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Student Alcohol Research and Prevention Activity (SARPA): Final Research Report

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SARPA project stages and outputs

The SARPA project has been implemented in three phases. Phase one informed the development of interventions or work programmes aimed at reducing alcohol consumption and related harms amongst students across Liverpool through implementing original research. A report of phase one findings is available here:

Ross-Houle et al. *Student Alcohol Research and Prevention Activity (SARPA): Pre-intervention report*. Public Health Institute, Liverpool John Moores University. 2018.

<https://phi.ljmu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SARPA.pdf>

Phase two involved SARPA steering group partners using information gathered in phase one to inform the development of an action plan to reduce alcohol consumption and related harms amongst students, and to implement these activities during the 2018/19 academic year. Phase three, reported on in this report, aimed to explore the development and implementation of the SARPA actions plans, and where applicable early indications of the project's impacts and, or anticipated impacts.

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Executive Summary

Introduction and literature summary

Despite evidence suggesting that alcohol consumption rates in the UK are falling (Chapman, 2016) there are groups in society that are still engaging in risky drinking practices, such as binge drinking (Butler et al, 2017; Public Health England, 2016). Binge drinking is a behaviour, which is often considered common and socially acceptable for students (Dodd et al, 2010; Ham et al, 2003; Neighbours et al, 2007; Quigg et al, 2013). Social norms around drinking within the student population are an important consideration as to why binge drinking has become commonplace; excessive drinking now has an important role in socialising and reinforcing peer group identity (Anderson, 2013; Griffin et al, 2018). Furthermore, purchasing alcohol from an off-licenced premise and consuming it at home before going on a night out (pre-loading) is also common with the student population and contributes to students consuming harmful levels of alcohol (Gant and Terry, 2017; Quigg et al, 2013).

Research has highlighted how drink promotions can influence behaviour and lead to binge drinking and increased alcohol consumption in consumers, including young adults (Trawley et al, 2017). Drink promotions within nightlife venues influence student's expectations about the amount they will drink, and encourage them to remain in a venue and consume drinks that are on promotion (McClatchley et al, 2014; Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019). Furthermore, marketing material that students receive during fresher's week will often include information about drink promotions (Fuller et al, 2017). Social media plays a key role in the marketing and promotion of alcoholic drinks (Fuller et al, 2017) and will use lifestyle and cultural references to engage with specific groups such as students (Atkinson et al, 2015, 2016; McCreanor et al, 2013; Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019).

The 'Student Alcohol Research and Prevention Activity' (SARPA) project aimed to inform the development of activities to encourage students to drink less alcohol on a night out and to engage with events that have less of a focus on alcohol; and subsequently implement such activities amongst university students in Liverpool during the 2018/19 academic year.

SARPA activities

Phase one of the SARPA project incorporated mixed method research carried out by the Public Health Institute to inform the development of various activities that were (in the most part) then implemented by the University of Liverpool (UoL), and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). These proposed activities included:

- **Maintaining and building upon existing multi-agency approaches and work programmes** aimed at addressing alcohol consumption and related harms;
- **Reducing alcohol promotion** at the UoL through e.g. removing alcohol from student quiz prizes;
- **Reducing alcohol access** at the UoL through, e.g. refusal of alcohol sales to intoxicated patrons at bars;

- **Promoting engagement in non-alcohol focused activities** through e.g. supporting and encouraging student societies to develop events that are not alcohol focused and implementing non-alcohol focused events throughout the academic year;
- **Promoting the consumption of non-alcoholic drinks** through e.g. aiming to ensure non-alcoholic drinks are more appealing (i.e. in bars: greater range, cheaper than alcoholic drinks, free water promoted).

This report explores the development and implementation of these activities, and provides some early indications of the project's impact as well as the anticipated impact that the implemented activities may have in the future, and areas for development.

Key findings

This research has highlighted the following:

- **The extent of activities proposed by the UoL and LJMU differed due to their ability to make direct change or influence policies and practice, and to a lesser extent allocate resources to preventative activity.** For example, the UoL has a licensed bar onsite and thus were able to develop and implement plans to make changes to alcohol availability, pricing and promotion within their bar. LJMU does not have any on-licensed premises on site, and consequently their planned activities were broader, aiming to promote the overall health and wellbeing of students (within available resources). Both universities included a focus on developing and promoting non-alcohol focused events for students, and reducing the promotion of events that have an alcohol focus, over the course of the project (and in the future).
- **Research is imperative in informing suitable interventions for students that relate to alcohol consumption.** Feedback from SARPA partners highlighted how important phase one of this activity was in providing them with research informed recommendations to help them implement activities that encouraged students to reduce their alcohol consumption and engage with events that had less of an alcohol focus. The research from phase one, along with existing academic literature, highlighted how alcohol consumption is ingrained in mainstream student culture. As this is difficult to overcome, the research that made up phase one engaged with students to understand what kind of activities they would be interested in engaging with, as well as gaining further understanding about their motivations for drinking excessive amounts of alcohol. This research played an important role in the development of the SARPA activities across the universities. However, not all recommendations were clearly addressed in the action plans (e.g. reduction of pre-loaded alcohol consumption), some planned activities were not implemented during the project period, and others activities were often difficult to evidence (e.g. a shift in social media activity promoting health and wellbeing, rather than alcohol-fuelled events or the overt promotion of non-alcohol based activities).
- **Collaboration is key when targeting the student population with regards to their alcohol consumption.** Partners from both universities recognised the importance of working with colleagues across their institution to ensure that consistent messages

are delivered to students in relation to responsible drinking. Partners from LJMU also recognised that, as they do not have their own nightlife venue and thus many of their activities are hosted off university premises, they need to collaborate with external venues to host events that do not have a focus on alcohol, which presented some challenges. Furthermore, external partners from student halls of residence and substance misuse services were considered to be key stakeholders in helping to address the student intoxication culture.

- **Student's choice of alcohol-free drinks may vary and be influenced by financial incentives.** The Sphinx bar at UoL introduced a wider range of alcohol-free drinks. Sales data suggest a small increase in the purchasing of these types of drinks following implementation, with the cheapest alcohol-free drink being the most popular. Whilst sales of traditional (and often cheaper) soft drink options were more popular than the alcohol-free drinks overall, the UoL reported they would continue to stock the wider range of alcohol-free alternatives.
- **Promotional messages that aim to encourage people to drink less on a night out as it is against the law to serve or purchase alcohol for somebody who is overly intoxicated are perceived to be more effective in reducing alcohol consumption compared to non-alcoholic drink promotions.** A survey with 197 students demonstrated how they felt that promotional materials from the 'Drink Less Enjoy More' intervention would be more effective in encouraging them to drink less on a night out compared to promotions on alcohol-free beer and non-alcoholic cocktails. A drinks promotion that included reduced price pints of beer, cider and soft drinks was thought to be the least effective method of reducing student drinking.
- **Students attend a wide range of events.** Events relating to music, quizzes and food markets were the most widely attended according to the student survey.
- **The location of health messages is an important consideration for future campaigns.** The majority of the respondents to the student survey stated that social media is the most effective tool in disseminating health messages. Posters were also seen as an important means of communicating health messages, with university buildings and student accommodation being seen as the preferred location for such messages.
- **Difficulties in engaging with nightlife venues creates a barrier for interventions aiming to encourage students to drink less alcohol.** Whilst nightlife venues must adhere to the law relating to the service of alcohol, they may be less likely to engage in any activity that risks a reduction in their profits. Identifying ways to engage nightlife venues in encouraging students to drink less alcohol is vital in ensuring a consistent message and offer is presented to students across drinking settings.

Conclusion

The SARPA project has suggested that reducing alcohol consumption amongst students requires the delivery of a wide range of activities in partnership with different organisations in order to mobilise change. Partners have highlighted a number of immediate positive changes as a result of engagement in the SARPA project, including a reduction in alcohol promotion and access, and increased availability of non-alcoholic drinks and non-alcohol focused events that appear to be well received by students. If sustained, this has the potential

to lead to longer-term outcomes relating to changes in culture and acceptability of alcohol use amongst students, and ultimately reductions in alcohol consumption and related harms. Critically however, the research has highlighted that further and continued work is required to enable such changes to occur. SARPA partners should continue to develop (based on SARPA research findings and other evidence) and implement their actions plans, incorporating them in to existing or future multi-agency work programmes, with mechanisms in place to monitor progress, develop interventions and measure change. Further, it is evident that in order for activities such as those implemented by SARPA to be successful, commitment and engagement is needed from all relevant partners. This report has highlighted how there was some disparity between the two universities in terms of levels of engagement. For example, it was possible for UoL to engage with activities associated with alcohol consumption in the night time economy because they have a licenced bar, however it was more challenging for LJMU as they had to rely on the co-operation of external venues and their events management company. Crucially, because high levels of alcohol consumption are embedded within mainstream student culture, any activities need to be maintained and reviewed to ensure that they are reaching the target audience and engaging effectively. Equally, programmes to prevent excessive alcohol consumption amongst students should be incorporated into broader strategic approaches that recognise the wider influences on alcohol use. This should include consideration of policy and practice options around alcohol price, promotion and availability that are likely to influence both overall alcohol consumption, and in particular harmful drinking behaviours such as preloading.

Recommendations

All universities

- SARPA partners should continue to develop (based on SARPA research findings and other evidence) and implement their actions plans, incorporating them in to existing or future university-level and city-wide multi-agency work programmes, with mechanisms in place to monitor progress, develop interventions and measure change. Activities should focus on Liverpool's student population as a whole, and students within each university. Partners should consider if and how other universities (e.g. Liverpool Hope University and Edge Hill) can support future work.
- LJMU and UoL should continue to share examples of best practice around organising events that do not focus on alcohol, as well as any health related messages that have been well received by students relating to alcohol. Other local universities and student accommodation services could also be included in this knowledge exchange.
- SARPA partners should continue to engage with the on-licensed alcohol trade across Liverpool's nightlife to consider if and how they can further support work to reduce student alcohol consumption and related harms. This could include the development and implementation of approaches to promote a more balanced drinking and socialising offer across nightlife venues that has less of a focus on alcohol. Sharing information of the types of social activities local students attend and their views on the impacts of drinks promotions, as well as the experiences and lessons learnt from the changes made at the UoL Sphinx bar (e.g. provision and promotion of a wider

range of alcohol free/low alcohol beverages), and other approaches implemented elsewhere in the UK (e.g. nudging pubs¹) may help make the case for premises to diversify their offer.

- Partners should aim to ensure that future student activities, particularly those introducing students to university and the city, such as fresher's events, have less of a focus on alcohol. Specific measures could include limiting alcohol promotion and availability during events, and promoting responsible drinking guidelines and alternative activities. For events hosted by externally commissioned providers (e.g. LJMU fresher's fair), this may require a contractual agreement requesting that the provider takes specific steps to discourage cultures of intoxication.
- Offering a broad range of events for students should continue to be a part of efforts to reduce student alcohol consumption, and promote overall health and wellbeing and the student experience.
- Universities should further consider how to capitalise the influence that social media has within the student population and how it can be used to deliver effective health messages.
- Partners should consider how future work can be monitored, and where feasible set up processes to monitor students' views of activities implemented to ensure they are attractive and meet their needs. Consideration could be given to the implementation of an annual cross-university student health and wellbeing survey that would provide baseline and subsequent comparative data so that student alcohol consumption, amongst other issues, is monitored across the city.
- The logic model and theory of change presented in this report could be used by partners as a vehicle to develop and continue future work, and monitor and measure change.

LJMU

- John Moores Student Union (JMSU) should aim to include a caveat when they next invite event management companies to tender for the freshers' week contract that states that they must commit to activities to discourage cultures of intoxication and reduce student alcohol consumption. For example, ensuring that the promotion and availability of alcohol is limited, restricting opportunities for students to access multiple alcohol offers in the form of free alcoholic drinks and drinks vouchers (e.g. limiting access to one per person during the whole event). Furthermore, where alcohol is promoted and/or available, this should be balanced with the provision of responsible drinking guidance, and where applicable information on non-alcohol related activities or promotions.
- LJMU should continue to consider the development and implementation of a substance misuse support policy.

¹ <http://nudgingpubs.uk/>

UoL

- The UoL should continue to explore if and how they can increase the price differential between non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages sold in their on-campus bar.
- The UoL may wish to consider ways to ensure free tap water continues to be readily and safely available (e.g. through provision of a tap water dispensing machine).

Wider partners

- The **on-licensed alcohol trade** should consider diversifying their offer, to ensure they meet the changing demand of customers to engage in activities with less of a focus on intoxication, and support the reduction of alcohol consumption and related harms across Liverpool's nightlife. Consideration could be given to SARPA findings around the types of social activities local students attend and the experiences of the UoL Sphinx bar (e.g. provision and promotion of a wider range of alcohol free/low alcohol beverages and the promotion of soft drinks), along with approaches developed elsewhere (e.g. nudging pubs) (see Appendix 1). Broader diversification of what venues offer across the city, during the day and night, could enhance the city's socialisation and entertainment provision, and potentially attract a broader clientele.
- **Partners involved in managing and/or developing Liverpool's nightlife** (e.g. licensing teams; spatial planning groups) should consider the role that they can have in: reducing cultures of intoxication; diversifying the use of on-licensed (and other) venues; and, opening up the nightlife environment, and use of on-licensed venues (e.g. during the daytime) to a broader clientele (e.g. community associations).
- **Alcohol-licensing teams** could consider encouraging new and/or existing alcohol retailers to introduce steps to reduce excessive alcohol use and promote a more diverse offer, considering both commercial and societal benefits (e.g. see Appendix 1). Existing partnerships and interventions could be used to facilitate the sharing of ideas, lessons learnt and best practice across venues.
- Programmes to prevent excessive alcohol consumption amongst students should be incorporated into **broader strategic approaches that recognise the wider influences on alcohol use**. This should include consideration of policy and practice options around alcohol price², promotion and availability that are likely to influence both overall alcohol consumption, and in particular harmful drinking behaviours such as preloading.

² E.g. minimum unit pricing.

1. Introduction

The 'Student Alcohol Research and Prevention Activity' (SARPA) project aims to encourage students in Liverpool to drink less alcohol on a night out and to engage with events that have less of a focus on alcohol. Liverpool is home to three universities: The University of Liverpool (UoL), Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) and Liverpool Hope University. The city has a large student population of approximately 57,000 (2017/18) and across the three universities there are around 30,000 students under the age of 20 (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2018). Despite decreases in young adults' drinking across the UK, a subset of the population who still regularly engage in harmful and excessive alcohol behaviours are university students (Davoren et al., 2016; Quigg et al, 2013). Previous local research has demonstrated how venues will target events that encourage excessive alcohol consumption at specific groups, including students (Atkinson et al, 2015; Quigg et al, 2013; Ross-Houle et al, 2018; Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019).

The SARPA project was initiated by Public Health Liverpool. It was designed to complement existing work programmes and interventions in Liverpool aimed at addressing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms, as well as developing positive experiences for university students (e.g. Drink Less Enjoy More [DLEM]; Butler et al, 2019; Quigg et al, 2018). SARPA is overseen by a multi-disciplinary steering group, which includes stakeholders from Public Health Liverpool, licencing, LJMU, UoL, the Liverpool Guild of Students, Liverpool John Moores Student Union (JMSU) and Unite (a student accommodation service). In order to ensure a comprehensive piece of work, the SARPA project was broken down into three phases. Phase one (January to April 2018) involved the implementation of research by the Public Health Institute, LJMU to develop an understanding of the issue and highlight ways to address it, leading to the production of a research report and suite of recommendations to inform phase 2 (see box 1). Phase two (May to August 2018) involved SARPA partners using the research findings and recommendations to inform the development of an action plan of activities aiming to reduce alcohol consumption and related harms amongst students and to implement these activities during the 2018/19 academic year. Phase three (December 2018 to April 2019), reported here, aimed to explore the development and implementation of the SARPA actions plans, and where applicable early indications of the project's impacts, and, or anticipated impacts.

