

Hong Kong legislation on alcohol sale ban to minors ‘not enough’

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Education and awareness of underage drinking and alcoholism also required, support group says

Education is needed in order to tackle the problem of underage drinking in the city, and a [sale ban on alcohol](#) [1] to those under 18 is not enough to solve the problem, a youth group has said.

Sky Siu, executive director of youth charity KELY Support Group, said she welcomed tighter regulations on alcohol sales but wanted to see this combined with better education on consumption relating to young people.

“Owing to what we have found, we do think it is a step in the right direction for the government to look at some better regulations in terms of access to alcohol,” she said.

[Easy access to booze for minors in Hong Kong](#) [2]

“But that is not the only thing that needs to be done. There should be more conversations about how alcohol is introduced to young people, and we need to find more creative solutions to this problem.”

One recovering adult alcoholic, who has attended workshops with the support group, said there should also be more help for addicted youngsters.

“Making it difficult to obtain alcohol is important but providing the resources for understanding where the problem is coming from and different ways to approach it, is also important,” he said.

“The problem in Hong Kong is that there is a sense that the admission of alcoholism is not encouraged.

[Act quickly to end the scourge of underage drinking](#) [3]

“There is no awareness of what it means for a young person to have a drinking problem.”

He added: “We need the government to acknowledge that this is a disease. The abuser should not be thought of as a bad person. We should think of them as sick people who are trying to get better. We need to encourage family members to speak to each other.”

Joseph Wan, a 17-year-old student at Chinese International School, also said he did not believe a ban would be effective as youngsters would still find ways of obtaining alcohol.

“Hong Kong is a very money-based society, so even if there is a ban, people will still sell it and teenagers will find ways to get it,” Wan said.

“Ideally the government would want it to work, but I do not think it will,” he added.

[Hong Kong doctors want ban on sale of alcohol to under-18s](#) [4]

Wan is also the founder of Support International Foundation, a youth-led non-governmental organisation dedicated to bringing educational programmes to communities in need.

He said binge drinking was not a serious problem among his peers, but he knew of some teenagers who could become intoxicated and get out of control after a session. Wan said he and his peers drank mostly at house parties.

But he pointed out: "People also drink in their own homes. Legislation will not stop the situation because people may have alcohol lying around at home anyway." This meant the booze was still accessible to minors in the family.

Wan added that while the underage drinking problem is endemic throughout the student population in the city, those from local schools might be more "conservative" in their approach to drinking, compared to their counterparts from international schools.

Source URL: <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2063957/hong-kong-legislation-alcohol-sale-ban-minors-not>

Links

[1] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2064066/new-law-stop-minors-hong-kong-buying-alcohol-shops>

[2] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2064046/easy-access-booze-minors-hong-kong>

[3] <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2026402/act-quickly-end-scourge-underage-drinking>

[4] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/1964251/hong-kong-doctors-want-ban-sale-alcohol-under-18s>