A photograph of two police officers from behind, wearing high-visibility yellow-green jackets with 'POLICE' written on the back. They are standing on a city street at night, with blurred lights and buildings in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

The Impact of Alcohol on Policing in the North East of England

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The North East of England



- Alcohol related hospital admissions have more than doubled since 2002/03
- North East has the highest rate of under 18 alcohol related admissions
- Alcohol costs the region around £1.1bn per year (~~£1.9tr~~/\$1.7bn)
- Balance set up as a regional office to change the culture and attitude towards alcohol at the population level

The problem with alcohol

- Today alcohol is 61% more affordable than in 1980 in the UK
- The alcohol industry spends £800 million a year on marketing
- The North East has around 6,000 premises licensed to sell alcohol, available 24/7
- Over a third of people in the North East drink above the daily recommended limits (males 3-4 units, females 2-3 units)
- Males can do this for just 48p and females for just 36p...



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Alcohol and crime

- Half of all violent crime in the UK is alcohol-related
- Alcohol is also linked with 39% of domestic violence cases
- In 2011/12 in excess of £296m (~~£~~512bn/\$473m) was spent dealing with an estimated 209,000 alcohol related crimes in the North East of England



Research aims

Three key aims to the research:

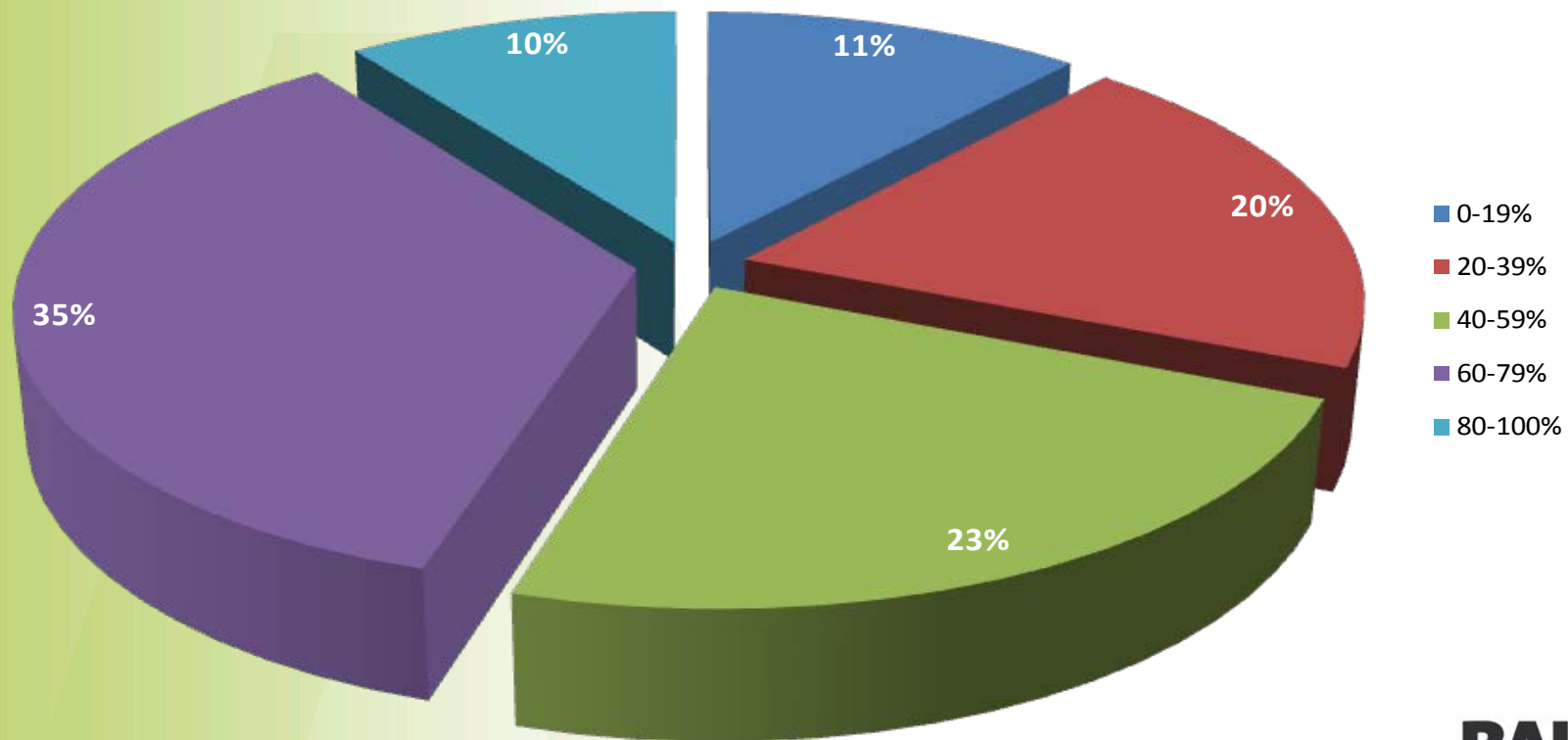
- **Supporting advocacy work**
- **Creating media interest**
- **Test validity of official figures**

