



Parents who buy alcohol are 'creating underage drinking problems' for teenage girls

By [Anna Edwards](#)

Parents are contributing to teenagers' drinking problems by buying them bottles of cheap booze, a probation watchdog has warned.

Liz Calderbank, HM Chief Inspector of Probation, says parents underestimate the risks of buying 'boxes of lager' for their teenage children.

She also blamed the low prices and easy availability of alcohol for the surge in teenage girls violently offending and warned they were becoming increasingly vulnerable while under the influence.

The Department of Health has warned that British girls are more likely to binge drink than anywhere else in Europe.

Ms Calderbank made her warnings to *The Evening Standard* as she launched an investigation into alcohol-fuelled violent offending by female youngsters.

She told the newspaper that alcohol was behind the different patterns of female offending, which had seen a rise in women joining gangs and committing serious crimes.

She said: 'The impact of alcohol consumption can be underestimated because alcohol is accepted as a recreational drug.

'For girls, it can lead to involvement in violent offending and increased vulnerability.

Ms Calderbank also warned that excessively drinking made girls vulnerable to being sexually exploited.

Her warnings came as earlier reports highlighted the extent of the problem, where 6,000 girls were being sexually taken advantage of by street gangs across England.

The planned investigation into the effects of alcohol on young women is a timely one, as the Government plans a crackdown on cheap booze.

It plans to slap a minimum price per unit of alcohol in an attempt to stop binge drinking.

Medical professionals have supported the action, agreeing it will reduce drunken and disorderly behaviour. But the alcohol industry says minimum pricing will have little effect.

A spokesman for the Wine and Spirit Trade Association said strict law enforcement and education about alcohol is the way to stop reckless drinking and alcohol-related crimes, not cutting the price of it.