buys a bottle of three litre Frosty Jack [white cider] every single day now and you can just see... his face, his dress, his smell, everything about him completely changed... Sometimes you feel like you want to counsel them, or something like that. You want to help them out because you're like, 'please, can you not have this anymore?'... I can't get him out of my head. He never drank before, and I don't know what he went through before, but every time he comes in... doesn't say a word, he is always half-cut, I knock him back maybe two or three times a night... he is ok during the day but at night-time it just gets too much...that was in the course of about six or seven months I saw him just go down hill... just to see everything change in him (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Below are two interview excerpts that highlight examples of when interviewees were concerned about the negative impacts of alcohol on their customers and their communities. In the first example, the interviewee claimed that they were willing to take a reduction in their profits so that Sunday licensing hours could be reduced; the second interviewee claimed that they had made an intervention by offering lifestyle advice:

*They've made this new licensing law with Sunday trading from 10 to 10 and that's a lot of pish [nonsense]. I mean I would lose money, but at the end of the day, if you want to start sorting things out, you need to start from the beginning. Sunday we should be shut. It would gee [give] the pubs a chance and you would get much better pubs opening up and the publicans would be making money. Less people would drink, there would be less trouble (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*See that woman who was in here [referring to customer who was in the shop earlier buying Buckfast Tonic Wine, Tennent's Super Lager and cat litter], she's got alcohol problem. She's got six beautiful daughters, intelligent girls. So, one day I said to one of them, 'listen, why don't you go to college, finish your education? If you go outside the scheme [social housing area] you might learn something'. She came back and said to me, 'do you know something? I'm in uni now and my life has changed'. You talk to these people and tell them these things, 'go out there and you might see different people, different views'. This scheme it's the same people, same views and they have the problems with drinking so they don't have any views on the outside world. If they go out and come back you can see the change. Five out of six of those lassies have changed, you know? If I like them I just tell them. It's a cycle of things in this area and that's what they have to do to break out of it (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

### 3.5 Opinion of the neighbourhood in relation to issues

Interviewees from non-deprived areas believed the general lack of problems they faced in their work was directly related to the area in which their shop was located:

*I really like it, it's a nice kind of quiet area, quite friendly...it's really nice to work here...the area and the people that come in help make the shop what it is (Licensed shop, non-deprived area)*

*It's a nice area, it's quite nice. It's got a lot in its favour because most people are middle class, so there is a lot of nice stuff here (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Similarly, interviewees in deprived areas perceived the higher frequency and severity of issues they faced was directly attributable to their surrounding area. However, this belief was not particularly pronounced, other than in a few selected areas.

*We're in the wrong end of the town; if you want an easy life you don't want a store in the East End of Glasgow, do you know what I mean? Basically that's my general view; if you want an easy life you stay away from the rough areas and this is a rough area (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*It's not one of the worst place ever... but it's up there for the worst place ever (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

A common description of the local areas was that it had 'good bits and bad bits' and that a certain level of issues was just an inherent 'part of the job'. Furthermore, most interviewees in both licensed and unlicensed shops commented that they believed their areas had improved over time:

*Since they demolished the high rise flats, it's now gardens and many of the junkies and the related people have been shunted out and it's much better now (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*It has improved, it's quite good now. You do get the odd occasion when there is trouble, but other than that it's calmed down. Years back it used to be really bad... it's quietened down a fair bit now (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

Interviewees in licensed shops in deprived areas reported higher levels of mental and physical ill-health which they directly attributed to their jobs and surroundings:

*I had a nervous breakdown! All the stealing, arguing... [if] I walk down the street I used to be afraid (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*The old owner he was disabled, like he only had one leg and they know how to handle this and were always cheeky to him and took his stuff and ran away. He was calling the police but they can't help you all the time, you know what I mean?... He was so [stressed] that's why he just gave up (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

### 3.6 Relations with customers

Interviewees almost unanimously believed that becoming established in the area was the single most effective way to reduce the frequency and severity of many of the problems that they faced. As interviewees became increasingly embedded in their areas over time, allowing a gradual building



up of relations with their clientele, a decline in the number of problems experienced was correspondingly described:

*If someone knows you they are less likely to give you hassle (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*You need to know your local customers and if you don't know your local customers then eventually you will get someone abusing you (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

*We know everyone, we know everyone's names so we're ok now, we're established here now, we're alright here... when we first came in they never knew you. It is just like everywhere; when they don't know you they think they can take you for a ride, basically. When you get to know who is who they are ok with you (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

As well as becoming established in the area, skills that were learned 'on-the-job' were seen as being another crucial aspect in reducing problems interviewees faced at work. Although each problem was dealt with in its specific context, how to interact with a problematic customer generally fell into one of two main reactions. The first of these was to adopt passive stance:

*Good policy is 'nice to be nice'; if they say something just be quiet. That is the best policy of being shopkeeper! (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*It's also how you treat the customers; see if they come in and you treat them like shit? They're gonna be cheeky. I'm a pleasant guy, I'm nice to them, 'how you doing? What you up to?' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

The second of these was a 'respond in kind' to any abuse received. This was particularly the case, although not exclusively so, for shop workers in licensed shops in deprived areas where alcohol-related abuse from customers towards staff was more common:

*Here it is perfectly acceptable to have an argument and the rest of the customers won't bat an eyelid. However, I imagine if you go into a shop in the city centre and start that... the other customers would be like, 'what? The shopkeeper was like that? I'm not going back into that shop'. Here it's like, 'no bother mate, I'm glad you stood your ground' and that's it; they'll be back in the next day... they might take the hump [sulk] and not come in for the day but they'll be back the following day, if not the same night apologising till they're blue in the face when they don't [remember] what they're apologising for (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

There was a common perception by the interviewees in unlicensed shops serving deprived areas that selling alcohol in that area incurs significantly more issues, which they wished to avoid, even if there was a demand locally:

*Q: would [you] ever consider getting alcohol in?*

*A: no, never.*

*Q: do your customers ever ask for it?*

*A: daily! There will be a customer every day coming in, 'do you sell alcohol?' We always say 'no'. It's not worth it, not worth the hassle as well, because getting alcohol in you do get a lot of hassle, you do get of drunken people and we don't want that (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

*A: Basically you have enough on your plate and you don't want to add to it...[selling alcohol] does bring you quite a lot [of trouble], I think, supposedly more profit in, but at the end of the day you*



*have troubles with it as well, so.*

*Q: so you've never even considered getting one [a drinks licence]?*

*A: no, no. Too much trouble! [laughs] (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

As the above section alludes to, it was widely accepted by interviewees that selling alcohol brings with it a set of inherent issues for shop workers. Some of these issues included; under-age persons, drunk customers, theft, loitering and proxy-buying, test-purchase operations, and the rapidly changing policy context and licensing conditions. These issues, and various ways that shop workers attempt to deal with them, are explored over the course of the next two chapters.

## 4. Findings Part II: internal issues related to alcohol sales

### 4.1 Drunk persons

Customer cohorts that were described to be problematic were drug addicts (associated with shoplifting) and children (associated with verbal abuse). These groups were largely described to be a problem for shops in deprived areas. However, the issues caused by these cohorts were described as being far less serious when compared to issues frequently presented by drunk customers, particularly in relation to the refusal of sale to them. Section 113 (1) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 states that; “Any responsible person who, on any relevant premises, sells alcohol to a person who is drunk commits an offence”. This issue was prevalent in both deprived and non-deprived areas.

*I've refused alcohol to someone who has had too much to drink and then I get the verbal abuse, as the saying goes, 'why are you not serving me?' and it starts. I've had them a couple of times throwing stuff off the shelves (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*You can't stop people when they're drunk, you can't stop them but we just try and make sure they go outside (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

However, interviewees in deprived areas reported a much higher frequency of having to refuse sale to persons under the influence. Abuse directed towards staff was also reported to be more common and of a more serious nature than in shops in non-deprived areas:

*If they come drunk and we don't serve them they go bad...refuse to leave the shop... swearing and trying to threaten us so we call the police (licensed shop, deprived area).*

*Our main difficulties would be customers coming in too drunk (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

A significant part of the issue related to the subjective nature of what constitutes 'drunk' (i.e. at what point an alcohol sale should be refused) and ignorance on behalf of the customer as to the nature of the law why they were being refused their purchase:

*In terms of abuse, the most abuse you get is when you're 'hey man, I'm sorry but you're too drunk' or 'I believe you've had too much to drink and I can't sell you it, it's for your own benefit'. They will never understand that, but I mean it's 'I want my booze, and you're going to give me it', 'I'm sorry I can't, it's the law and I can pull out transcripts to show you it's the law and I reserve the right to do this', but you can't [explain] that to a monkey, you know what I mean? (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*You can't sell someone that is under the influence of drink or drugs, we legally can't, but no-one is ever going to understand that... [we've] got a job to do but they just see 'that bad person is stopping me from getting what I want and I'm going to show my anger' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

However, the subjective nature of deciding whether someone was too drunk to be served was a common problem for many of the interviewees. This was an issue highlighted by one interviewee who worked in a licensed shop in a deprived area and which was located near to a hostel for homeless persons:

*Obviously you cannae [cannot] always tell [if they are drunk]. Like if someone stumbles it doesn't necessarily mean that you're under the influence of alcohol, know what I mean? If you're able to stand still and hold a conversation, generally you're deemed to be in a reasonable state to buy alcohol... I mean, these guys are hard-core drinkers; 40 or 50 units of alcohol a day isn't going to put them on their backside (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Some interviewees reported the issue of proxy-buying by sober persons for those already drunk:

*See that woman that came in earlier? She bought that cider for her man. He is probably drunk; he's got a bad drinking habit, so they send people, adults, family members. They don't come in themselves (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*They are wanting drink and then they basically say, 'oh, it's alright, I will get my friend to get it', and he could literally be standing right next to him and it's against the law for us to knowingly serve that guy who is buying a drink for him, which then brings conflict into it because he is standing in front of you going, 'he's sober, he can get it'. He could potentially get it but he can't because we know he is buying it for him and we get that quite a lot. Sometimes he will come in, thinks that he can get served then can't so he will go outside and try to get someone else in and we need to and stop him... it's quite a big thing to do when you've only got a limited amount of time and a limited amount of staff here to look and see who is doing that (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*[A known customer] brought in one of his friends in and he was in a right state, I don't know if he was drugged, drunk or whatever...so he went out and said, 'you're no going to get served. If you want, I will buy you it and we will deal with it outside', so you can't refuse it from that point of view (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

The problematic behaviour of customers who were refused sale was primarily linked to the effects of alcohol. Interviewees spoke of how they witnessed customers they had known and served for years being 'turned' by alcohol:

*I've seen a lot of people who were the best people you could know but see when they have alcohol in them? It's like that Hyde...*

*Q: Jekyll and Hyde?*

*A: yeah. It's amazing how you can see alcohol change a person and it can be a huge difference if you do [refuse sale] (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Some customers who had been refused sale and had become aggressive and problematic later came in to apologise for their actions, blaming the alcohol for temporary loss of control. However, there were also several instances of severe verbal and even physical attacks on members of staff when sale was refused:

*Things have happened like squaring up to people, and all this kind of stuff, 'get outside and I'll do this and do that'... you take more abuse with more drunks coming... even guys hitting girls in here, we've had that when someone goes for a swing for them on their way out of the shop things will happen when people just clearly get too much to drink and you knock them back and they go off on one. That's happened when there was just two girls, one who was pregnant. A [drunk] guy comes in; 'you're not getting served', 'I will get served. I'll wait for you outside' and when they were taking the shutters down at 10 o'clock he was holding up the shutters, broke the shutters, broke the alarm so we had to open the shop all night so we could sit in here and wait for the alarm company to come the next day (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*It's not like we get this once in a blue moon, it is more or less every night. You know, you're knocking someone back [refusing service] and you're getting, 'effing this' [sworn at] and threatened that you are 'going to get this' when you get outside, all this kind of stuff. Yeah, it just 'comes second nature to you; all the girls know to get picked up by a taxi or their boyfriend, or whatever, because they know that's what they have to do to watch their own backs. It 'comes second nature but when you say it out loud you're like, 'why should I have to watch when I go out that door if I've been serving someone and I've knocked them back?' And sometimes we have had a guy who we've knocked back and he's standing at the corner there. Ok, I will make sure that they all get in a taxi alright, they make sure I leave and everything is ok... why should have to do that? We shouldn't have to do that... we shouldn't have to come to our work being scared about, 'what will happen to us tonight?' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

One interviewee recounted a particularly harrowing experience of assault from a customer who had been refused because they were already drunk:

*I was in hospital for six months because I refused to serve someone. The person was too drunk and I was closing up so I said 'no'. I then got bashed to hell by baseball bats by eight people... I could have served them and broken the law and not been done in, but I obeyed the law which says I cannot serve anyone who is too drunk (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

As a direct result of this attack and then several other occasions when he had been the victim of verbal and physical abuse, this interviewee had relinquished their alcohol licence and was now working in an unlicensed shop in another (deprived) area of the city.

## 4.2 Under-age persons

Under-age persons being abusive towards staff when they had refused them sale was an issue described to be more frequent and more severe in licensed shops in deprived areas, although these issues were also not uncommon at unlicensed shops (cigarettes) and licensed shops in non-deprived areas. However, most off-sales servers claimed that the overall frequency of under-age persons attempting to purchase alcohol had significantly reduced in recent years. Furthermore, refusing to sell under-age persons was an aspect of their jobs that they took very seriously and took personal responsibility for. A stricter adherence to the laws regarding under-age persons appeared to stem from the financially damaging repercussions perceived of being caught selling to under-age persons, particularly is caught out by a 'test purchase' (see section 4.2.2 below):

*I'm always drumming it into the boys [male staff] especially that if we were ever to lose our licence it would have a massive impact on our business. The two most vital components to our business are the post-office and an off-license. If either of those we to go it would have a huge impact which is why I'm always drumming it in, constantly reminding them to check I.D., check I.D. If you ever feel intimidated then get us involved, but do not sell for the sake of it (licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*That something I've been drumming into my workers is, 'right guys, I would rather have no sale than an under-age sale', you know what I'm trying to say? This business is worth more than a bottle of beer, or whatever, this is my livelihood, this is your livelihood because you guys work here, you earn from here. So we know what we're doing. Ok, there could be a mistake... it will not never happen, but we try our best to not make that mistake (licensed shop, deprived area).*

*We just look at 25 now, and if we don't know and have never seen you before, even if the girls [female staff] have seen you and can't remember, they'll ask you again because their licenses are on the line and know that they will get charged as well, no just me (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Interviewees also believed that this stricter enforcement of age identification policies had combined with having to display prominent signage (e.g. 'Notice: It is illegal to sell alcohol to anyone under the age of 18') within shops and various media campaigns to raise awareness amongst the public had the effect of deterring many under-age persons from attempting to purchase alcohol in the first instance, and had improved customers' understanding of sellers' legal responsibilities.

*People know that nowadays you need to have your I.D. to get served in an off-license. They're cottoning on to that fact and seem to be heeding it (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Some interviewees also claimed that they had implemented various other informal schemes to further deter under-age persons, including: 'Challenge 21' or 'Challenge 25' policies in place prior to the recent legislation making such policies mandatory (see section 4.2.1 below); homemade signage reinforcing the message of obligatory signage; and a list of local customer's details and birthdays taken from passports (see section 4.2.3 below). Several interviewees also reported attempts to purchase alcohol with fake proof of age forms of identification. In these instances, the identification was either taken off the individuals or they were informed that it was shop policy to only accept a driver's licence or a passport as proof of age.