Research methodology

- Interviews with lead alcohol officer in each of three police force areas
- Online survey – over 1,300 responses in total, 1,100 of which were frontline police staff
- Focus group with each force area covering various policing roles

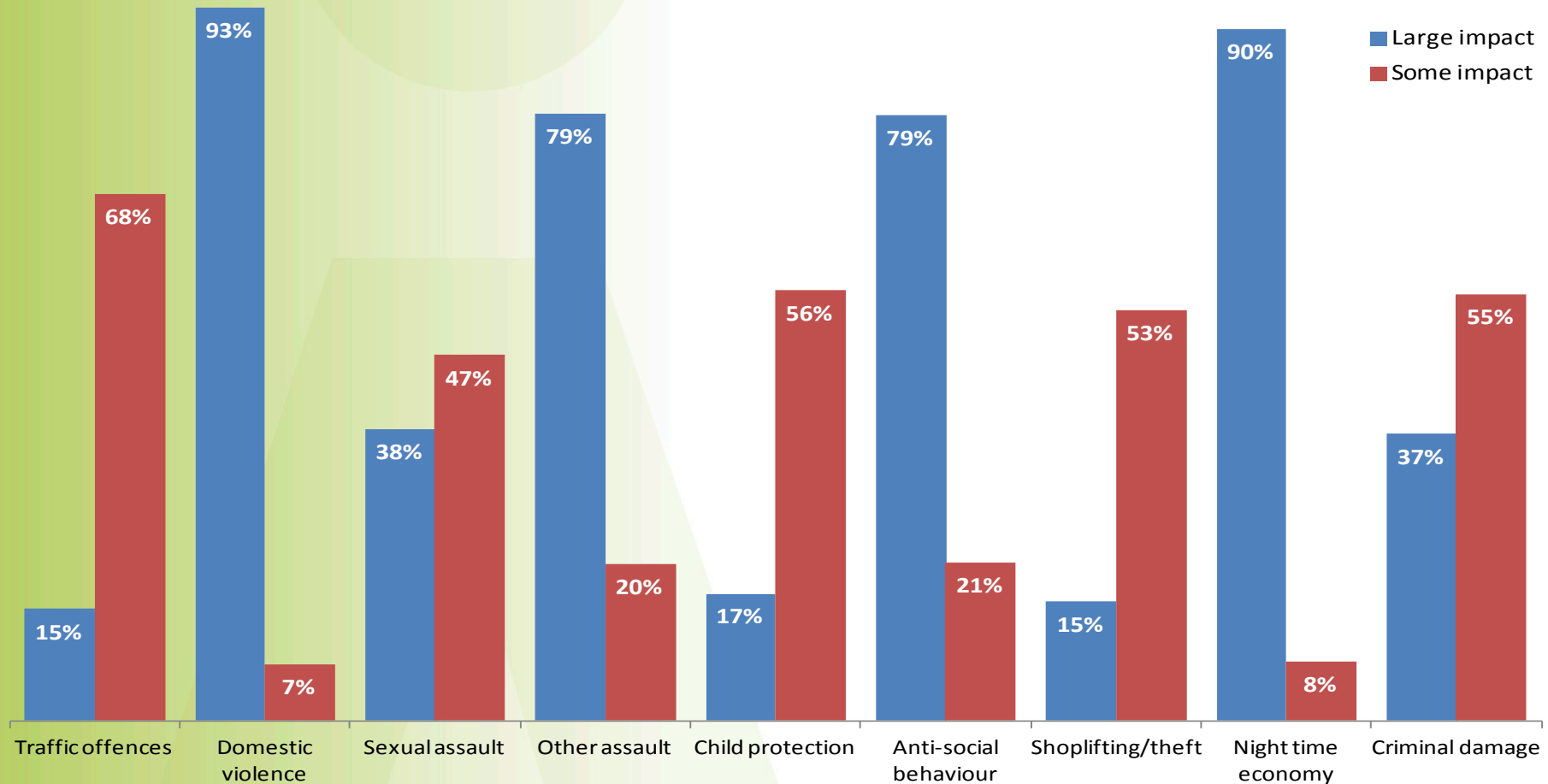
Perceptions of Alcohol Related Crime

What percentage of your own overall workload do you think is taken up by dealing directly or indirectly with alcohol related incidences?