1.1 Research aims and objectives

Research conducted in phase three aimed to:

- Describe how phase one informed the development of action plans aiming to reduce student alcohol consumption and related harms across the city;
- Document action plans and processes of implementation, and explore outcomes;
- Identify any barriers and facilitating factors to activity implementation; and,
- Inform the development and implementation of future work in 2019/20 and beyond.

In order to achieve these aims a mixed methods approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods was undertaken. Researchers collected information using semi-structured interviews with SARPA partners, student surveys, and collation and review of relevant materials and steering group minutes. Full details of phase three methods are provided in Appendix 2.

Box 1: Key research findings and recommendations from phase one

For phase one, a mixed method study was implemented, including: a rapid literature review, observations of nightlife venues (n=20), content analysis of nightlife venue social media activity (n=12), surveys with students visiting nightlife (n=171), focus groups/paired interviews with students (n=32 total participants) and interviews with key stakeholders (n=21). Key findings from the phase one report included:

- Binge drinking is normalised within Liverpool's student population.
- Nightlife venues in Liverpool City Centre use drink promotions to target students.
- Students who do not drink alcohol are perceived to be on the periphery of mainstream student culture.
- Students are unlikely to consume non-alcoholic drinks when visiting nightlife venues.
- Activities that offer an alternative to visiting traditional nightlife venues appeal to students.

Key recommendations for stakeholders to consider when developing their action plan included:

1. A multi-agency and multi-component approach, that enhances existing approaches, is required for the SARPA intervention.
2. The SARPA intervention needs to target pre-loading as well as drinking in nightlife venues.
3. The timing of the SARPA intervention needs to be considered.
4. The overall culture of intoxication within the student population needs to be considered and addressed in order to make the SARPA intervention sustainable.
5. Events that take place outside of traditional nightlife venues need to be considered, as well as diversifying the activities currently on offer in traditional nightlife venues.
6. The SARPA intervention should ensure that consistent and complementary messages about the harms of excessive drinking are delivered across partners, work programmes and intervention activities.
7. Promotion of non-alcoholic drinks need to be more prominent in advertising material and should offer value for money.
8. The SARPA intervention should include continuous assessment and monitoring of student trends, which in turn should be used to update and develop the ongoing SARPA programme.
9. The use of social media in the SARPA intervention should be considered as it plays a key role in the student experience.

2. Literature review

2.1 Current UK and local drinking culture

There is evidence to suggest that drinking cultures in the UK are changing. In the past twenty years the number of people drinking alcohol in the UK has fallen; the average level of consumption has also declined (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2016). ONS data demonstrated that in 2015, people aged 16 to 24 years were as likely as those aged 65+ to report that they were teetotal. Furthermore, the proportion of those aged 16 to 24 who reported binge drinking³ at least once in the previous week has fallen by more than a third since 2005 (from 29% to 18%) with the number of frequent drinkers falling by two-thirds, down to one in 50 young adults (ONS, 2016). However, there is evidence that suggests that people within this age group are still participating in risky drinking practices, such as binge drinking. In 2016, of those young people aged 16 to 24 years in Great Britain who had consumed alcohol during the previous week, 24% of men and 29% of women drank more than 12 and 9 units respectively on their heaviest drinking day (Drinkaware, 2016).

There is also evidence to suggest that drinking practices in terms of drinking locations has changed. Between 2009 and 2012, household spending on alcoholic drinks increased by 1.3%, whilst spending on alcohol consumed outside of the home fell by 9.8% (Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2015). This suggests that more is being spent purchasing alcohol from off-licenced premises and consuming it in the home environment with less being consumed in nightlife venues. This could be due to a financial incentive as it is often cheaper to purchase alcohol from off-licenced premises, but research with young people has also demonstrated that drinking at home also provides further social opportunities (Atkinson et al 2015). However, this could be a cause for concern as research has demonstrated the general public are largely unaware of how much alcohol constitutes a unit and are therefore likely to overserve when pouring their own drinks (Gill and O'May, 2006; Hasking et al, 2005).

Binge drinking is of particular concern in Liverpool; estimates for the years 2011-14, for harmful alcohol consumption in Liverpool are worse than the England average (Public Health England, 2016). Research with nightlife users in Liverpool has demonstrated high levels of alcohol consumption, including units that have been consumed prior to entering the nightlife environment (primarily at home, i.e. pre-loading). A survey carried out with 181 nightlife patrons in 2016 found that 71% of participants had pre-loaded prior to entering the nightlife environment and the median number of units consumed during pre-loading was 4.7 (Butler et al, 2017). The median number of units that participants consumed/were expected to consume over the course of their night out was 16 (Butler et al, 2017), above the Chief Medical Officers guidelines for low risk drinking (Department of Health, 2016).

³ The Chief Medical Officers' guidelines for both men and women is that they should not drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week and that these should be spread over three or more days (Department of Health, 2016). Drinking in excess of six units of alcohol in a single session is classed as binge drinking.

2.2 UK student drinking culture

Binge drinking is a behaviour that is often considered to be a common occurrence and socially acceptable for students (Dodd et al, 2010; Ham et al, 2003; Neighbours et al, 2007; Quigg et al, 2013). Drinking within the student population is seen as a way to make friends and reinforce social bonds (Atkinson et al, 2015; Mackinnon et al, 2017). The National Union of Students (NUS) Alcohol Survey (2016) found that out of 13,451 students, 48% thought that getting drunk meant that they would have a good night out, although paradoxically, 76% claimed that they did not need to get drunk in order to have a good time. Social norms around drinking within the student population are an important consideration as to why binge drinking has become commonplace; excessive drinking now has an important role in socialising and reinforcing peer group identity (Anderson, 2013; Griffin et al, 2018; Ross-Houle et al, 2018; Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019). Whilst there have been numerous public health campaigns that have aimed to reduce binge drinking in the general population, they often do not resonate with the student population who see alcohol consumption as a traditional aspect of student life. For this group, alcohol has become normalised with students not usually identifying as problematic drinkers (Anderson, 2013).

Pre-loading is a key part of student drinking culture in the UK. A 2017 study of 604 UK students found that 59% of participants (males, 57%; females, 61%) had pre-loaded alcohol before visiting town centre venues (Gant and Terry, 2017). Furthermore, a questionnaire completed by 227 students attending commercially organised pub-crawls found that 90% of respondents had pre-loaded before going out (Quigg et al, 2013). Students pre-load as it reduces the cost of their night out (Gant and Terry, 2017) and it provides an opportunity to socialise and bond with peers (Atkinson et al, 2015; Gant and Terry, 2017).

Young people, including students, will often associate cultural and social capital with drinking practices (Atkinson et al, 2015; Järvinen and Gundelach, 2007; Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019). The concepts of social and cultural capital are based on Bourdieu's (1984) wider framework of 'capital'. Social capital refers to the importance of social networks, in this case the social networks that students create with peers at university. Cultural capital refers to the meaning attached to cultural artefacts (such as alcohol) and behaviours (such as drinking practices). Cultural capital is often used by individuals to gain position within social hierarchies and is therefore essential in acquiring social capital. Hence, students would have to participate in what is considered to be 'normalised' drinking culture in order to obtain the correct cultural capital. This in turn would influence their relationships with other students thus obtaining social capital.

Students who do not drink alcohol are often not considered the norm (Conroy and de Visser, 2014; Herring et al, 2014). Research with international students who do not drink alcohol and who attend UK universities, has found they can feel intimidated when faced with the UK student drinking culture (Bloxham et al, 2009; Thurnell-Read, 2018). Students who do not drink alcohol are faced with the challenge of negotiating their way through social

environments that often come with pressure to drink in order to be part of the group. As such, they can be perceived as being different and they may not be accepted as part of the peer group (Conroy and de Visser, 2014). This has the potential to alienate these students from their peers and reduce their opportunities to interact with other students in a social setting. Students who are new to university, and thus unfamiliar with their new peers, in particular may struggle to articulate their reasons for abstaining from alcohol. Non-drinking students can find it easier to justify their behaviour by claiming they do not drink for health reasons (Conroy and de Visser, 2014). In contrast, some students who do not drink have embraced this identity through categorically informing peers that they do not drink at all. Conroy and de Visser found that this approach, rather than claiming to 'not drink very often' was beneficial to these students as it helped to prevent peers from encouraging them to have a drink (Conroy and de Visser, 2014). The idea of being firm and retaining authenticity with being a non-drinker helped some young people to stay in control of their lives and keep their identity (Conroy and de Visser, 2015).

2.3 Drink promotions

Promotions of alcoholic drinks are prevalent across the UK (Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019). Research has highlighted how drink promotions can influence behaviour and lead to binge drinking and increased alcohol consumption in consumers, including young adults (Trawley et al, 2017). Promotions of hedonistic products associated with identity formation, such as alcohol, encourage impulse purchasing (Pettigrew et al, 2015). These types of promotion will often appeal to students. Furthermore, attending a venue where alcoholic drinks are on promotion influences student's expectations about the amount of alcohol that they will drink (Christie et al, 2001) as well as encouraging patrons to remain in an establishment and purchase drinks that are on promotion (McClatchley et al, 2014).

Results from a recent study in the UK, on marketing material given out during a freshers' fair highlights that much of students social activities occur in pubs, bars or night clubs, with many alcohol promotions encouraging students to attend and drink alcohol (Fuller et al, 2017). Fuller et al (2017) found that out of 85 handouts that included a drink promotion, 94% were for alcoholic drinks, highlighting how alcohol consumption has become normalised within student culture.

Social media has an important role in shaping young people's expectations about drinking practices (McCreanor et al, 2013; Moreno et al, 2009a, 2009b). Research has explored the way alcohol brands use social media to promote their products (Atkinson et al, 2015, 2016; Brooks, 2010; Mosher et al; 2012; Nicholls, 2012). Often this is done through association with certain identities and drinking practices that will appeal to particular groups in society. Brands that want to engage with young people, such as students, often elude to lifestyle and cultural identities that would resonate with young people (Atkinson et al, 2016). Fuller et al (2017) also highlighted the occurrence of alcohol-related incentives, which were offered to students attending a freshers' fair and encouraged interaction with the venue's social media.

There is a dearth of evidence about the impact that promotions of non-alcoholic drinks can have on student drinking cultures. However, in the UK there have been some examples of interventions and events that have aimed to encourage people to drink less alcohol. The Nudging Pubs project in London aims to help bars and pubs change their behaviour towards their customers and create a more inclusive atmosphere for non-drinkers or those who want to drink less alcohol. The website allows bars and pubs to self-assess their low and non-alcoholic drink choices, which is used alongside customer reviews and ratings etc. In addition to this, there are nine nudges that the pubs/bars can work on: ambience, functional design, labelling, presentation, sizing, availability, proximity, priming and promoting (Tolvi, 2016; Nudging Pubs, 2016). Research by Herring et al (2014) has highlighted examples of successful events, for example, tea parties and quiz nights that appeal to young people but do not have a focus on intoxication. There is also an emerging trend of alcohol free music and dance events within the UK, such as Morning Gloryville⁴ (Oxford Brookes University, 2017).

⁴ This is an early morning immersive dance party, with coffee, smoothies and yoga bars that has attracted some well-known dance artists to play, such as Fatboy Slim (Morning Gloryville, 2018).

3. Findings

This section presents a summary of the key findings from phase three of the SARPA project. Findings are presented across a number of core sections. An overview of the research methods used to collect data for this report can be found in Appendix 2.

Section 3.1 provides an overview of the development and implementation of the SARPA action plans.

Section 3.2 provides an overview of all SARPA related activities implemented during the project period. To understand the development, implementation and outcomes of activities implemented, further information is provided on selected activities, including:

- The Liverpool Guild of Students Sphinx bar (section 3.3); and,
- Health messages and promotional materials (section 3.4).

Section 3.5 provides information collected from further research to inform future interventions or work programmes.

3.1 Development and implementation of SARPA action plans

3.1.1 SARPA action plan development

In April 2018, research findings and recommendations from phase one of the SARPA project were presented to the SARPA steering group by the Public Health Institute (verbally and via a research report). Stakeholders from Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), Liverpool John Moores Students Union (JMSU), the University of Liverpool (UoL) and Liverpool Guild of Students were subsequently invited to review the findings from phase one, consider the recommendations and develop an action plan for addressing alcohol consumption and related harms amongst university students in Liverpool. Each partner organisation consulted with internal and external partners and subsequently developed an action plan for the 2018/19 academic year. The University of Liverpool and the Liverpool Guild of Students (jointly referred to as University of Liverpool (UoL) from hereon) developed one combined action plan, whilst LJMU and the JMSU produced individual, yet complementary action plans. All action plans were informed by findings from phase one of the SARPA project, and tailored towards each universities priorities, resources, and broader health and wellbeing plans. For UoL, this included incorporation of existing work relating to their involvement in the National Union of Students (NUS) Alcohol Impact⁵ programme, and Best Bar None scheme⁶.

The plans included a variety of actions focusing on:

- **Maintaining and building upon existing multi-agency approaches and work programmes** aimed at addressing alcohol consumption and related harms (relating to recommendation 1);
- **Reducing alcohol promotion** through e.g. removing alcohol from student quiz prizes (relating to recommendation 4);
- **Reducing alcohol access** through, e.g. refusal of alcohol sales to intoxicated patrons at bars (UoL only; relating to recommendation 4, 6);
- **Promoting engagement in non-alcohol focused activities** through e.g. supporting and encouraging societies to develop events that are not alcohol focused and implementing non-alcohol focused events throughout the academic year (relating to recommendation 4, 5, 6);
- **Promoting the consumption of non-alcoholic drinks** through e.g. ensuring non-alcoholic drinks are more appealing (i.e. in bars: greater range, cheaper than alcoholic drinks, free water promoted) (relating to recommendation 4, 6, 7).

⁵ The National Union of Students (NUS) Alcohol Impact programme aims to embed social norms of responsible drinking across university campuses. The NUS work with universities providing support to affect change through working through a set list of criteria, and following a period of implementation, audit the university to assess their performance relating to the programme. Universities who complete the criteria to a satisfactory level are awarded an accreditation mark (see <https://alcoholimpact.nus.org.uk/about>). UoL and LJMU took part in the Alcohol Impact pilot, however LJMU are not currently part of this accreditation scheme.

⁶ The Best Bar None is an accreditation scheme with national awards, supported by the home office and the drinks industry that is aimed at promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol-licensed premises. <http://bbnuk.com/>. LJMU took part in the Best Bar None pilot scheme and achieved accreditation; UoL became involved in the established scheme.

Not all recommendations from the phase one SARPA research report were clearly addressed in the action plans (e.g. reduction of pre-loaded alcohol consumption). The extent of activities proposed by the UoL, JMSU and LJMU differed due to their ability to make direct change or influence policies and practice, and to a lesser extent allocate resources to preventative activities (Table 1). For example, the UoL has a licensed bar onsite and thus were able to develop plans to make changes to alcohol availability, pricing and promotion within their bar. LJMU does not have any on-licensed premises on site, and consequently their activities were broader, aiming to promote the overall health and wellbeing of students (within available resources). Both universities included a focus on developing and promoting non-alcohol focused events for students, and reducing the promotion of events that have an alcohol focus.