Regardless of increasingly strict age identification policies, familiarity with and knowledge of the local inhabitants also had an effect on the issue of under-age persons. For example, many interviewees would refuse sale on the basis that they knew their customers' ages because they, and sometimes their entire families, were known to them. A common theme was for shop workers to describe that as they accrued knowledge of their customers over time, attempts by under-age persons to purchase alcohol correspondingly decreased:

*They used to come but I know everybody now in this area. Because I know they're actual age, their mum and dad as well, they don't bother trying it [purchasing alcohol] now (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Familiarity with the local area and its inhabitants also raised interviewees' personal stake in their areas. Like most other discerning residents, interviewees claimed to also be concerned about youth antisocial behaviour and did not want to be associated with attracting such incivility or fuelling it by providing alcohol. The thought that they could be personally contributing to this issue was an anathema to many of the shop workers who expressed that they felt a social responsibility towards their customers and to the area in general. Some interviewees even lived in the area that they served:

*Most of the girls [female staff] that work for us in the shops are like mothers and grannies [grandmothers] so it's more they don't want someone selling their children, know what I mean? It's the same mentality; 'you sell my child, I'm selling your child'. It's no all about the money. If you get a 15 year old drunk and he's out there causing havoc... (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

However, some interviewees still found difficulties in the age identification process and did not want to cause offence to someone by asking them their age:

*A lot of these girls [female under-agers] doll themselves up, you don't know if they are 15 or 22, we don't have a clue and a lot of the young kids come in and they try to look well-dressed, well-mannered, well spoken you would think they are 21, 22 years of age... eh, if you've grown up in the area you know the kids you have grown up with then that's easy, you can knock them back but if someone else walks in then you just don't know, you just can't tell (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

#### **4.2.1 Age verification policy: 'Challenge 25'**

Regarding the recent introduction of the 'Challenge 25' policy (Alcohol etc (Scotland), 2010: section 5), the overall opinion towards the scheme was positive, primarily as it further raised awareness amongst customers that they were less likely to be served if they were under the legal age to purchase alcohol:

*Quite a lot of people when they're asking they're handing over their passport, drivers licence at the same time as they're asking because they're that used to being asked (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

However, some interviewees commented that they had experienced further incidents of anti-social behaviour directed towards staff from customers aggrieved at being asked for proof that they were over 25, particularly those customers who had previously provided proof that they were over 18 and had been served before:

*it's been good in a way...but bad because someone will argue back, 'I'm 21 and the age for buying alcohol is 18, so why can't I buy?', and we're like, 'well, you don't look 25 so we've got to see proof'. So sometimes for that we get problems (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We've got a passport policy in here which is great for the company but not really too much when you are trying to explain to someone who doesn't carry their passport about a lot which is a big majority of people who do not carry a passport. I wouldn't carry a passport so I don't imagine anyone else would. Fair enough, if you look young most people would carry a passport around, but driving licenses and stuff like that, as I said that is quite a hard thing as well... if someone is age to buy alcohol but we don't accept drivers licenses and trying to explain another rule to them. Yes, we've got posters up and that, but not everyone carries their passport around (licensed shop, deprived area).*

*I think we already have issues with [our] 'Challenge 21' because in the eyes of the law they are legal enough to drink... but [Challenge 25] that's 7 years of a difference from when you can legally drink. I think it would be harder if it was a 'Challenge 25', considering we find it hard enough as it is (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Below is an excerpt from an interview transcript and is an example of a customer interaction between a shop worker and a customer which highlights several of the issues for shop workers regarding the proof of age scheme:

*Shop worker (SW): You try to ask everybody and sometimes you are busy and you can make a mistake, you know? If you and your staff are serving... and sometimes the youngsters, if you're not serving them, they will just say, 'we are going to tell the police you sold us', so what do you do? It's your word against theirs. It's hard. Sometimes the police will come and check on you and if you report sometime to them they see you as the guilty one, you know? They check on you before they check on them. Sometimes it's very, very hard... you get stressed out. The government is not here to stand in the shop and see what it's like, the hassle and the abuse that we get when we refuse to serve them, you know? Sometimes they haven't got the I.D. card and you know they are 18 but they don't have the I.D. card but you have to check... some people are 21, 23 and we have to ask them for the I.D. card if we don't know them and sometimes they give you a mouth full in the shop. This person here [referring to customer (C1) waiting to be served], he is 18 and can have the I.D. card...*

*C1: I've got the I.D. card but yous will nae [not] take it. It does nae matter, man, what's the fucking point?*

*SW: no, it doesn't matter but we have the right to ask. But listen I'm not saying that, but I'm just saying...*

*C1: can I get a tenner [£10] on that please? [referring to pay card]*

*SW: [referring to interviewer] and then you get a lot of abuse from them, you know? You can get a mouth full off of them, you know? What do you do?*

*C1: [referring to SW] you've never got abuse. Your fucking husband did because he's a prick.*

*SW: [referring to C1] listen, don't start that, he's got the right to ask!*

*[serves another customer]*

*SW: young boys like that, you get abuse off of them... he won't provide his I.D. and he [SW's husband] won't serve him but see if we serve him and he gets caught then you're in trouble because he has got a mouthful, he would give everybody abuse, you know? So we just don't serve them until they can prove it. What do you do? We have no option (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

It was hoped that incidents such as that in the vignette above and other 'bedding-in' issues associated with aspects of the 'Challenge 25' will be overcome over time as awareness was raised of the new policy. However, despite such overall progress, there appeared to be some resistance amongst a small number of interviewees with regards to the mandatory requirement to request proof-of-age for anyone suspected, or known, to be under-age:

*I don't make up my own laws like ASDA, you know, say 'Challenge 25'. If they law says 18 and they are 18 then I'm quite happy to give them it (Licensed shop, non-deprived area)*

*Most of the young ones round here have grown up now and they're all 18 and have I.D.s and you just keep a copy of them.*

*Q: What about the 'Challenge 25' thing?*

*A: nah, we just do the 18 or over and if they're no I.D. then we they need to be over 21 (Licensed shop, deprived area).*



#### 4.2.2 Test purchase operations

Under Section 105(2) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, a young person may buy or attempt to buy alcohol when authorised to do so by the police for the purposes of determining if a licensed proprietor is committing the offence of selling alcohol to an under-age person. This practice is referred to as 'test purchasing'.

Among the interviewees in this study, there was a high level of awareness of the practice of test purchasing. With a few exceptions, almost all the shop workers interviewed had some direct experience of being test purchased. Although the majority perceived test purchasing to have little impact on their retail practice, because they claimed they were already operating a stringent age restriction policy, the fear of being caught by a test purchase was real. One 'symbol' group chain of shops ran their own internal test purchasing scheme, where a member of staff will visit another store incognito. Failing these tests can result in internal disciplinary procedures being taken.

There are inherent issues in the test purchasing scheme, primarily relating to the legal mechanisms. For example, test purchasing operational protocol also recommends that the under-age persons be 'at least 18 months younger than the legal minimum age for the purchase' and that the 'young person must not look older than their age... [and] consideration should be given to the clothing and make-up (if appropriate) worn' (Scottish Government, 2007:7). Because persons are selected to look their age (i.e. not trying to deliberately 'catch out' shop workers), many interviewees claimed that this was another way to identify test purchasing agents:

*There was one that was blatantly obvious, but it's a case of, 'where's your I.D.? Don't have one? Sorry, I can't sell you anything', and five minutes later, you are almost expecting the police, it's like, 'where's the police? Oh, there they are!'...and the police are doing that deliberately... and this isn't borderline, this is blatantly obvious and the reason being is that they want to put a stop to the retailers who are blatantly selling to under-agers (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

However, the legislation also acknowledged that a person's age-related appearance is subjective. This subjectivity was an issue raised in one of these case studies by a shop worker who described the under-age person that was used by the police to carry out the two separate test purchases as being "a guy dressed up like a Goth and looked 19, 20... big heavy metallar with a beard" and a "lassie [girl] that was 6ft 2, chested". In this case the shopkeeper felt aggrieved because they believed that this was a deliberate attempt to catch them out. Whilst they passed both tests, such an issue would appear to demonstrate the subjectivity of a person's age related appearance.

Another issue pertains to the fact that the operational guidelines for test purchasing state that if an initial request for alcohol is refused then he / she cannot 'attempt to persuade or coerce the seller to make a sale... [and] he/she should leave the premises' (Scottish Government, 2007:9). In this sense, all shopkeepers need to do is to ask one question enquiring the persons age or proof of age. If that person protests that they are of legal age or provides a fake form of identification then the shop worker can be certain that the person is not a test purchasing agent, something that shopkeepers have become aware of:



*Here, if you knock somebody back [refuse sale], they're arguing left, right and centre, contesting the fact that they're old enough, whereas people that do the test purchase just go, 'ok, fine, thank you' and walk out the door. If that happens, you know (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Yet another way that interviewees claimed they could recognise a test purchase agent is related to the fact that a test purchase volunteer, for issues concerning their welfare, will be sourced from an area outside of the shop's neighbourhood. With many shop workers having extensive knowledge of the local areas inhabitants (see section 3.6) several shopkeepers spoke of the ease at which they could identify a test purchaser due to their unfamiliarity

*You know your locals; if it's not your locals then it's our policy to ask everyone who is non-local (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*I can spot them a mile off, but it's because I know everybody in the area (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*We pass every time because we know every local in the area. If someone new comes, I know that they are not 18 (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

If this is the case, then test purchasing effectiveness may be of less value at catching out savvy shopkeepers who know the system. Some respondents suggested that unscrupulous traders can use their knowledge of these loopholes in the system and combine it with their knowledge of local customers to engage in unscrupulous selling practices, if they chose to do so:

*I think shopkeepers are getting clever and they know what a test purchase is and they know for a start that if you walk into my shop and I've never seen you in that shop before and you ask for alcohol, right? You can tell what a customer wants and what a customer likes so straight away they'll know that is a test purchase, so they'll ask if you have any I.D., to which you have to say no, then they'll [the police] come in and say 'you've passed it'. It's that easy to bend the rules (licensed shop, deprived area).*

*I mean they will sell a 15 year old...*

*Q: shops round here that do that?*

*A: oh fuck, aye [yes]. There are shops everywhere that do it. Go up to [deprived area of Glasgow's name] there are shops there that will do it. I mean things are getting tighter for them, they know an easy avenue to make a pound extra is to sell to a child. The shopkeeper across the road, he takes a pound off you...*

*Q: how do you know this is going on?*

*A: everyone tells you, the weans [children] tell you. I see it, they walk by here blatant as fuck, I know it goes on.*

*Q: how come they are not being clamped down on by test purchasing and such stuff?*

*A: they dae [do], but you can tell. They know their regular customers, you know what I mean? Basically they are not stupid and they will ask as well, 'what age are ye [you]?' and they've got to tell you their age...(Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Instead of catching unscrupulous traders such as the one described above, test purchasing may instead catch out less suspecting members of staff (e.g. part-time workers). While no interviewee stated that they had failed an alcohol test purchase, one did report a fellow member of staff failing a test purchase, albeit for cigarettes. The legal mechanisms of a cigarette test purchase are identical to those of alcohol test purchase and highlight the point made above:

*My Saturday morning lassie [female staff member] who helps was off one weekend and another lassie came in to help and they did a test purchase on cigarettes and she sold it. I thought, 'me of all people!' My reputation is that I don't do anything like that... [the employee concerned] was shocked, scared to come back in (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

#### **4.2.3 Refusal of sale books**

Shop workers are encouraged by local Licensing Boards and Licensing Standards Officers (LSO) to keep and maintain a record of all the occasions when they refuse service and include a brief description of the persons who they suspect of being under-age and cannot provide a suitable for of age identification. The rationale is to discourage under-age persons from attempting to purchase alcohol if they know they are being recorded and to foster general good practice among shop workers. When / if police officers and / or LSOs enter the premise they frequently request to see these books.

However, the opinions and use of 'refusal of sale' log books were diverse. For example, interviewees in non-deprived parts of the city would generally report an infrequent need to make use of their book. One interviewee even remarked that they fabricated the occasional entry just to make it look to the police as if they were indeed recording they had refused service under-age persons when the truth was in fact that they had little to no actual incidents to record (rather than making it look like a dereliction of duty on their part). This was in contrast with most of the interviewees from deprived parts of the city, as this example illustrates:

*You're meant to write this information down but it happens so often that we've not got enough time to write down and remember every description of every single person that comes in. You get six persons a night that you knock back, you've got a queue of people there, you can't stop to sign a refusal book (Licensed shop, deprived area)*

The level of detail of the person who was refused sale that is required to be noted down by shop workers was seen by some interviewees as being challenging, particularly for staff in shops where refusing under-age persons was a frequent occurrence:

*You have to write down the details, the character... all we can do is write 'tall' and this and that. You can't really describe someone, can you? It is a lot of information to put down (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Whilst he recognised that selling to an under-age person was illegal, one interviewee was even opposed to the need for shop workers to implement / comply with the legislation at all:

*The laws that have come out state that we have to police which I'm not happy with. We are shopkeepers, we are not the police, why should we take the police role asking people, 'what's your date, what's your address, where do you stay, how old are you?', we should not be asking that kind of stuff, that's up to the police to do that. I understand there is a legal age limit, but in saying that why should we police it? (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

### 4.3 Shoplifting, robbery and security technologies

Interviewees reported that shoplifting was a relatively common problem. However, theft of alcohol was reported to be extremely rare, especially in shops serving deprived areas. Unlicensed shops in both deprived and non-deprived areas reported experiencing shoplifting equally frequently with the most common products targeted being cheese and bacon. With regards to robbery and break-ins, there appeared to be no distinction between shops in deprived or non-deprived areas in reporting such incidents. Furthermore, the evidence from the interviews suggests that there is no distinction between licensed and unlicensed shops regarding the frequency of break-ins and robberies, as till money and cigarettes appear to be the most common target:

*Robbery; that we had as well. It was a young lassie [female staff member] that was in and somebody came in with a hooded mask... and there was one time, years ago, when they try break-in through the basement (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We've had constant break-ins... the building above has been derelict for about five years... there is constant break-ins all the time with folk trying to get into the shop, constant alarm calls, I'm coming down here at one, two in the morning with the sensors going (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

A range of security technologies were employed by shops, the most commonly being alarms, panic buttons and Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras and monitors to prevent shoplifting and robbery. In the day-to-day operation of the shop, CCTV was seen by the majority of the interviewees as being of most use in both a both proactive (visible deterrent) and reactive (post-incident evidence) sense. Whilst most licensed shops in non-deprived areas had some form of CCTV in operation, it appeared to be optional:

*A: no CCTV! [laughs]*

*Q: why is that, that there's no CCTV?*

*A: probably not deemed necessary. To be honest, occasionally when you think about it we are in there by ourselves and very easily it could go wrong. Luckily it's not yet and unfortunately it would probably take something like that to happen for him [the owner] to do it... but in all fairness I'm not entirely sure that at the time, if something happened, what CCTV would do (licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

This pattern was replicated by unlicensed shops in contrasting areas. However it was reportedly the case that these unlicensed shops were less likely to have CCTV than the licensed shops:

*Q: do you have any CCTV?*

*A: no.*

*Q: why not?*

*A: not necessary (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*Well... doesn't record! [laughs] We've got this now [points to sign which indicates to customers that CCTV is in operation in the shop]... we keep an eye on things ourselves, plus there is one across there at the bus depot and the police one so if, God forbid, anything did happen then it should be recorded (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

However, in deprived areas, CCTV was seen as being essential:

*A: CCTV saved this shop.*

*Q: when you say 'CCTV saved this shop', what do you mean?*

*A: stopping the shoplifting and also they don't give us the hassle because they know that the CCTV is in here and they be caught in the camera, that's why they do behave sometimes (Licensed shops, deprived area).*

*Mostly it's for stealing. We didn't have any CCTV to take to court... and they had friends. I looked like a guilty party but now it is fine. [CCTV coverage] shows action, dated, there is no argument... I don't think I would have survived without it (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Some interviewees in licensed shops in deprived areas commented that insurance companies stipulated a high level of security provision in their shop before they would offer them cover:

*We have internal shutters, the expensive stuff so that was all security so they couldn't get through to this stuff [cigarettes and alcohol]. The first time they did because we didn't lock it... now it's all alarmed. We had to upgrade all our security – now we've got the same alarm as the banks have. GSM [Global System for Mobile Communications], wireless alarm and sound blasters on the roof, all that kind of stuff, you know? It's for insurance purposes, that's how bad it is. That costs us a £1,000 a year just for that. It's a lot of money, a lot of overheads (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Despite the widespread use of security technologies like CCTV, it would appear that the positioning of alcohol on the shop-floor was the most effective deterrent for reducing shoplifting and theft. Across all licensed shops, alcohol was stocked behind, beside or in full view of the shops workers standing at their till, primarily to avoid theft. This was particularly the case for spirits, but also for (expensive) products identified as being a high theft risk:

*[Spirits] are high theft rate, and the wine is also here so we can watch easy enough from the till (Licensed shop, non-deprived).*

*It [Buckfast tonic wine] is behind the counter, we don't put it in the fridge because of security (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*You've got to keep stuff like that hidden. Whisky's behind the counter. Never put whiskies on the shelf, it will just get taken (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Of the interviewees that reported theft of alcohol, the product had been located at an easily accessible part of the shop-floor:

*We used to have it [Buckfast tonic wine] out on the shop front but it just kept getting stolen... that was the target. As soon as they saw it there they were going to try it and it's not practical at all times when a group of guys come in to go over there and keep any eye on them (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We've had a lot of grab and runs when people have ran into the shop, grabbed a case of beer and ran straight out, you know... they knew when there was a lack of staff on, sort of thing... [they targeted] beer or whatever goes on the stack is the easy to carry out so it could have been beer, cider... sometimes a bottle of wine, just whatever they could grab and straight back out the door (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Interestingly, both the above examples of alcohol theft occurred in non-deprived areas and in shops where the security provision was lower. Conversely, licensed shops in deprived areas were more

likely to have their alcohol positioned behind the counter or even entirely stocked behind grill-cages or glass and sold via a serving hatch. In such instances, alcohol theft was non-existent. In contrast to this, one shop in a non-deprived area has actually removed their security precautions:

*When we first started selling it was all behind a big grill, you know? It wasn't accessible, you couldn't pick them up at all, it all had to be done through us and now as you can see it is more or less all out there for you and you can pick it up yourself... you felt like a prisoner in there as well and so we just decided to see what it would be like without it and it was great and there was never any issues with it (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Some interviewees provided examples of when they had put themselves in extreme personal danger in order to prevent theft from their store or to retrieve stolen goods:

*We say 'don't give chase' but sometimes the adrenalin kicks in and you do run after them. One guy [male staff member] had a knife pulled on him but it was just as he [the robber] was going to take it out of his pocket that he was like, 'ok', and walked away. It was as if some sort of wee click of sense came back! (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*They come from [name of deprived area], go to the park. We are two people in the shop and one girl. They come in, about 15 youngsters together. I sell the customers, they go around there, there, there [points to various locations on the shop floor], somebody try to steal the Buckfast [tonic wine], bottle of MD [fortified fruit flavoured wine]. I left the counter and pulled the shutters down standing there... they try to get two bottle of wine and one MD and hide them. When they want to go I say, 'listen, take the bottle out', 'no'. Then they push me, try to run, right? We try to catch them, take two bottle from them. They run away in the park, then a lot of people come from the hotels, people looking at, they run after them as well to try and get them! [laughs] they run away then (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

#### **4.4 Modified selling practices: 'red-flag' products**

Some interviewees in licensed shops described how they modified their selling practices by stocking a specific drinks brand or diversifying a type of alcohol variety in response to customer demand or to attract new customers. However, it was more often the case that interviewees had modified their selling practices around certain products they considered to be 'associated with a certain problematic clientele (e.g. under-age persons, alcoholics, 'trouble-makers'). The general consensus was that these products consisted of; white ciders, fortified / tonic wines, super lagers and alcopops. Due to the conspicuous nature of these products for shopkeepers we have termed them as being labelled 'red-flag' products

How selling practices were specifically modified varied depending on each individual shop, however there was a strong link to the type of area. In non-deprived areas, many interviewees spoke of not wanting to attract problematic clientele into the area. In these cases, red-flag products were either kept out of sight, not refrigerated, or simply not stocked:

