

Newsletter from Alcohol Focus Scotland

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July 2023

UPDATE

Figures reveal 40% drop in alcohol treatment in Scotland over 10 years

Analysis of figures recently published by the Scottish Government shows there has been a 40% reduction in the number of people accessing alcohol services in the last decade.

This decline has occurred alongside an increase in alcohol harms and deaths, pointing to difficulties in accessing treatment, rather than a decreased need for treatment.

Alcohol Focus Scotland has warned that if we don't act now to prevent and treat alcohol problems, Scotland could be turning the clock back 30 years to when death rates soared to record levels.

Laura Mahon, Deputy Chief Executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, said: "The drop in the level of treatment in Scotland over the last ten years is shocking and deeply concerning.

"[This] coincides with a period when budgets for Alcohol & Drug Partnerships were cut. At the time, many of us feared that those cuts would affect service provision and it now appears that is the case. The fact that this drop in support is only now coming to light is also of real concern. The Scottish Government urgently needs to invest in alcohol treatment – as they have in drug services – and to monitor provision to ensure these vital services are maintained."

Early access to person-centred treatment is essential to help people avoid developing more severe problems or even losing their life to alcohol. These figures highlight the need for urgent investment in this vital area.

that investment in specialist services is prioritised to ensure that they are supported earlier and to relieve future demand on our NHS. This must be accompanied by preventative action on low prices and aggressive marketing which encourage and normalise high levels of alcohol consumption.”

 [Read more](#)

UPDATE

New survey finds public support for alcohol control policies across all political backgrounds

According to recent polling from the Alcohol Health Alliance, seven in ten people want government policy to be protected from the influence of the alcohol industry and its representatives. Additionally, over half of people surveyed welcome improved marketing regulations, with six in ten believing that alcohol display and promotion in shops and supermarkets should only be visible to people intending to browse or purchase alcohol.

Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, Chair of the Alcohol Health Alliance, said: “The results of the YouGov survey clearly show that people in the UK want to see politicians doing more to protect their health and that of their families and their communities.

“People want the opportunity to lead healthy lives and make healthy choices but current legislation, or lack of, makes this difficult when important health information is being withheld from labels and children are being bombarded by alcohol adverts.

 [Read Pouring over public opinion: Alcohol Policies in the UK](#)

UPDATE

Challenge and Change: Lived Experience Voices on Alcohol Marketing

The Alcohol Focus Scotland Involvement team shares why it is important to listen to and highlight the voices of people affected by alcohol.

We have launched a new blog series called “Challenge and Change”, which aims to give a platform to people to share their experiences and views. In the first blog post, our Involvement team write about their recent work on alcohol marketing and share what

[📖 Read the blog post](#)[📧 Get in touch and share your story](#)

POLICY

EASL Policy Statement for Reducing Alcohol Harms 2023

The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) have released a policy statement on reducing alcohol harms.

EASL argue that evidence-based interventions that reduce population-level alcohol consumption are both effective and cost-effective at reducing deaths from alcohol-related liver disease and reducing other negative health, social, and economic impacts of alcohol consumption. They recommend policies including minimum unit pricing, banning alcohol marketing, and restricting the availability of alcohol.

In the policy statement, they note that many states have failed to implement proven and effective measures, usually due to lobbying and interference by the alcohol industry. EASL highlight that the irreconcilable conflict of interest between the alcohol industry and health must be acknowledged and confronted.

[📖 Read the policy statement EASL's full recommendations](#)

TRAINING

Working with children and young people

Take a look at Alcohol Focus Scotland's upcoming training sessions which introduce resources developed for use with children, young people, or families affected by alcohol harm. Participants will learn how to use our materials to help build children's resilience,

🔗 Find out more and book your place:

- **Children Harmed by Alcohol Toolkit (CHAT):** Thursday 24 August
- **Oh Lila** (pre-school aged children): Wednesday 6 September



TRAINING

Alcohol Awareness Week 2023: Interview with Diane Thomson

Diane Thomson, Senior Learning and Development Coordinator at Alcohol Focus Scotland, talks about what surprises people about alcohol and the courses we offer.

A trainer with AFS for just over 10 years, Diane runs our two Alcohol Awareness courses. In this interview, she talks about the importance of alcohol awareness training for everyone, including challenging societal attitudes and misconceptions, and how people react to some of the facts they are given.

“In our society, we’re almost drenched in alcohol. It’s almost like a metaphor!”

Read the interview

Want to better understand alcohol, its impact, and basic ways to provide basic support and signpost others affected by alcohol use?

🔗 Find out more and book your place:

- **Alcohol Affects Us All (enhanced Alcohol Awareness):** Tuesday 29 August
- **Alcohol Awareness:** Thursday 31 August

Scottish Parliament Committees Call for Views

A number of Scottish Parliament subject committees have published calls for views to investigate the sustainability of Scotland's finances, scrutinise the forthcoming budget, and examine the impact of the Scottish Government's spending and taxation plans.