45% of officers say alcohol takes up 60% of their time...

Perceptions of Alcohol Related Crime



In your experience or knowledge how much of an impact does alcohol have upon the following?

100% see impact on domestic violence...

Alcohol on the road

“The 17-29 age group are the main offenders when it comes to drink driving, 30-39s are the next worst and then the figures start to tail off.... A lot of drink driving that we see is a consequence of the morning after as opposed to catching people who have been drinking that same day... The estimated cost of a fatal RTA on a British road is £1.8 million.”

Traffic Officer



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Licensed Premises

- Licensing conditions and changes in the law were seen as a huge issue by officers as they felt that these contribute significantly to the drinking culture being policed



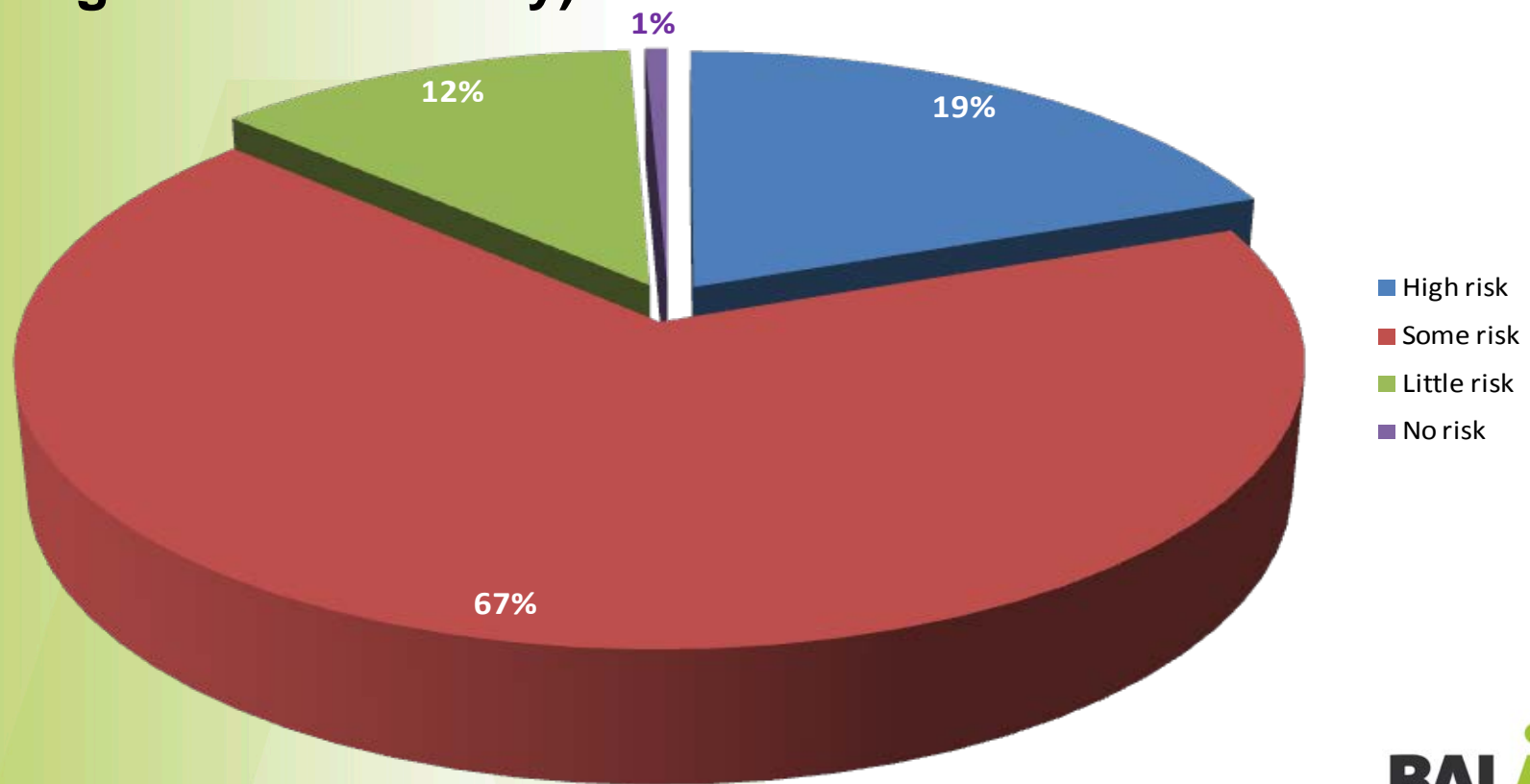
“Policing has had to change because of the availability of alcohol. In the past, outlets were restricted but now it’s available on every street corner, in bars, supermarkets and petrol stations. There are around 2,000 licensed premises in County Durham and Darlington and it’s impossible to control and monitor each and every one.”