*I keep Buckfast [tonic wine] but that's behind the counter and well-hidden. I don't sell it to Tom, Dick and Harry, as the saying goes.... Kids stuff is, like, your Pulse [white] ciders, all your cheap*

*ciders, cheap cans... eh, all your Sidekicks [alcoholic shots], I keep away from all that stuff. I only keep to the wines, beers... I don't do all your alcopops, your Hoochs [an alcopop brand that ceased production in November 2003], stuff like that I don't do either. It's just to dissuade the kids from coming in, you don't want them in, you want the customers that are coming in for a bottle of wine, a paper, blah, blah, blah. We're not interested in the kids sales, kids sales brings with it its own problems with them hanging about the streets (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*There is a few lines that people have asked us to get and we just say 'no, we don't sell'.*

*Q: Examples?*

*A: eh, Mansion House [fortified wine]...Frosty Jack's [white cider]...a lot of the alcopop range that we know is a big, big one, but we just don't sell it, we don't want to go down that avenue...because once people know that you are selling that, it's also we work hard to make this a nice environment and once you go down that road it's attracting the wrong type of people (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

However, demand for red-flag products in deprived areas was higher than in non-deprived areas, making a decision to not stock certain products deemed less favourable (see also Table 7). In order to retain these (in)direct sales from red-flagged products while attempting to reduce the inherent issues with them, selling practices were often modified in other ways, including: raising the price of certain products; positioning certain products out of the sight of customers (e.g. under the counter) or behind the counter:

*We've never concentrated on drink, but basically if you were to improve your drink sales you need to be very cautious about the price and we tend to keep our prices up to keep the idiots away, right? So we keep our prices high so people who want to buy it will buy it and the ones who are into their drink tend to be price cautious so they stay away and that's what we would rather have that and keep the idiots away so that's why we do that...we tried that in the past and we thought, 'you know what? This isn't worth the hassle, so you know what let's put the prices and keep the idiots [away], that's the best way to do it' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*There is a lot of stores the other side now and they're competing with each other for prices. They sell everything a £1 cheaper; your Buckfast [tonic wine], crazy deals on shots, you know the ones that attract the young ones? All the ones that attract the young...they sell two big bottles of Frosty Jack [white cider] for a fiver! We sell one for £3.50. That just shows that's what the young ones drink; cider. So they try and got there first to save money because kids are restricted by money and a cash flow so they all chip in and say, 'let's go there'. That's better for us because it's less of a headache with the young ones. The young ones come in here then it's a headache (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*I've always presumed that that's [Buckfast tonic wine] something that the kids go for. For that reason I've kept it behind the counter so I know everyone who is picking it, I can get a good evaluation of who it is (Licensed shop, deprived area).*



## 5. Findings Part III: external issues related to alcohol sales

### 5.1 Loitering and proxy-buying

Regarding the issue of persons loitering directly outside shops, the majority of interviewees did not perceive this to be a significant issue:

*We don't generally have them hanging about outside the shop, if they do, on the odd occasion, it's like, 'boys, do you want to move on please', and they generally do move on (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*There not hanging around as much as they used to when we first opened. They used to hang around in their hundreds... people were scared to come out and they wouldn't come round to the shop because they were scared to come down (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

*They [children] do [loiter]... most of the time but they don't give us the hassle. They come to the shop as well but I know a lot of them and their parents as well, so they don't give us the hassle any more, but in the start they give us a lot of hassle. But at the moment they are quiet now, we know their parents and the family and everybody, but they still hanging and they do stand over there and we have the cameras [CCTV] on them... (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

However, where loitering was considered an issue for interviewees from licensed shops, was when it was linked to the practice of proxy-buying for under-age drinkers (the practice where a person over 18 purchases alcohol on behalf of a person who is under the age of 18), an issue that was described by many interviewees as being significant for several reasons. With regards to where the legal responsibility lay in regards to who is accountable for providing alcohol to an under-age person (i.e. the buyer or the seller), there were contrasting views:

*It is them that's breaking the law not us... It's not for us to educate these customers... you feel like saying to them, 'you know it's you that's breaking the law here, not me, and if you get caught handing over those packet or cigarettes or drink it's you that's in trouble, but at the end of the day what's the point in getting into a conversation... we're not breaking the law and we're just keeping ourselves right (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We have had a couple of occasions of that when parents have tried to buy their kids 18<sup>th</sup> birthday presents for their pals but they're not 18...they don't think about it because they're not going into the supermarkets and buy a bottle of cider or something and we have to go, 'sorry, is this for your daughter to give to a friend?', 'yes'. 'So in essence you're buying this for your daughter?', 'yes'. 'Is your daughter 18?' No? Well I can't serve you then [because] I can't knowingly sell you alcohol' (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Whilst the majority believed that the buyers were responsible for providing alcohol to an under-age person, there were some interviewees who believed that they would be the ones held accountable for knowingly allowing the sale. Despite the legal uncertainty for some, interviewees expressed varying levels of accountability for this issue and lengths they described they would go to in order to prevent or discourage the practice of proxy-buying. Almost all interviewees were aware of this practice but in general interviewees in deprived areas reported more suspicions of proxy-buying.

Attempts at curbing proxy-buying were divided into internal and external practices; the existence and nature of each could vary by individual or be a general staff-wide policy. Internal practices related to the sales transaction within the private spaces of their shop, and would be centred on the perceived knowledge of their customers and their purchasing habits. For example, interviewees spoke of how they believed that they could anticipate what products a customer would buy based on their knowledge of the customers previous purchasing habits or by their general profile (demographics, appearance, etc.) and context (time of day, local area, etc.). If an attempt at purchasing a 'red flag' product represented a customer breaking from their usual purchasing habits or the customer was not known to them, then their suspicions were raised:

*You can spot it sometimes though when a regular customer comes in you know what they normally buy. Like, if they only ever buy Tennent's Lager and they're buying Tennent's but also two bottles of Buckfast [tonic wine], a bottle of cider, you can spot it (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Assigning certain products with a red-flag status was described as the most common way of identifying potential proxy-buyers. Other examples were given of customer behaviours regarding red-flagged products that alerted the suspicion of the interviewees, including; purchasing more than one red-flagged product; purchasing other products then returning shortly with the sole purpose of purchasing a red-flagged product; having exact change for the price of a red-flagged product. Upon suspicion of proxy-buying, interviewees commented that sometimes the action of enquiring if the product was for consumption by the purchaser was often described as being enough to dissuade potential proxy-buyer from continuing with the purchase:

*Nine out of ten, if it's not for the customer and you question them, they will just walk away and we then know 100% that it was not for them. When it is for them they will stand there and say, 'why am I not getting served?', but nine out of ten they will just say, 'fair enough' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

In another action designed to dissuade proxy-buying, one interviewee said it was their shop policy to only sell one red-flagged product (white cider) per customer:

*A: we only allow to give them more than two bottles per person sometimes.*

*Q: is that right? On what products?*

*A: cheap cider because if they are buy too much then we think they're buying it for somebody... just in case they are buying it for anybody else. People we know we sell them, customers have been coming in a long time we know. If a stranger comes in and then tries we have to say, 'no, I'm sorry we only sell two' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

A common set of issues identified by the interviewees was how their attempts at curbing proxy-buying were restricted by the limits to which they can regulate and control the environment outside of the private spaces of their shop. Whilst most interviewees expressed a sense of responsibility for the immediate vicinity in front of their shop, beyond that the extent of their responsibility was somewhat of a grey area and was open to personal interpretation. For some interviewees their responsibility ended after they had ensured that the person purchasing the alcohol was over 18:

*If somebody buy drink here, maybe 30 years old, his friend is maybe sitting in the park, drink together, it no our fault. I don't know who is drink with him (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*



Other interviewees described deploying a set of external practices to extend their sphere of control beyond their shop boundaries. Although they were often limited in the number of CCTV cameras, the quality of the footage, the field of vision, and need for constant monitoring, cameras positioned on the exterior of the shop provided the most common way of extending the shop workers vantage point:

*Q: do the kids sometimes try and get the older kids to come in and buy for them?*

*A: yeah, yeah.*

*Q: how do you know when this happens?*

*A: because we have front of shop [CCTV] camera we find it out...*

*Q: so you see them on the cameras?*

*A: yeah, we seen them in the cameras, the outside cameras that they are sending the one guy over (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Interviewees also mentioned occasionally leaving the shop premises in order to extend their sphere of influence:

*At the weekend I have staff who go outside to check up on what's happening... physically going round about. We're always going outside for deliveries anyway so we know the culprits anyway and we know the young faces that wait for drink (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

In an extreme example one interviewee mentioned occurrences when, despite his warnings not to, his staff had left the premise to physically take possession of alcohol that had been purchased from their shop by a proxy-buyer for under-age persons:

*I've seen people being caught outside my shops. Girls at [name of area in Glasgow], [name of employee], she'll go out and physically take bags off folk. [Name of employee] does that here as well and I'm telling them, 'somebody scuds you with a bottle you're no insured for that; don't you be going oot [outside], just bar them' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

In another attempt to curb proxy-buying, two interviewees described how they had introduced a coloured bag scheme for alcohol sales in order to give them an indication if the practice of proxy-buying was occurring in their store:

*I keep the booze in separate bags [and] I keep my bags separate from any other shop so I know when it's been purchased from my shop, I know it's from my shop... I do it for my own benefit so in case there is an issue I know the drinks came from my shop... I've done that from day one, from day one so that I know it's from my store... in case there is an issue and the police come back to me and say, 'was this drink bought from this shop?', and I can say, 'yes officer, that's my bag', or, 'no officer, that's not my bag so it's not from my shop'... The reason I do it is that there has been times in the past when the cops have come in and said, 'this drink was bought from your shop', and 'it's not; show us our bag' (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

However, another interviewee claimed that a shopkeeper in a nearby shop had deliberately copied their bag colours in order to hide their practice of selling to under-age persons:

*If we've got white bags he [rival shopkeeper] will go and get white bags, if we get blue bags he will go and get blue bags. If you get your own shop bags it costs a fortune. I mean those bags cost a 1 or 2p a bag, but if you want a bag with your name on it it's 10, 15p a bag, do you know what I mean? So we can't afford to dae [do] that. Short of doing that that's all we can do then.*

*We change the bags all the time so he changes his bags... he sells to weans [children], he doesn't care. He blatantly does it but when the polis [police] see folk with white bags who they going to blame? (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

One informal form of preventing proxy-buying was the third party policing offered by members of the public. Several interviewees described occasions when members of the public informed them of when under-age persons had attempted to acquire their help services to act as a proxy-buyer on their behalf:

*[If there is] anybody that is standing outside people will come in and say, 'you've got a group of teenagers hanging about outside at the window there asking passersby' (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

However, some interviewees described how they had been the victim of threats and verbal and physical abuse because they had refused to sell someone they suspected of attempting to proxy-buy alcohol. One interviewee even described how they would knowingly sell to a proxy-buyer in order to avoid the verbal and physical abuse that would be directed at them if they refused the sale:

*They're standing outside waiting on it, they're blatantly just standing outside your shop, your front door...they're that obvious. They won't go hiding around corners and all that, that's not the way they do business round here; it's right outside your front door basically. You would have to be pretty naive to not know it was going on... you can't do that [go outside the shop], you would just get a barrage of abuse; bottles getting launched at the shop door, cars getting vandalised, and all that. It's not worth the hassle, seriously (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

There were examples provided of when intimidation was used by under-age persons in order to pressurise customers into acting as proxy-buyers:

*A lot of them put pressure on you... [inaudible]... like, 'gonna get that Buckie [Buckfast tonic wine] for us?'... they dae threaten them, don't get me wrong. They go up to some skinny wee guy or an old biddy [woman] and say, 'gonna get me this', but it's the way they say 'gonnae get me this', threatening like... [go] up to old grannies, granddads (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Strong opinions were almost unanimously expressed by interviewees that they were being unfairly blamed for an issue that was, despite their best efforts, largely out of their control. It was believed that the focus of blame should be shifted from the workers in licensed shops to those agents engaged in proxy-buying. There was strong support for some sort of test purchase-type operations being regularly conducted in order to enforce the law prohibiting the practice:

*I've no heard of anybody where they've been given a £1,000 fine yet and I've seen people been caught outside my shops.... That's why we've got a [CCTV] camera now, if you look we've got a camera outside watching folk outside and if we see somebody doing it we'll run a DVD off of it and gee [give] it to the polis [police], and we've told them that...See what it is, see until people start getting hit with fines, they ain't gonna give a fuck. See when word gets about, 'aw fuck, they're fucking [fining] me for a £1,000, a tenner [£10] a week', whatever it is. Even a fiver a week is a lot when you're unemployed, right? So that's when the message is going to hit home. They need to start hitting the fines. Just now they're hitting the shops that sell to under-agers, but start hitting the people that are buying it [for under-age persons] (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*It's very, very, very difficult these days, you know? Running a shop and you've got all these liars buying the alcohol for them and the police come in and say, 'you must have sold it to them'. Very, very, hard (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

## **5.2 Informal security: Shop security networks and Informal enforcement**

Some interviewees in shops located in non-deprived areas reported having informal security networks with other shops in their areas (e.g. when an incident occurs in one shop, they inform the others in the area), providing support and reassurance to shop workers. These networks were often developed over time and operated on an *ad hoc* basis:

*We've a good relationship with the girl up at the Spar [i.e. a different 'symbol' group store to the interviewee's shop] and vice versa, so on a few occasions she's actually said, 'look there is a couple of guys coming down, they are wearing x, y, and z, I've just refused them for drink. I'm not telling you to do the same, but just be vigilant', and right enough they come in and, 'right, beat it' and vice versa (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We do have a list of phone numbers for all the other businesses close by so if something was to go wrong I could phone [person's name] here or [shop name], the guys at [shop name], you know, any of them to come in. If I screamed loud enough someone would come! (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We all know each other round here and it's much better because we kind of all look out for each other and even the simplest of things, like asking each other for change, stuff like that all helps (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Informal security networks between shops were also prevalent in deprived areas, however interviewees in shops located in deprived areas also reported using informal enforcement as a means of discouraging, and even threatening, customers from causing any issues within the shop:

*I tell the polis [police], 'I don't need you, I deal with things myself'...I would have big fuckers in a van drive and batter fucking shit out of them. I would send someone up to the door, when they open the door and then just leather them. That's it, that's how I deal with them. I know a lot of people, people that I call friends here, know what I mean? I've got a shop of guys trying to rob my van and I leathered him and 20 guys turned up. I said, 'is that right?' I'm make a phone call that these guys weren't expecting... these guys show up, and they're like, 'You think you're a gangster? I'll show you what a gangster is. That's my pal; you think because he's Asian he's an idiot? Nae [No] more shite...[nonsense]' I'm not a gangster but I know folk to can protect me. I'm just running a business; I'm a shopkeeper and that's it, but I know a lot of people because you get to know people (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*They just look at me and I go, 'don't even bother because you know what happens'...I've got boys and it could maybe be boys that are their age, and I'll say, 'do you want [name of first son]?', that's my son, my youngest one, 'do ya want [name of second son]? Want [name of third son]? Take your pick. Beat it!' Then they go, 'oft! That's their ma!' and I go, 'that's right, now move' (Unlicensed shop, deprived area).*

### 5.3 Police contact

Overall, interviewees claimed to have frequent informal contact with the police. This would normally take the form of a visit by a local Community Police Officers (CPOs):

*They [the police] pop in maybe once every month. They do pop in to see the licence holder, they do pop in to see if there is any problems. I've got the community police officer who walks by every single day... whenever he is on he always pops in. I've no problems with the police at all (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We work well together and the police are quite good and very, very helpful; they come round on time and they ask questions, ask if everything is ok... they are quite good up here, quite good (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Regarding the police response to formal contact (i.e. response to a phone call for assistance), mixed views expressed by interviewees. Interviewees in deprived and non-deprived areas recalled instances where the police had been called. However, in deprived areas these instances were more regular and for more serious incidents:

*They [the police] sort it out ok for us but it's all now just moving them on basically, that's the best they can do. In other aspects they are completely rubbish. If I've got an alarm call at one in the morning, I'm coming into a shop and I don't know what I'm coming into. They can see me coming, I can see them coming in and the police are meant to be here and they are never, never here. Then they phone you, usually about 24 hours later and say, 'oh, we've got an alarm call; is everything alright?', 'well, if it wasn't alright it's a wee bit too late now, but thanks for the phone call anyway'. But that's probably nothing to do with what you're down here for, but yeah, they're alright, but I'm not going to say that they are great because they're not great (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*I just feel that there has to be a slightly harsher way of looking at it to protect people who do deal with drink.... in the pubs I found it slightly harsher, they kind of dealt with it a bit more harshly but when it comes to an off-licence you are more vulnerable here. In a club you've got your stewards or even if you've not got your stewards at least you've got your other staff on with you, or whatever, but here you're confined to a shop with only one other member of staff... I do feel like, and I'm not saying I judge the police for doing it, but if there was a fight in a pub they would be there in seconds, but if it's in a shop they are like, 'oh well, it will die down in a wee minute'. I don't think it is taken as seriously as I would like it to be... it's not the most dangerous job ever but it is dangerous in that we do deal a lot with this (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

One interviewee described having a particularly trying time with the police due to a serious incident happening in the immediate vicinity of their shop for which they were being implicated:

*These boys came in and got served and were walking out and another boy came in and they must have had some kind of carry on, must have had a feud between them. So they walked out, then I saw a Buckfast [tonic wine] bottle breaking at the door but I couldn't see much because I was putting the milk order through and then the next moment I see the bottle breaking inside the shop at the door but I couldn't see what was happening. Anyway, they must have stabbed him. The police came by and asked, 'was the bottle broken?', but I didn't know and just cleaned it up and thought it was just a mess [inaudible] but I didn't see anything and when they came back they shut the shop down... but they thought I had seen everything and was trying to say I hadn't. That day I hadn't turned the [CCTV] camera on but I thought I was on so when I told them to check it they*

*thought I had cleaned the tape. Then they closed the shop down, took DNA sample... they never said what it was all about but it happened outside and they thought it happened inside the shop. So I went through hell at that time... I had to go to the police all the time, asking me questions like I was a criminal. I had to go to the licensing board and they said, 'we can take your licence away'. It was something I'd not done and they were trying to make me pay for it, you know? The police kept coming in constantly at the time (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

However, one interviewee spoke of how the local licensing sergeant had personally defended them against frivolous and false claims from the public that they were engaged in unscrupulous serving practices in order to have their licence revoked due to a personal vendetta:

*When I took this shop over people didn't like me so they made up excuses; 'he's serving under-agers', or 'he is doing this, he is doing that', trying to get my licence taken off of me, they put a thing my [formal complaint] in... then the Chief Police came in, Glasgow City Council came in to see me; checked all my records, checked everything, the whole lot and at the end they shook my hand and I was like, 'what you shaking my hand for?' and he says, 'because see if everybody ran their establishment like yours', he says, 'East of Glasgow wouldnae [wouldn't] have problem', know what I mean. His words. Then he said, 'see when you go to court? Don't worry, I'm going to be there', and he was there (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

## **5.4 Personal licence training**

As part of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, all licensed premises in Scotland now require a personal licence holder to sell or authorise the sale of alcohol. Staff members who were not personal licence holders are required to achieve a level of competence in retailing alcohol, meaning that staff members are obliged to undergo a basic level of training. Several competing agencies are recognised by the accrediting body the Scottish Qualifications Authority as being able to provide the training necessary to achieve this qualification. However, whilst the training provided is sufficient to reach the basic level required to achieve the personal licence, the extent and nature of these training course varies.