Engagement with on-licensed premises across Liverpool's nightlife

Partners from the SARPA steering group considered if and how they could engage on-licensed premises across Liverpool's nightlife in the SARPA project. An exploratory meeting was held between representatives of Liverpool City Council, the universities, commercial operators of local on-licensed premises, and the event company who implement freshers' week events on behalf of JMSU. This meeting highlighted a number of common concerns across partners relating to student's alcohol use, particularly pre-loading. Examples of how all partners aim to discourage excessive alcohol consumption, support vulnerable students and prevent harms were shared, and opportunities for collaborative working (beyond existing work programmes, e.g. DLEM) were discussed. Whilst a list of potential activities were identified, these were not incorporated into the SARPA action plans, or implemented during the SARPA project period. Key reasons for this were the financial viability of some of the proposed actions for the commercial operators as their primary focus is to make money from alcohol sales, competition between commercial operators and limitations to amending existing contracts or work programmes with the JMSU external event provider. Both the commercial operators and events provider noted that they were also already engaged in some activities to reduce levels of student intoxication, such as the DLEM intervention (Quigg et al, 2018) and active provision of free water. As highlighted in the phase 1 SARPA report and in the wider academic literature, alcohol consumption is entrenched within the mainstream student culture, and thus any potential reduction in levels of consumption will require a change in the norms associated with this culture over a longer period of time. Whilst further engagement with on-licensed premises was not possible within this phase of SARPA, it is certainly something that should be considered by the universities in future action plans.

3.1.2 SARPA action plan implementation

The action plans produced broke down each action further with partners providing timescales for implementation, methods of measuring progress, and any skills required to implement the proposed action. Each partner implemented their action plans separately with no direct collaboration between universities⁷. For recommendation three from the phase one report,

⁷ Implementation plans and progress updates were shared and discussed during SARPA steering group meetings held throughout the project period.

both partners ran a number of events throughout the academic year, and aimed to develop a broader range of activities that students could engage with. For the majority of action points from both universities, they felt there would be ongoing activities that would continue to be implemented beyond the SARPA project (to enable change) and/or in line with larger projects underway (e.g. NUS Alcohol Impact). UoL were able to immediately and directly implement actions relating to their bar environment, where many of their student events are held.

“The list of recommendations provided in the pre-intervention report were really useful, and we focused the activities on them. i.e. things we could do in our bar, the events that take part outside of traditional nightlife venues” [Stakeholder, Liverpool Guild of Students]

In order to implement many of the actions listed in each partners plan, it was essential to adopt a collaborative approach within their organisation, and bring in external facilitators to aid in the implementation process. During the course of the interview, representatives from the Sphinx Bar detailed the development of a group of staff from the bars and membership services to mobilise the actions proposed.

“Individual teams went off and worked on the interventions themselves. It was useful as it was well timed for when we were planning our yearly work plan, it fitted nicely”.
[Stakeholder, Liverpool Guild of Students]

For members of LJMU, it was important to collaborate with JMSU. This was discussed in regards to the university’s overall approach to student drinking and it was highlighted that many of the aims of SARPA were already embedded into existing work programmes within the university and they had seen some improvement over the past few years. Through LJMU and JMSU working together and producing an expanded programme of activities that provided an alternative to going out drinking, this in turn helped to increase inclusivity for their students.

“I think that alcohol and alcohol consumption runs as a theme throughout a lot of the work that we do without it being overtly about alcohol... if we look back a few years there were significant issues with students behaving in a very anti-social manner after being out in the night-time economy and returning to halls. We have almost eradicated that type of behaviour through working with the students union we have adopted this approach of not promoting alcohol events over anything else. It has be subsumed into wider events. I think the whole approach to wellbeing is so deeply ingrained in everything we do that actually it’s just part of a natural discussion, it’s just become second nature” [Stakeholder, LJMU]

It was clear that UoL’s ability to directly influence alcohol availability, promotion and pricing through the bar provided an advantage in terms of implementing the SARPA action plan during the project period. LJMU do not have a bar on campus. Whist this may help in reducing enticement as alcohol is not present on university premises, LJMU stakeholders did highlight that they would need to collaborate with the external events organisers used for freshers’ week and the venues that they use to host LJMU events to ensure that alcohol promotion was

minimised, and that alternative non-alcohol focused activities were available, which presents some difficulties (see section 3.2.2).

Critically, both universities described implementing the SARPA action plans as part of their existing work programmes. This is important, as it highlights how a university wide approach is imperative when trying to engage students in activities, such as those promoted by SARPA, that span across different university departments and have relevance with external partners. For example, LJMU also collaborated with external partners, including a substance use service and halls of residence to allow them to implement part of their action plan. Collaboration is of particular importance due to the continuous financial restrictions that are being imposed on universities, as it helps to ensure that work carried out by various partners is complementary without using funds to replicate existing work. However, due to increasing budget cuts within higher education, it can also be difficult for staff to find the time to commit to additional activities.

“In terms of the general approach to our events then yes because we’ve purposely done that, we’ve not done it as a standalone thing.” [Stakeholder, John Moores Student Union]

Table 1: Summary of action plans

Partner	Action	Key action
University of Liverpool / Liverpool Guild of Students	1	Work towards Alcohol Impact accreditation
	2	No alcohol prizes will be awarded as part of quizzes
	3	Free water will continue to be available from Guild bars at all times
	4	The Guild will continue to take seriously its duty of care for customers including refusal of service where necessary
	5	Continue to be a safe space in the night-time economy for all people regardless of whether they are consuming alcohol or not
	6	The Guild will continue to work with other agencies and organisations in order to implement the recommendations in the report
	7	The Guild will continue to be part of the Best Bar None Scheme, ensuring high standards in alcohol retailing
	8	Training for societies will include information on how to run inclusive events and activities that are not alcohol-focussed
	9	Promote societies and their events
	10	The current Give it a Go Programme will be extended, and its profile raised
	11	Extend non-alcohol based evening activity within the Guild
	12	There will be an increased range of non-alcoholic beers
	13	The Guild will stock an increased range of premium soft drinks
	14	Pricing will be amended to offer non-alcoholic cocktails cheaper than alcoholic cocktails
	15	The Guild will stock non-alcoholic spirits
	16	The Guild will commit to freezing the price of standard soft drinks
	17	The Guild will engage with ongoing evaluation, including enabling assessment of the actions outlined in this plan
Liverpool John Moores University / John Moores Student Union	18	Design and promote events and activities with less of a focus on alcohol
	19	Promote non-alcoholic drinks to students
	20	Target pre-drinking as well as drinking in nightlife venues
	21	Use the intervention on social media to target students and get messages across
	22	Raise awareness of elements of the student experience which do not involve alcohol
	23	Work with JMSU to identify relevant and appropriate pathways for events that do not involve alcohol or that reduce the impact of alcohol on students
	24	To work strategically with partners in the city to develop support mechanisms for students, e.g. through the City Safe board
	25	To develop a substance misuse support policy designed to ensure students have access to support

3.2 Evidencing implementation - all activities

The following presents an overview of all activities implemented relating to the SARPA action plans during September 2018 to March 2019. Information is derived from interviews with stakeholders, observations and review of relevant documentation. Sections 3.3-3.4 provide further information to demonstrate selected actions implemented covering:

- The Liverpool Guild of Students Sphinx bar (section 3.3); and,
- Health messages and promotional materials (section 3.4).

3.2.1 Action plan activities implemented

University of Liverpool

- **Engage in multi-agency collaboration to implement prevention activity to reduce alcohol consumption and related harms (actions 1, 6):** The UoL continue to form part of the NUS Alcohol Impact programme, including working with a range of partners across the city and implementing activities to maintain their accreditation.
- **Removal of alcohol prizes and introduction of free water at bars (actions 2, 3):** Early on in the intervention, steps were taken by partners to remove alcohol as a prize for quiz nights held within the Sphinx Bar. This has been in place since September 2018, and partners intend to keep this change following the SARPA project. Also, as part of their action plan, the Sphinx Bar ensured that free water was available to its patrons, and placed water dispensers to one side of the bar, ensuring students could access it at all times, without having to ask at the bar.
- **Promoting a safe nightlife venue (action 4, 5, 7):** The commitment to continuing a consistent approach to the refusal of alcohol sales to intoxicated and underage patrons was implemented. The Sphinx bar also continue to be part of the Best Bar None scheme, which ensures high standards in alcohol retailing. These actions help to promote a safer environment within the bar itself.
- **Training and promotion for student societies (actions 8, 9):** As part of their commitment to maximise inclusivity within the events being organised, the UoL improved their training materials for student societies to include ideas for how to run events and activities that are not alcohol focused. This training was rolled out to approximately 200 societies at the beginning of the academic year, and materials made available online. In addition to this, societies and the range of events they hold without an alcohol focus were promoted at both the freshers' and refreshers fairs, with societies making up a large proportion of the stalls in attendance at these events.
- **Extended Give it a Go Programme and more non-alcohol events held in the evenings (action points 10 and 11):** The production of a structured series of events was undertaken, of which over 70 had no alcohol focus. The programme of events consisted of a range of activities colour coded into themes: trips, life skills, evening, wellbeing, learn something new and culture. Examples of the types of events include cooking lessons, visits to local historical places, movie nights, language courses and

nature walks. The majority of the activities advertised were free of charge, with a small number requiring students to pay. Anecdotal feedback from the events was positive, with students believing the events they attended helped them to socialise, gave them skills and were value for money. The events organised also took place throughout the day, including events during the evening that also had a reduced focus on alcohol.

- **Increase in range of non-alcoholic beverages available, and price differential between non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks (actions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16):** The Sphinx from September 2018, increased their range of non-alcoholic beverages from one brand of beer, to three beers and one spirit. Whilst the sales on these have not been high, the bar has committed to keeping them following the SARPA project. The inclusion of non-alcoholic cocktails at a lower price was also implemented from September 2018, with the offer making them £1 cheaper than their alcoholic counterparts (2 for £5 vs 2 for £6). Further, the range of premium soft drinks was increased, and the cost of standard soft drinks was frozen.

Liverpool John Moores University / Liverpool John Moores Student Union

- **JMSU events programme (action 18, 22, 23):** Stakeholders reported that they increased the availability of events without an alcohol focus or activities in venues that do not have an alcohol focus. Activities such as trips to the Cat Café and Chester Zoo, International Day, Sunrise Festival, film nights and comedy nights took place, and provided students with alternative events to those with an alcohol focus. JMSU discussed how in previous years attendance had been an issue, possibly because many of the events had been free and therefore students felt less committed to turning up. In light of this, they charged for events during the SARPA implementation activity period and found that attendance improved. Additionally, the reduction in advertising events with a substantial alcohol focus was noted, and an emphasis on positive health and wellbeing messages was present within the university's social media.
- **Promotion of non-alcoholic drinks (action 19):** Stakeholders encouraged partners from their external events company to continue to provide free water at events, and to use venues that do not have an alcohol focus for events. Events were held in venues such as the Cat Café and museums. Additionally, one cocktail making class was ran in order to give students a better understanding of alcohol measures.
- **Health and wellbeing week⁸ (action 18, 20):** A programme of events targeted at students and staff to introduce different ideas on physical and mental health over a five-day period. Some of the activities that ran included yoga, meditation, debates and music events. These events also aimed to increase the opportunity to meet new people and increase communication. Whilst the week as a whole had a variety of different activities, discussions around alcohol's impact on mental and physical health, as well as motivations to drink were facilitated. Additionally, Welcome Reps (responsible for welcoming new students to halls of residence and the university) also

⁸ <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/students/supporting-your-study/health-and-wellbeing/ljmu-wellbeing-week>

promoted healthy alcohol behaviours whilst in the halls, and encouraged safety to be a priority amongst students whilst on a night out.

- **Reduction in alcohol promoting posts on social media (action point 21):** Partners reported a shift in focus towards positive health and wellbeing messages, as well as general university activities across their social media outlets e.g. Twitter and Facebook, and less of a focus on alcohol-fuelled events and/or promoting events as being non-alcohol based.
- **City socials (action points 18, 22 and 23):** These events provided an opportunity for students to socialise with new people in various settings, including venues without an alcohol focus. The events were a collaborative effort between both partners, and promoted accordingly. Within the city socials, events such as a 'culture crawl' around Liverpool took place. These were reported as being popular with international students in particular as a mechanism for meeting other students. Organisers were able to collect feedback from attendees, who stated they felt the event enabled them to explore the city, meet new people, escape the loneliness of their accommodation and reduce stress.
- **Student Safety Group (action 24):** Both universities are part of the student safety group, where data relating to crimes against students involving alcohol is shared by local police, security services, A&E departments and Liverpool City Council. This helps to adopt a multi-agency approach in the reduction of alcohol related harms to students.
- **Substance misuse support policy (action 25):** The university invited Young Addaction (a substance use support service) to run drop in sessions on university premises to offer support to students, and provide more information about drug and alcohol use. After six weeks, this service was relocated to student accommodation, where numbers of attendees increased.

3.2.2 Limitations to action plan implementation

Whilst many of the actions were implemented, a small number failed to be introduced during the project duration, or had to overcome barriers. Firstly, the UoL planned to increase the price of the alcoholic drinks included in one of their promotions in order to increase the price difference between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. However, due to an increase in the prices of soft drinks as a result of the recent sugar tax this was not possible in the SARPA implementation period. However, partners from UoL did recognise that the promotion was in contrast to the SARPA philosophy and plan to introduce this price increase in the next academic year (2019/20).

"It was all pretty simple to implement most of the stuff from the bar was very simple I thought we were basically able to run the shop floor." [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

It was noted by stakeholders at JMSU that the fact that they use an external events company and venues to organise and host their freshers' events does limit some of the control that they can have over these events and created some barriers in implementing some of the

SARPA recommendations. A further limitation identified by JMSU was the lack of accessible venues in the city centre that do not serve alcohol and would be appropriate to host student events. It is essential that university events are accessible to all students including those who have mobility issues and therefore this is a key consideration when selecting venues. As a result of this, events were often hosted in venues that did have alcohol on offer, even if the theme of the event was not alcohol focused.

“Although we don’t own Cool It and we don’t own any of the venues that they host their nights at, we have such a close relationship with them and they do so much to do with wellbeing looking after students on the night. I don’t think we could do it any better. Obviously there are some prohibitive factors, such as if they don’t want to put water on the bar they won’t put water on the bar but they will generally if we explain the recommendations” [Stakeholder, John Moores Student Union]

It was noted that not all students would have engaged with the SARPA based events on the action plans. Students who were originally local to Liverpool and commute to university may already have existing friendship groups and as a result might not participate in university organised events. Whilst this is not an issue that is exclusive to the SARPA project, it is important that ways to increase engagement with commuter students are considered in the future.

“Commuter students are very difficult. They are almost an invisible part of the student body in most cases because you don’t routinely take their needs into the picture because when you’re assessing what you’re going to do you think of students walking home to their halls.” [Stakeholder, LJMU]

A lack of funding was also identified as being a barrier to delivering some of the health promotion activities at LJMU. Those responsible for student health and wellbeing have to prioritise the resources they are allocated which can affect what education activities they are able to deliver.

“We are resourced as a reactive service, I don’t get any funding for proactive activity. We need to be going out doing the educational activity; semester one should be full of events for new students saying ‘this is what is going to happen if you drink too much, this is what is going to happen if you don’t eat well’ and we’ve tried to do healthy halls but we haven’t got the funding. I can’t take money away from reactive services that are needed but we will never shift the balance completely unless we can do proactive stuff” [Stakeholder, LJMU]

Related to the issue of funding was the presence of nightlife venues and alcohol brands at the JMSU freshers’ fair. Stakeholders explained how the event is an important part of their fundraising and as a result they need the revenue from the stalls occupied by nightlife venues and alcohol brands. However, they further justified this by explaining how they also have a section of the fair dedicated to health and wellbeing so that students are also given information to encourage them to live more healthy lifestyles.