Community Officer

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Alcohol - part of the job

How at risk do you feel in regards to being physically assaulted when dealing with drunken members of the public? (Policing areas other than the night time economy)

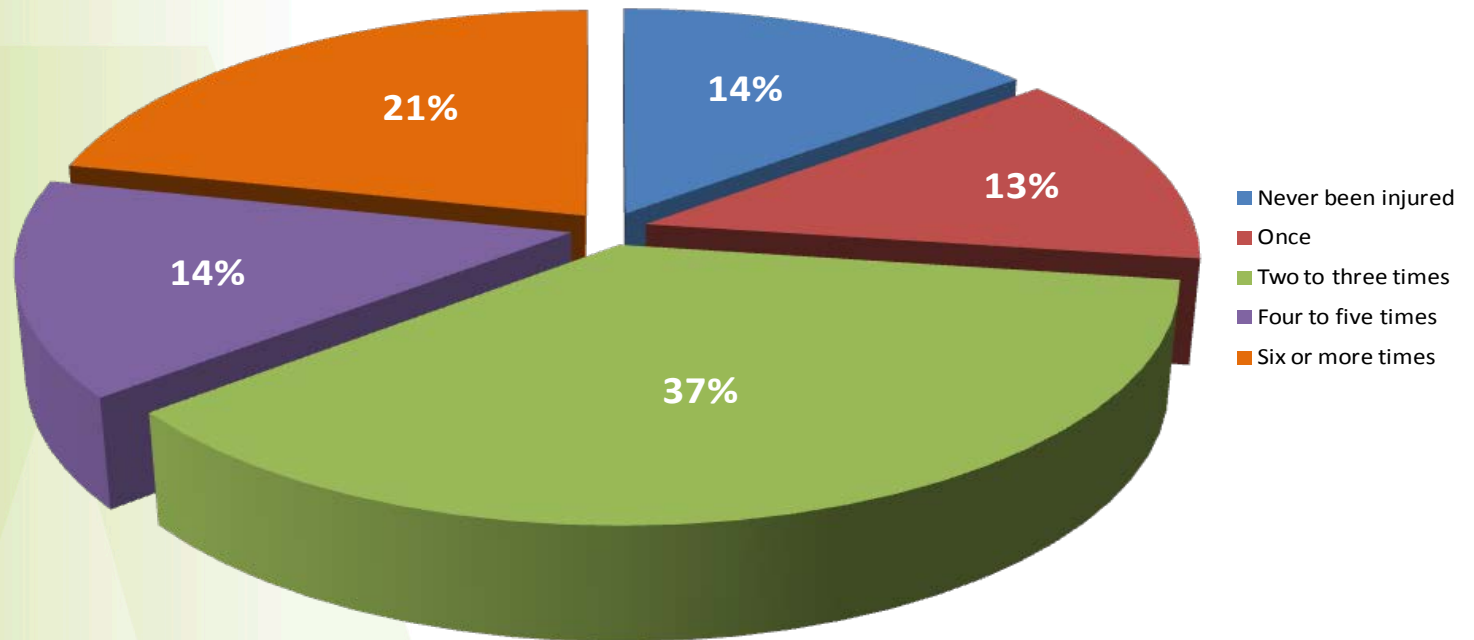


86% feel some level of risk...

Assault in the Workplace



Have you ever received an injury through dealing with drunken members of the public and if so on how many separate occasions?



More than two thirds have been assaulted at least twice...