This fluctuation in training parameters was reflected by the interviewees. For example, the majority of interviewees stated that their training had provided them with a good knowledge of the laws and regulations pertaining to their role as purveyors of alcohol (i.e. the minimum requirement of the training):

*It was helpful because a few things we wouldn't have known without the training (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*In terms of learning[what] the new rules are, say for example under-age and how you are now held accountable and it's not just the company, so you get fined personally, certainly that's important to pass down to the staff because there is a stigma being asked for I.D. (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

However, there were also many negative views expressed regarding the extent, or lack thereof, of training provided to help them with the day-to-day reality of dealing with customer related issues (e.g. dealing with drunk customers, proxy-buying, anti-social behaviour towards staff). These

negative views were primarily based on the perceived relevance of the issues related to their shop's location: i.e. interviewees in deprived locations believed that this training was relevant but that there was not enough of it, whereas interviewees in non-deprived areas believed that such training was of little use to them because they had little experience of these issues:

*In here you need all the, 'you're not allowed to do this, you're not allowed to do that', but nothing was set up for the grief that I got but how else am I supposed to run my business? Nothing is tailored towards to this specific area, it's licensing board in general all the way along... there is no, 'you can bend the rules', know what I mean? There is nothing about the impacting individuals, it's all generalised... You need to know a bit about the area that you're in and the problems that you're going to face and how best to deal with them. So, if somebody is coming from the Licensing Board for this area to do our training then aye, fine, no problem at all because they know the area. But there is no point in coming from England to do a City and Guilds course with a boy from the East End of Glasgow, from Dundee, Stirling [other Scottish cities], or wherever. You don't know the area, you don't know what's happening there, you don't know what people buy and what their attitudes to things are (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

*I looked at the questions and it was just stupidity. All we do is put it in a bag for them and they take it away. It's different if you're actually pouring a drink in a cafe or a restaurant or something, then you do have to be more aware, d'you know. Obviously if someone comes in drunk we don't serve them, that it's it from our point of view. We are quite lucky, we don't really have any big problems. It's fine. I don't think it was relevant at all, to be honest with you. Obviously it's [training] not cheap; it's money making scam, but obviously you have to do it if you want to sell alcohol, so... I just don't think you really need it (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

## **5.5 The future: potential legislation and trends within the industry**

### **5.5.1 Minimum pricing**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2011 the Scottish Government introduced the Alcohol Minimum Pricing Bill to lay the groundwork for introducing a Minimum Unit Price (MUP) of alcohol to be set at 45p in the near future (see Introduction section 1.4). There was strong support from many of the interviewees for the introduction of this MUP policy because of the perceived financial benefits it would bring to their business (i.e. by helping them retain and attract customers that may have otherwise gone to the supermarkets in order to get cheaper prices):

*We can only compete from a small shop to a small shop, we can't compete with the supermarkets. The supermarkets should be in line with the corner shop (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*If you are living here and you get same price as supermarket and same price at us the chances are you will come here. You might go for the service or find other things, but without the price difference there is less incentive (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Those against MUP were so because; they thought it would damage their sales; that it would negatively affect non-harmful drinkers; and that it would have no discernible effect on reducing alcohol consumption:



*I read the early guidelines set for minimum pricing and they were going to actually, they weren't going to hammer Buckfast [tonic wine] and I think they've got it totally wrong, you know? They are focusing on the wrong type of person; they were basically hammering the person who's a respectable person who wants to take a bottle of wine home and have it with their evening meal, rather than the Buckfast and the alcopops (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*Minimum pricing for alcohol, I agree with that but only in a business sense. It would stop them [major supermarkets] putting in the big offers and taking the business away from the convenience stores, because clearly we cannae [can't] match that. It's no for a health thing that you're actually doing it for, and again I think politician are chasing the wrong hare there, you know what I mean? It's a question of cosmetic stuff for them, you know? It won't affect anything (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Regarding the perception that MUP would be ineffective at reducing alcohol-related issues in the 'problem drinkers' cohort, one interviewee used an analogy of price increases in cigarettes for what he believed would happen if MUP was to be introduced:

*You can see everybody, even with the cigarettes, cigarettes is the biggest thing I've seen change because everyone has gone from cigarettes they've always smoked to now just smoking the cheaper cigarettes. I think my sales has gone from always being quite big on the Mayfair to now jumping to John Players because they are a few pence cheaper. People are giving up what they would rather drink to what they are able to afford to drink and it is happening with the ciders, they are just going to the cheaper one... as I said, cigarettes is the only thing I can sort of use as a guide to how it might go is... I'm not a smoker but I think if you enjoy smoking it you will always usually stick to that but it's completely changing because the prices are so ridiculous that they are just going to the cheapest cigarette they can. They have even come out with 'make your own' cigarettes now because it's cheaper and that's actually going quite well, whereas that would never go before. It's weird because I can visually see it happening with the sales figures over cigarettes and I think that would happen with the alcohol as well. Say for instance that Frosty Jack [white cider] three litres went up while all the others came down a wee bit then you could probably put your money on that Frosty Jack completely stop and they would just jump to the cheaper thing, the next best thing (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

### **5.5.2 Social Responsibility Levy**

The Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Act which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 set out the broad framework for a Social Responsibility Levy (SRL) which could be imposed on holders of premises licences and occasional licences to meet or contribute to expenditures incurred or to be incurred by any local authority to remedy or mitigate any adverse impact (direct or indirect) in a licence authorities area (see Introduction section 1.4). Regarding the possibility of the introduction of a SRL, there was a general lack of awareness of the purpose and principals of such a policy. Of those interviewees that were knowledgeable on the subject, the general consensus was that such a policy was unnecessary and unfairly blamed them for alcohol-related issues in society:

*It depends on how they actually do it, eh, but as I said I think the real issues are its education more than anything else. [SRL] would be aimed at the wrong area I would say (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*The level of taxes on licensed products are already so massive that I think, eh, I think there is always going to be an argument that if something costs the country 'X' amount and it's continuing to cost the NHS, etc, etc, and policing the more tax should be lobbied on it, but I don't know. You can get to ridiculous levels which punish, you know, people who don't abuse this product (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*I think it is mostly in the city centre. I'm not a pub, there is no problem here, off-sales closes at 6 o'clock, Saturday at 8 o'clock and there is no midnight problem. We don't need police here to deal with problems. As far as I know it is mostly pubs in the city centre and need the police. Up here there is no problems; you buy your can, you go home... there is no social problem (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

### **5.5.3 The influence of 'the big four'**

A belief almost universally expressed by interviewees was that supermarkets, particularly 'the big four' chains of Tesco, ASDA, Sainsbury's and Morrison's were becoming increasingly influential in the industry. While the effects of this have been varied, the vast majority of interviewees involved in this study felt that their business and the industry of convenience stores in general, were facing a considerable threat from the expansion of supermarkets and their recent incursions into the convenience store market<sup>11</sup>. A large part of this threat was pinned on the price differentials between the two sectors. For example, due to their superior buying powers, supermarkets were frequently able to sell products for less than the price being offered to the convenience stores by their wholesalers. Several interviewees recounted occasions when they had bought alcohol or other stock directly from the supermarkets with the purpose of then selling it for a profit in their shops. In this sense, supermarkets had effectively become a 'secondary wholesaler':

*I go into ASDA and get packs of it...they're secondary wholesalers (Licensed shop, deprived area)*

*See what they've got on their shelves? I couldn't afford to buy them at that price, so what chance have you got (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area).*

There was also a strong belief that local and national governments were 'in the pocket' of the supermarkets partly due to their far superior lobbying powers and legal representation. As such, the already powerful supermarkets were operating in a legal environment that favoured them over smaller businesses. To highlight this fact, several interviewees cited a recent incident where a Tesco branch in St Rollox, Glasgow, failed a police organised test purchase when an under-age person was able to purchase alcohol through a self-service till. The outcome of this case was a four week ban of alcohol sales but only at the self-service tills<sup>12</sup>. Several interviewees described this as being too lenient and believed that if they had been found guilty of the same offence then they would have been dealt with far more severely (e.g. having their entire alcohol licence revoked for a longer period of time):

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/8750639/Sainsburys-opens-400th-convenience-shop.html> (accessed February 2012).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/2010/11/16/scots-supermarket-banned-from-selling-self-service-booze-after-police-underage-booze-sting-86908-22720700/> (accessed February 2012).



*We thought, 'my goodness, coming up to Christmas and Tesco is losing their licence for four weeks?' But actually what happened was that they just weren't allowed to sell alcohol through the self-service check-out for four weeks. So it's basically a slap on the wrist, yet if we were to do that we they literally would not hold back, 'nope, you can't sell'. One of our, basically someone in the family, has paid the penalty and they have sold to under-agers and there is no questions, that's it, your licence is taken away from you for three months and they just had to accept it. It's almost like... the law is basically governed for them, you know? It's what they want and the law is written round about their wishes, you know? (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Interviewees also felt that alcohol-related health, crime and social issues were seen as being largely attributable to the supermarkets 'bulk selling' (i.e. the practice of selling mass volume of products in order to make an overall profit as opposed to making profits on each individual item). As such, many interviewees believed that practices such as test purchasing were focussing too narrowly on them and missed the wider picture:

*ASDAs, they don't want a single can they want volume to be moved, same with the Sunday trading. It's all geared up for ASDA and Tesco's, the whole licensing is geared up for them, it's no for us. If you look at it 30 years ago before the ASDA and Tesco's took to do with drink, right, was there a problem with binge drinking and binge culture? Why? How did it all of a sudden appear?... That's where we're all going wrong and the booze prices are too cheap, walking into ASDA and they've got all these mad offers on... See when they buy 60 cans, or 45 bottles of Bud [Budweiser lager], they cannae [cant] stop till they finish them. That's where the problem lies (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

Because of the supermarkets significantly increased buying power, interviewees firmly believed it would be extremely hard to compete in regard to their prices on any of their stock;

*Financially we can never compete, because if you try to compete with the multiples [major supermarket chains] you are just as well locking the door because you can't compete; you've just got to do your deals, make sure you are making a good margin and concentrate on your own business and let others concentrate on theirs because if you try to compete with the multiples it's a wasteful exercise (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Logic, then, would perhaps dictate that unlicensed shops would potentially turn to selling alcohol in order to boost sales. However, while some cited applying for a licence to sell alcohol to increase falling profits, the evidence from this research is that such motivations are not particularly widespread within the unlicensed sector.

Local licensed shops have been linked to selling alcohol products associated with problematic consumption (e.g. 'red-flag' beverages, see section 4.4). Selling products that supermarkets do not carry is clearly a practice which most licensed convenience stores engage in. Most of the licensed stores involved in the research stocked alcohol products which have been associated with problematic consumption, many were aware of these issues and modified their selling practices (see section 4.4). Licensed convenience stores cannot compete with the price and selection that supermarkets offer and they see it as being reasonable to respond to market demands by offering these products and would argue that they are perfectly entitled to do so, particularly if there are no unwanted issues associated with the clientele it would bring;

*You've got your set neds [hooligans] that don't cause any trouble now that they know that it's [Buckfast tonic wine] there, they just come in and you just give them it and that's it, no trouble at all (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

*We used to get asked for a lot of Frosty Jack's [white cider] so we got that in because a few of the regulars that are decent guys that you know, we got it in for them (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

There were some occasions when the opening of a new supermarket nearby increased sales, or the effects of supermarkets was limited by situational specificities. In a non-deprived part of the city, the opening of an upmarket supermarket brand was reported to have actually increased overall sales in a nearby off-licence selling shop specialising in the selling of premium spirits.

*For us it's brought nothing but higher calibre of customer to the West End right across from our shop... despite early concern we've probably gained customers (Licensed shop, non-deprived area).*

Due to the high end nature of the supermarket, the specialist spirits store concerned subsequently benefited from the additional (more affluent) customers it brought into the area (i.e. increasing passing trade from the supermarket's destination shoppers). However, such benefits tended to be rare.

One unlicensed shop in a non-deprived part of town describe how they had remained competitively priced by purchasing stock from four separate wholesalers, as well as various supermarkets, throughout the week in order to pick the best deals available. By being efficient, innovative and willing to utilise his local knowledge this shop owner was able to relatively successfully stave off the threat of two separate supermarket chain convenience stores opening up within 100 metres of his premise within the space of three years.

*I go to four different ones [wholesalers] and I do my buying where I think... I mean, I could go to one or two... you know, when you get into a rhythm of things you get to know all the different prices and that's what it's like for me; I go to one and I know what they've got and if they've got them on £2 cheaper then I know that [name of wholesaler] have got them on £2 cheaper, I head there (Unlicensed shop, non-deprived area)*

Several shops serving deprived parts of the city also claimed to be relatively unaffected by the supermarkets. This was speculated to be because of the geographically remote aspect of the peripheral housing schemes (social housing areas) where they were located; many inhabitants did not own a car and were unable to afford public transport to get to other stores. The planned layout of a housing scheme also tends to mean that opportunities for new retail outlets are limited other than the designated (central) location, thereby constraining the availability of sites suitable for a new supermarket to open (this was similar to the shops / housing schemes visited in the pilot study).

In a move that can be interpreted as a direct attempt at countering this geographical advantage that some shops ensconced in housing schemes may have, one supermarket located outside of the housing scheme concerned had begun offering a free shuttle bus service from the front-door of the

local convenience store directly to their supermarket located in a suburb outside the Glasgow city boundary (as opposed to another of their branches in an adjacent part of the city).

It was clear however that many locals made journeys out of their home neighbourhood to shop at the supermarkets. This could involve trips specifically to buy cheaper alcohol products; a pattern which represents a cash flow away from deprived communities and their local shops and, arguably, a flow of problems back into these neighbourhoods involving drink purchased elsewhere. The following account illustrate this consumer behaviour and encapsulates many of the other issues which were raised during this and the previous two chapters reporting the findings from the interview phase of this research project.

[customer C1 enters shop]

*C1: 20 Richmond Superkings [cigarettes].*

*C2: I came here for something and I cannae [can't] remember what it was now... [C2 leaves the shop]*

*C1: I bet you get along [along] the street and yee [you] remember; yer [you're] like me then! Aye [yes], have you nane [none] of those £5 left? [shop worker's name]? Gee [give] us those ones, whatever the fuck their called; the ones that are blue. I've been in jail so anything will dae [do] me... I'm running oot [out] of money here... my wee[small] brain. [pays for and receives a packet of cigarettes] Thank you, thank you very much. You can talk, I won't bother you [referring to the researcher]*

*Q: no bother [addressing C1]. Do you have deals on the alcohol [addressing shop worker]?*

*A: deal... no, just your normal stuff; your beer and your spirits and that's it...*

[serves other customer]

*C1: eh! Deals on the spirits? I just came fae [from] ASDA [major supermarket] and thank fuck I go to ASDA instead of here.*

*A: what have you got then?*

*C1: my vodka*

*A: what one?*

*C1: Glen's [vodka brand].*

*A: how much was it?*

*C1: I'll show you the receipt; £12 and... for my litre*

*A: [without looking at the receipt] £12.99.*

*C1: for my litre*

*A: £12.99. That's £1 difference.*

*C1: £1 difference, aye [yes]! See? You and your deals...*

*A: that's ASDA price [advertising slogan used by this supermarket brand].*

*C1: aye, that's why I went to fucking ASDA!*

*Q: so have you had training to serve alcohol?*

*A: aye, I've got a personal license.*

*Q: what did you think of the training then?*

*A: Sometimes it's on things that are not important, I think. I think it was just a money-making scheme, that's what I think personally.*

[C1 interjects and pulls out a four pack of Tennent's lager from her ASDA bags] *C1: how much would you ask for them?*

*A: £4.*

*C1: four can? £3 fae [from] ASDA.*

*A: that just shows you; superstores are making more people turn into alkies [alcoholics] like her! She's alcoholic, ain't you?*

*C1: I'm an alcoholic, I will admit that, but I go there for my food as well, obviously.*

*A: but mainly your booze.*

*C1: naw [no].*

*A: [inspecting the contents of her ASDA bag] what's your food? Bread?! [laughs]*

*C1: he's walked round...*

*A: She's got a bottle of vodka, lemonade and for food she just got bread! [laughs]*

## 6. Findings Part IV: Quantitative survey

### 6.1 Community off-sales sample

All 271 licensed premises identified as operating as a community off-sales (licensed local shops) in Glasgow were visited by one of the research team (ND or AF) who hand-delivered a questionnaire (see Methodology chapter, page 8). This technique yielded 133 questionnaire returns. A postal reminder questionnaire yielded an additional ten responses, bringing the total number of participating community off-sales in the licensed shop survey to 143. That is a response rate of 52.8% of those invited to participate. Of the 24 licensed shops which provided a qualitative interview, eleven did not participate in the survey, eight of which were located in deprived areas.

