

Newsletter from Alcohol Focus Scotland

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February 2024

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Scottish Government announce plans to increase MUP

Following a **consultation** on minimum unit pricing (MUP) in late 2023, the Scottish Government has brought forward two pieces of secondary legislation: one to continue the policy and one to increase the price to 65p per unit. The Scottish Parliament is expected to vote on the two draft items of legislation before the end of April 2024.

Welcoming the announcement, Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, said, "It's encouraging to see cross-party support on the issue. With the recent

rise in alcohol deaths, and the impact of the pandemic, we need the Scottish Parliament to work together. Without support to increase the price, the positive effects we've seen will be reversed, with hundreds of people experiencing suffering and loss because of alcohol. This is particularly true for people living in our most deprived communities, where we've seen the greatest benefits from MUP."

The announcement came after a Health, Social Care and Sport Committee **meeting** where MSPs took evidence on the impact of minimum unit pricing from public health advocates including our chief executive, Alison Douglas, as well as from industry representatives. **Read our written evidence.**


Ahead of the vote, we are campaigning to ensure that the policy is maintained and increased. **Write to your MSP** and ask them to vote in favour of continuing and increasing MUP, to save and improve the lives of people in Scotland.

 **Read our full comment**


 **More on MUP**

MUP works.


To optimise this life-saving policy the Scottish Parliament must:




**Vote to
retain MUP**



**Uprate to at least
65p per unit**



**Link with
affordability**



UPDATE

People in recovery and MUP

Listening to and highlighting the voices of lived and living experience is an important part of our work at Alcohol Focus Scotland. Over the past 2 years, our **Involvement team** has been working with people and organisations to help guide the development of alcohol policy.

More recently, our Involvement Team has been speaking with people in recovery about their thoughts on MUP. Last month, the team spoke with people from **Borders in Recovery** to hear their opinion of MUP.

The group were strongly in favour of raising the MUP, feeling that it should be set even

higher than 65p. Whilst recognising the limited impact of MUP on current dependent drinkers, they felt that MUP was important in preventing people from developing dependency in the first place. An alcohol harm prevention levy was a very popular idea; the group were shocked to discover that retailers profit from the policy and thought the money would be better spent on alcohol treatment and care. **See their views demonstrated in illustration.**

 **Check out our MUP playlist on YouTube**

UPDATE

Levy on supermarkets could raise £57 million a year

New research from the Fraser of Allander Institute at the University of Strathclyde shows that a levy on shops and supermarkets that sell alcohol could raise £57 million a year.

While off-sales of alcohol have gone down by an estimated 3.5% due to minimum unit pricing, this research provides new estimates that suggest revenue from alcohol has increased by more than £30m a year. This means shops and supermarkets are likely making greater profits.

The report findings demonstrate the potential for retailers that profit from the sale of alcohol to contribute towards the financial burden alcohol places on society. According to recent estimates, alcohol costs Scotland up to £10 billion every year, including £700 million in health and social care costs.

Alcohol Focus Scotland have welcomed the Scottish Government's announcement in the recent Budget that they are considering reintroducing the Public Health Supplement.

 **Read more**

 **Get in touch to discuss the levy**



CONSULTATIONS

Wellbeing And Sustainable Development Bill

Alcohol Focus Scotland has responded to the Scottish Government **consultation** on proposals for a Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill, intended to help improve decision-making and the implementation of the National Performance Framework.

AFS believes it is crucial that the health and economic impacts of health harming products, such as alcohol, are actively considered as part of Scotland's Wellbeing Economy, and continue to be reflected in the National Performance Framework. We highlighted that the development of a wellbeing economy could provide an opportunity to reduce the harm caused by alcohol by prioritising policies and interventions that focus on improving overall societal well-being rather than solely focusing on economic growth. This approach could involve implementing measures such as investing in public health campaigns, enhancing access to treatment and support services, promoting community engagement, and regulating alcohol marketing and availability to create a healthier environment for individuals and communities.

By adopting a wellbeing-focused approach, Scotland could also address the root causes of alcohol-related harm and work towards creating a more resilient society.

 [Read our response](#)

RESEARCH

A review of alcohol services in Scotland's acute hospitals

Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) commissioned a review of alcohol services in major Scottish hospitals, finding provision is fragmented.

SHAAP have urged the Scottish Government to rapidly improve the provision and impact of alcohol care teams, to ensure people with alcohol problems get the support and treatment they deserve.

 [Read the report](#)



RESEARCH

Policy Actors' Perceptions of Conflicts of Interest and Alcohol Industry Engagement in UK Policy Processes

Alcohol industry interference has been identified as a major barrier to public policy progress in reducing alcohol harm. New research published in the International Journal of Health Policy and Management examines how different policy actors view alcohol industry involvement in policy, and their beliefs on what sorts of interactions are appropriate and not appropriate.

