

Newsletter from Alcohol Focus Scotland

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January 2024

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UPDATE

First Minister commits to reduce children's exposure to alcohol marketing

First Minister Humza Yousaf has signed up to support our **joint campaign** with Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs, Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems, and BMA Scotland.

In the new video, the First Minister acknowledges the concerning levels of alcohol brand awareness among children and young people in Scotland, recognising that this exposure

He said, “The Scottish Government is fully committed to improving public health and reducing the health risks faced by young people. When we improve the welfare of children in Scotland we make a positive difference for generations to come. So I fully support the campaign to reduce children and young people’s exposure to alcohol marketing.”

[Find out more](#)

[Contact us to pledge your support](#)



First Minister supports Alcohol Free Kids campaign

UPDATE

Support for a Public Health Levy on alcohol sales

Scottish Labour is calling for the implementation of a Public Health Levy on alcohol sales to ensure income generated by Minimum Unit Pricing can fund vital, life-saving treatment. Currently, additional revenue from MUP is lining the pockets of alcohol retailers.

In the recent Budget, the Scottish Government announced they are considering reintroducing the Public Health Supplement. This is a tried and tested approach. The supplement, which applied to large retailers selling both alcohol and tobacco, raised £95 million over its 3-year duration.

In response to Scottish Labour’s call, Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland said, “Alcohol sales revenues have increased significantly in recent years and as a result retailers are likely making greater profits. At the same time, alcohol harm is on the rise, with deaths up by 25% over the last three years and the impact felt throughout our NHS. Alcohol Focus Scotland and the NCD Alliance Scotland have been

[🔗 Read more](#)

📢 UPDATE

Evidence Session on Minimum Unit Pricing

On Tuesday 6 February, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee will be taking oral evidence on Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP). Ahead of the session where chief executive Alison Douglas and others will be giving evidence, Alcohol Focus Scotland submitted **written evidence** highlighting the positive impact of MUP on reducing consumption, saving lives, and reducing hospital admissions. We also outline the reasons why the minimum unit price must be increased to at least 65p.

Following the evidence session, the Committee will report to Parliament with recommendations on whether MUP should be renewed beyond April 2024, and if the price should be increased to 65p.

[📺 Watch on Scottish Parliament TV](#)

📢 UPDATE

New IAS Film: "Alcohol Marketing: Explained"

Alcohol marketing is all around us: at our favourite sports matches, on our TV screens, online, at bus stops and on billboards. It affects what we think and how we drink, nudging us to drink more and during more occasions. But how does it reach us, why are current regulatory structures failing to deal with a growing problem, why does the World Health Organization recommend comprehensive bans on alcohol marketing, and what can be done to protect the most vulnerable in society from being bombarded by alcohol ads?

marketing intersects with perceived gender and gender norms; how alcohol marketing became so prevalent in sport; and why controlling alcohol marketing is a human rights issue.

 [Watch the film](#)

RESEARCH

Binge-pattern alcohol consumption and genetic risk as determinants of alcohol-related liver disease

New research from UCL, the Royal Free Hospital, the University of Oxford, and the University of Cambridge finds that in the long run, the pattern of drinking is more important than volume. The risk is further increased when genetic predisposition and Type 2 diabetes are also present. These factors provide more accurate information with which to identify people most vulnerable to liver disease.

Pamela Healy, Chief Executive of the British Liver Trust said: “This research is important because it reveals that it’s not just how much you drink overall but the way that you drink matters. Drinking a lot, quickly, or drinking to get drunk can have serious consequences for your liver health. Over the last twenty years, as alcohol has become more accessible and affordable, there has been a disconcerting shift in the UK’s drinking culture. The UK needs to tackle increased alcohol consumption through a joined up ‘alcohol strategy’ that includes taxation, stronger controls on alcohol advertising and marketing and improved awareness of the dangers of binge drinking.”

 [Read the study](#)

RESEARCH

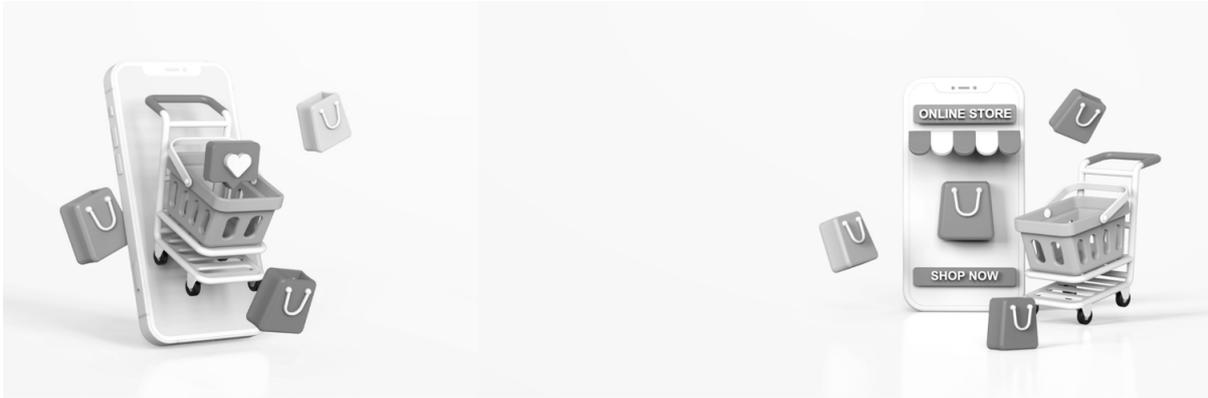
Characteristics of high- and low-risk drinkers who use online alcohol home delivery in Western Australia

High-risk drinkers purchase larger amounts of alcohol, purchase alcohol more often, and are more likely to use rapid delivery online options compared to low-risk drinkers, according to a **study** published in Drug and Alcohol Review.

The removal of physical restraints to obtaining alcohol, enabled by easily-accessible online purchasing options, may facilitate harmful drinking practices among people already considered at high-risk of an alcohol use disorder. Increased availability of alcohol is closely associated with increased level of consumption and alcohol-related harms. The

possible impacts of home delivery on their clients' ability to reduce, or abstain from, alcohol use.

[Read more](#)



[RESEARCH](#)

Type and prevalence of nutrition-related claims on alcoholic ready-to-drink beverages

Nutrition-related claims are prevalent and can mislead consumers about the healthiness of alcohol products, according to **new research** published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

The researchers analysed almost 500 ready-to-drink beverages in three major alcohol retailers and found that over half (52%) has at least one nutrition-related claim, despite alcohol being inherently unhealthy. Nutrition claims were found on almost all hard seltzers (96%) which are predominately targeted at younger people, with an average of 3.4 claims per product. This is particularly concerning as young people's decreasing alcohol consumption has been attributed to increased awareness of alcohol-related health harms. The researchers conclude that more stringent regulation of nutrition-related claims is needed to provide appropriate consumer protection.

[Read the study](#)

[EVENT](#)

Measuring alcohol policy implementation: are existing tools and methods fit for purpose and use?

interactive experience for online participants.

Register for the event on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 13:00 CET (12:00 GMT)

EVENT

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 for interested MSPs and registered group members who have completed a declaration of interest (DOI) form. The registration links for in-person and online attendance will be sent in due course. Please contact the secretariat at CEO@ashscotland.org.uk if you would like to become a member of the CPG.

 **Find out more about the CPG**



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