The mean Scottish Index of Multiple deprivation (SIMD) 2009 score of the data zones of shops participating in the survey was 35.4. Crucially this does not differ significantly from that of non-responding shops (mean SIMD score=37.8: by Independent t-test,  $t=0.979$ ,  $df=266$ ,  $p=0.329$ ). Nor did they differ in terms of SIMD data zone deprivation rank (mean=1893), crime rank (mean=1785) or alcohol-related hospitalisation rank (mean=1809, see also Table 2). Thus the eventual sample can be said to be representative of community off-sales operating across socio-economically contrasting neighbourhoods of the city.

The SIMD considers data zones in the 'worst' 20% to be in the deprived quintile of Scotland. These deprived, Quintile 1, data zones are heavily concentrated in Glasgow City, with around half (50.3%), of all data zones in the city being Quintile 1 (i.e. deprived). As might be anticipated from this distribution of deprivation in the city, around half ( $n=189$ , 51.3%) of the 271 licensed shops eligible for participation in the survey had addresses located within Quintile 1 (deprived) data zones. Crucially almost half, 69 (48.3%) of the questionnaires returned during the licensed shop survey were from premises located in Quintile 1. This reflected the non-linear geographical distribution of alcohol outlet density to deprivation found in the city (Ellaway et al, 2010).

Thus the licensed shop survey sample could readily be evenly divided between off-sales premises located in deprived areas (the 69 questionnaires returned by licensed shops located in SIMD Quintile 1) and off-sales located non-deprived areas (the 74 remaining questionnaires returned by licensed shops located in Quintile 2,  $n=32$  (22.4%), in Quintile 3,  $n=23$  (16.1%), Quintile 4,  $n=12$  (8.4%) or Quintile 5,  $n=7$  (4.9%), the least deprived Quintile). Participating licensed shops did not differ significantly from non-responders to the survey by deprivation quintile (chi-square=1.576,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.813$ ). Shops located within SIMD Quintile 1 data zones are hereafter referred to as being in deprived neighbourhoods, and these are contrasted against shops which are not located in Quintile 1, hereafter referred to as shops in non-deprived neighbourhoods.

The first question on the survey's questionnaire (see Appendix 4) was intended to assess each shop's size (in terms of business operation), and to this end asked how many people were normally on

duty, working on premise, during normal trading hours. A mean of 3.1 persons were working in the responding licensed shops during their normal trading hours (range 1-14), confirming that participants in this research were, as intended, not working in supermarkets, but were part of small businesses. Staffing levels did not vary between shops located in deprived data zones (mean=3.1) and non-deprived data zones (mean=3.2: by independent t-test,  $t=0.329$ ,  $df=139$ ,  $p=0.742$ ).

Three participating licensed shops stated they were open 24 hours per day. Of the remainder, their modal hours of business were 12 hours per day (mean=13.3 hours, range 8 to 19). The modal opening time of these licensed shops was 7AM (range 5AM to 1.30PM) and the modal closing time was 10PM (range 5.30PM to Midnight). Thus it can be seen that many of these community off-sales were open for business before the start of alcohol licensing hours in Scotland (10AM) and also that some had already closed before the end of these (10PM). Less than one quarter ( $n=34$ , 23.8%) opened on or after the start of alcohol trading hours (28 shops opened at 10AM). Almost half ( $n=72$ , 50.3%) closed at 10PM, with only 12 still trading after the end of alcohol sales (including the three 24 hour shops).

Although there were no significant differences in opening or closing times between shops located deprived or non-deprived neighbourhoods, there was a tendency for those serving non-deprived areas to be open for longer overall (by independent t-test,  $t=2.034$ ,  $df=138$ ,  $p=0.044$ ). Their modal business time being 15 hours per day (mean=13.7 hours, range 8 to 19) as opposed to only a 12 hour day for shops serving deprived communities (mean=13.0 hours, range 10 to 16.5).

The next set of questions on the survey questionnaire comprised four Lickert (multi-choice) scales designed to measure the extent to which each shop's customer base was from the local community. For example, the first of these asked what proportion of customers the responding shopkeeper felt came from the local community (i.e. within walking distance), with the options of 'none', 'few', 'many', 'most' and 'all' being provided. The other three scales similarly enquired about the proportion of customers who were described as 'passing-trade', who were thought to be 'tourists or students' (i.e. non-permanent residents), or who were 'destination shoppers' (i.e. persons who travel specifically to that shop from other areas). Table 3 summaries survey respondents' answers to these four items enquiring about customer base.

**Table 3: Survey customer base**

Type of customer	none	few	many	most	all	Difference between deprived and non-deprived Chi-square, df=4
Local	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>14</b>	3.243, p=0.518
Deprived shop	1	1	10	47	8	
Non-deprived	1	3	18	46	6	
Passing-trade	<b>7</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	3.602, p=0.462
Deprived shop	3	39	20	8	0	
Non-deprived	4	32	28	5	1	
Students or tourists	<b>33</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	21.829, p=0.000
Deprived shop	24	34	7	1	1	
Non-deprived	9	33	18	12	0	
Destination shoppers	<b>59</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	5.056, p=0.239
Deprived shop	32	31	3	1	0	
Non-deprived	27	33	7	5	1	

Three-quarters (n=107, 75.9%) of respondents believed that ‘most’ or ‘all’ of their customers lived within walking distance of their shop. This confirms that, as intended, the off-sales sample was made up of licensed shops which served their local community, and concurs with the in-depth interview findings (see section 3.1). Only six respondents reported that ‘few’ or ‘none’ of their customers were from the local area. By way of contrast only seven respondents stated that ‘most’ or ‘all’ of their customers were destination shoppers (i.e. from other areas), with the bulk of shops (n=123, 87.9%) reporting ‘few’ or ‘none’. This finding suggests that, as intended, participating shops were embedded within their neighbourhoods.

As can be seen from Table 3, local residents provided the main customer base for responding shops, regardless of whether they were located in deprived or non-deprived areas. This reliance on locals as customers is important because it means that the shops which participated in survey reflected the purchasing patterns of the communities within which they were located, unlike major supermarkets which may, for example, be located in an area of disadvantage (with low land values and an available labour force), but attract a customer-base of, perhaps more affluent car owning, destination shoppers from various other neighbourhoods.

Also from Table 3, it can be seen that there were no significant differences between deprived and non-deprived shops in terms of the proportion of their customers who were described as passing trade, or in terms of the proportion who were destination shoppers. However, licensed shops in non-deprived areas reported that more of their customers were students or tourists compared to shops in deprived data zones. This finding may have been anticipated as deprived parts of the city are unlikely to receive many holidaymakers (e.g. hotel guests) or be home to many students (2 of

Glasgow's universities are in the city centre, the third in the affluent 'west end', with the same distribution also being the case for many of the city's tourist attractions, museums, theatres etc).

Despite the predominance of local customers (and equivalent staffing levels, see above), shops in deprived data zones reported knowing a significantly higher proportion (mean=66.8%) of their customers well (i.e. by name and age) than did those in non-deprived data zones (mean=52.8%: by independent t-test,  $t=3.316$ ,  $df=136$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Overall the mean proportion of customers whom respondents claimed to know well (by name or age) was 59.6% (range 0 to 100, with only one respondent reporting each of these absolute values). Thus staff working in these community off-sales typically knew six out of ten of their customers well (i.e. their name or age) and this was especially the case in deprived neighbourhoods (where they knew two-thirds of their clientele personally). This suggests that many respondents might be regarded as a part of the local community in which they served. This is likely to contrast with other types of alcohol outlet, for example a similar sample of shop workers obtained from the major supermarket workers may be unlikely to know the many of their customers or local area well.

As might be expected, the number of customers known well by the respondent varied according to the proportion of their customer base who were locals (by one-way ANOVA,  $F=3.991$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). For example, shopkeepers who stated that either 'most' or 'all' of their customers were locals were more likely to report knowing more of them well (mean=62.8%), than those who had a less localised customer-base (mean=49.6%: by independent t-test,  $t=2.501$ ,  $df=53$ ,  $p=0.016$ ). This would imply a level of embeddedness in the community, which concurs with the qualitative interviewees who valued this local knowledge / acceptance and some of whom felt a sense of belonging or 'family' with their regular customers (see section 3.1).

The proportions reporting knowing their customers well also varied according to whether they served more or less tourists / students (one-way ANOVA,  $F=5.434$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and also whether they served more or less destination shoppers (one-way ANOVA,  $F=2.813$   $df=4$ ,  $p=0.028$ ). For example, shopkeepers who stated that none of their customers were tourists or students were significantly likely to report knowing more of their customers well (mean=74.7%) compared to those which had some customers from these transient groups (mean=55.1%, by independent t-test,  $t=3.926$ ,  $df=135$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The same was true of shops that either received no destination shoppers (mean=66.8% known well) or any customers of this type (mean=55.0%:  $t=2.696$ ,  $df=136$ ,  $p=0.008$ ). There was no significant difference in the likelihood of receiving passing trade.

Another set of Lickert scales asked respondents about how often they experienced difficulties while on duty at their shop. For example the first of these asked how often an occurrence they felt that 'shoplifting' was at their premise, with the options of 'never', 'rarely', 'monthly', 'weekly', and 'daily' being provided. The same options were provided to measure the frequency that each shop experienced 'verbal abuse', 'drunk customers', 'under-agers' and 'physical attack or robbery'. Table 4 summaries responses to these five items measuring problems experienced while on duty.



**Table 4: Frequency of problems experienced while on duty**

Type of problem	never	rarely	monthly	weekly	daily	Difference between deprived and non-deprived Chi-square, df=4
Shoplifting	<b>11</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	1.940, p=0.747
Deprived shop	6	26	12	15	9	
Non-deprived	5	34	8	16	11	
Verbal abuse	<b>19</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>17</b>	3.054, p=0.412
Deprived shop	6	28	11	15	8	
Non-deprived	13	32	7	12	9	
Drunk customers	<b>5</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>	2.449, p=0.654
Deprived shop	2	25	12	18	11	
Non-deprived	3	24	8	23	16	
Under-agers	<b>7</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19</b>	2.307, p=0.680
Deprived shop	5	25	8	21	9	
Non-deprived	2	28	13	21	10	
Physical attack / robbery	<b>75</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	2.872, p=0.419
Deprived shop	37	31	0	0	-	
Non-deprived	38	33	1	2	-	

With the exception of 'physical attack or robbery', the difficulties listed on Table 4 were a relatively common occurrence at the licensed shops which responded to the survey. Taking as an example the proportion of respondents who reported 'daily' or 'weekly' problems (which may equate to a weekend occurrence), around one-third (35.9%) claimed to experience 'shoplifting' this frequently, and a similar proportion 'verbal abuse' (31.2%). 'Drunk customers' and 'under-agers' attempting to buy restricted products were reported at this 'daily' to 'weekly' frequency by an even larger proportion of responding shops (47.9% and 43.0% respectively).

These findings concur with those of the qualitative interviews (see section 4.1). In particular, interviewees' belief that dealing with drunken customers, rather than refusing under-agers, was the biggest difficulty that they faced while on duty is supported here, with almost half these licensed shops experiencing this problem on an at least weekly basis. Also it should be noted that this measure of weekly frequency takes no account of severity or incidence (i.e. it could have happened several times on a Friday or Saturday night, but not daily throughout the week). These findings also imply respondents have a degree of first hand awareness of alcohol issues in their community.

Interestingly, despite varied levels of experiencing these problems between individual shopkeepers (see Table 4) there were no significant differences reported between those working in licensed shops in deprived or non-deprived areas. This was not what was anticipated from the findings of the qualitative interviews, or from observations during fieldwork (e.g. 'verbal abuse' was only witnessed during visits to shops in deprived areas). Again the above table takes no account of severity, so for example, the lack of difference in 'verbal abuse' may be down to differences in normative behaviours, in that interviewees from deprived areas commented that it was normal to argue with customers in their shop in ways which would be considered unacceptable in a city centre store (see Section 3.6). In any case, the findings above would seem to raise the question of whether an alcohol licence was more important than deprivation in how shop servers perceived the frequency of problems they faced while on duty. However, the frequency of experiencing some problems did vary according to the proportion of customers known well, that is by name or age.

The reported frequency of 'under-agers' varied according to how many customers were known well by respondents (one-way ANOVA,  $F=2.798$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.029$ ). For example, shopkeepers who stated that they 'rarely' or 'never' had problems with 'under-agers' were significantly likely to report knowing more of their customers well (mean=66.4%) compared to those experiencing more frequent difficulties of this nature (mean=54.5%, by independent t-test,  $t=2.822$ ,  $df=135$ ,  $p=0.005$ ). This would seem to corroborate the qualitative interviewees' accounts that knowing your customers well will reduce trouble, especially knowing the ages (and parents) of potential under-agers in the local community (see section 4.2).

The likelihood of having been victim of 'physical attack or robbery' was also influenced by how many customers were well known (one-way ANOVA,  $F=2.685$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.043$ ). Those who had 'never' been attacked reported knowing more of their customers well (mean=64.5%) in comparison to those who had been a victim (mean=54.5%, by independent t-test,  $t=2.399$ ,  $df=130$ ,  $p=0.018$ ). These findings concur with the accounts given by the qualitative interviewees, supporting their reasoning that some of the additional problems faced by shops workers serving deprived communities are likely to be offset (over time) when they get to know their customers personally, which is something they are more likely to be able to achieve in such areas (see section 3.6).

Although a majority (52.8%) of licensed shopkeepers said they had 'never' been a victim of 'physical attack or robbery' (and only three shops reported this as occurring more frequent than 'rarely'), when asked if they thought current legislation was sufficient to protect shop workers from violence while on duty, a majority ( $n=81$ , 58.7%) of respondents felt that it was not. These views did not vary by neighbourhood type, with 42 (60.9%) of respondents from deprived data zone shops and 39 (56.5%) in non-deprived feeling that the current legislation was not sufficient to protect them (chi-square=0.269,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.604$ ).

Respondents were also asked about recent and proposed licensing laws, specifically the *Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010* provisions to ban alcohol promotions, hereafter referred to as the 'two-for-one offers ban' (legislation which came into effect shortly after the in-depth interview phase of this

research had been completed but immediately prior to the survey) and the Scottish Government's proposed policy of alcohol Minimum Unit Pricing, hereafter referred to as MUP. Both of these divided opinion amongst licensed shopkeepers, although more respondents were supportive of the proposed alcohol MUP than of the two-for-one offers ban.

A majority of licensed shopkeepers who responded to the survey stated that they were supportive of the Scottish Government's proposal for an alcohol Minimum Unit Price, with 84 (59.6%) claiming to be in favour of MUP, and 52 (36.9%) against. A further five indicated they were unsure / did not know (despite no option for these responses being provided on the questionnaire). Levels of support for MUP did not vary by neighbourhood type, with 38 (59.4%) respondents from shops in deprived data zones and 46 (63.9%) from non-deprived being in favour (chi-square=0.292, df=1, p=0.589).

When asked if they were supportive of the recently introduced two-for-one offers ban, 75 (53.6%) respondents stated that they were supportive. This left 63 (45.0%) who were not supportive, plus two further cases where the respondent gave an unsure / don't know answer (again no such option was provided on the questionnaire). Levels of support for this legislation did not differ by neighbourhood type, with 37 (56.9%) respondents from shops in deprived data zones and 38 (52.1%) from non-deprived being supportive (chi-square=0.328, df=1, p=0.567).

Both the questions on the recent two-for-one offers band and on the proposed MUP policy were supplemented by an open-ended question which invited respondents to state why they did, or did not, support these each of these measures (more than one answer / reason could be given in both cases). The reasons given by respondents when answering both of these supplementary questions were similar, and as can be seen from Tables 5 and 6, it was possible to group these under the general themes of 'business' reasons (e.g. effects on profits or re competition from the major supermarkets) and 'health & social' reasons (e.g. alcohol-related crime, effect on the community or public health issues).

Table 5 summarises reasons given by licensed shopkeepers for supporting, or not supporting, the proposed MUP policy. In Table 5, as well as these broad groupings of reasons ('business' or 'health & social', each broken down by data zone type), specific answers given by more than one respondent are also provided as illustrative examples of why off-sales servers may be for or against this policy.

It should be noted that the five respondents who stated that they were unsure / did not know if they supported MUP are not represented on Table 5 (although 2 stated that their support depended on knowing how the policy would affect the major supermarkets). Also, the individual reasons given do not sum to the total number of 'business' or 'health & social' reasons because respondents could give more than one answer.