“The main reason we do freshers’ fair is to fund our entire activities for the rest of the year. It is a huge money making event for us... I’d like to think it’s not mixed messaging [having bars and health and wellbeing services present], I think they complement each other”
[Stakeholder, John Moores Student Union]

LJMU hoped to implement a substance misuse support policy and provide further support to students. Whilst they were unable to produce a full policy within the project time period, guidance notes have been produced, and will be carried forward into future academic years. Additionally, they enlisted the services of a substance use support organisation (Young Addaction) to have presence within their university buildings. There was an initial lack of uptake however, and this service was relocated to halls of residence and has been more successful as a result (i.e. there has been an increase in students accessing the support service). This highlights the importance of reviewing service provision and considering where services are best placed in order to increase engagement. Stakeholders from LJMU further discussed their new ‘Residential Life’ strategy, which is currently under development, considers how policies (such as those aligned with SARPA) can be further embedded with university accommodation.

3.2.3 Achieved and anticipated outcomes from implemented activities

Stakeholders were asked whether they felt that the implementation of the SARPA action plan had made a difference to the overall student experience that they were offering. Many stakeholders agreed that the SARPA related activities had contributed to the creation of an inclusive culture and environment, where it is easier for people to choose to drink non-alcoholic beverages, and engage on non-alcohol focused events.

“A lot of the stuff we have done has been positive in that sense. We’re always committed to trying to make sure as an environment it is an inclusive space. Part of the action plan is to continue this idea that we want it to be like a safe space...in the sense that people can come here at any time of day and if they want to have an alcohol drink that’s fine but also if they want to have a non-alcoholic drink that’s also fine...it’s a cultural thing like the idea that it’s a space for everybody” [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

One stakeholder described how the SARPA projects aims, which encourage students to drink less alcohol whilst on a night out, and for student events to have less of an alcohol focus were aligned with their existing values and would aid them to have positive outcomes in changing drinking culture.

“One of the things I have really liked about this is that it fit really easily with the ethos of the Guild and some of the things we are already doing, but its added value too. It’s allowed us to be assured the things we are doing are worthwhile.” [Stakeholder, The Liverpool Guild of Students]

The adaptation in the LJMU setting for the substance use support organisation, Young Addaction, was discussed by one stakeholder as being key to its ultimate success and uptake. This also highlighted how important getting the right setting can be to the success of an intervention. Further to this, a representative from student accommodation (for both the universities) described the wider implications of alcohol interventions and the associations with sexual health and substance misuse. They described their experiences of student alcohol consumption and behaviours and recognised that interventions addressing alcohol could in turn address other behaviours.

“Something they do here at [student hall] is pre-drink in their flats and they won’t go out till like 12, 1 o’clock. Then they’ll go out and have a few drinks in town, then they’ll get off their faces on whatever and then they come back and we have ambulances and police at our door because of the mix of drink or drugs.” [Stakeholder, Unite Accommodation]

3.2.4 Future implementation

Stakeholders were asked to consider whether they would continue to embed the changes recommended within the SARPA action plan. The UoL and JMSU described their proposed approach to continue to embed the changes in light of their responsibilities and duty of care to students.

“Well there’s definitely a lot of stuff continuing with this course of action looking at what we do... as a commercial outlet we have to act commercially but that’s not our only thing... We will continue to look at alcohol price and even if there’s some kick back about raising prices ...but we think it’s probably what’s best then we will do it. And we will continue to ensure non-alcoholic drinks are available even if it doesn’t make financial sense, more out of a sense of providing a service” [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

“In terms of the general approach to our events then yes because we’ve purposely done that, we’ve not done it as a stand-alone thing. I think in terms of sitting down and reviewing it as part of an action plan that would require some additional resource but in terms of just being aware of where alcohol fits in to our promotions is just part of how we do things now” [Stakeholder, John Moores Student Union]

A stakeholder from the UoL went on to explain that the implementation of action plan activities was particularly feasible because they already had a staff member who organises a programme of activities and who had supported the SARPA project and would continue to do so. This stakeholder also described how they have activities delivered by societies, which also made the action plan feasible and sustainable in the future.

“We were lucky as we already had a member of staff who puts together a programme of activity so we didn’t need to put in place extra resources... and lots of the stuff we did was ran by societies so it worked quite well.” [Stakeholder, The Liverpool Guild of Students]

The long-term sustainability of the actions implemented was discussed during the course of the interview with LJMU. They expressed the view that it could be sustained long-term and they have embedded these actions within their day-to-day practice.

“I think its sustainable long -term, because I think we are embedding practice now into mainstream delivery of services. What I didn’t want to do is a whole series of individual actions that would just stand on their own and fall on their own. I think what we are doing is embedding an approach across the university and the student union but ultimately we will continue to do this long-term even without the project being behind us” [Stakeholder, Liverpool John Moores University]

Stakeholders at JMSU and LJMU discussed the approach that they had developed for the next academic year (following the SARPA project). It was noted from feedback from students that a lack of a university venue at LJMU impacts on the sense of community. As a result of this feedback, JMSU has partnered with a number of venues in the city centre that will be used for some events and that will have a strong association with the university (e.g. presence at freshers’ fair and free venue hire for students). When selecting the venues JMSU ensured that, whilst alcohol is on offer, it is not the main focus of the venue and excessive drinking is not encouraged. Furthermore, JMSU discussed how in the next academic year, the student union was taking a different approach to organising events with students taking more of a leading role. The venues discussed above would be available for them to use and staff at the student union would be able to offer advice. It was hoped that this would enable a diverse range of events to be organised in line with the diversity of the students across the university.

“We are launching some partner venues in September. A lot of them aren’t focused on alcohol and we are really keen to ensure they are not predominantly alcohol focused venues. But through that we are hoping to create that sense of community... They will be used for some of our freshers’ events... We offer them a stall at our freshers’ fair and in return they offer our students free venue hire so that students can put their own events on there if they want to. They will all be on the Totum card (the rebranded NUS extra card). So it’s good promotion for the venue but will provide that community for the students” [Stakeholder, John Moores Student Union]

Stakeholders reflected on the overall role of universities and discussed how, in addition to academic achievement, personal confidence was important for students to develop whilst at university. This relates to the overall aims of SARPA as it includes them having autonomy over the decisions they make concerning alcohol consumption.

“I think part of the role of going to university is building personal confidence, alongside all of the other stuff, and actually if we can build personal confidence in our students so that they feel empowered to say ‘I don’t want to drink tonight’ then that is fantastic. If we can take through a generation of students that can do that and continue to do that, then that becomes the norm” [Stakeholder, LJMU]

Additionally, LJMU considered the changing conversations that are now being had within universities as well as wider society with regards to health and wellbeing and in particular mental health. They discussed how in this phase of the SARPA project, students had not engaged with Addaction when they were on university premises but that this might change in the future if such conversations were less stigmatised.

“From a preventative perspective, it would be good to have some more interaction with other agencies across the city. We work with Young Addaction but students don’t often want to engage with those services, they don’t want to see that they have a problem but as we move through the mental health debate and discussion I think that the impact of alcohol and drugs on mental health will be seen more widely by young people” [Stakeholder, LJMU]

Also, LJMU suggested that a health and wellbeing survey could form part of future SARPA related activities. This would provide them with a baseline to compare future data sets too and thus be able to measure any potential impact of university policies and would also help them to decide where funding should be targeted.

Finally, stakeholders felt that the collaborative approach adopted for the SARPA project worked well and that they would be keen to continue this approach.

“We appreciate you being a part of the work and were keen to continue, were always looking for ways to monitor and look at what’s going on in terms of alcohol consumption amongst our students” [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

“It hasn’t felt onerous or a huge departure from what we were already working towards, it feels like it’s something which aligns with our values but maybe wouldn’t have thought about it so consciously and we wouldn’t have been able to articulate it in these ways without this project. It’s been really valuable” [Stakeholder, The Liverpool Guild of Students]

“It was useful to be able to sit down and develop the [SARPA] action plans and think ‘ok, how are we going to do it and how are we going to make it sustainable’” [Stakeholder, LJMU]

“It was really interesting to talk to the other participants around the table about how their approach to alcohol is so different to ours, whether that’s because of priority or strategy or because they have venues” [Stakeholder, John Moores Student Union]

This highlights the importance of projects, such as SARPA, that bring together individuals and organisations that are working towards the same objective in order to share ideas and examples of best practice.

3.3 Evidencing implementation - University of Liverpool Student Guild - Sphinx Bar

3.3.1 Background

The Sphinx bar is situated within the Liverpool Guild of Students building, located within the UoL campus. The Guild of Students is a large events building, which provides students with a range of spaces to socialise, study and eat, as well as hold public events including music gigs and food festivals. The Sphinx bar is housed across two rooms within the larger event space. Each of the two rooms has its own bar and seating, as well as games activities such as pool tables and chess games. Food is served in the bar throughout the day until 9pm.

Researchers observed the bar on three occasions in early 2019, on one weeknight, a night when a major sporting event was being shown and one night on a weekend. The bar was described by researchers as having the following characteristics:

- Student bar with a busy but relaxed atmosphere.
- It was estimated that 90% of the venue had seating.
- Food was served during all observations.
- Music being played was described as mainly pop music however, this was often replaced with sporting event commentary.
- The majority of patrons were noted as being under 25 years of age.
- Security staff were noted as being visible during the weekend observation, but not during the week.
- A minimum of two bar staff were in attendance across the three nights.
- The proportion of males in the venue ranged from 60-70% over the three nights observations took place.
- Researchers noted a number of promotions referencing alcohol i.e. Beer club members receive a free beer, Pitchers for £10 and £1.80 pint Fridays.

3.3.2 Intended plans

The planned actions relating to the student bar included:

- A reduction in alcohol promotion through a variety of methods i.e. no alcohol prizes, introduction of free water at bars and active refusal of intoxicated patrons.
- A focus on ensuring non-alcoholic drinks are more appealing through a number of ways including; an increased range in non-alcoholic drinks offered, addition of non-alcoholic cocktails at a cheaper price, stocking non-alcoholic spirits and freezing the price of standard soft drinks.

These actions were designed to directly influence the role alcohol plays within their student bar and to ensure the responsible service of alcohol to its patrons. Additionally, by implementing these actions, it was hoped that it might create a broader behavioural change in relation to alcohol consumption and also contribute to the university's NUS Alcohol Impact accreditation.

3.3.3 Activities implemented

In order to evidence actions and changes, researchers collated the data gained from observations, stakeholder interviews and surveys with students. As part of the observations, characteristics of the bar were noted and photographic evidence of actions taken. These observations enabled researchers to evidence the following actions as having been taken:

- Free water available at the bar, clearly advertised, and with a fruit infused option (Figure 1).
- The introduction of non-alcohol alternatives, at a lower price, in their cocktail offer (Figure 2).
- A greater selection of non-alcoholic drinks, which are actively promoted in their drinks menu (Figure 3).
- Non-alcoholic beverages taking equal prominence to their alcoholic counterparts in the bar layout i.e. placed in visible fridges and often next to the alcoholic alternative (Figure 4).
- An 'Alcohol-Free' alternative being advertised on all drinks promotion signage and menus (Figure 5).

In addition to the changes that were laid out in the action plan, the following observations demonstrating good practice were noted:

- The inclusion of ABV⁹ percentages on the signage and menus for beers, aiding customers to easily assess the strength of their drink prior to purchase (Figure 5).
- Visible health promotion materials such as FRANK and Don't Drink Drive posters on display near the bars. The venue also had signage detailing their zero tolerance policy on drugs and advertising their willingness to telephone a taxi for patrons who are in need. Further to this, a number of posters for the 'Change 4 Life' campaign were visible, promoting the reduction in alcohol consumption (Figure 6).
- The bar also had anti-spiking devices available, which aim to reduce the chance of having your drink spiked by creating a stopper in bottles (Figure 7).

⁹ Alcohol by Volume is a standard measure of how much alcohol is contained in a given volume of an alcoholic beverage.

Figure 1: Free water available and clearly advertised, Sphinx bar, UoL



Figure 2: Cocktail menu from the Sphinx bar, showing the availability for cocktails to be alcohol free (at a reduced price), Sphinx bar, UoL

CLASSIC COCKTAILS

THE SPHINX f t i @liverpoolguild

£3.50 EACH / £6 FOR TWO

MOJITO V VE CF

Bacardi and Mojito Funkin served with fresh mint, lime wedges and shaken over ice.

GARNISH: Lime Wheel/Mint Sprig

RASPBERRY MOJITO V VE CF

Bacardi and Raspberry Mojito Funkin, served over ice and finished with raspberry and mint.

GARNISH: Raspberry/Mint Sprig

CHERRY BAKEWELL V VE CF

A blend of Disaronno and Strawberry Funkin, served over cubed ice and topped off with cherries.

GARNISH: Cherries

FRUIT SALAD V VE CF

A sweet blend of Stolichnays, Passion Fruit and Strawberry Funkin, served over cubed ice and finished off with a strawberry and lime wheel

GARNISH: Lime Wheel/Strawberry

STRAWBERRY DAIQUIRI V VE CF

A blend of Bacardi and Strawberry Funkin topped off with a fresh strawberry

GARNISH: Strawberry

PASSIONFRUIT MARTINI V VE CF

A sweet mix of Smirnoff and Passionfruit Funkin, finished off with half a passion fruit.

GARNISH: Passionfruit

ALL FUNKIN COCKTAILS ARE AVAILABLE ALCOHOL FREE. £3 EACH OR £5 FOR TWO

£3 EACH

SMIRNOFF SMASH V VE CF

A longer, lighter drink. Smashing boundaries to create a refreshing drink with Smirnoff and soda.

GARNISH: Lemony/Lime

JIM BEAM HIGHBALL V VE

The refreshing side of Whiskey. Jim Beam, and soda – a simple classic.

GARNISH: Cherries

V = Vegetarian VE = Vegan CF = Caffeine Free

Figure 3: A section from the drinks menu, demonstrating a wider selection of alcohol-free drinks, Sphinx bar, UoL

ALCOHOL AND GLUTEN FREE	
Brewdog Nanny State AF All taste. No Alcohol.	3.00
Heineken 0% AF Beer but without the hangover	2.00
Bud Prohibition The Dry King of Beers	2.50
Kopparberg mixed Fruit 0% AF Cider without the Hangover	5.00
Brewdog Vagabond (GF free) Who Needs Gluten Anyway?	4.00
San Miguel Gluten Free Be Gone Foul Gluten	3.20

Figure 4: Image showing the alcohol-free beverages (on the left) being placed in the same fridge as their alcoholic counterparts (right), Sphinx bar, UoL

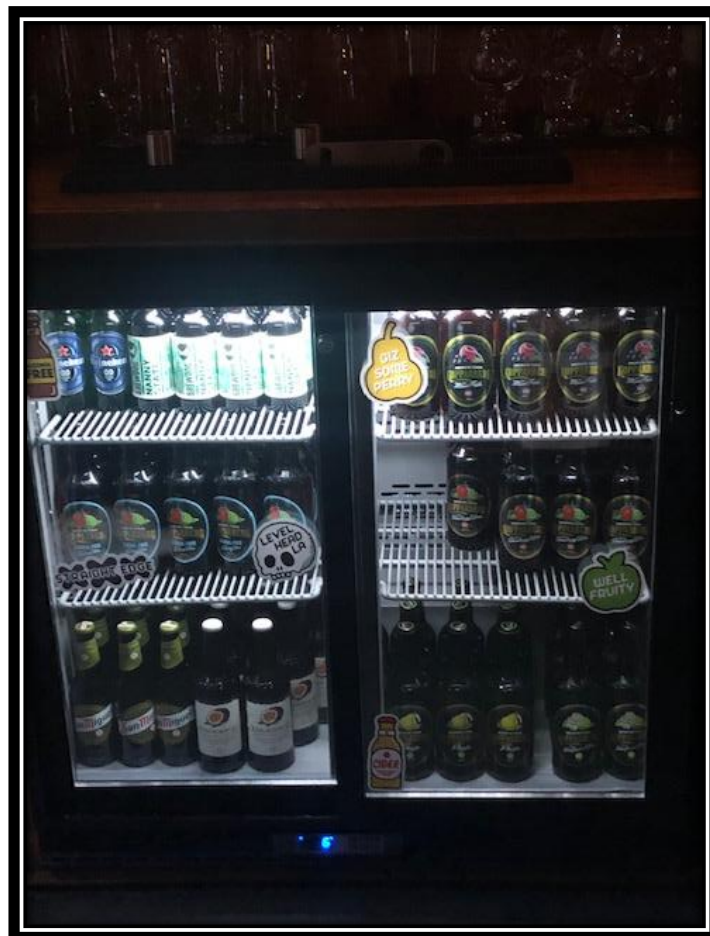


Figure 5: Drinks menu board, with ABV information and alcohol-free options advertised, Sphinx bar, UoL



During the course of interviews with key stakeholders from the Liverpool Guild of Students and the Sphinx bar itself, it was also learnt that they had been able to implement their action to remove alcohol prizes from their quizzes and to freeze the price of soft drinks to ensure they are a cheaper option for customers.