The researchers aimed to address the current lack of alcohol-specific guidance on conflict of interest (COI) and a lack of agreement amongst researchers, policymakers, and civil society actors on what constitutes a COI and thus what forms of industry engagement should be precluded.

The Institute of Alcohol Studies will draw on this research to inform the development of guidelines for UK government to mitigate risks associated with commercial conflicts of

interest in alcohol policy settings.

 [Read the blog post](#)

 [Read the research](#)

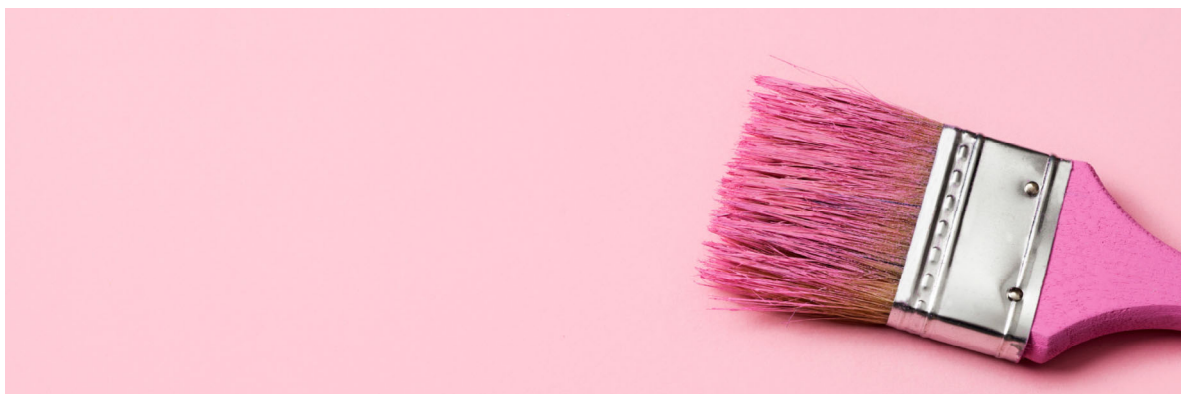
RESEARCH

‘Just a colour?’: Exploring women's relationship with pink alcohol brand marketing within their feminine identity making

New research concludes that in the current context of contemporary feminism, in which (young) women are endorsing feminist identities, women's relationship with feminism influences their attitudes to marketing, such as pinking; the overuse of the colour pink as a feminine aesthetic, and their likelihood of consuming such products.

The research, published in the International Journal of Drug Policy, explored how women relate to and view the pinking of alcohol products and marketing, and how such products feature in their performance of femininities through drinking practice. Whilst pink marketing is effective in appealing to some women as part of their feminine identity-making, the pinking of products actually prevents others from purchasing and consuming such products as it is deemed unrelatable to their identities.

 [Read more](#)



EVENT

Neurodiversity in schools: Intro to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

This online webinar on **Wednesday 13 March** hosted by Education Scotland will be of interest to practitioners working across all sectors of education who are interested in expanding their knowledge and understanding of neurodevelopmental presentations in the classroom.

The session will provide a brief introduction to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and signposting to access further information, guidance and support in relation to supporting learners with FASD in Scottish education settings.

 **Read more and sign up**



How can we raise awareness of the link between alcohol and breast cancer?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK. In women, even low levels of alcohol consumption increase breast cancer risk. Overall, the more someone drinks, the more their risk of breast cancer increases.

Researchers at Oxford Brookes University conducted a study about alcohol and the risk of breast cancer. They asked:

- How can we raise awareness of the link between alcohol and breast cancer?
- How can we support women who are thinking about reducing their alcohol consumption?

 **Join the free webinar on Thursday 21 March to hear about their findings**



CPG on Improving Scotland's Health: March Meeting






The next meeting of the Cross-Party Group on Improving Scotland's Health will be held as a hybrid meeting, online and in Parliament on **Tuesday 26 March 2024, 18:15-19:30**.

We will be joined by **Jenni Minto MSP, Minister for Public Health and Women's Health**. The Minister will speak about progress made so far in tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs), by addressing the risk factors of alcohol, tobacco, and unhealthy food; the Scottish Government's future priorities; and how the CPG can support the aim of creating a public health Parliament.

The meeting is only for interested MSPs and registered group members who have completed a declaration of interest (DOI) form, who will have already received the registration link for in-person and online attendance. Please contact the secretariat at CEO@ashscotland.org.uk if you would like to become a member of the CPG.

[!\[\]\(99f58673407353e96a019fbca558fd72_img.jpg\) Find out more about the CPG](#)



 166 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW
 0141 572 6700
 enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk
 www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk
 [@alcoholfocus](https://twitter.com/alcoholfocus)

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