🔍 Find out more and respond to the committees:

- **Finance and Public Administration Committee: The Sustainability of Scotland's Finances** – by Wednesday 16 August
- **Health, Social Care and Sport Committee: Pre-budget Scrutiny 2024-25** – by Friday 25 August
- **Equality, Human Rights and Criminal Justice Committee: What impact do the Scottish Government's spending and taxation plans have** – by Friday 25 August



🔍 RESEARCH

Not all home drinking is equal: A latent class analysis of drinking patterns and alcohol consumption levels following initial COVID-19 restrictions in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdoms

New research published in the Drug and Alcohol Review, concludes that drinking contexts, sex, and age influenced alcohol consumption during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although research generally shows that people consume more alcohol at home, the study findings suggest that "home" as a drinking context has subgroups that need to be taken into account.

People who reported drinking in home and social settings were more likely to report increased alcohol consumption. Similarly, people who reported drinking alone also

reported consuming less alcohol than males in all groups. This disparity was more pronounced within older age groups.

The authors argue that their findings demonstrate the influence of the social environment on home drinking behaviours and highlight a need for improved policy targeting risky drinking in home settings. Further research should explore whether COVID-19-induced shifts in alcohol use persist as restrictions are lifted.

 **Read the study**

RESEARCH

Instagram sober journeys: How relapse narratives and viewing orders influence audience response on social media

New research published in *Computers in Human Behaviour* examined the potential of using social media to share recovery stories and positively influence attitudes and support for policies to reduce alcohol harms.

Self-disclosures of recovery journeys on social media have increased in recent years. The study examined the effects of relapse narratives and the order in which people viewed someone's story. Viewers were more likely to interact with and identify with people's stories if they were viewed in chronological order, and if the stories included a relapse narrative. In turn, this prompted positive attitudes and support for policies to reduce alcohol harm.

 **Find out more**



EVENT

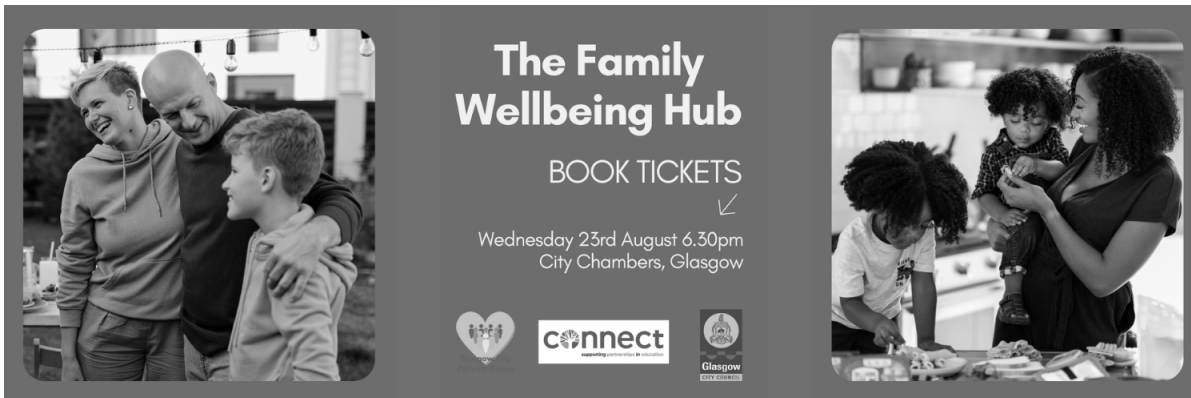
Our Learning and Development Team will be exhibiting at the Family Wellbeing Hub in August!

An opportunity to find out what support is available to help you and your family, this in-person event will showcase family services from across Glasgow, and nationally. The focus is on the themes of mental and physical health, plus food and nutrition. Glasgow City Parents Group believe these are important needs to be met in order for any child to be able to learn in school.

Location: Glasgow City Chambers

Date and time: Wednesday 23 August, 18:30 - 20:30.




 **Find out more and reserve your free spot**



The Family Wellbeing Hub

BOOK TICKETS

Wednesday 23rd August 6.30pm
City Chambers, Glasgow



WHO Less Alcohol Webinar Series

The World Health Organization has announced the return of the Less Alcohol Webinar Series for its third edition.

Each hourlong webinar will include a keynote presentation, three to four spotlight country cases, active moderation and an interactive experience for online participants. All events are free with prior registration available at the links below:

- **Alcohol and the environment: how to green alcohol control policies?** Monday 18 September, 13:00 CET
- **Alcohol monopolies: what does it take for alcohol monopolies to work?** Wednesday 18 October, 13:00 CET
- **Youth and alcohol: do new trends demand new solutions?** Tuesday 7 November, 13:00 CET

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