**Table 5: Reason for supporting or not supporting minimum pricing**

	Number of shops giving this reason	In deprived area	In non-deprived area	Difference between deprived and non-deprived Chi-square, df=1
<b>SUPPORT MUP</b>				
<b>Business reasons</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	2.818, p=0.093
Affect supermarkets	31	13	18	
Level the playing field	17	10	7	
Help small retailer	7	4	3	
Not affect sales	3	0	3	
other business reason	1	0	1	
<b>Health &amp; Social reasons</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	2.536, p=0.111
Help alcohol problem	8	5	3	
Less drunken trouble	5	3	2	
Affect under-agers	5	3	2	
Reduce consumption	3	2	1	
other health or social reason	4	2	2	
<b>AGAINST MUP</b>				
<b>Business reasons</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	0.605, p=0.437
Not affect supermarkets	6	5	1	
Affect small retailer	5	3	2	
Help the supermarkets	5	1	4	
Not affect sales	4	3	1	
Harm profits	3	2	1	
other business reason	3	2	1	
<b>Health &amp; Social reasons</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	0.016, p=0.901
Not help alcohol problem	12	7	5	
Not reduce consumption	4	2	2	
More theft	4	1	3	
Affect responsible drinker	4	2	2	
Affect working class	3	2	1	
Harm economy	2	1	1	
other health or social reason	1	1	0	

From Table 5, it can be seen that twice as many licensed shopkeepers who were supportive of MUP were in favour of this policy for ‘business’ reasons (n=44) as were in favour of it for ‘health & social’ reasons (n=22). Respondents working in licensed shops that supported MUP mainly hoped that it would affect the supermarkets and ‘level the playing field’ between these majors and smaller retailers such as themselves (i.e. curb supermarket deep discounting). Reflecting this, many of those who did not support MUP felt that the policy would fail to affect the supermarkets in this way. It was noteworthy that twice as many respondents supported MUP for ‘business’ reasons (n=44) as were against it for ‘business’ reasons (n=21).

Respondents working in licensed shops who were in favour of MUP for 'health & social' reasons were divided between those who felt it would reduce Scotland's drink problem by reducing consumption, and those who felt it would reduce the problems which they might experience while on duty, such as drunken customers and under-agers. Those who provided 'health & social' reasons for being against MUP either suggested that the policy would fail to reduce consumption / alcohol problems or that it would adversely affect their shop or community, whether by discriminating against the working classes and responsible drinkers, or increasing theft. A similar number of respondents gave 'health & social' reasons for being against MUP (n=25) as did those who were in favour of it (n=22). Overall, respondents who supported MUP were statistically significantly more likely to give 'business' reasons for this (Chi-square=4.134, df=1, p=0.042) and significantly less likely to give 'health & social' reasons (Chi-square=6.464, df=1, p=0.011). There were no significant differences in the types of reasons ('business' or 'health & social') given for supporting, or not supporting, MUP by neighbourhood type (data zone deprivation).

Table 6 shows the reasons given by licensed shopkeepers for supporting or not supporting the two-for-one offers ban, and follows the same format as Table 6 for MUP. Not shown in this table are the two shops who said they were unsure if they supported this recently passed legislation (both because they found it confusing, and one also stating that it was too easy to get round). Again totals do not always sum because more than one reason could be given by respondents.

From Table 6 it can be seen that, as with MUP, 'business' reasons were more often provided than 'health & social' ones. However on this occasion 'business' reasons were given by significantly more of those who did *not* support this legislation (n=35) than those who did (n=25, Chi-square=7.632, df=1, p=0.006) and there was no significant difference in the likelihood of respondents citing 'health & social' reasons for supporting (n=22) or not supporting (n=25) the two-for-one offers ban (chi-square=0.765, df=1, p=0.328). Again there were no significant differences in type of reasons given by the data zone deprivation level of respondents' shops.

As with their views on MUP, the main 'business' reasons given for being either for or against the two-for-one offers ban revolved around whether the legislation would, or would not, help to 'level the playing field' between small businesses and the major supermarkets. Those who were not supportive of the two-for-one offers ban felt that it was too easy for the supermarkets to get round, for example by halving their alcohol products' prices instead of offering 'buy one get one free'. The main 'health & social' reasons given were interesting, in that those who were supportive felt that the two-for-one offers ban had successfully reduced consumption by preventing unnecessary alcohol purchases, because often the 'customer only wants one', that is to buy a single item (e.g. a bottle of wine or a can of beer). Those who were not supportive of the two-for-one offers ban for 'health & social' reasons tended to feel that it had failed to reduce consumption with customers still drinking as much as they did before but now paying more for their alcohol (i.e. less value for money).

**Table 6: Reasons for supporting or not supporting two-for-one offers ban**

	Number of shops giving this reason	In deprived area	In non- deprived area	Difference between deprived and non-deprived Chi-square, df=1
SUPPORT TWO-FOR-ONE BAN				
Business reasons	25	13	12	0.000, p=0.990
Affect supermarkets	15	8	7	
Level the playing field	5	3	2	
Not affect sales	3	1	2	
More profit on singles	3	0	3	
other business reason	5	4	1	
Health & Social reasons	24	12	12	0.083, p=0.773
Reduce consumption	13	6	7	
Customer only wants one	9	4	5	
Less drunken trouble	2	0	2	
other health or social reason	1	0	1	
AGAINST TWO-FOR-ONE BAN				
Business reasons	35	14	21	0.134, p=0.714
Not affect supermarkets	16	9	7	
Prices halved	11	5	6	
Affect small retailer	10	4	6	
Harm profits	7	2	5	
Easy to get round	2	0	2	
Should not be for cases of wine	2	0	0	
other business reason	3	1	2	
Health & Social reasons	18	7	11	0.001, p=0.977
Not help alcohol problem	8	3	5	
Gave value to customer	7	2	5	
Customer purchasing more	2	2	0	
other health or social reason	1	1	1	

Perhaps one of the most striking findings of this survey was that a large majority (n=111, 78.2%) of surveyed shops felt that businesses such as theirs were under threat from the major supermarkets. This feeling was strong across neighbourhood types, with 45 (82.4%) respondents from licensed shops in deprived data zones and 55 (74.3%) in non-deprived data zones feeling under threat (chi-square=1.339, df=1, p=0.247).

The licensed shop-specific version of the questionnaire asked respondents what percentage of their shop's sales were alcohol products (see Appendix 4). Interestingly, across the licensed sample as a whole, alcohol products accounted for about half of all sales at responding shops (mean=48.7%, range 5 to 100). There was no difference in the percentage of sales that were alcohol products between shops serving deprived data zones (mean=49.7%) and shops serving non-deprived data zones (mean=47.7%, by independent t-test: t=0.459 df=136, p=0.845). However, this is not the full

picture, as the types of alcohol products these sales constituted did vary between socially contrasting neighbourhoods.

The types of alcohol products being sold by each participating licensed shop was measured by an open-ended question asking respondents to state what their best selling drinks brands were (more than one answer could be given). These brands were then categorised into four main beverage types – beers, wines, ciders and spirits. Three of these beverages types were then subdivided according to whether they were ordinary strength alcohol by volume (ABV) or a high ABV variant; specifically super-lagers from ordinary lager / beer, white cider from other (i.e. amber) ciders and fortified wine (including caffeinated tonic wine) from other (i.e. table) wines. The spirits category was also subdivided, between vodka and other spirits (vodka being the dominant beverage in this category and viewed as the basic spirit).

Table 7 shows the distribution of these best selling alcohol products as reported by shops located in deprived or non-deprived data zones, and lists all the individual brands mentioned by more than one respondent as illustrative examples of each beverage type.

**Table 7: Best selling alcohol products**

Alcohol product Drinks brand	Number of shops as best seller	In deprived area	In non- deprived	Difference between deprived and non-deprived Chi-square, df=1
Vodka	<b>55</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	0.089, p=0.765
Glen's	48	25	23	
Smirnoff	10	4	6	
any other brand	1	0	1	
mix of brands	4	0	4	
Other spirits	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	5.929, p=0.015
Whyte & McKay	2	1	1	
any other brands	8	1	7	
mix of brands	3	0	3	
Fortified wine	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	0.855, p=0.355
Buckfast	34	19	15	
MD2020	5	4	1	
High Commissioner	2	1	1	
Other wines	<b>35</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>26</b>	8.875, p=0.003
Blossom Hill	6	4	2	
Echo Falls	5	2	3	
Prosecco	3	0	3	
own label	2	0	2	
other brands	5	0	5	
mix of brands	21	4	17	
White cider	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	7.304, p=0.007
Frosty Jack	21	14	7	
Pulse	4	4	0	
any other brand	2	1	1	
mix of brands	1	1	0	
Other ciders	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	0.003, p=0.958
Strongbow	17	8	9	
Magners	2	1	1	
other brand	2	2	0	
mix of brands	5	2	3	
Super Lager	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	4.039, p=0.038
Tennent's	6	6	0	
other / mix of brands	2	1	1	
Other Beers / lagers	<b>100</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	0.032, p=0.858
Tennent's	85	45	40	
Budweiser	26	14	12	
Stella	11	1	10	
Carling	2	1	1	
Carlsberg	2	0	2	
any other brands	7	0	7	
mix of brands	10	3	7	

As can be seen from Table 7, white cider and super-lager were more likely to be reported as best selling alcohol products by community off-sales serving deprived areas (both higher ABV products which can offer lower cost alcohol). Meanwhile, non-fortified wines and non-vodka spirits were



more likely to be reported as best sellers by community off-sales serving in non-deprived areas (i.e. beverages such as table wines and malt whisky, both products which may be relatively strong in alcohol but high in price).

From this finding it might be suggested that although in monetary terms, sales of alcohol equated to around half of business turnover across all licensed shops regardless of their area's deprivation status, those serving deprived communities were potentially selling more alcohol because their best selling beverages were cheaper in terms ABV to unit cost.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Table 7 is the dominance of an individual brand in six of the eight beverage categories. In particular the Tennent's Lager brand was mentioned by 85 of the 100 shops which reported they had at least one best selling alcohol product in the other beers / lagers beverage type category. Indeed, Tennent's Lager was reported as a best seller by the majority of the whole community off-sales sample (n=85, 60.3% of participating shops). This brand is heavily promoted in Scotland, sponsoring both the country's biggest music festival and Glasgow's two top football teams at the time of writing. Although there was no significant difference in the likelihood of the other beers / lagers beverage type being a best selling product between neighbourhood types overall, it was noteworthy that shops in deprived data zones seemed to be reporting a more restricted range of brands as best sellers. For example, apart from the 45 reports of Tennent's (i.e. cans) and 14 of Budweiser (i.e. bottles), only two alternative other beer / lager brands were specifically mentioned by shops serving deprived areas.

The Tennent's brand name also dominated the super-lager beverage type. All six mentions of the Tennent's Super brand were made by shops located in deprived data zones. The Frosty Jack brand dominated white cider, being mentioned by 21 of the 25 shops which reported any of this beverage type as a best seller, with this brand's sales also being skewed towards deprived areas. Buckfast (tonic wine) similarly dominated fortified wine beverage type, being mentioned by 34 of the 35 shops which reported any products in this category as a best seller. Although, like super-lager and white cider, this brand has been associated with problematic consumption (see Introduction), and was a 'red flag' product among interviewees (see section 4.4), it is noteworthy that this more expensive beverage's sales were evenly divided between shops in deprived or non-deprived areas. The Strongbow brand accounted most of the other (amber) ciders category, being mentioned by 17 of the 25 shops where this beverage type was a best seller. The Glen's brand dominated the vodka category, with 48 of 55 shops where this beverage type was a best seller specifying this brand. These latter two beverage types (other cider and vodka) did not vary in sales by neighbourhood type.

It is salient that the two categories of beverage type which were not dominated by a single brand were also the two beverage types which were more likely to be reported as best sellers by shops located in non-deprived data zones, namely non-fortified (i.e. table) wines and spirits other than vodka. This would suggest that customers from non-deprived neighbourhoods were able to choose from a broad range of alcohol brands (wines, spirits and beers), in comparison to drinkers in deprived neighbourhoods who were more likely to stick to a limited range of basic or cheaper drinks.

Not shown by Table 7, are two shops who stated that whatever they have on a deal / offer is their best seller, two shops which answered a mix of every beverage (i.e. they had no best seller), and one shop which claimed that their best sellers included (unspecified) alcopops.

Despite around half of licensed shops gaining most of their income from non-alcohol products, when asked if their business could survive without an alcohol licence, only ten (7.0%) respondents said they could do so easily (three of which were located in deprived areas). A further 44 (31.0%) said they could survive but with difficulty (e.g. it would cost jobs, see Appendix 4). This concurs with the accounts given by the qualitative interviewees, who often stated that having a drinks licence was an essential part of their business, even when they did not sell many alcohol products because all sales were 'interconnected' and it was advantageous to have 'everything under one roof' to retain customers who might otherwise go to the supermarkets (see section 3.2). For example, six survey respondents who stated that their businesses could not survive at all without a drinks licence claimed that alcohol products made up only 20% of their sales, as did two licensed shopkeepers who said alcohol was only 15% of their sales.

Although more local licensed shops in deprived data zones (n=46, 67.6%) felt they could not survive without selling alcohol than did those in non-deprived data zones (n=42, 56.8%) this did not reach statistical significance (chi-square=1.783, df=1, p=0.182). Unsurprisingly, shops which believed they could not survive without a licence reported a significantly greater proportion of their sales as being alcohol, (mean 57.3%) as opposed to those which believed their business could survive unlicensed (mean 34.4%, by independent t-test: t=5.531, df=136, p=0.000). This finding may of course have implications for how rigorously owners of shops which were more reliant on alcohol sales ensured licensing regulations were enforced (e.g. in comparison to supermarkets selling a broad range of goods).

With such a high proportion of respondents perceiving that a drinks licence was essential for their business's survival, it was not surprising that very few respondents (n=11, 7.8%) indicated that they had considered stopping selling alcohol products. Those who had considered taking such actions were then invited to state why by answering a supplementary open-ended question (see Appendix 4). Answers given by more than one respondent comprised various hassles from the licensing authority (n=7), trouble from customers (n=3), religious reasons (n=2) and that they would stop selling alcohol if the major supermarkets increased their prices (n=2).

A three-point multi-choice question enquired about respondents' views on Scotland's alcohol problems by asking them to choose from options stating whether they felt it was 'exaggerated', 'underestimated' or 'neither' (see Appendix 4). Responses to this were remarkably evenly split between the three options given, with 43 (30.5%) believing it was 'exaggerated', 46 (32.6%) 'underestimated' and 52 (36.9%) 'neither'.

A second three-point multi-choice question enquired about the levels of alcohol problems in their local (shop's) community. This invited them to compare the level of alcohol problems locally relative to the city of Glasgow as a whole, with options of 'not as bad', 'worse' and 'about the same' being provided. Responses to this question were much more varied than those for the question on Scotland's drink problem, with only 16 (11.5%) licensed shopkeepers reporting that their neighbourhood was 'worse' than Glasgow as a whole, 46 (33.1%) stating that it was 'not as bad' and a majority (n=77, 55.4%) thinking it 'about the same'.

Both the above three-point multi-choice questions were re-coded into pseudo-continuous variables, specifically a range from 'exaggerated' to 'underestimated' for Scotland's drink problem, and from 'not as bad' to 'worse' for the situation in the local community. From this it was possible to contrast the views on these alcohol problems between shopkeepers serving in deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods. There was no statistically significant difference in how they viewed Scotland's alcohol problem (chi-square=0.456, df=2, p=0.796), in fact they were remarkably similar, with 22 (32.8%) respondents serving a deprived area and 24 (32.4%) a non-deprived area believing this problem was underestimated. However, as might be anticipated, those serving deprived areas were significantly more likely to think that the alcohol problem in their neighbourhood was more serious compared to Glasgow as a whole (chi-square=9.249, df=2, p=0.010). More respondents from licensed shops in deprived data zones (n=12, 18.2%) than in non-deprived data zones (n=4, 5.5%) felt that alcohol problems were worse locally, and fewer (n=15, 22.7%) serving deprived neighbourhoods felt that things were 'not as bad' compared to those serving non-deprived neighbourhoods (n=31, 42.5%).

These findings are of interest given that respondent's attitudes towards alcohol legislation were more influenced by business concerns than alcohol-related social or health factors. Also, shopkeepers serving deprived neighbourhoods did not report experiencing more alcohol-related problems themselves while on duty in their shop (see Table, 4).

A final open-ended question invited licensed shopkeepers to add comment on anything else which they had found useful in regard to alcohol sales (see Appendix 4). Responses to this were very varied, and some who answered took the opportunity to say what they found problematic about alcohol selling rather than what was useful, but most answers to this opened-end 'anything else' question tended to revolve around either age I.D. policies or other (perhaps related) restrictions on alcohol sales and security. In other words issues already covered in-depth during the qualitative interviews (e.g. Challenge 25 or 'red-flag' products, see sections 4.2 and 4.4 respectively).

Answers to this final question which were specifically given by more than one respondent comprised; having a security serving hatch (n=14), support for Challenge 25 (n=11), having their own strict I.D. policy (n=10), having designated security staff (n=5), signage (n=5), finding challenge 25 counterproductive (n=4), knowing local families well (n=4), storing alcohol behind counter (n=4), not promoting alcohol (n=4), keeping all alcohol in one place (n=3), supporting Challenge 21 instead of Challenge 25 (n=3), having CCTV (n=3), staff training (n=3), restricting Buckfast sales (n=3), having

their own I.D. book (n=2), finding test purchases counterproductive (n=2), not stocking Buckfast (n=2), not stocking white cider (n=2), closing early (n=2), avoiding the police (n=2), treating customers alike (n=2) and a view expressed that it should be the customer, not the retailer, who should have (and risk losing) an alcohol licence (n=2).

## 6.2 Control group of unlicensed shops

Forty-seven unlicensed local small retailers responded to the postal survey, two of which had also participated in the interview phase of the project (one located in a deprived and one in a non-deprived area). This figure of 47 postal returns accounts for only 18.8% of the 250 unlicensed shops which were sent a questionnaire. Whether or not this lower response rate than was achieved with the community off-sales sample is simply because retailers who did not sell alcohol did not view the survey as relevant to them cannot be known. However it does suggest that the adoption of hand-delivery strategy (see Methodology chapter, page 8), which albeit time consuming, was to the benefit of the off-sales sample size and representativeness. Nevertheless, the aim of this second survey was not to maximise response rates, but to produce a control group of shops that are similar to the larger representative sample of community off-sales. To this end it was more important that the shops responding to the control survey did not differ in terms of neighbourhood type or in their role in the community (other than in terms of alcohol sales).