*“We planned to have no alcohol prizes as part of our quizzes and we have kept to that”
[Stakeholder, The Liverpool Guild of Students]*

The Sphinx bar provided researchers with access to their sales data in an effort to establish any trends and changes in their sales, since introducing alcohol-free alternatives and increasing the promotion of alcohol-free beverages. Three additional non-alcohol beverages were added to their menu from September 2018 and the sales data shows consistent demand, with one in particular (Heineken 0%) proving particularly popular. The Heineken beverage accounted for almost 80% of sales of alcohol-free drinks, with the other two options proving less popular. It is important to note however, that the retail price for the Heineken (£2) is lower than the other two alternatives, being half the cost in one instance.

Overall, the sales made on the alcohol-free drinks offered from September make up 0.11% of the total sales during the four-month period examined. When compared to the sales data for draught soft drinks (4.62% of total sales) during the same period, it is apparent that sales of the alcohol-free beverages are substantially lower than soft drinks. Whilst these figures may be disparaging, it is worthy to note that the soft drinks are again cheaper (ranging from £1-£1.80), so financial motivations may play a role in their increased sales over the alcohol-free drinks. Additionally, the bar did stock one alcohol-free option during the four months prior to the intervention period, however only two bottles were sold. It could be said therefore, that the increase in promotion activity and a larger range of alcohol-free drinks being available has encouraged more customers to purchase an alcohol-free alternative. Despite having a low number of sales, during interviews stakeholders felt they would continue to stock the alcohol-free alternatives.

Figure 6: Health promotion messages on display in the bar, Sphinx bar, UoL



3.3.4 Perceived impact

Stakeholders from the UoL, Guild of Students and Sphinx Bar were interviewed, and details regarding the impact of their intervention activities discussed. Most of those asked felt they had been able to achieve the majority of actions laid out within their initial action plan to a high standard and with relative ease. It was the belief of one stakeholder that by making changes to the bar environment, such as providing free water, they are creating a more accessible space for all.

“I think as much as possible we want people to think of this as a space that is open to everybody, that’s essentially what we’ve been trying to do. To move away from traditional notions of what a student bar is and the connotations that comes with that and try and make it a little more open, a little more inclusive, something that is going to appeal to everybody not just kind of the traditional student union night out. [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

Stakeholders noted that a few of the actions listed in their action plan could not be implemented, however these were all actions they hoped to achieve in the future. For example, it was hoped that they would be able to increase the cost of the alcoholic drinks included in one of their promotions (£1.80 pints on a Friday including alcoholic and soft drinks), in order to create a price difference between the alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Unfortunately, this could not be implemented for this academic year, however will be introduced from September. Whilst sales of the alcohol-free beverages make up a small proportion of the overall sales, stakeholders felt that they could sustain this change, and that they were providing an alternative for patrons.

“The soft drinks are already cheaper than the alcohol on most days. However for the offer on a Friday, as of next year we will almost certainly be raising the price of that” [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

“We will continue to ensure non-alcoholic drinks are available even if it doesn’t make financial sense, more out of a sense of providing a service” [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

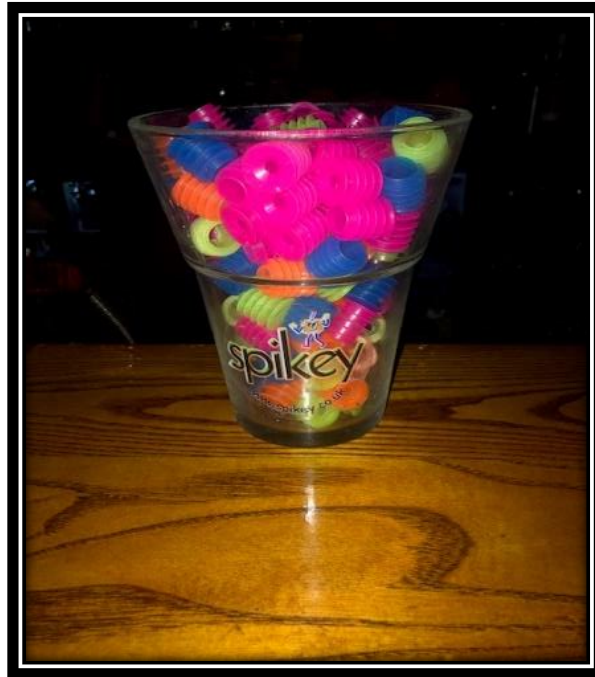
Whilst being interviewed, stakeholders expressed their beliefs that the project has been well received from all elements of the university, and that they have felt supported in their efforts to implement the changes.

“Everyone is very on board with the project and what’s trying to be achieved in terms of changing the cultural aspect around the bar and who drinks there” [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

As part of the UoL’s ongoing intention to participate in the NUS Alcohol Impact programme and the Best Bar None Scheme, stakeholders expressed a desire to continue with the actions already implemented and to push for further changes in the future. All stakeholders interviewed detailed their intentions to continue to work with key organisations to ensure a high standard in alcohol retailing and to encourage the safe and moderated consumption of alcohol within the student population. The majority of changes implemented during the intervention were carried out ‘in-house’ with minimal financial implication, or need for external involvement. Additionally, stakeholders were optimistic that the resources needed to continue the intervention changes would continue to be available. One stakeholder expressed a desire to pair food with the sales of alcohol, in order to encourage people to consume food as opposed to alcohol alone.

“I would have liked to have worked more with food. Consuming alcohol with food rather than by itself is a big part of trying to change consumption habits.... We could say if you’re drinking this why don’t you try this side dish or something like that to try and get people into a pattern of consuming food with alcohol rather than just the alcohol itself” [Stakeholder, The Sphinx Bar]

Figure 7: Anti-spiking devices freely available on the bar for patrons, Sphinx Bar, UoL



3.4 Evidencing implementation - health messages and promotions

As part of the larger student survey (see section 3.5), 197 students were shown five messages and promotions for alcoholic/non-alcoholic drinks that were related to the SARPA action plans. Students were asked to give their views on whether they agreed that the message or promotion was an effective way to encourage students to drink less alcohol on a night, and to explain their reasons why.

The University of Liverpool, Sphinx Bar menu: As a result of actions implemented at the UoL Sphinx Bar, the bar menu was altered to promote the cheaper non-alcoholic cocktails and the new range of non-alcoholic drinks. Students were shown extracts from the Sphinx Bar menu illustrating these promotions, along with a separate promotion from the bar.

Alcohol and gluten free: 44% (n=87) of respondents thought this promotion would encourage students to drink less on a night out. A number of students liked the variety that was offered in this menu.

Classic cocktails: 40% (n=78) of respondents thought this promotion would encourage students to drink less on a night out; almost one-third (29%) were unsure. Some students felt that this offer was providing a good alternative.

Friday £1.80 pints: Only 17% (n=33) of respondents thought this promotion would encourage students to drink less on a night out. Of the 64% of respondents who felt this promotion would not encourage students to drink less alcohol, 31% felt that this offer would not be effective as there was not a price difference. Some students felt this offer promoted cheap alcohol which would encourage drinking.

ALCOHOL AND GLUTEN FREE	
Brewdog Nanny State AF All taste. No Alcohol.	3.00
Heineken 0% AF Beer but without the hangover	2.00
Bud Prohibition The Dry King of Beers	2.50
Kopparberg mixed Fruit 0% AF Cider without the Hangover	5.00
Brewdog Vagabond (GF free) Who Needs Gluten Anyway?	4.00
San Miguel Gluten Free Be Gone Foul Gluten	3.20

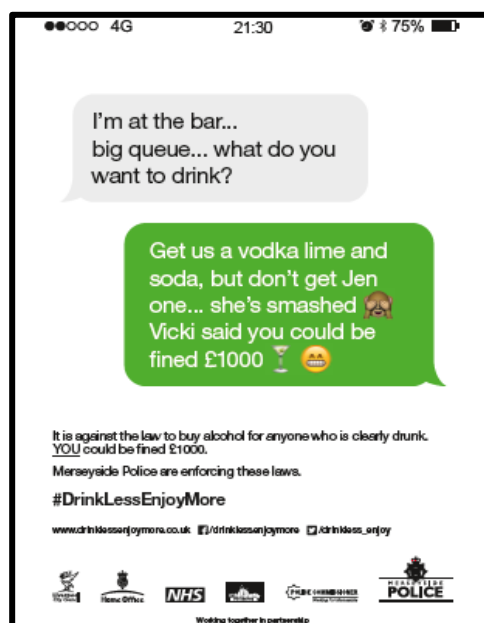
CLASSIC COCKTAILS
£3.50 EACH / £6 FOR TWO
<u>ALL FUNKIN COCKTAILS ARE AVAILABLE ALCOHOL FREE. £3 EACH OR £5 FOR TWO</u>
Friday £1.80 Pints Carlsberg, Somerby, Diet Coke, Coke Zero And Lemonade

Drink Less Enjoy More (DLEM) materials (Liverpool City Council and partners, including both universities): DLEM is a community based multi-component intervention comprised of three core components; community mobilisation, responsible bar staff training, and strengthened law enforcement that has been implemented in Liverpool's nightlife since 2014 (Quigg et al,

2018). The intervention aims to reduce excessive drunkenness and alcohol-related harms amongst nightlife users through: 1) increasing awareness of, and adherence to, UK legislation, which prohibits the sale of alcohol to, and purchasing of alcohol for, drunks; and, 2) discouraging pre-loading of alcohol and reducing the acceptability of nightlife drunkenness. Over the past four years, representatives from Liverpool City Council have engaged with LJMU and the UoL to target the intervention towards students, with a number of promotional events held and DLEM materials and messages shared at student's freshers' fairs and other events/spaces. The Sphinx bar also engages with DLEM and works to ensure bar staff do not serve alcohol to drunks.

Dave WhatsApp poster: 45% (n=89) of respondents thought this message would encourage students to drink less on a night out; one-third (30%) were unsure.

I'm at the bar text poster: 48% (n=94) of respondents thought this health message would encourage students to drink less on a night out; 18% (n=17) of these respondents said that the large fine mentioned was a deterrent.



Most and least effective message or promotion

Over a quarter of respondents stated that the DLEM messages were the most effective of the five examples in encouraging students to drink less alcohol on a night out (Dave, 24%; I'm at the bar, 37%). One in five (20%) stated that the alcohol and gluten free promotion would be the most effective, 12% stated the classic cocktails promotion and 7% stated the Friday pint promotion.

Over six in ten (62%) respondents stated that the Friday pint promotion would be the least effective in encouraging students to drink less alcohol on a night out.

3.5 Research to inform future interventions or work programmes

3.5.1 Student survey

As part of phase three, researchers undertook a short survey with students to examine their motivations for reducing their alcohol consumption, the events they had attended this academic year (up to January 2019), and their views on effective ways to communicate health messages, and the best locations to place them.

Motivations

Motivations for reducing alcohol consumption were examined by gender, university and year of study. Saving money was the most popular motivation, with a response rate of 88.1% (females 93.3%, males 83.7%; $p < 0.05$); second to this was to be healthier (52.3%) (Table 2). Losing weight as a motivation demonstrated some difference in response by gender, with a higher proportion of females (46.1%) reporting this in comparison to males (29%) ($p < 0.05$) (Table 2). No other significant differences were identified. Other reasons identified as motivations to reduce alcohol consumption included examinations, academic deadlines and work commitments.

Table 2: Participant motivations for reducing their alcohol consumption on a night out, LJMU and UoL students

		Save money (%)	Lose weight (%)	A better variety of NAC (%)	Be healthier (%)	Avoid hangover (%)	Other (%)
Gender							
	All	88.1	36.8	14	52.3	32.6	13
	Male	83.7	28.8	14.4	47.1	27.9	8.7
	Female	93.3	46.1	13.5	58.4	38.2	18
	<i>P Value</i>	<0.05	<0.05	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>
University							
	UoL	86.5	36.9	11.3	52.5	29.8	12.9
	LJMU	91.1	39.3	21.4	50	37.5	13
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>
Year of study							
	1st year	91.5	28.8	11.9	40.7	31	8.6
	2nd-5th year	85.8	40.8	13.3	56.7	31.7	15.8
	Postgraduate	88.2	47.1	23.5	64.3	50	7.1
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>

NAC: non-alcoholic drinks. *n/s* = not significant.

Events attended

The survey demonstrated that there are a number of events which have been attended by students since the start of the 2018/19 academic year. Almost half (47%) had attended music events, 45% attended quiz nights, and 44% detailed having been to a food festival or market

(Table 3). A smaller proportion had attended game nights (12%), day trips (11%) or art events (12%). When broken down by university, a significantly higher proportion of LJMU students (25%) had attended games nights in comparison to the UoL (9%) ($p < 0.05$). Contrastingly, a much higher percentage of the UoL students (15%) had been on day trips since the start of the academic year than LJMU students (4%) (< 0.05). During this section of the survey, participants were also given the opportunity to detail any events they would like to attend in the future. Of the 197 students asked, 114 chose to provide answers to this question. Many respondents indicated they would like to attend similar events to the ones already available, however the opportunity for trips abroad, more health events (such as yoga and cooking lessons) and extra music events were the most frequently answered.

Effective ways to communicate health messages

Students were asked their opinions on the effective ways to communicate health messages (Table 4). The majority (96.4%) felt that social media is the most useful tool for disseminating these messages, followed by posters (64.8%) and health talks (23.8%). A higher proportion of females (31.5%) than males (17.3%) reported that health talks might be an effective method of communication ($p < 0.05$). No other significant differences were identified.

Location of health messages

When examining the location of health messages, students felt that they were best placed in university buildings (80.3%; females 88.8; males 73.1%; $p < 0.05$) and student accommodation (75.1%) (Table 5) (Table 5). A small number (11%) of participants provided an 'other' answer such as 'social media' and 'bus stops'

Table 3: Student social events attended by students since the start of the academic year, LJMU and UoL students

		Quiz nights (%)	Film nights (%)	Food festivals/ markets (%)	Game nights (%)	Music events (%)	Art events (%)	Sports activities (%)	Day trips (%)
Gender									
	All	45.1	33.2	44	11.9	47.2	11.9	22.8	10.9
	Male	41.3	33.7	39.4	10.6	44.2	9.6	27.9	8.7
	Female	49.4	32.6	49.4	13.5	50.6	14.6	16.9	13.5
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>
University									
	UoL	44	34.8	48.2	8.5	48.2	11.3	26.2	14.9
	LJMU	50	33.9	33.9	25	46.4	16.1	14.3	3.6
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<0.05	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<0.05
Year of study									
	1st year	45.8	35.6	50.8	8.5	50.8	13.6	30.5	15.3
	2nd-5th year	45	31.7	43.3	14.2	46.7	12.5	21.7	7.5
	Postgraduate	52.9	47.1	29.4	23.5	47.1	11.8	5.9	23.5
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>

n/s = not significant.

