



eFocus January 2020

news

NHS Health Scotland publish two new MUP studies

In January 2020, NHS Health Scotland published two further studies as part of the MESAS MUP evaluation.

Analysis of off-trade alcohol sales in first year post MUP

The first analysis of alcohol sales following the introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) has shown that the volume of pure alcohol sold per adult in Scotland fell by 3.6%

Compared to the 12 months before implementation of MUP, the volume of pure alcohol sold per adult in the off-trade in Scotland decreased from 7.4 to 7.1 litres. In England and Wales – where MUP has not been implemented – the volume of pure alcohol sold in the off-trade during the same year increased from 6.3 to 6.5 litres.

In response to the analysis, Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland said, “A reduction of 3.6% in alcohol consumption in the first 12 months following the introduction of MUP is great news for Scotland’s health. Particularly significant is the contrast to England and Wales, who don’t have MUP, where sales of alcohol have increased in the same time period.

[Read more from Alcohol Focus Scotland](#)

[Read the report and summary briefing from NHS Health Scotland](#)

First study published looking at under 18 drinkers post MUP

The study found that for under-18s the price of alcohol was not seen as an important factor in their drinking behaviour, and overall they did not report changing what they drank, how much they drank or how they obtained their alcohol, in response to the increase in price alone.

The study was designed to help understand the lived experience of the young people who took part. It is not representative of the impact of MUP on all young people in Scotland.



In response to the findings Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland said, "This study provides a unique - and concerning - insight into the lives of a group of teenage drinkers and shows that the cost of alcohol is only one factor in their alcohol consumption.

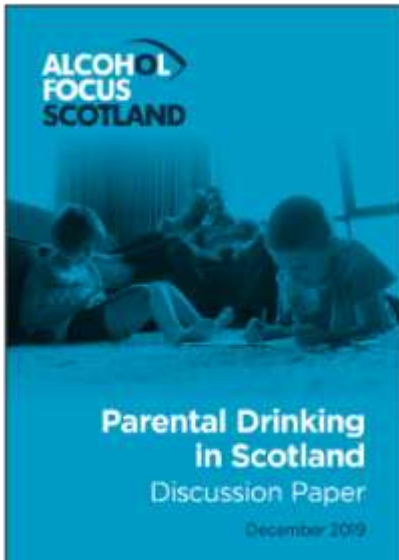
"The apparent ease with which these young people are able to acquire alcohol raises serious questions about enforcement of existing licensing legislation and age-verification arrangements which are there to protect young people. It is also deeply worrying that adults are regularly providing under 18s with drink, despite the potential effects of alcohol on brain development and on young people's wider mental and physical health."

[Read more from Alcohol Focus Scotland.](#)

[Read the full report and briefing from NHS Health Scotland.](#)

Both these studies form part of the programme to evaluate minimum unit pricing. This robust and thorough evaluation has been put in place to help look at the wider impact of minimum pricing. Find out more about it on the [NHS Health Scotland website](#).

Parental drinking in Scotland



In December 2019, Alcohol Focus Scotland published a new report on Parental Drinking in Scotland. The discussion paper focuses on the Scottish data and inquiry results from the UK report *Like sugar for adults* which was published in October 2017 and followed by an peer-reviewed article reporting on the survey in November 2019.

The paper highlights that parental drinking, even at low levels, can have an impact on children's emotional wellbeing and at higher levels can contribute to their risk of physical harm. The research, however, clearly conveys the unintentional nature of most of the harm experienced by children as a result of parental drinking. Often parents, services and relevant family support staff are not fully aware of the impact that lower-level drinking can have on children's immediate emotional and physical wellbeing or the emotional availability and comfort-giving of parents.

The discussion paper will be used to highlight the impact that low level parental drinking can have on children and stimulate policy development in Scotland. [Read the report.](#)

Work with us! Policy and Public Affairs Coordinator
- Closing date tomorrow

We are seeking a skilled policy professional to join our passionate team in the delivery of our strategic priorities. You will have a varied and challenging role, with a focus on developing and communicating our policy advocacy work, sharing the latest research, and keeping the team up to date on developments in parliament.



This role will form a crucial part of AFS's work to influence policy, including in relation to a forthcoming Scottish Government consultation on alcohol marketing and AFS's manifesto for the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections, and so provides an exciting opportunity for anyone wishing to progress their policy career. For further details and to apply [visit the AFS website](#). Closing date Wednesday 29th January at 9am.

Alcohol Health Alliance Commission on alcohol harm



The Commission on Alcohol Harm has launched a call for evidence as part of its inquiry into alcohol harm and the changes needed to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

The Commission will hold three oral evidence sessions across the UK later this year, and has launched a call for written evidence, with submissions welcomed before the deadline of 12 noon on 17 February 2020.

The Commission is interested in receiving evidence from academic researchers,

charities, healthcare professionals, professional bodies, commissioners and those affected by alcohol harm in their personal, professional or family life. [Find out more.](#)

Alcohol-free Childhood Action Network

Alcohol-free Childhood Action Network (ACAN) is a new network that brings together organisations and individuals from education, health care, family support, advocacy and research to examine and formulate policy raise awareness and identify ways to improve current practice in Scotland.