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The Night Time Economy

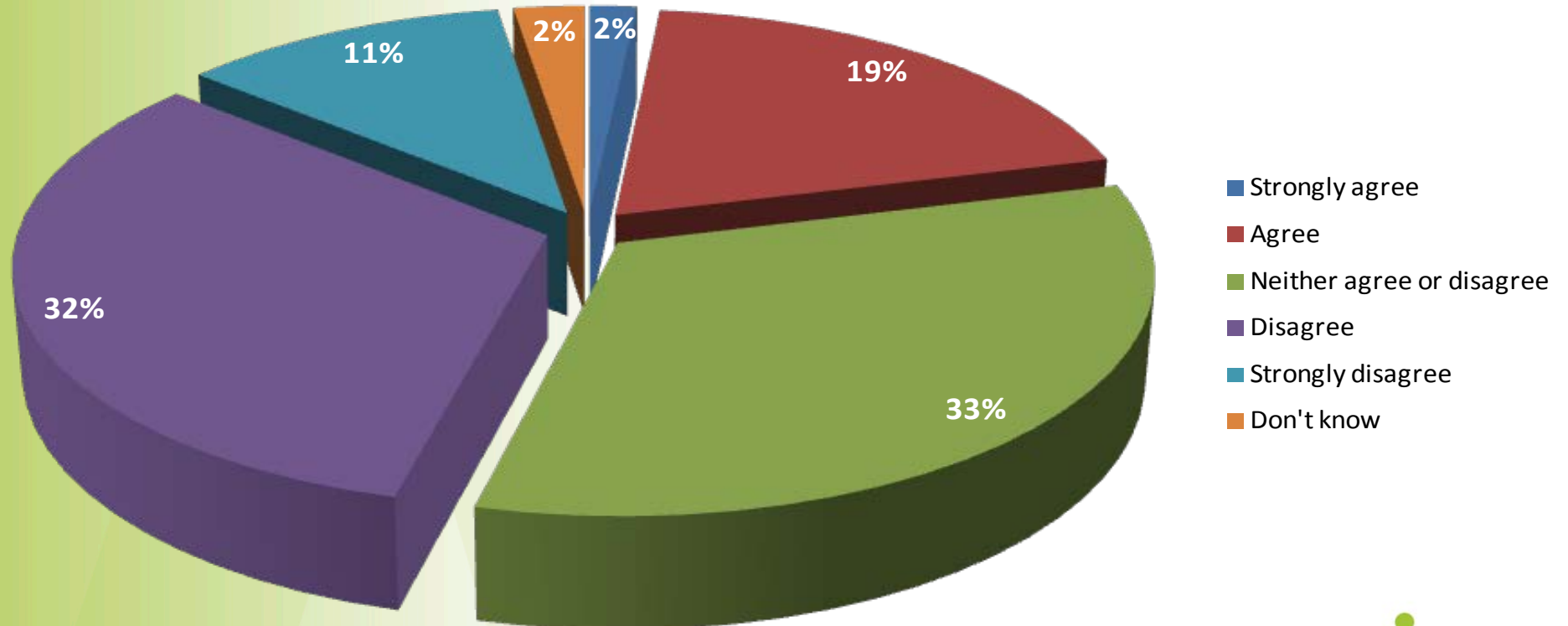
- **97% of officers felt at a 'high risk' or 'some risk' from being physically assaulted when policing the NTE**
- **38% are asked either 'every shift' or 'most shifts' to work additional hours in the night time economy**
- **74% experience cell capacity being an issue on Friday and Saturday nights**
- **Only 43% of officers actually find the incentive of overtime pay attractive when working the NTE**

“Why would I want to work extra hours coming in to police drunks when I could be at home spending time with my wife?”

Community Officer

Alcohol and Society

To what extent would you agree that disposal methods available to the police are effective in reducing alcohol related reoffending?



Only 21% agree that they have effective powers to deal with problems...

Alcohol and Society

- **Proxy provision of alcohol to under 18s is major problem experienced by police with 85% seeing it as having at least 'some impact' on alcohol related crime and disorder.**



“Often there will be groups of up to 30-40 kids... some are over 18 and will buy alcohol for the whole group. This leads to problems and ASB as young people who can’t handle alcohol have easy access to it.”

Neighbourhood Officer



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Summary

- **Disparity between official data and perceptions**
- **Police see alcohol as normalised and just ‘part of the job’**
- **Small minority of officers never been physically injured**
- **Affordability and availability contributing to a wide range of problems**
- **Large media interest**
- **Raised profile of alcohol within police forces**
- **Generated evidence to support calls for policy change**
- **Research supported Balance’s Minimum Unit Price campaign and influenced support of other police forces through the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)**



Questions?

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