Table 4: Effective ways of communicating health messages to students LJMU and UoL students

		Social media (%)	Posters (%)	Information leaflets (%)	Health talks (%)	Information stands (%)	Other (%)
Gender							
	All	96.4	64.8	19.7	23.8	10.4	2.6
	Male	96.2	58.7	20.2	17.3	8.7	1
	Female	96.6	71.9	19.1	31.5	12.4	4.5
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<0.05	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>
University							
	UoL	95.7	66	22	22	10.6	0.7
	LJMU	96.4	60.7	16.1	26.8	10.7	7.1
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<0.05
Year of study							
	1st year	98.3	59.3	23.7	22	8.5	1.7
	2nd-5th year	95	67.5	17.5	25.8	10	2.5
	Postgraduate	94.1	64.7	29.4	11.8	17.6	5.9
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>

n/s = not significant.

Table 5: Best location for display of health messages LJMU and UoL students

		University buildings (%)	Student accommodation (%)	Nightlife venues (%)	Student health centres (%)	Other (%)
Gender						
	All	80.3	75.1	46.1	42	10.9
	Male	73.1	77.5	40.4	41.3	11.5
	Female	88.8	73.1	52.8	42.7	10.1
	<i>P Value</i>	<0.05	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>
University						
	UoL	80.9	73.8	44.7	39.7	9.9
	LJMU	80.4	75	51.8	46.4	12.5
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>
Year of study						
	1st year	74.6	69.5	54.2	35.6	16.9
	2nd-5th year	85	76.7	44.2	44.2	8.3
	Postgraduate	76.5	76.5	41.2	41.2	5.9
	<i>P Value</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>	<i>n/s</i>

n/s = not significant.

3.5.2 Content analysis of Fresher's Fair data

Phase one of SARPA highlighted the role that introductory events, such as freshers' fairs, have in shaping early student experiences. Both universities hold a freshers' fair at the start of the academic year, to welcome students to the university and city. Additionally, the universities provide a second freshers' fair later in the academic year commonly known as the refreshers' fair to mark the start of second semester. The LJMU freshers'/refreshers' fairs are held in a venue outside of the university campus. For the UoL, they hold their fairs on campus within their Guild of Students. During the phase one focus groups and paired interviews, students discussed how the first few weeks at university were an important time when they could form new friendships with peers and enjoy new experiences. Freshers' fairs are important in highlighting the new experiences that are on offer for students and thus it was decided that data would be collected at both the LJMU and UoL freshers' and re-freshers' fairs to see what promotional materials students are given. This data has been used to inform the recommendations that are made at the end of this report.

Both the freshers' and refreshers' fairs are core events targeted to students and provided researchers with the opportunity to observe and record activities and document any differences between them. Researchers attended four events across the two universities; two freshers' fairs in September 2018, and two refreshers' fairs during late January/early February 2019. The aim was to collect data relating to the types of stalls, promotions and marketing strategies used within these university led events, with a specific focus on alcohol. Comparisons were made across fairs held at the start of the university year (September 2018), and mid-way (January/early February 2019), as well as between universities.

University of Liverpool: Freshers' Fair, September 2018

The UoL freshers' fair ran over a two-day period in September 2018 and comprised of 155 stalls; 74 of which were commercial stalls. The majority of the commercial stalls were food retailers, fashion brands and online retailers; 12 (8% of all stalls) were associated with venues/organisations that had some focus on alcohol. Researchers reported the event was distributed over a number of rooms within the Guild of Students, with the vast majority of stalls relating to society activities, health and wellbeing, or other organised events. The stalls were sectioned off into separate rooms depending on the type of event/activity they promoted, e.g. charities in one room, societies and commercial stalls in the main hall. Researchers observing the event reported that the event was busy, but well managed, with a large variety of activities for students to engage in during the event.

The main promotional activities taking place relating to venues or events where alcohol may be present, was the distribution of vouchers or promotional materials, e.g. Welcome Liverpool Booklets and drinks offers (Figure 8). The majority of stalls also handed out flyers with general information about the venue or events they were promoting which also had information about alcohol promotions. Materials of this nature were handed out by six stalls. Only one stall handed out free merchandise, which consisted of a bottle opener and a lighter

(Figure 8). Additionally, one charity stall had alcohol as a prize for a raffle they were running (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Example of alcohol promotions used, including voucher booklets, free merchandise and leaflets [Freshers' Fair, University of Liverpool]



Figure 9: Charity stall with an alcohol prize for the raffle [Freshers' Fair, University of Liverpool]



University of Liverpool: Refreshers' Fair, February 2019

In contrast to the original freshers' fair, the refreshers' fair consisted of fewer stalls (n= 69), but was again held in the Guild of Students bar. Due to the smaller number of stalls, the event was primarily in the main hall, with a few stands within the entrance. Observers reported the majority of stalls were showcasing student societies, with a range of activities being advertised. This event was less busy than the previous one, however there was still a large number of students in attendance. A total of 14 commercial stalls were noted, none of whom advertised or endorsed alcohol. Additionally, no nightlife venues attended, unlike the previous event. The only alcohol-based promotion observed was by the 'Cocktail Society' who were verbally advertising bar crawls and cocktail masterclasses. Whilst the stall had some posters, they did not have any promotional materials for researchers to collect at the time of observation. In comparison to the first freshers' event, there was a noticeable reduction in the amount of stalls and promotional activity relating to alcohol.

Liverpool John Moores University: Freshers' Fair, September 2018

LJMU held their freshers' fair within the large M&S Arena. The 140 stalls within the venue were organised into rows according to the type of activity they were representing. A large proportion¹⁰ of the stalls were classed as commercial, of which 23 (16% of all stalls) were identified as being associated with nightlife venues or organisations. The organisers had introduced a carnival theme to the event, and observers stated that it was very busy on the day.

A large section of the event centred on the general promotion of products (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic), events and venues, with a huge variety of merchandise being handed out to students. Of the stalls which related to either nightlife venues or activities which feature alcohol, some of the merchandise given out included t-shirts, tote bags, bottle openers, posters and drinking cups (Figure 10). Along with this, leaflets that provided information regarding events, posters and drinks vouchers were handed out. In addition to the merchandise that was being distributed, there was also alcohol being distributed by two of the stalls. This included free rum and cans of pre-mixed alcoholic drinks (Figure 11).

In addition to this, a number of stallholders were handing out drinks vouchers or materials offering discounts on alcoholic beverages in their venues (n=9). A large proportion of those gave students multiple vouchers or discount leaflets at any one time. As well as alcohol being given away, it was also used as an incentive or prize in games by some stalls (Figure 12). Researchers recorded three stalls using alcohol in this way, usually in the form of the bar game, 'Beer Pong' with a variety of drinks being used.

¹⁰ Exact number not recorded.

Figure 10: Collection of merchandise being distributed by nightlife venues or events featuring alcohol [Freshers' Fair, Liverpool John Moores University]

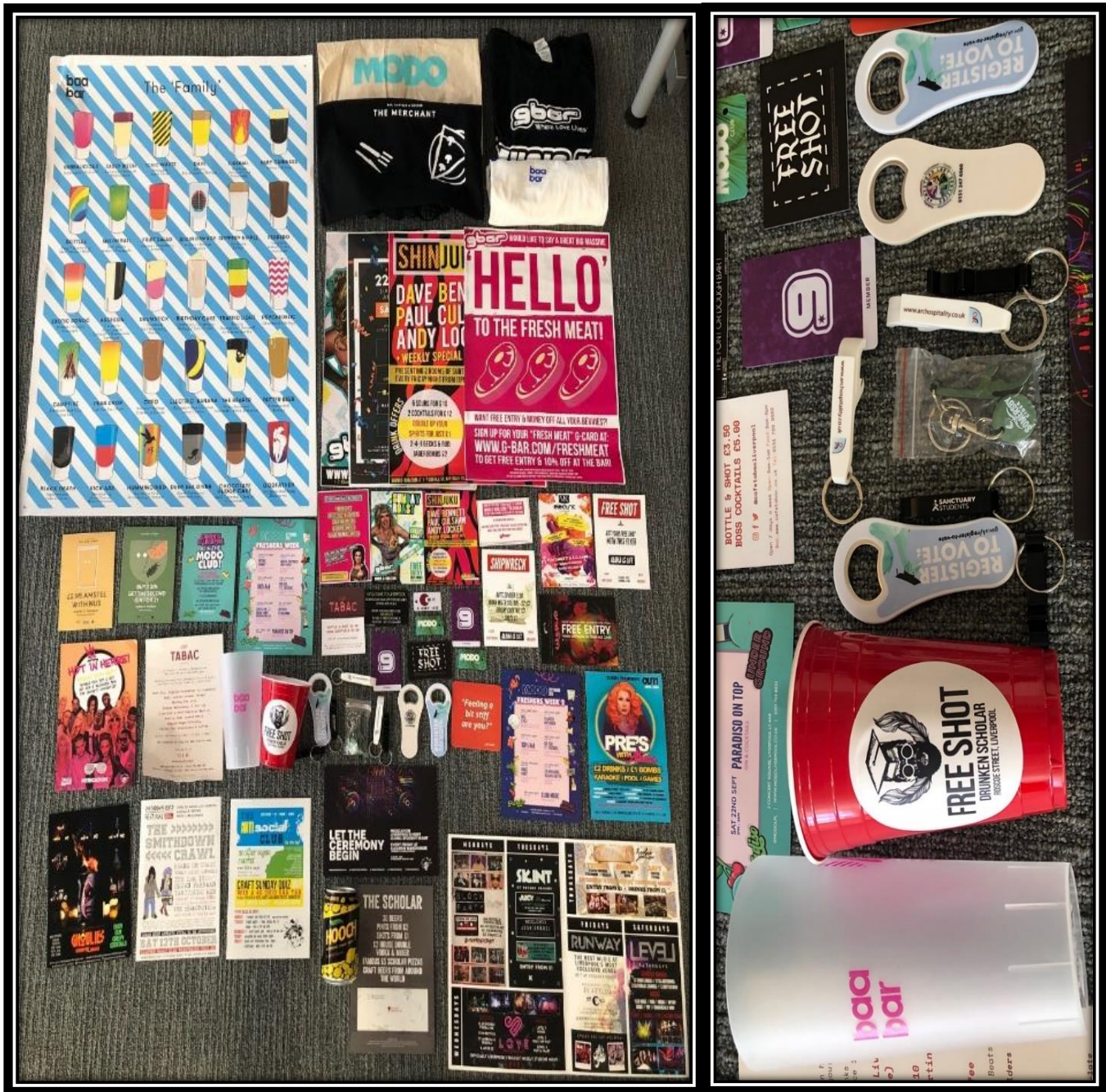


Figure 11: Examples of the alcoholic drinks distributed [Freshers' Fair, Liverpool John Moores University]



Figure 12: Examples of alcohol being used as a prize, or incentive in games ran by stalls [Freshers' Fair, Liverpool John Moores University]



Liverpool John Moores University: Refreshers' Fair, January 2019

LJMU hosted their refreshers' fair in a local event space/bar. In contrast to the first freshers' fair, which was spread over one large room, the refreshers' fair was separated into three distinct rooms. Researchers categorised the first room as being stalls which were commercial, health and wellbeing, or information (i.e. student support and police) focused. The vast majority (approximately 70%) of the commercial stalls were student letting agencies. The second room was hosted by JMSU. It included a smoothie making stall and various stalls which highlighted the various means of support offered by JMSU and promoting ways for new students to get involved with JMSU. A bar that was owned by the host venue was also located in this room and had a promotion of a 20% discount off alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. The third room held LJMU society stands, which were offering membership and events promotions. As with the freshers' fair, researchers recorded information about all the stalls, and collected merchandise and photographs of the event. A total of 52 stalls were recorded with only three (6% of all stalls) having a recognisable link to alcohol. The free merchandise being distributed to students from these stalls included posters, wristbands, drinks vouchers, flyers, badges and keyrings.

As previously mentioned, the bar within the venue was open on the day of the fair, and offered students 20% off their drinks. Researchers reported that the event was popular, however was less busy than the first freshers' fair in September. Additionally, it was noted that there was a bigger emphasis on health and wellbeing within the event, with more stalls offering support to students.

3.3.4 Differences across events

In total, researchers who attended both universities freshers' fairs in September recorded 52 examples of stalls distributing materials relating to alcohol in some way (Table 6). The proportion of materials distributed at the UoL's fair was less than the number from LJMU freshers' fair (n=12 vs 37). It is important to note however that LJMU did have almost double (23 vs 12) the number of stalls which could be linked with alcohol sales or alcohol based events than UoL.

In comparison to these figures, the number of materials distributed at both university refreshers' fairs were much smaller (Table 7). Again, the number of stalls that were in attendance at the refreshers' fair was much smaller than the original freshers' fair held in September. During the course of interviews with partners from both universities, it was discussed that the reduction in size of the event and the reduction in the number of alcohol related stalls was not intentional. However, these events are always on a smaller scale and have a heavier focus on the promotion of societies, health and wellbeing, and support organisations.

Table 6: Overall number of materials distributed by alcohol-related stalls (n=35) from both university Freshers' fairs¹¹

Merchandise	University of Liverpool	Liverpool John Moores University
Leaflets	6	13
T-shirts	-	2
Bags	-	2
Bottle openers	1	4
Drinking cups	-	2
Lighters	1	1
Posters	-	2
Beverages	-	2
Vouchers	4	9
Total	12	37

Table 7: Overall number of materials distributed by alcohol-related stalls (n=4) from both university Refreshers' fairs

Merchandise	University of Liverpool	Liverpool John Moores University
Leaflets	1	1
Membership card	-	1
Posters	-	3
Vouchers	-	2
Badges	-	1
Total	1	8

¹¹ Whilst researchers made every effort to collect all available materials, it is possible that some were missed.

4. Summary of key findings

The overarching aim of the SARPA project is to encourage students in Liverpool to drink less alcohol on a night out and to engage with events that have less of a focus on alcohol. The project consisted of three phases:

- 1) Implementation of research to understand the issue and ways to address it.
- 2) Development of a research-informed plan of activities aiming to reduce alcohol consumption and related harms amongst students, and implementation of these activities during the 2018/19 academic year.
- 3) Exploration of the development and implementation of the SARPA actions plans, and where applicable early indications of the projects impact, and, or anticipated impacts, and barriers to implementation.

This report has aimed to provide an overview of the development and implementation of the actions plans, identify any barriers and facilitating factors to activity implementation, and, explore achieved and, or anticipated outcomes. A summary of key findings is provided below, along with a suite of recommendations to inform future activities or work programmes.

4.1 Development and implementation of the action plans

The SARPA action plans were developed and implemented in collaboration with a range of partners and centred on adopting a multi-agency approach to reducing alcohol promotion and access, and promoting the availability of, and engagement in non-alcohol focused events or drinking activities. Each university produced its own action plan which was informed by findings from phase one of the SARPA project (not all recommendations were clearly addressed in the action plans, e.g. reduction in pre-loaded alcohol consumption), and took into consideration each university's priorities, ability to make direct change or influence policies or practice, resources and broader health and wellbeing plans. Whilst action plans were produced and implemented on an individual basis, both universities do collaborate via a number of local multi-agency action groups (e.g. the health and wellbeing department leads co-chair a citywide student safety group). Further, their existing work programmes, and the SARPA action plans, focus on an overall long-term goal of promoting positive health and wellbeing for all students in the city. However, as each university campus differs, the specific SARPA action plans varied, particularly as the UoL has its own on-licensed premise and designated indoor event area located on its campus (not present across the LJMU campus). Thus, a core component of the proposed UoL actions focused on these settings, which they had direct control over. LJMU does not have any on-licensed premises on site, and consequently their planned activities were typically broader, aiming to promote the overall health and wellbeing of students (within available resources) (also a key aim for the UoL). Whilst LJMU included actions to alter their student events (e.g. freshers' fairs), challenges were noted as they had to engage with external partners to implement these actions as events are predominantly held off campus and their freshers' week events are hosted by an external company.

