

## HBSC IRELAND

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a research study conducted by an international network of research teams<sup>1</sup> in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (Europe) and co-ordinated by Professor Candace Currie of the University of St Andrews. This factsheet is based on data collected in 2010 from 12,661 10-17 year olds in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

Further information is available at:  
<http://www.hbsc.org>  
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**hbsc**  
HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN  
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



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**Summary**

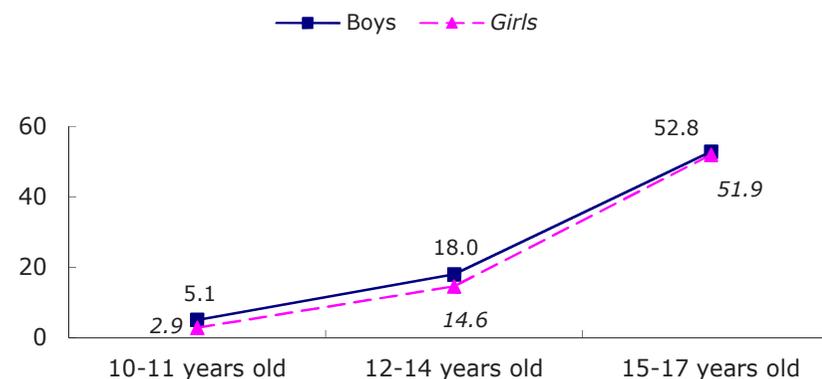
HBSC Ireland 2010 has found that the percentage of children who report having been 'really drunk' has slightly decreased between 2006 (32.4%) and 2010 (28.1%). There are higher rates of reported drunkenness among older children; 3.7% of 10-11 year olds, 19.4% of 12-14 year olds and 56.6% of 15-17 year olds. The decreases since 2006 are largest in the two older age groups. There are only marginal differences in drunkenness between the older girls and boys. Those who have been 'really drunk' are less likely than those who have not to report that they live with both parents, find it easy to talk to their mother and their father and to report liking school. They are more likely to report that they find it easy to talk to their best friend, spend four or more evenings out per week and that they feel pressured by their school work than those who report that they have never been 'really drunk'. Being drunk in this factsheet refers to children who report having had so much alcohol that they were 'really drunk' once or more in their lifetime.

**Why this topic?**

Perceived drunkenness is a relatively common result of excessive alcohol consumption and particularly for young people can be seen as an indicator of alcohol misuse and a risk factor for problem behaviours<sup>2,3</sup>. Excessive alcohol use can disrupt the processes of brain development in childhood and adolescence, which in turn can influence cognitive, emotional and social development<sup>4</sup>.

**Change 2006-2010**

Overall there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of children who report that they have been 'really drunk' from 32.4% in 2006 to 28.1% in 2010. This decrease is most pronounced for those aged 12-17 years. The rates are marginally higher among younger boys than younger girls but in the 15-17 year old age group the gender difference is very small.

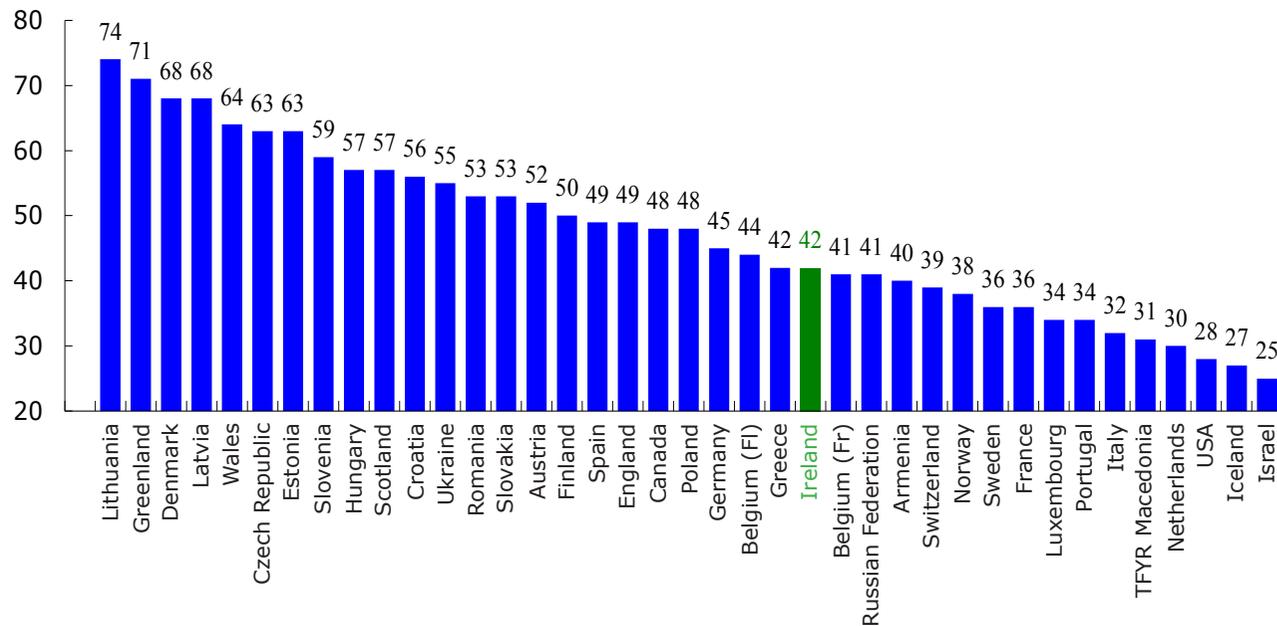


Percentage of children who have been really drunk, by age and gender

**Drunkness in context**

- Children who have been 'really drunk' are less likely to report living with both parents (67.8%) compared with those who have not (77.4%).
- Children who have been 'really drunk' are less likely to find it easy to talk to their mother (73.5% vs. 85.0%) or father (57.8% vs. 69.9%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been 'really drunk' are more likely to find it easy to talk to their best friend than those who have not (90.4% vs. 87.4%).
- Children who have been 'really drunk' are more likely to spend four or more evenings per week out with friends than those who have not (47.2% vs. 35.4%).
- Children who have been 'really drunk' are less likely than those who have not to report liking school (55.0% vs. 77.2%).
- Children who have been 'really drunk' are more likely than those who have not to report that they feel pressured by their schoolwork (46.6% vs. 35.6%).

## ...Drunkenness among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year olds reporting having been 'really drunk', by country

- Children from lower social classes are more likely to report having been 'really drunk': social classes 5-6 (30.2%), social classes 3-4 (27.1%) and social classes 1-2 (26.1%).

### International

Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 24th among 39 countries in Europe and North America with 42.1% reporting that they have been 'really drunk'. The countries with the highest rates are Lithuania (74.5%) and Greenland (71.2%) and those with the lowest rates are Israel (25.3%) and Iceland (26.6%). Overall 4.0% of 11 year olds in Ireland (rank 27th) and 14.3% of 13 year olds in Ireland (rank 27th) report having been 'really drunk'.

### Implications

Drunkenness as reported by schoolchildren in Ireland, has remained stable or slightly decreased over the years. Ireland ranks mid to low among countries involved in HBSC 2010, with higher rates of drunkenness rates in many UK and Northern European countries. These data suggest that good relationships with parents may play a protective role whereas peer relationships may increase the likelihood of drinking so much alcohol that children experience drunkenness. There is a sizable percentage of under-age children who reported excessive alcohol consumption and there is a demonstrable need to address this aspect of alcohol use in primary and secondary prevention programmes.

### References

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