The mean SIMD 2009 score of the data zones in which shops responding to the control survey were located was 40.4. Crucially, although this is a slightly higher mean deprivation score, it does not differ significantly from that of the shops who responded to the licensed shop survey (mean SIMD score=35.4: by Independent t-test,  $t=1.474$ ,  $df=79$ ,  $p=0.143$ ). Nor did the two samples differ in terms of SIMD data zone deprivation rank (unlicensed shops' mean=1460) or crime rank (unlicensed shops' mean=1400). However it was noteworthy that the SIMD indicator measuring alcohol hospitalisation rank did differ significantly between the two samples (by independent t-test:  $t=2.396$ ,  $df=188$ ,  $p=0.018$ ). Curiously, it was shops in the unlicensed sample which tended to be located in data zones with *more* alcohol hospitalisations than those in the licensed shop sample (mean ranks of Scotland's 6505 data zones on this measure being 1198 and 1809 respectively). Why this should be the case is unclear, although it might be speculated that unlicensed shopkeepers in such localities may have felt more inclined to respond to a survey investigating alcohol issues than would those serving communities where no such issues were obvious.

Thus, the shopkeepers who responded to the control survey were comparable with the licensed shop sample in terms of overall deprivation level, although unexpectedly these unlicensed shops data zone's scored higher on the SIMD's alcohol health measure. Next, the two samples were compared in terms of business size and whether or not they were serving local communities.

Unlicensed shops had a mean number of 2.5 staff on duty (range 1-6). As might be anticipated, given that they potentially sell less products (i.e. no alcohol products), this was slightly lower than the staffing level at the licensed shops (mean=3.1, by independent t-test:  $t=2.267$ ,  $df=118$ ,  $p=0.025$ ).

Given the responses from the off-sales survey, it also might be conjectured that alcohol's presence may require more personnel to be on duty for security reasons, and that this valuable product can help to employ additional staff (31.0% of licensed shops said that if they lost their drink licence they would continue trading but that it would cost jobs). In any case, from these data, like the off-sales sample, these unlicensed shops would also appear to be small business and not supermarkets.

As might be anticipated (given alcohol licensing trading hours), unlicensed shops tended to open earlier (by independent t-test:  $t=2.851$ ,  $df=184$ ,  $p=0.005$ ) and close earlier ( $t=6.522$ ,  $df=62$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The modal opening time of unlicensed shops was 7AM (range 5.30AM to 10AM), the modal closing time was 6PM (range 5.30PM to midnight). However there was no difference in duration of trading hours overall (modally a 12 hour day), with unlicensed shops being open for a mean of 12.5 hours (range 9 to 18) compared with a mean of 13.0 hours at licensed shops ( $t=1.130$ ,  $df=184$ ,  $p=0.260$ ). These statistics exclude three unlicensed (and three licensed) shops which were open 24 hours.

Despite their earlier trading hours, there were no significant differences in the customer bases of these unlicensed shops as compared with the off-sales sample (see Table 3). This was true for the proportion who were locals (chi-square=5.457,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.244$ ), passing trade (chi-square=1.964,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.742$ ), tourists or students (chi-square=4.037,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.401$ ) and destination shoppers (chi-square=4.833,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.305$ ). As with the off-sales sample, the customer base of the unlicensed shops was mainly local people who lived in walking distance ( $n=31$ , 68.9% unlicensed shopkeepers stated that 'most' or 'all' of their customers were locals). This was reflected in the proportion who stated they knew their customers well (mean=54.9%), which did not differ significantly from the proportion known well by the off-sales sample (mean=59.6%: by independent t-test,  $t=1.055$ ,  $df=72$ ,  $p=0.304$ ).

Thus, although they had earlier trading hours and slightly fewer staff, the unlicensed shops which responded to this survey could be said to constitute a suitable control group, being comparable to the licensed shops who responded to the off-sales survey in that they were also serving local (socially contrasting) communities. It was therefore felt that valid comparisons could be made between the two groups in terms of their experiences of, and views on, alcohol-related issues and problems.

With the above similarities in mind, it was interesting that when asked about the range of potential problems experienced while on duty (see Appendix 4 and also Table 4) no significant differences were apparent. This was true in terms of frequency of experiencing 'shoplifting' (chi-square=5.288,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.259$ ), 'verbal abuse' (chi-square=3.998,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.406$ ), 'drunken customers' (chi-square=5.690,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.338$ ), 'under-agers' (chi-square=6.744,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.148$ ) and 'physical attack or robbery' (chi-square=2.212,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.530$ ). This was not what was anticipated from the findings of the qualitative interviews, in which shopkeepers reported that having a drinks licence brings problems (see Findings II). For example, it might have been anticipated that shopkeepers from unlicensed shops would report less 'shoplifting', yet *none* of these respondents stated that they 'never' experienced this problem, while 11 (7.8%) of the off-sales survey's shops reported no

‘shoplifting’. Similarly, it might have been expected that respondents from licensed premises would have to deal with more ‘under-agers’ attempting to buy age-restricted products on a ‘daily’ basis than at unlicensed premises, yet this was not the case. In fact nearly twice the proportion of unlicensed shops reported ‘daily’ ‘under-agers’ (n=19, 13.4% off-sales and n=12, 26.7% control shops).

Perhaps this lack of expected differences is explicable through greater levels of security at off-sales premises, off-setting and compensating for the risk of experiencing problems. For example, shoplifting may be, relatively speaking, reduced in off-sales (at least to a common tolerable level comparable with other shops) by extra security measures, such as CCTV and products being stored behind counters or protective, grills, cages and other barriers with serving hatches etc (see in-depth interviews section 4.4). Similarly off-sales legal obligations towards stricter age I.D. policies (e.g. Challenge 25) may render these premises less frequent targets of those attempting to purchase other age restricted products, such as tobacco, lottery, fireworks and volatile substances (e.g. lighter fuel) while under-age (see section 4.2). On the other hand the lack of difference in reporting problems may be down to individual perceptual differences, rather than their severity, in that what constitutes ‘verbal abuse’ may vary depending on what is considered normative at the type of shop concerned. It may also be conjectured that respondents working in off-sales were reticent about disclosing problems such as under-agers.

There was also no difference between licensed and unlicensed shops in believing that the current legislation was not sufficient to protect shop workers while on duty (n=81, 58.7% off-sales sample respondents versus n=28, 66.7% control sample respondents: chi-square=0.857, df=1, p=0.355).

Although the control group believed that they experienced similar levels of (potentially alcohol-related) problems while at work, respondents from unlicensed shops were statistically significantly more likely to believe that alcohol problems in their neighbourhood were more serious than did respondents from licensed shops (chi-square=9.135, df=2, p=0.010). Almost one third (n=13, 31.0%) of respondents from unlicensed shops believed things were worse in their area (compared to 16, 11.5% of off-sales respondents), less than a quarter (n=10, 23.8%) believed things ‘were not as bad’ (compared to 46, 33.1% of off-sales), with the remainder (n=19, 45.2%) believing things were ‘about the same’ as the rest of Glasgow (the response given by a majority of off-sales sample respondents, n=77, 55.4%).

This difference in assessing local community alcohol problems may have been down to the control shops being located in areas with higher levels of alcohol-related hospitalisation (according to the SIMD). However, with this in mind it was noteworthy that the control group of unlicensed shops were also statistically significantly more likely to believe that Scotland’s national alcohol problem was more serious than did respondents from licensed shops (chi-square=9.083, df=2, p=0.011). In contrast to the off-sales sample, a majority (n=25, 59.5%) of shopkeepers in the control group felt that Scotland’s alcohol problem was ‘underestimated’ (only around one third of licensed shop respondents felt this way, n=46, 32.6%). Fewer (n=7, 16.7%) felt that the problem was ‘exaggerated’

(around one-third of licensed shopkeepers did,  $n=43$ , 30.5%), with the remainder ( $n=10$ , 23.8%) opting for the 'neither' option (as did 52, 36.9% off-sales respondents).

Perhaps these reported differences in assessing alcohol problems reflect a vested interest amongst off-sales shopkeepers to minimise the harmful impact of the products they sell. Alternatively, these differences may be perceptual, with those working in off-sales being more aware of the true nature of these issues (as opposed to being informed from second-hand sources, such as the media).

Despite these differences between licensed and unlicensed shops in how serious they view alcohol problems as being, there was no significant difference in their levels of support for the proposed alcohol MUP policy. A majority ( $n=26$ , 65.0%) of shopkeepers in the control sample of unlicensed shops were in favour of MUP (compared with  $n=84$ , 61.8%, in the off-sales sample: chi-square=0.138,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.710$ ). However, unlike the off-sales sample, the reasons given by unlicensed shops for supporting, or not supporting, MUP were largely 'health & social'. Only two (16.7%) shops which did not sell alcohol reported *any* 'business' reason (both in favour of MUP, both because it would affect the major supermarkets), significantly fewer than did off-sales ( $n=44$ , 71.0%, of whom were supportive of the policy for such reasons : chi-square=12.604,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). No control shops gave a 'business' reason for being against MUP, compared to 21 (51.2%) off-sales (chi-square=7.171,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.007$ ). Thus all nine control shops who gave any reasons for being against MUP gave 'health & social' reasons, compared to 25 (61.0%) of off-sales (chi-square=5.165,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.023$ ), with control shops overwhelmingly giving 'health & social' reasons ( $n=11$ , 91.7%) for supporting MUP, compared to only a third (22, 35.5%) of off-sales which gave such reasons for supporting the proposed policy (chi-square=12.884,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

Apart from the two respondents who felt that it would affect the supermarkets, specific reasons given by two or more unlicensed shopkeepers for supporting MUP comprised; 'affect under-agers' ( $n=4$ ), 'help Scotland's alcohol problem' ( $n=3$ ), 'reduce consumption' ( $n=3$ ) and 'less drunken trouble' ( $n=3$ ) (see also Table 5 for how off-sales shopkeepers responded to this supplementary question). Three control shops were against MUP because respondents felt it would 'increase theft', with six other 'health or social' reasons also being given. It was anticipated that control shops reasons for supporting MUP would be reflected in their reasons for not selling alcohol.

In place of the specific alcohol sales questions of the off-sales survey questionnaire (e.g. those asking respondents about their experience of the two-for-one offers ban, the proportion of their sales which were alcohol, to name their best selling products and had they consider giving up their drinks licence), the unlicensed survey enquired about why these control shops did not sell alcohol, if they ever had done so in the past, and whether would they would consider doing so in the future (see Appendix 4).

To assess why these premises were unlicensed, the control survey questionnaire offered a range of alternative scenarios, each of which had been raised during the qualitative interviews. These were



'religious reasons', which was the most often chosen option, answered affirmatively by the majority of unlicensed respondents (n=29, 65.9%), 'trouble from customers' (n=14, 31.8%), 'social / health reasons' (n=13, 29.5%), 'too many licences in area' (i.e. 'overprovision', n=10, 22.7%), 'legal / logistical issues' (n=8, 18.2%) and 'not profitable to sell it' (n=3, 6.8%) which the least often chosen of the scenarios provided. An open-ended supplementary question invited respondents to write in any other reasons which might explain why they did not sell alcohol. Eight shopkeepers answered this, two of whom cited local council conditions prevented them for obtaining a drinks licence. These findings concur with the qualitative interviews (see section 3.2).

Unlicensed shops were also asked if they had ever sold alcohol in the past. Only two (4.5%) stated they had done so, with one stating they had stopped for religious reasons, the other for unspecified social reasons. Finally the control shops were asked if they would ever consider selling alcohol in the future. Seven (16.7%) said they might, five to increase profits, two if there was demand and one to help serve their community.

Given the above pattern of responses from the control group, it was perhaps most interesting that these unlicensed shops felt even more under threat from major supermarkets than did those in the off-sales survey. All but one (2.3%) of the unlicensed respondents felt that business like theirs were under threat from the majors, compared with more than one-fifth (n=31, 21.8%) of licensed shopkeepers who did not feel threatened in this way (chi-square=9.021, df=1, p=0.003). This finding would imply that having a drinks licence may help to safeguard local community convenience stores against the majors, although concerns about the supermarkets was a unifying factor across all the shop types in this research, regardless of their socially contrasting neighbourhoods or licensing statuses.

## 7. Discussion

### 7.1 Summary

This research project successfully gathered data from an often neglected but important group in alcohol consumption and policy making – shop servers. We interviewed and surveyed servers working in both licensed and unlicensed local shops across the socially contrasting neighbourhoods of a major UK city known to experience elevated levels of alcohol problems (Glasgow, Scotland). In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with those working in shops serving the most and least deprived parts of this city, and we recruited a quantitative survey sample comprising respondents from half of all its community off-sales premises (licensed local convenience shops). A total of 211 shops took part in at least one phase of the research.

This project found that convenience store work can at times be a tiring, thankless (even dangerous) job in an industry already undergoing economic stress at a time of recession. However, what was also found was that shop workers can also be proud to serve the community and often felt an embedded part of their neighbourhood, with a stake in the well-being of the people who were their customers. Consequently the more that their customer base was dependent upon local shoppers, the more shop servers knew their clientele personally (e.g. by name or age). This had the twin benefits of reducing the problems which they experienced while on duty (e.g. verbal or physical attack) and made them better able to third-party police local alcohol issues (e.g. under-age purchase). This was borne out by both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study.

Those working in local shops were often aware of the problems in their community and were averse to contributing to these (e.g. by fuelling alcohol-related disorder). That said; it was apparent throughout this research that those working in unlicensed shops felt that alcohol problems both locally and nationally were more serious than did their counterparts working in off-sales. This may reflect licensed shop workers downplaying the harm caused by a product they sell, though it might equally reflect them having better understanding of alcohol issues, compared to those who do not sell alcohol and who may only form their opinions from second-hand reports (e.g. the media).

The major supermarkets' practice of deep discounting was felt to be the main driver of alcohol problems in the community. Aside from a few individual anecdotes no-one squared the blame for either local or national drinking problems on the shoulders of the small retailer. Local shops almost universally felt under threat from the major supermarkets' business practices, particularly unlicensed shops which did not have the extra revenue available from alcohol sales. Despite this few unlicensed shops in our study had ever considered obtaining a drinks licence, with most saying they did not sell alcohol for religious reasons.

Local licensed shops often felt dependent on drinks sales for their survival, even when alcohol products only made up a small proportion of their turnover. This was felt to be due to the 'interconnectedness' of having 'everything under the one roof' which made such local premises better able to compete with the supermarkets.

Local off-sales premises could not match the supermarkets' drinks price reductions, and many had resorted to stocking alcohol products not usually sold by the majors (e.g. tonic wine). In non-deprived areas this could involve specialist drinks (minority brands), but in deprived neighbourhoods this could mean beverages associated with problematic customers. Cheaper 'Alcohol by Volume' (ABV) products (e.g. white cider or super lager) were more a feature of shops in deprived neighbourhoods. In contrast, more expensive, table wines and premium spirits were better sellers in non-deprived neighbourhoods.

Reported differences in the frequency of experiencing (potentially alcohol-related) problems while on duty were less marked than anticipated between off-sales shop servers working in socially contrasting communities (deprived versus non-deprived areas of Glasgow). This was particularly the case with the survey component of the research. This may suggest that alcohol brings the same issues regardless of neighbourhood type. However, this relative lack of difference in the frequency of experiencing problems while at work was also found between licensed and unlicensed shops' servers who were also affected by alcohol issues (e.g. drunk customers).

This finding, that servers' working across a range of local shops report similar difficulties, may have been mediated by a greater tolerance of certain behaviours by shops serving deprived areas. This may be partly because of differing local behavioural norms and partly because shopkeepers in deprived neighbourhoods were more likely to know their customers personally. Similarly off-sales servers may have a greater tolerance of alcohol-related behaviours and, especially in deprived neighbourhoods, may have been more likely to resort to a range of security measures to reduce potential problems to a comparably tolerable level, in comparison to say unlicensed shops (or licensed shops in non-deprived neighbourhoods). However this could mean that when problems were reported they tended to be most serious at off-sales serving deprived neighbourhoods.

The main problems experienced by shop servers were from drunken persons. These problematic would-be customers were not youths (e.g. under-agers) or addicts (alcoholics or drug users), but were otherwise well-behaved local adults who occasionally entered the shop while intoxicated. These situations became aggravated when they were surprised to be refused service by someone who they knew well and who would normally sell them alcohol.

Strict age-I.D. policies, both those legally mandated and the rules imposed by the shops themselves, were seen as having reduced the frequency of experiencing problems from youths. However a recent 'Challenge 25' policy (requiring anyone who looks under 25 to provide I.D.) was seen as causing friction between the shopkeeper and customers already known to be aged between 18 and

25, especially in close-knit deprived communities. Given this perceived reduction in direct attempts by under-18s to buy alcohol, it was noteworthy that police operated test-purchases were easily spotted by shopkeepers who knew their local community. They felt such policies would be better aimed at supermarkets, than at hoping to catch out an individual seller making an honest mistake. Local shop servers felt unjust pressure was being put on them to police under-age sales.

Proxy-buying of alcohol was seen as a bigger problem than direct under-age purchase (and this practice extended to those who purchased drinks on behalf of those already too intoxicated by alcohol or drugs to be served by them self). Local shopkeepers who knew their community were often aware when proxy-buying was happening (e.g. when regular customers purchased something unusual), and were able to take appropriate action. For example, certain alcohol products (e.g. tonic wine) were associated with proxy-buying, and other problematic consumption, and these were 'red-flagged' with modified selling practices (e.g. only one bottle per person).

Participants were divided on alcohol price legislation, such as a 'two-for-one' offers ban, introduced between the interview and survey phases of the research, and in particular the proposed policy of minimum unit pricing (MUP). A majority of participants (around 6 in 10) were in favour of MUP; off-sales shopkeepers because they hoped it would 'level the playing field' with the supermarkets, unlicensed shops because it might reduce alcohol consumption / problems. Those against MUP tended to feel that the supermarkets would find a way round it, or that it would penalise less affluent responsible drinkers without reducing problems.