Critically, universities do not have control over student's access to alcohol off campus, or outside of university events. As previously discussed, in the early stages of the project, SARPA partners engaged with a number of on-licensed premises from Liverpool's nightlife as well as an events company, to see if and how they could support the SARPA project. However, despite common interests, particularly around preventing pre-loaded alcohol use, and discussions around opportunities to collaboratively reduce student alcohol use and related harms, no actions were implemented during the SARPA project period. Reasons for this centred on the financial impacts. However, several on-licensed premises, and the events company contracted to implement LJMU freshers' events, do engage in citywide campaigns, such as DLEM, which potentially has an impact on student alcohol consumption and associated harms. Given the extent of Liverpool's nightlife however, and attraction to students, particularly those new to the city and university, future work should continue to consider if and how on-licensed premises can further support work to reduce student alcohol consumption and related harms. This would complement existing work implemented by the universities (e.g. workshops on drinks measures; safety advice regarding alcohol and nightlife use) and other partners (e.g. DLEM) to address alcohol use off campus, and/or during pre-loading, and amongst non-student patrons or students visiting the city from elsewhere. SARPA partners from both UoL and LJMU commented on how the SARPA project has been beneficial in engaging with staff from a different university and sharing ideas around best practice when it comes to non-alcohol focused events. The Liverpool City-Region has two other universities within the region or close by, Liverpool Hope University and Edge Hill. Future work across the city should consider how partners from these universities can support activities.

4.2 Activities implemented, key outcomes and limitations

The development of the SARPA actions plans led to the implementation of a range of activities across the two universities during the 2018/19 academic year. Whilst all activities were incorporated into existing work programmes, the action plans led to adaptations of planned programmes and, or the inclusion of new activities.

Across the two universities, partners reported implementing activities to **reduce the promotion of alcohol** during events, on promotional materials, on social media or (in the case of UoL) within the on-licensed premise. Our findings suggest a large difference in the promotion of alcohol between the freshers' fairs in September 2018 and refreshers' fairs in early 2019, particularly at the LJMU fairs. However, these differences are most likely the result of a natural change in focus of these events, with the freshers' event concentrated upon introducing students to the city and university, and the refreshers' focused upon re-engaging students and ensuring they have the help and support required. Fresher's events are a key part of a both new and existing students' social calendar, and for new students in particular may illustrate the culture of the university and, or local community, including expectations around students' engagement in alcohol-related activities. As the wider academic literature has demonstrated, students who are new to university will often use introductory events, (which often promote include high levels of alcohol consumption) to make new friends

(Atkinson et al, 2015; Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019). Since freshers' fairs are important in disseminating information about welcome activities it is important that they reduce the promotion of alcohol-fuelled events and promote events that do not have an alcohol focus. It should be noted however that events, such as freshers' fairs, provide income to student unions and therefore it may be difficult for them to turn away business from alcohol related brands and venues. In the future it would be beneficial for universities to work collaboratively with these venues and brands to ensure that messages relating to safe and responsible drinking practices are promoted and that any alcohol promotions are limited and are in line with these messages.

Furthermore, it has also been highlighted within phase one of the SARPA activity that information about welcome events is often sent to students prior to them starting university and they will often have to commit to the events that they plan to attend as they are ticketed and may sell out. Additionally, unofficial means of communication (such as Facebook pages and Whats App groups) may be set up by students before they start university and these will often include discussion about social events. Whilst it is difficult for universities to police these groups, it is important that they send out promotional materials for the non-alcohol focused events prior to students starting university so that they are aware of the variety of activities that they can engage with. This would also have the potential to help embed non-alcohol focused events in the norms associated with student life, before potential students start university.

Partners at the UoL have aimed to **reduce student access to alcohol** through refusing sales of alcohol to drunks within the UoL bar (as part of the DLEM intervention) and ensuring alcohol is not offered as a prize during quizzes. LJMU do not have any direct control over student access to alcohol as they do not have a venue. However, there were instances of alcohol being provided freely or at a discounted rate during the LJMU freshers' and refreshers' fairs, along with numerous alcohol promotions (more than at equivalent events at UoL). LJMU should consider how they can work with the nightlife venues and alcohol brands that attend their freshers' fair to explore how they can collaboratively deliver responsible drinking messages to students and, if feasible, actively prevent alcohol retailers from offering students free or cheap drinks during university led student events.

There has been an **increase in the availability of, and access to non-alcoholic drinks**, through the explicit display and promotion of water (in the UoL bar and at LJMU events) and non-alcoholic beverages (in the UoL bar). The accessible provision of free water within bar and event environments may encourage students to have a soft drink alongside or instead of an alcoholic drink. In phase one, some students discussed how it might not occur to them to drink water on their night out so increasing visibility may have helped to encourage this. Further consideration for the future could include a water dispensing machine which would mean that water was continuously available (during peak times it may not occur to bar staff to replenish the jugs of water) and would remove any risk of the water being contaminated. This, coupled with an increase in non-alcoholic drinks being available, can reduce the stigma

that nightlife venues are solely alcohol focused as it would increase the visibility of these alternative options to alcohol.

Further efforts to **promote consumption of non-alcoholic drinks** at the UoL bar included increasing the price differential between non-alcoholic 'mocktails' and alcoholic cocktails. The UoL bar did intend to make more of a difference in price between soft drinks and alcoholic drinks in their Friday night £1.80 drinks offers, but were unable to implement this in the current academic year. Offering pints of both soft drinks and alcoholic drinks is in opposition to the SARPA ethos; findings from the student survey, and the student focus groups and paired interviews from phase 1, suggested that saving money and selecting drinks that appear to offer value for money are key motivators for students in deciding to reduce their alcohol consumption. Henceforth, offering both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks for the same price could potentially encourage alcohol consumption as it makes the alcoholic option appear to be better value for money. Thus, ensuring non-alcoholic drinks are cheaper than alcoholic drinks, and/or alcohol drinks are more expensive, may help encourage students to drink less alcohol.

Both universities described **diversifying the offer of events** they provide to students, including those implemented outside and within the nightlife setting, and at different times of the day (including the evening). At the UoL, this included providing training to student societies to encourage them to make their events more inclusive, ensuring that they have less of an alcohol focus. Critically, both universities noted that their efforts did not focus on promoting messages for students not to drink, but rather increasing the range of activities that are available to them across the universities and the city, that are not alcohol focused. Many of the students surveyed reported attending events that were not alcohol focused during the academic year (up to January 2019), and anecdotal evidence from partners suggested that such events were well attended and enjoyed by students. Offering a broad range of events for students to partake in should continue to form part of efforts to reduce student alcohol consumption. An increase in events without an alcohol focus, can help to increase the level of inclusivity by ensuring students who do not engage in the student intoxication culture have the opportunity to participate in alternative social events. This is particularly pertinent to international or non-local students who are often unfamiliar with the area, and who may be at increased risk of loneliness. The increase in activities centred around health and wellbeing, and educating students on the harms of excessive alcohol consumption, have the potential to contribute to improvement in student's physical and mental wellbeing. These actions could also potentially contribute to a reduction in risky behaviours.

Both universities implement a range of activities to promote student health and wellbeing, including encouraging and supporting students to drink less alcohol, and supporting students who may be affected by alcohol related issues. LJMU hoped to develop and implement a substance misuse support policy during the SARPA implementation period and this was included in their action plan. Whilst they were unable to implement the policy during the implementation period, guidance notes for students were produced. This action point was

designed to run alongside other substance use support activities being ran within the university, and in particular the introduction of drop in sessions provided by Young Addaction which were designed to **support students regarding drugs and alcohol use**. However, after low uptake, the drop in sessions were relocated to one of the accommodation providers, and this resulted in an increased uptake. This highlights how existing provision of activities that promote student health and wellbeing should continue to be reviewed in order to ensure they are being delivered in the most effective way.

Social media has been highlighted in this report as having an important role in delivering health related messages. In the student survey for example, social media was the preferred delivery method for health promotion messages. Further, DLEM was considered to be the most effective way of encouraging students to drink less alcohol on a night out and this has a high presence on social media. Wider academic literature has highlighted how alcohol venues and brands will often use social media to promote alcohol consumption and that this is often done by incorporating content that eludes to specific intoxication culture and identity (Atkinson et al, 2015; Brooks, 2010; Mosher, 2012; Nicholls, 2012; Ross-Houle and Quigg, 2019). In an attempt to counteract this, universities could try to promote health related messages in a similar way by aligning the notion of drinking less or engaging with non-alcohol focused events with notions of identity that are popular with the student population. Consideration also needs to be given as to where these messages should be placed. University buildings were cited as being the preferred location for health related messages in the student survey so one possibility could be to display Twitter and Instagram feeds on screens within university owned buildings.

4.3 Logic model and theory of change

The evaluation findings have been used to develop a logic model to demonstrate the activities that were implemented as a result of the SARPA action plan and the associated and, or anticipated short, medium and longer-term outcomes. In terms of the ability to implement and influence change, our evaluation highlighted how the UoL was able to make direct changes to alcohol availability, pricing and promotion through the bar; this demonstrates that universities who have these opportunities may have more ability to directly influence student alcohol intake and associated outcomes whilst on campus. For LJMU and JMSU, the implementation of action plan activities involved working across organisations and with partners to influence change using non-direct methods and using activities related to student health and wellbeing as a vehicle to support this.

The UoL and LJMU engaged with the SARPA project in different ways. The logic model shows the programme of activities that were embedded by each organisation as a result of SARPA and demonstrates the alcohol-specific activities, particularly those delivered by UoL.

The activities delivered by UoL and some delivered by LJMU provided some measurable outcomes, however, not all of these were evidenced through the evaluation activities, and/or cannot be measured within the project timeframe as change would not be expected within

this timeframe. Some (e.g. delivery of events) were not alcohol-specific; whilst we cannot directly measure the attribution of these activities to a reduction in excessive alcohol consumption we would expect this to have some positive impact on the anticipated short, medium and longer-term outcomes. The logic model and theory of change could be used by partners as a vehicle to develop and continue future work, and monitor and measure change. Partners should consider how future work can be monitored, and where feasible set up processes to monitor students' views of activities implemented to ensure they are attractive to them and meet their needs.

Furthermore, wider partners, such as on-licensed premises across Liverpool that do not have affiliation with the two university's should also be provided with the logic model and theory of change to help demonstrate what changes are possible with regards to reducing harmful alcohol consumption, and the positive impacts these changes can have. This could help to initiate discussions about the wider culture of alcohol consumption in Liverpool City Centre and how the nightlife environment could be diversified to include more activities and drink options that do not promote over intoxication.

4.4 Conclusion

The SARPA project has suggested that reducing alcohol consumption amongst students requires the delivery of a wide range of activities in partnership with different organisations in order to mobilise change. Partners have highlighted a number of immediate positive changes as a result of engagement in the SARPA project, including a reduction in alcohol promotion and access, and increased availability of non-alcoholic drinks and non-alcohol focused events that appear to be well received by students. If sustained, this has the potential to lead to longer-term outcomes relating to changes in culture and acceptability of alcohol use amongst students, and ultimately reductions in alcohol consumption and related harms. Critically however, the research has highlighted that further and continued work is required to enable such changes to occur. SARPA partners should continue to develop (based on SARPA research findings and other evidence) and implement their actions plans, incorporating them in to existing or future multi-agency work programmes, with mechanisms in place to monitor progress, develop interventions and measure change. Further, it is evident that in order for activities such as those implemented by SARPA to be successful, commitment and engagement is needed from all relevant partners. This report has highlighted how there was some disparity between the two universities in terms of levels of engagement. For example, it was possible for UoL to engage with activities associated with alcohol consumption in the night time economy because they have a licenced bar, however it was more challenging for LJMU as they had to rely on the co-operation of external venues and their events management company. Crucially, because high levels of alcohol consumption are embedded within mainstream student culture, any activities need to be maintained and reviewed to ensure that they are reaching the target audience and engaging effectively. Equally, programmes to prevent excessive alcohol consumption amongst students should be incorporated into broader strategic approaches that recognise the wider influences on alcohol use. This should include consideration of policy and practice options around alcohol price, promotion and availability that are likely to influence both overall alcohol consumption and in particular harmful drinking behaviours such as preloading.

Recommendations

All universities

- SARPA partners should continue to develop (based on SARPA research findings and other evidence) and implement their actions plans, incorporating them in to existing or future university-level and city-wide multi-agency work programmes, with mechanisms in place to monitor progress, develop interventions and measure change. Activities should focus on Liverpool's student population as a whole, and students within each university. Partners should consider if and how other universities (e.g. Liverpool Hope University and Edge Hill) can support future work.
- LJMU and UoL should continue to share examples of best practice around organising events that do not focus on alcohol, as well as any health related messages that have been well received by students relating to alcohol. Other local universities and student accommodation services could also be included in this knowledge exchange.
- SARPA partners should continue to engage with the on-licensed alcohol trade across Liverpool's nightlife to consider if and how they can further support work to reduce student alcohol consumption and related harms. This could include the development and implementation of approaches to promote a more balanced drinking and socialising offer across nightlife venues that has less of a focus on alcohol. Sharing information of the types of social activities local students attend and their views on the impacts of drinks promotions, as well as the experiences and lessons learnt from the changes made at the UoL Sphinx bar (e.g. provision and promotion of a wider range of alcohol free/low alcohol beverages), and other approaches implemented elsewhere in the UK (e.g. nudging pubs¹²) may help make the case for premises to diversity their offer.
- Partners should aim to ensure that future student activities, particularly those introducing students to university and the city, such as fresher's events, have less of a focus on alcohol. Specific measures could include limiting alcohol promotion and availability during events, and promoting responsible drinking guidelines and alternative activities. For events hosted by externally commissioned providers (e.g. LJMU fresher's fair), this may require a contractual agreement requesting that the provider takes specific steps to discourage cultures of intoxication.
- Offering a broad range of events for students should continue to be a part of efforts to reduce student alcohol consumption, and promote overall health and wellbeing and the student experience.
- Universities should further consider how to capitalise the influence that social media has within the student population and how it can be used to deliver effective health messages.

¹² <http://nudgingpubs.uk/>

- Partners should consider how future work can be monitored, and where feasible set up processes to monitor students' views of activities implemented to ensure they are attractive and meet their needs. Consideration could be given to the implementation of an annual cross-university student health and wellbeing survey that would provide baseline and subsequent comparative data so that student alcohol consumption, amongst other issues, is monitored across the city.
- The logic model and theory of change presented in this report could be used by partners as a vehicle to develop and continue future work, and monitor and measure change.

LJMU

- John Moores Student Union (JMSU) should aim to include a caveat when they next invite event management companies to tender for the freshers' week contract that states that they must commit to activities to discourage cultures of intoxication and reduce student alcohol consumption. For example, ensuring that the promotion and availability of alcohol is limited, restricting opportunities for students to access multiple alcohol offers in the form of free alcoholic drinks and drinks vouchers (e.g. limiting access to one per person during the whole event). Furthermore, where alcohol is promoted and/or available, this should be balanced with the provision of responsible drinking guidance, and where applicable information on non-alcohol related activities or promotions.
- LJMU should continue to consider the development and implementation of a substance misuse support policy.

UoL

- The UoL should continue to explore if and how they can increase the price differential between non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages sold in their on-campus bar.
- The UoL may wish to consider ways to ensure free tap water continues to be readily and safely available (e.g. through provision of a tap water dispensing machine).

