Newsletter from Alcohol Focus Scotland
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June 2023

UPDATE

Public Health Scotland evaluation supports continuation of MUP

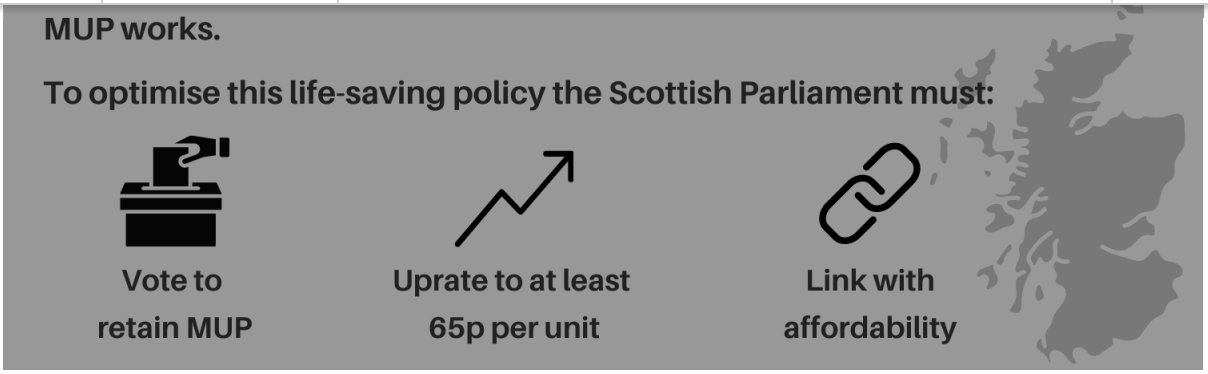
Scotland's national public health body Public Health Scotland (PHS) has reported that they are "confident that MUP is an effective mechanism to reduce alcohol-related harm in Scotland" and they "support the continuation of MUP beyond April 2024."

On Tuesday 27th June, Public Health Scotland published its final report on the independent evaluation of the impact of minimum unit pricing (MUP) for alcohol in Scotland, which showed that MUP has had a positive impact on health outcomes, including addressing alcohol-related health inequalities. The evaluation also showed there was no clear evidence of substantial negative impacts on the alcoholic drinks industry in Scotland.

MUP led to a 3% reduction in alcohol consumption at a population level. It has reduced deaths directly caused by alcohol consumption by an estimated 13.4% and hospital admissions by 4.1%, with the largest reductions seen in men and those living in the 40% most deprived areas.

Welcoming the findings of the evaluation, Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, said "Now we know that minimum unit pricing is truly life-saving, the policy must be continued, and the price increased. To scrap it now or leave it at a level that will quickly lose its effect would condemn hundreds of people to unnecessary suffering."

Find out more



UPDATE

New cancer strategy includes vision that "alcohol is no longer a major cause of cancer"

The plan includes the need to target specific cancer risk factors such as tobacco, obesity and alcohol. Alcohol causes 6.5% of deaths in Scotland and 28% of those are due to cancer. While alcohol as a risk factor remains a key challenge, particularly in relation to liver disease and liver cancer, the new strategy recommends following the WHO best buys of making alcohol less available, less affordable and less attractive.

Read the strategy

UPDATE

Alcohol and diabetes: a guest blog post from Diabetes Scotland

Diabetes Scotland support Alcohol Focus Scotland's mission to reduce alcohol-related harms, understanding that type 2 diabetes, alcohol problems and obesity are all part of a wider public health challenge which can't be tackled in isolation.

In this blog post, Diabetes Scotland explore the relationship between alcohol consumption and diabetes, highlighting that it is complex and our understanding of it is still evolving. People who drink heavily are at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes, partly but not only due to the contribution alcohol can make to overweight and obesity. However, the food and drink environment is currently skewed towards health-harming products. That's why Diabetes Scotland support measures to tackle the problem at its source.

POLICY

Liver Cancer Crisis debate

Stuart McMillan MSP led a debate on Scotland's liver cancer crisis.

Drawing attention to the liver disease and liver cancer crisis in Scotland, which particularly affects people living in our most deprived areas where deaths from alcohol are highest. He emphasised the importance of prevention and early detection of liver cancer, which has seen a significant increase in mortality rates over the past decade.

Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, reiterated the government's commitment to reducing alcohol-related harm through population-level prevention strategies and working towards earlier cancer diagnosis.

Watch the debate
Read the official report

CAMPAIGN

Alcohol Awareness Week 2023

Alcohol Awareness Week is an annual event dedicated to raising awareness about the impact of alcohol consumption on individuals, families, and communities. It plays a vital role in educating and supporting individuals and communities.

This year's Alcohol Awareness Week takes place from 3-9 July 2023

Find out more from Alcohol Change UK

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland

The Scottish Government is gathering views to help inform how it will take forward the Human Rights Bill. The Bill will incorporate a range of economic, social and cultural rights (such as the right to health) into Scots law for the first time. Although Scotland is already bound by international human rights treaties, embedding these rights into Scottish law will further emphasise the importance of all people being treated with dignity, and ensure that human rights play a central role in strategies, policies and decision-making. The new human rights law will also mean public bodies and others have duties to uphold our rights. Alcohol Focus Scotland believes that this has the potential to transform lives in Scotland – including people seeking support in relation to alcohol and their families.

The consultation will run until Thursday 5 October 2023.

Find out more and respond to the consultation

CONSULTATIONS

Response to Call for Evidence on the Review of National Outcomes

The Scottish Government recently undertook a review of the **National Outcomes**. These outcomes underpin Scotland's wellbeing framework helping it to achieve its purpose by setting an overall vision for life in Scotland.

Alcohol Focus Scotland contributed to the response submitted by the **NCD Alliance Scotland**. We suggested changes to the National Outcomes and associated indicators on health, children and young people, communities and the economy. We have called for reference to the commercial determinants of health and the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), with a focus on alcohol, tobacco and related products, and high fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS) foods.

Read the response

Find out more about the National Outcomes

RESEARCH

Reducing alcohol use through alcohol control policies in the general population and population subgroups: a systematic review and meta-analysis

New research published in eClinicalMedicine, part of the Lancet Discovery Science, demonstrates the effectiveness of alcohol control policies in reducing alcohol consumption.

The systematic review found that alcohol taxation and minimum unit prices (MUP) are the most effective policies in reducing alcohol consumption. For example, doubling alcohol taxes or introducing an MUP of 50p per UK unit reduces alcohol consumption by 10% on average.

The researchers concluded that high levels of alcohol consumption and related health consequences can be effectively tackled through implementing evidence-informed alcohol control policies, while more research is needed to uncover difference across population subgroups, which is important for policies that promote health equity.

Read the blog summary

Read the study

RESEARCH

Alcohol consumption and risks of more than 200 diseases in Chinese men

New research published in Nature Medicine found a link between alcohol and 33 diseases not previously listed by **World Health Organization** as alcohol-related.

The researchers looked at the associations of alcohol consumption with 207 diseases,

gout. Among Chinese men, alcohol consumption increased multiple disease risks, highlighting the need to strengthen preventive measures to reduce alcohol intake. The study – which used genetic analysis – also found no health benefits of moderate drinking.

Read a blog post by the lead author

Read the study

RESEARCH

Unpacking assertions made by the alcohol industry and how they make them: An analysis of submissions into Australia's National Alcohol Strategy

A new study on industry influence in Australian policymaking calls for systematic scrutiny of submissions made into government policy processes to ensure policymakers are aware of misinformation and poor-quality evidence when policy decisions are being made.

Published in the Drug and Alcohol Review, the study analysed alcohol industry submissions into the consultation on Australia's National Alcohol Strategy to determine the content and the ways in which evidence was used and misused. The study found that the alcohol industry consistently made five common assertions: ‘Drinking alcohol in moderation has health benefits’; ‘Alcohol isn't the cause of violence’; ‘Targeted initiatives, not population level alcohol policies, are needed’; ‘Strong alcohol advertising regulations are not necessary’; and ‘Minimum unit price and pricing and taxation policies more broadly are not needed’. The industry also frequently misused and misrepresented evidence.

Read the study

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 2023 18:30 - 20:30.

Find out more and reserve your free spot

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