Overall, these findings imply that (contrary to what had been anticipated from the pilot study) the alcohol licensed status of a shop was more important than local community deprivation levels in how shop worker experienced alcohol problems. Moreover, what united all the participating shops in this study seemed to be more important than what divided them. The premises in this research are all characterised as small business serving local communities, half of which are defined as being areas of socio-economic disadvantage. In particular, both those interviewed and those who responded to the survey (working in both licensed and unlicensed community shops) were with a very few exceptions concerned about the impact that the major supermarkets were having upon both the alcohol market and on the survival prospects of smaller retail businesses in general.

## **7.2 Implications**

The findings of this project are able inform future alcohol harm-reduction initiatives at both local and national level. Specifically:

- It should be acknowledged that local shopkeepers know their customers and have a stake in their community. As such, and in contrast to bulk buying at supermarkets, local off-sales are

able to monitor who purchases what alcohol, when, for whom, and are able to adjust their selling practices accordingly. Local off-sales should be commended for this, and encouraged towards, or rewarded for, participation in alcohol harm reduction initiatives. We suggest that the level of legal responsibilities carried by those who sell alcohol should be reflected in the level of legal protection which they receive while on duty.

- The main problem faced by off-sales servers was in relation to refusing service to drunken would-be customers (as opposed to under-agers). This highlights the need to make both shop server and the general public more aware of the legislation relating to the selling of alcohol to intoxicated persons (i.e. to be on a par with the level of understanding that people already have in the case of under-18 sales). We suggest that this could be achieved via publicity campaigns, produced for example by appropriate authorities (central or local government) or the drinks industry.
- This research highlighted that alcohol-related problems are experienced across all communities, regardless of levels of deprivation. That said; the problems of deprived communities are likely to be more serious.
- Test-purchases appear to be counter-productive when targeting local community off-sales, especially in a 'Challenge 25' environment. As well as alienating potential allies, who might third-party-police alcohol issues, this practice seems more likely to catch out the unwary novice server, rather than any savvy 'unscrupulous operators', who will know how to spot a test purchase and manipulate loopholes in the law.
- A greater onus should be placed on the responsibility of the customer, rather than the shop / server, when policing alcohol issues (e.g. proxy-buying). Although a degree of responsibility must still lie with the individual server or premise, there may be a case for 'test purchasing' proxy-buyers rather than sellers. Again measures to increase the retail industry's and general public's understanding of the issues involved would be helpful.
- Given that it was apparent that cheaper ABV products were more a feature of deprived communities, price-led interventions would seem more likely to impact upon poorer neighbourhoods (their population and shopping provision).
- Views server training varied between interviewees from socially contrasting neighbourhoods, with those from deprived area shops feeling that it did not go far enough in regards to dealing with the problems they encountered on duty, while those in non-deprived areas felt it was a money making scam because training them at all about such problems was not relevant to their job (the same was also true of refusal of sale books').

- Local shopkeepers can be made supportive of policies such as MUP if this helps to level the business playing field between them and the major supermarkets.
- Studies linking outlet density to local alcohol problems and deprivation need to take account of outlet size and customer mobility.
- Although many participants in this research saw selling alcohol as essential to the survival of their business, they feared for the future of their industry given the continuing advance of the major supermarkets, who they felt were dominating the market place (for drinks and other products) and were the drivers of alcohol issues (nationally and in the community).

### 7.3 Conclusions

The qualitative and quantitative phases of this research complemented each other well. The survey data concurred with many of the findings of the qualitative interviews, and there were no topics of disagreement where the findings from each method were contradictory. However, the degree of difference between socially contrasting neighbourhoods found was much greater in the qualitative phase, particularly in relation to problems experienced by the shop worker while on duty. This would seem to highlight the usefulness of in-depth interview method for investigation complex alcohol / licensing issues over surveys, and of using a mixed method approach more generally.

There may be several reasons for this disparity between methods. It is possible that survey respondents divulged less information than could be obtained via the researcher-driven probing afforded during face-to-face interviewing. It is also possible that the socio-economic extremes represented by the interviews (in terms of the data zone deprivation) may have uncovered differences lost in the Glasgow-wide survey, where by necessity (i.e. a function of the city's demographic profile) responding shops were skewed towards deprived neighbourhoods (half in SIMD Quintile 1). However, it seems likely that fewer differences were found by the survey - either between deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods or between licensed and unlicensed shops - because respondents only reported what they believed to be the problems which they encountered. The in-depth interviews revealed that, for example, what constitutes verbal abuse differs greatly by locality. Also, different shops took different steps to moderate the problems which they faced down to a tolerable level. For example, to this end licensed shops in deprived areas were more likely to take extra precautions such as serving from behind security hatches or strict age I.D. policies.

This study has identified that local convenience shops have developed many strategies for dealing with alcohol-related issues in their shops, some of which are centred on having knowledge of the consumption patterns of the local residents they serve. Using this knowledge, shop workers can monitor, modify and restrict their customers' purchases; where they position alcohol within their shop (e.g. not stocking certain products in the fridge); limiting the amount and type of alcohol

products per customer (e.g. to combat proxy-buying); and even offering basic, informal counselling. As well as protecting themselves and their businesses from harm, many of these measures will have direct knock-on effects onto the alcohol consumption of their communities.

Although those who participated in this study were cognisant of their responsibilities (both legal and to their communities), it was clear that others could assist to make their work easier. In particular there would appear to be a need to educate the public about servers' legal responsibilities towards proxy-buying and selling to intoxicated individuals. The public seem aware of the legislation relating to age restricted sales, and support shop servers in duties in this regard. This should also be the case in regard to other legislation governing restrictions on alcohol sales, in order so that shop servers' job of refusing purchasing attempts that contravene these is made easier. We have suggested that relevant government or drinks industry bodies could help to improve levels understanding of these issues in the same way as they currently do with age I.D. policies.

The local convenience shop industry, which is already operating in an increasingly challenging environment, has been affected by the continued expansion of 'the big four' major supermarkets into their industry, on top of the effects of the current economic recession. Regarding alcohol sales, these changes have produced varying effects. As it stands, local shops are unable to compete with supermarkets and their drinks prices are generally *higher* as a result. Yet despite this, (in)direct alcohol sales are extremely important to the majority of licensed shops. As a result, it would appear that shopkeepers are more likely to strictly follow the law (e.g. not selling to under-age persons) or contravene any other licence operating conditions that could incur to licensing conditions, suspensions, or even having their licence revoked entirely. Conversely, some unscrupulous shopkeepers may be more inclined to bend or ignore the law (e.g. selling to an underage person) as a stream of additional revenue, particularly if they know the legal technicalities in the test purchase system. However, the evidence from this research would indicate that shops engaging in such practices would run the risk of being looked upon unfavourably by the local community which may offset the financial benefits of any unscrupulous alcohol sales.

This research has provided a voice for those who sell alcohol at the counter. It is hoped that their words will help inform policy-makers about the complexities of working on the shop-floor of local alcohol provision and assist towards the reduction of alcohol-related problems in the community.

*Sometimes it's very, very hard... you get stressed out. The government is not here to stand in the shop and see what it's like, the hassle and the abuse that we get when we refuse to serve them (Licensed shop, deprived area).*

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## APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEWEES



### **INFORMATION SHEET**

My name is Neil Davidson, and I'm a researcher from the Institute for Society and Social Justice Research at Glasgow Caledonian University. We are currently conducting research which looks at the shop servers' experience of alcohol-related issues and interventions in socially contrasting neighbourhoods. This research has been commissioned and funded by *Alcohol Education Research Council*. I am currently working as the Research Assistant on the aforementioned project along with the Principal Investigators (Dr Alasdair Forsyth and Dr Anne Ellaway of the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Research Unit at the University of Glasgow).

The aims of this interview are:

- To find out what problems local shop workers face with 'public incivilities' (e.g. abuse, dishonesty, loitering) and other nuisance behaviours.
- To assess the role of alcohol products in these behaviours
- To highlight practices that maintain good order and efficient service and make businesses more attractive places for staff and customers.
- To give those who work in local convenience stores a voice.

**Please note we are equally interested in your views whether or not your shop has a drinks license.**

To help us in these objectives we would like to invite you, or a suitable member of your staff, to take part in a research interview at a time and place of your choosing. The interview will cover issues such as your views on this area, customers, alcohol, local policy and problems, as well as asking you about what experiences you have had during your job. **We offer a sum of £20.00 as payment for your time.** The interview should only take a few minutes (and it can be done in sections to minimise any disruption to your business). With your permission I would like to digitally record the interview.

**All your comments will be anonymised and you will not be identifiable in the research report.** All information collected will be treated confidentially unless you reveal details of harm towards yourself or that you are causing harm to others. If this occurs, ethical guidelines will be followed which involves contacting relevant bodies to enable help and advice to be given. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to, and you may stop the interview at any time.

Thanks once again for your co-operation

Neil Davidson / Dr Alasdair Forsyth  
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Glasgow Caledonian University  
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MRC Public Health Sciences Unit  
University of Glasgow  
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## APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWEES



### **CONSENT FORM**

#### **Shop servers' experience of alcohol-related issues and interventions in socially contrasting neighbourhoods**

- *I consent to be interviewed and for that interview to be digitally recorded. I understand that the interview will be anonymised and am aware that only the researcher will have access to the recording and that anything I say will be anonymised in any research reports which are later published*
- *I have read, understood and have a copy of the information sheet*
- *I have been able to discuss the interview and ask questions about it*
- *I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time, without having to give a reason*

***I give my consent to be (please tick your response and sign and print your name and the date below)***

***Interviewed today:***

***Yes***

☐

***No***

☐

***Sign name:.....***

***Print name:.....***

***Date:.....***

**Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.**

---

**I declare that I have completed the shop workers interview for the Institute for Society and Social Justice Research in Glasgow Caledonian University and claim my £20.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LICENSED AND UNLICENSED SHOP WORKERS

### General Information

#### General trade

- Who is the owner/operator
- Busy times/quiet times
- Number of staff on during day/night, midweek/weekend
- Who are customers/what % are known

#### Shop's main service to the community

- What do products/services they offer
- Best selling products/most popular service

#### Promotions

- Any cheap pricing, specials
- How often do these change
- Why do they change
- Are they effective
- How advertised
- Set by owner, parent company

#### Qs for unlicensed premises

- Reasons for no license
- Advantages/disadvantages of no license

#### Qs for licensed premises

- Reasons for having a license
- Advantages/disadvantages of having a license

Q

### Frequency and examples of difficulties in job

#### Problems inside the shop

- Instances of aggressive customers, shoplifters, under-agers and proxy-buyers for cigarettes and alcohol

- Verbal abuse, physical abuse
- Damage to property

#### **Problems outside shop**

- Loitering
- General Environment (vandalism, litter, etc.)
- Upkeep of the building

#### **Break-ins/robberies**

- (if yes give details)

### **Shop policies**

#### **Methods to avoid these risks**

- Withdrawn certain products
- Removed promotions
- Changed shop layout
- Managing of queues
- Barring of customers

#### **Age related sales**

- Displaying of notices for proof of age
- Acceptable behaviour from customers

#### **[Qs for licensed premises]**

- introduction of 'Challenge 25', recording of refusal of service (tills, books), ban on 2-4-1 offers

### **Security measures**

- CCTV
- Panic buttons
- Locking up routines
- Screens or cages
- Controlled entry

### **External bodies and security networks**

#### **Formal support networks**

- e.g. Scottish Grocers Federation

#### **Police**

- Type and frequency of police communication with local community officers

### **Community involvement**

- Member of 'Neighbourhood Watch'/customer or resident group?

#### **[Qs for licensed premises]**

#### **Type and frequency of contact with licensing authorities**

- Opinion of the training

### **Future of the industry**

#### **Effects from closure of dedicated off-sales (Haddows et al)**

#### **Supermarkets**

- Is the shops future threatened by supermarkets
- how do they compete with supermarkets/what advantages to they offer customers over supermarkets

#### **Thoughts on potential govt. policies**

- Minimum pricing
- Social Responsibility Levy
- Banning of certain products
- Changing glassware to plastic

#### **Anything that they would like to change about the shop**

#### **Anything else to add?**



## APPENDIX 4: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



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### Shop Staff Questionnaire

#### Firstly some questions about your shop

- 1.1 How many staff work in your shop on a normal weekday?  
[please write appropriate number in the box to the right]
- 1.2 What are your normal weekday opening hours? From  to
- 1.3 What do you call this area (the shop is in)?  
[please write in box to right e.g. "High Burnside"]

#### The next questions about your normal customers

- 2.1. How would you describe your typical customer base?

[please circle the appropriate answer for each type of clientele below]

Locals (walking distance)	none	few	many	most	all
Passing trade	none	few	many	most	all
Tourists or Students	none	few	many	most	all
Destination shoppers (come here from other areas)	none	few	many	most	all

- 2.2. What percentage of customers do you know well (by name, age etc.)?  %

#### These questions refer to difficulties that you may face at work

- 3.1 How often do you face the following problems (if at all)?

[please circle the appropriate answer for how many of each type below]

Shoplifting / theft	never	rarely	monthly	weekly	daily
Verbal abuse	never	rarely	monthly	weekly	daily
Drunk customers	never	rarely	monthly	weekly	daily
Under-agers	never	rarely	monthly	weekly	daily
Physical attack or robbery	never	rarely	monthly	weekly	daily

- 3.2 Do you think current legislation specifically protects shop workers from violence while on duty? 

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**[THIS SECTION FOR UNLICENSED PREMISES ONLY]**

**Now your views on current trends**

4.1 Do you feel businesses like yours are under threat from the major supermarkets? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

4.2 Are you supportive of the proposed alcohol minimum-pricing policy? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐  
Why do you think this [please write in the box below]

4.3 Do you think Scotland's alcohol problem is... [please tick one box]  
**Exaggerated** ☐ **Underestimated** ☐ **Neither** ☐

4.4 Compared to Glasgow as a whole, do you think alcohol problems in this area are...  
**About the same** ☐ **Not as bad** ☐ **Worse** ☐

**Finally even although you do not sell alcohol, we are interested on your views on this**

U.1 Why do you not sell alcohol? [please tick each appropriate box in the shaded area below]

<b>Religious reasons</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Too many licences in area</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Trouble from customers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Legal/logistic issues</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Social/health reasons</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not profitable to sell it</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other reasons</b> [please indicate what these are in box provided to the right]	<div></div>		

U.2 Has your shop ever sold alcohol? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐  
**If yes**, why are you no longer selling [please explain in space below]

U.3 Can you foresee circumstances where you would consider obtaining a licence to sell alcohol? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐  
**If yes**, why [please explain why in space below]

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire** (please return in stamped-addressed our envelope)

**[THIS SECTION FOR LICENSED PREMISES ONLY]**

***Now your views on current trends***

4.1 Do you feel businesses like yours are under threat from the major supermarkets? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

4.2 Are you supportive of the proposed alcohol minimum-pricing policy? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐  
Why do you think this? [please write in space below]

4.3 Do you think Scotland's alcohol problem is . . . [please tick one box]  
**Exaggerated** ☐ **Underestimated** ☐ **Neither** ☐

4.4 Compared to Glasgow as a whole, do you think alcohol problems in this area are . . .  
**About the same** ☐ **Not as bad** ☐ **Worse** ☐

***The final questions are specific to alcohol licensing***

L.1 Have you/your shop ever stopped or considered stopping selling alcohol? **If yes, why have you considered this?** [please write in box below] **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

L.2 Could your shop survive without an alcohol licence? [please tick one box]  
**Easily** ☐ **With difficulty (e.g. cost jobs)** ☐ **No** ☐

L.3 What percentage of your total sales would you estimate are alcohol products?  %

L.4 What are your most popular alcohol products? [Please write brands below e.g. "McEwan's lager"]

L.5 Are you supportive of the recent legislation restricting alcohol promotions (e.g. 2 for 1 offers)? [please explain why in the box below] **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

L.6 Please write below anything else you would like to add regarding alcohol sales, such as any practices which you have found helpful in your job (e.g. how you stock certain product)

***Thank you for completing this questionnaire*** (please return in stamped-addressed our envelope)

## APPENDIX 5: INFORMATION SHEET FOR SURVEY



Neil Davidson / Dr Alasdair Forsyth

Institute for Society and Social Justice Research

Glasgow Caledonian University

Phone: 0141 273 1495 / 0141 331 8301

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### **INFORMATION SHEET**

*The Institute for Society & Social Justice Research at Glasgow Caledonian University and MRC Social & Public Health Sciences Research Unit at the University of Glasgow are currently conducting research looking at the shop servers' experience of alcohol-related issues and interventions in socially contrasting neighbourhoods. This research has been commissioned and funded by Alcohol Education Research Council and is being advised by Alcohol Focus Scotland, Scottish Grocers Federation, Institute for Social Marketing, Glasgow Centre for Population Health (NHS) and Strathclyde Police licensing branch.*

*We are currently undertaking a postal survey of shops across Glasgow and would welcome your participation in the survey, which aims to:*

- *Find out what problems local shop workers face with 'public incivilities' (e.g. abuse, dishonesty, loitering) and other nuisance behaviours.*
- *Assess the role of alcohol products in these behaviours*
- *Highlight practices that maintain good order and efficient service and make businesses more attractive places for staff and customers.*
- *To give those who work in local convenience stores a voice.*

**Please note we are equally interested in your views whether or not your shop has a drinks license.**

To help us in these objectives we would like to invite you, or a suitable member of your staff, to complete the questionnaire and return it in the stamped addressed envelope provided (no need to return this sheet). It should only take-up **5 minutes** of your time. Participation is entirely voluntary and you do not need to answer any questions which you do not wish to. The survey **will be anonymised and you will not be identifiable in the research report.**

***Thank you for your cooperation***