Wider partners

- The **on-licensed alcohol trade** should consider diversifying their offer, to ensure they meet the changing demand of customers to engage in activities with less of a focus on intoxication, and support the reduction of alcohol consumption and related harms across Liverpool's nightlife. Consideration could be given to SARPA findings around the types of social activities local students attend and the experiences of the UoL Sphinx bar (e.g. provision and promotion of a wider range of alcohol free/low alcohol beverages and the promotion of soft drinks), along with approaches developed elsewhere (e.g. nudging pubs) (see Appendix 1). Broader diversification of what venues offer across the city, during the day and night, could enhance the city's socialisation and entertainment provision, and potentially attract a broader clientele.

- **Partners involved in managing and/or developing Liverpool's nightlife** (e.g. licensing teams; spatial planning groups) should consider the role that they can have in: reducing cultures of intoxication; diversifying the use of on-licensed (and other) venues; and, opening up the nightlife environment, and use of on-licensed venues (e.g. during the daytime) to a broader clientele (e.g. community associations).
- **Alcohol-licensing teams** could consider encouraging new and/or existing alcohol retailers to introduce steps to reduce excessive alcohol use and promote a more diverse offer, considering both commercial and societal benefits (e.g. see Appendix 1). Existing partnerships and interventions could be used to facilitate the sharing of ideas, lessons learnt and best practice across venues.
- Programmes to prevent excessive alcohol consumption amongst students should be incorporated into **broader strategic approaches that recognise the wider influences on alcohol use**. This should include consideration of policy and practice options around alcohol price¹³, promotion and availability that are likely to influence both overall alcohol consumption and in particular harmful drinking behaviours such as preloading.

¹³ E.g. minimum unit pricing.

Figure 13: SARPA Logic Model

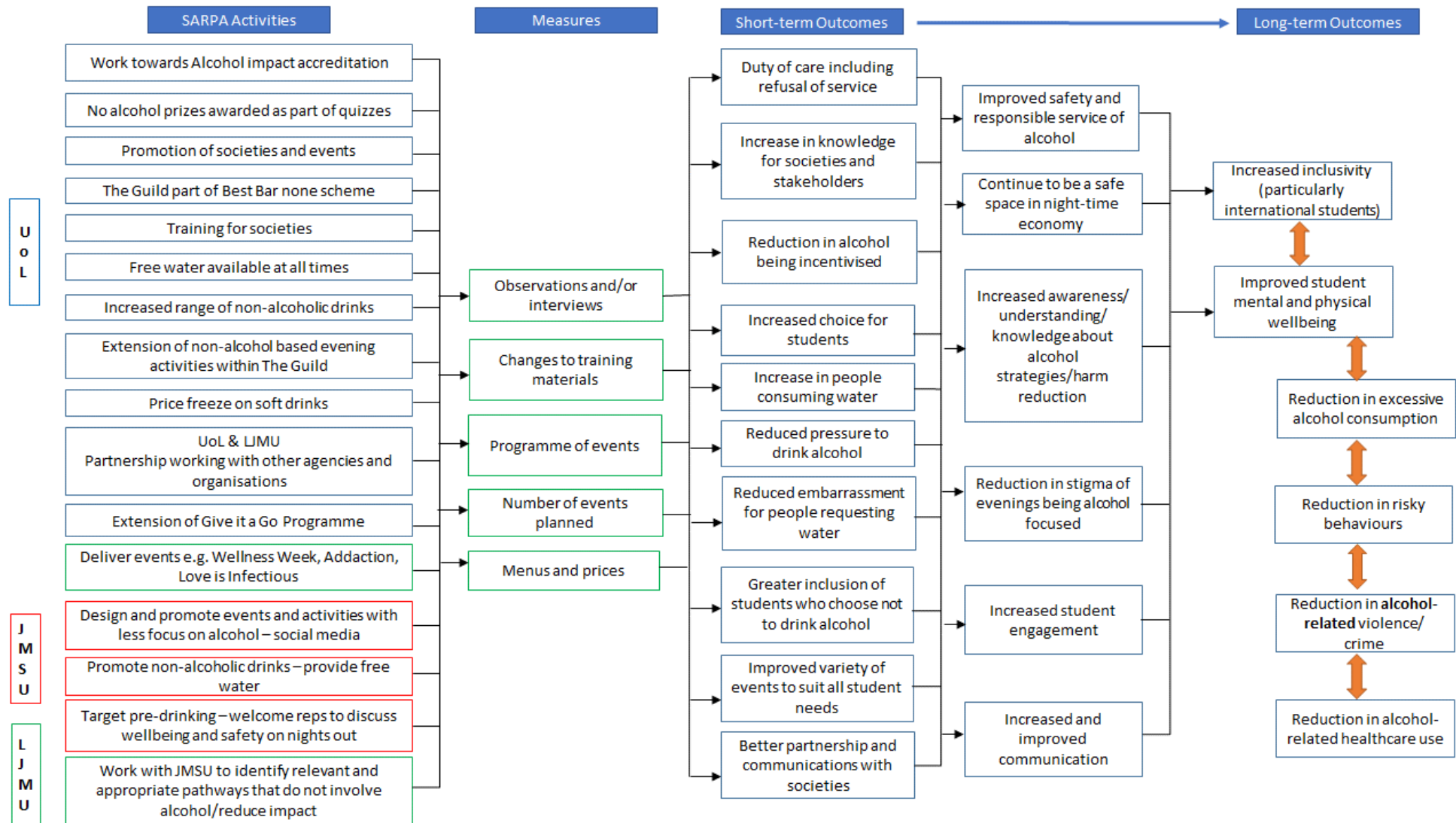
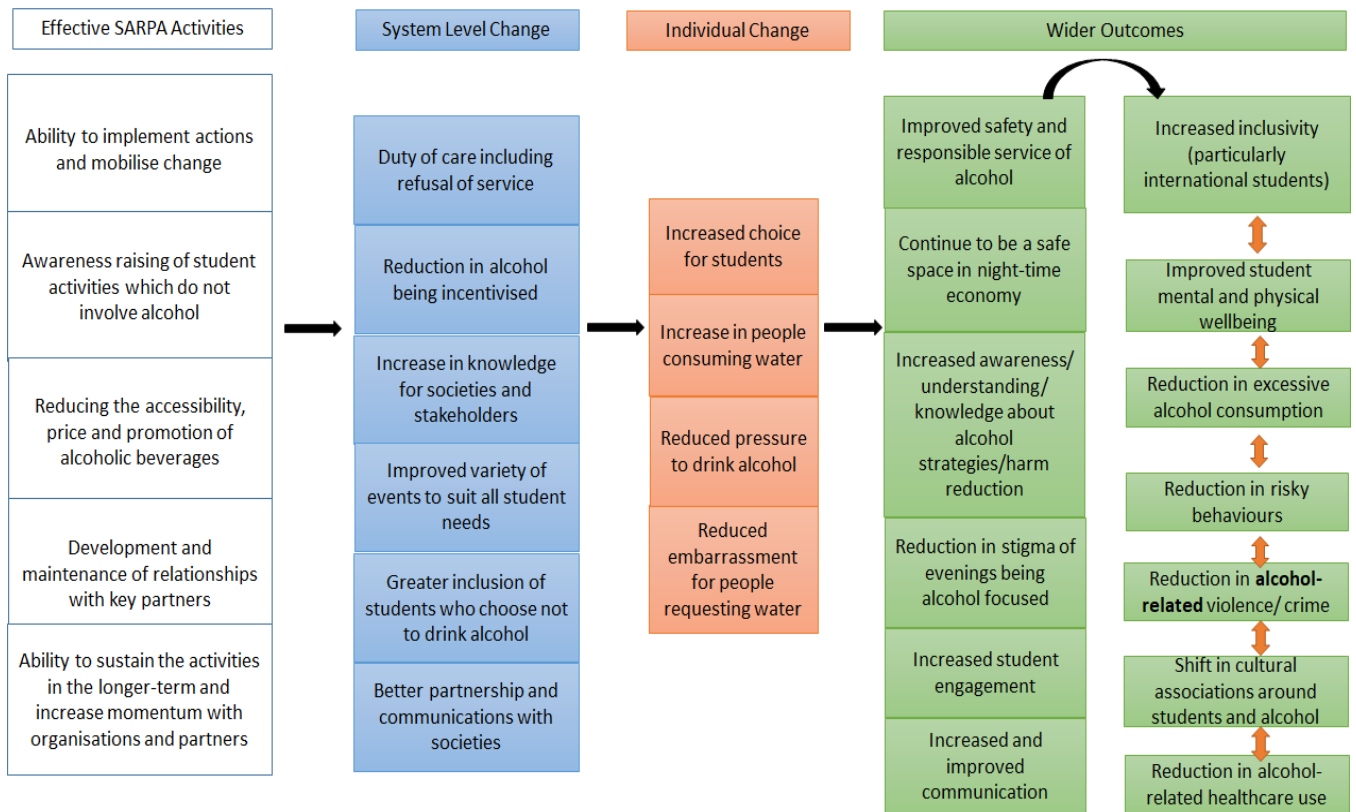


Figure 14: SARPA theory of change



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6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Examples of approaches on-licensed venues could take to diversify their offer and support the prevention of excessive alcohol use¹⁴

General

- Engage in local interventions and training such as the Drink Less Enjoy More (DLEM) intervention, the Best Bar None scheme, and the Good Night Out campaign. These approaches aim to promote **responsible management and operation of alcohol-licensed premises**, set common standards across venues, and support partnership working and knowledge exchange across venues and other partners, promoting a healthy thriving nightlife.

Venue level

- Consider if the venue environment provides an **inclusive atmosphere for non-drinkers** or people who want to drink less alcohol (i.e. adequate seating, food offered, non-drinking activities).
- Ensure the premises remains a **'safe space'** for customers by continuing to refuse alcohol sales to intoxicated¹⁵ and underage patrons.
- Ensure drinks **promotions include low and non-alcoholic alternatives** and that they are **promoted as prominently** as their alcoholic counterparts (i.e. cocktail offers include non-alcoholic 'mocktail' options).
- Enhance the **range of low or non-alcohol alternatives**. By ensuring a varied range of soft drinks and non-alcoholic beverages, customers who do not drink or wish to drink less are more likely to feel welcome to the venue.
- Include low or non-alcoholic drinks on drinks menus and **advertise the variety** on offer consistently.
- **Do not use alcohol** as a **prizes or incentives** (i.e. quizzes and competitions).
- **Reduce the price of soft drinks** to make them more **'value for money'** in comparison to alcoholic beverages. This sense of 'value' is critical to people when making the decision whether to drink alcohol or not. Additionally, the sense of value may encourage additional patrons to visit the venue.
- Provide **free easily accessible water** for all patrons. This could include provision of water dispensers allowing patrons to access water without the need to queue at the bar or ask a member of staff, or provision of jugs of water for groups on tables.

¹⁴ Based on findings from the SARPA project and Nudging Pubs¹⁴.

¹⁵ Including engagement in the DLEM intervention.

Appendix 2: Methodology

In order to carry out phase 3 of the SARPA intervention, a mixed methods approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods was undertaken.

Semi-structured interviews (project stakeholders)

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with stakeholders involved in the SARPA project (n=9). These included representatives from both universities, accommodation providers and partners from Liverpool City Council. Interviews were carried out via telephone and lasted approximately 40 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for set themes to be explored through open-ended questions. Throughout the interviews, participants discussed their views and perceptions of the activities implemented from their action plan. Questions explored the development of the action plan, what went well with the intervention activities, any deviations from the action plan, barriers and future changes, as well as student engagement and impact. In addition to this, participants were asked about their expected outcomes and the outcomes that were achieved.

Student surveys

In order to collect information about a range of topics relating to student drinking, researchers conducted surveys with students over a two-month period. Data collection took place in university campuses, including the student union and lecture theatres. Students were provided with a participant information sheet prior to filling out the survey, and their consent given at the beginning of the survey form. A total of 197 students participated in the survey, which aimed to assess their drinking behaviours and motivations, and types of events attended. Additionally, participants were shown five health messages and menu exerts, and then asked to provide their views on their effectiveness. The survey also asked questions about:

- Demographics (e.g. age, gender¹⁶, year of study).
- The participants' drinking behaviours (e.g. frequency that they drank alcohol, number of typical units consumed).
- Perception of health messages and drinks promotions (e.g. were they effective? which was the most/least effective?).
- Motivations for drinking less alcohol (e.g. save money, lose weight, a better variety of non-alcoholic drinks).
- Effective ways to communicate health messages (e.g. social media / posters / health talks and where would they be best placed?).
- Events already attended (e.g. quiz nights, film nights, sports activities).
- Events that participant would like to attend in the future.
- Events that participant would like to attend in the future.

Analysis of secondary and partner data

¹⁶ Gender categorised as 'Other' was removed due to low numbers.

As part of the continued SARPA project, analysis of materials from Freshers' Fairs, and Re-Freshers' Fairs was conducted. Researchers attended two Freshers' Fairs at the beginning of the academic year in September 2018, and an additional two Re-Freshers' Fairs in early 2019. The aim of this activity was to gather basic information about each stand (e.g. what it was promoting, whether alcohol was advertised and what promotion strategies were utilised), and collect any materials that were being distributed. The materials gathered included photographs, leaflets, posters, and free merchandise i.e. t-shirts, glasses etc. By collating this information, researchers aimed to be able to detail the proportions of stands that had an alcohol focus, or were promoting businesses where alcohol would be consumed. Additionally, by examining the types of merchandise being offered, further conclusions about the methods that organisations use to promote themselves could be analysed.

Observations and case study

As a mechanism to effectively evaluate the SARPA intervention activities, researchers undertook the formation of a case study involving one of the venues previously visited in phase 1 of the project. The Sphinx bar, located within the Liverpool Guild of Students was chosen due to its high student population, and its participation with specific elements of the SARPA intervention. In the first instance, observations were done in the chosen venue to demonstrate the extent to which intervention activities took place, and to document in further details of the processes involved. The Sphinx bar was visited over the duration of three nights during the hours of 7-11pm. Researchers attended the venue in pairs on a Wednesday and Friday night, as well as a night when a key sporting event was being shown. A pre-designed observation recording form was implemented for researchers to be able to make note of their observations and to ensure consistency on the information being recorded. Researchers made initial observations such as the type and characteristics of the venue and clientele and then proceeded to walk around the venue and record information about the venue as a whole. Any promotional materials referencing alcohol were noted and photographed (where possible), as were drinks menus. Additionally, researchers observed the bar layout, in particular the placement of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, again taking photographs where possible. Information relating to the cost of four drinks: a glass of coke, a bottle of standard brand beer, a single vodka and coke, and a cup of tea, and number of staff within the venue were recorded on each night. After observations had taken place, the formation of the case study began with researchers collating materials gathered through the observations, interviews, focus groups and any existing data or documentation. The varied research mechanisms implemented enabled researchers to gain a comprehensive picture of the intervention activities that took place and provided significant detail into the development and implementation processes.

Data analysis

All quantitative data were entered, cleaned and analysed in SPSS v23. Analyses used frequencies, descriptive statistics and chi-squared tests. Common themes throughout the interviews and focus groups were identified and collated. Illustrative quotations have been used within the report to highlight and evidence these themes.

Qualitative data gathered through the interviews were used to inform the development of a logic model. This model depicts the activities that were implemented by UoL student union, LJMU and the JMU Students Union. The model shows the short, medium and longer-term outcomes that are (or anticipated to be) associated with these activities, as demonstrated via the interview findings and our knowledge from the research literature (relating specifically to the evidence which demonstrates longer-term outcomes).

Ethical considerations

Approval for this study was obtained from the Liverpool John Moores Research Ethics Committee (17PHI006). Informed consent was obtained from all of those who took part in interviews, as well as those who completed a student survey. All of the data included in this report has been anonymised to ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

