

Overall Other Drug Use:

Overall, 51% of school leavers and 57% of stayers have ever used one or more addictive illegal or psychoactive prescription drugs, other than alcohol or tobacco, while 32% of school leavers and 28% of stayers have used one or more such drugs within the past year, a non-significant difference. Use in the past 12 months of alcohol or other drugs, excluding tobacco, is higher among stayers with no differences between the groups in recent AOD problems or recent use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

IV. Alcohol Use by Educational Status

Significant educational status differences characterize alcohol use. They are not in an expected direction. Drinking status varies for stayers and school leavers. **More school leavers are lifetime abstainers. More school leavers are former or infrequent drinkers. Stayers are more likely than school leavers to be recent, not current (past year but not past 2 weeks) drinkers of alcoholic beverages, and are more likely to be current (past 2 weeks) drinkers of alcoholic beverages (Table 4).**

Other alcohol measures suggest similar trends, and highlight certain preferences in types of alcoholic beverages by educational status (Table 5). Beer is the alcoholic beverage of choice for both groups with no significant differences in beer consumption by educational status. Stayers drink more wine more often than school leavers. The quantity of liquor consumed is similar for both groups. Overall, both stayers and school leavers have a similar quantity-frequency index of alcohol consumption, and a similar rate of binge drinking (that is, drinking five or more alcoholic drinks on a single occasion or at a time). No statistically significant difference marks the frequency of intoxication during the two weeks prior to the survey at drinking onset. **School leavers were younger (16.5 years of age) at drinking onset. A higher percentage of stayers reported taking five or more drinks on a single occasion at least once in the past twelve months.**

The suggestion here is that while more school leavers are non-drinkers, the school leavers who do drink are similar in most ways to stayers who drink, with the exception that they started drinking earlier and are less likely to binge or drink heavily than stayers.

V. Polydrug Use, Addiction Experience and AOD-Related Problems

When use of alcohol and use of other drugs are viewed collectively, significant group differences emerge. More young school leavers (46%) than stayers (31%) used neither alcohol nor drugs in the past year. More school leavers (15% vs 10%) used other drugs while abstaining from alcohol. More stayers used alcohol alone in the absence of other drugs (41% vs 22%). However, no more stayers than leavers used alcohol and other drugs in the past year (16%-18%) (Table 6).