Following the first meeting in Glasgow on 5 December 2019 we hope that ACAN will become a network capable of inspiring, developing and supporting action to uphold children's rights not to be harmed by alcohol. A report and presentations from the event can be found [here](#). New members welcome. [Find out more.](#)

Action on Sugar Call for 'Ready to Drink' Alcoholic Beverages to be Reduced in Sugar and Calories



Popular 'ready to drink' pre-mixed spirits sold in major UK retailers are unnecessarily high in hidden sugar and calories new research from Action on Sugar has found.

The organisation has called for drinks companies to be forced to reformulate their products immediately so they comply with the agreed criterion set by government in the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL), or pay the fine.

The group of experts warn that sugary alcoholic drinks are contributing to obesity, type 2 diabetes, various cancers, liver damage and tooth decay as consumers are unknowingly drinking large amounts of sugar and calories. Action on Sugar is now urging the government to prove it really is committed to prevention and reducing inequalities, by stepping in and taking control of not only the food and drink industries, but also the alcohol industry.

In response to the study, Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland said, “This research provides another example of the alcohol industry choosing to withhold basic information from consumers. At the moment it’s impossible to make an informed choice. Unlike for other food and drink, there is no legal requirement to provide details on sugar content or ingredients on alcoholic products. We need reliable information directly on bottles and cans where it can usefully inform our decisions.

“Alcohol Focus Scotland welcomes the Scottish Government’s statement that they will consider mandatory action if industry don’t act. Sadly alcohol producers have proven time and time again they won’t do this voluntarily. It’s time they were required by law to do so. The public want and need this information and have a right to be provided with it.”

[Read more](#)

policy

Cross-Party Group #scothealth2021

Dates for your diary 2020

The Cross Party Group will take place on:

- Wednesday 26th February 2020, 5.30pm to 7pm – Committee Room 4 – Chair Brian Whittle MSP.

- Wednesday 17th June 2020, 5.30pm to 7pm – Committee Room 5 – Chair David Stewart MSP.
- Wednesday 16th September 2020 , 5.30pm to 7pm– Committee Room 4– Chair Kenneth Gibson MSP. This will also be the AGM.

[Find out more](#) about what the Cross-Party Group has achieved in the last year.

If you're interested in becoming a member please contact [Valerie Smith](#).



research

> National, regional, and global burdens of disease from 2000 to 2016 attributable to alcohol use: a comparative risk assessment study

This study investigated gender, age, and geographical differences in the alcohol-attributable burden of disease from 2000 to 2016. Globally, the researchers estimated that there were 3.0 million alcohol-attributable deaths and 131.4 million disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs) in 2016, corresponding to 5.3% of all deaths and 5.0% of all DALYs. Alcohol use was a major risk factor for communicable, maternal, perinatal, and nutritional diseases, non-communicable diseases, and injury deaths.

The results demonstrated that alcohol use is a leading risk factor for the burden of disease, and disproportionately affects people in low HDI countries and young people. Given the variations in the alcohol-attributable burden of disease, cost-effective local and national policy measures that can reduce alcohol use and the resulting burden of disease are needed, especially in low-income and middle-income countries. [Read the abstract.](#)

> Improving Knowledge that Alcohol Can Cause Cancer is Associated with Consumer Support for Alcohol Policies: Findings from a Real-World Alcohol Labelling Study

Knowledge that alcohol can cause cancer is low in Canada. Alcohol labels are one strategy for communicating alcohol-related harms, including cancer. Extending existing research observing an association between knowledge of the alcohol–cancer link and support for alcohol policies, this study examined whether increases in individual-level knowledge that alcohol is a carcinogen following an alcohol labelling intervention are associated with support for alcohol policies. Cancer warning labels were applied to alcohol containers at the intervention site, and the comparison site did not apply cancer labels. Pre-post surveys were conducted among liquor store patrons at both sites before and two-and six-months after the intervention was stopped due to alcohol industry interference. Limiting the data to participants that completed surveys both before and two-months after the cancer label stopped, logistic regression was used to examine the association between increases in knowledge and support for policies. Support for pricing and availability policies was low overall; however, increases in individual-level knowledge of the alcohol-cancer link was associated with higher levels of support for pricing policies, specifically, setting a minimum unit price per standard drink of alcohol (OR = 1.86, 95% CI: 1.11–3.12). Improving knowledge that alcohol can cause cancer using labels may increase support for alcohol policies. [Read the abstract and article.](#)

> How did a lower drink-drive limit affect bar trade and drinking practices?

The aim of this study was to qualitatively explore how a reduction in the drink-drive limit from 0.08% to 0.05% BAC in Scotland, was experienced by bar owners or managers, including any resultant changes in customer drinking or business practice. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 owners and managers of on-trade premises in Scotland in 2018, approximately three years after the drink-drive limit was reduced. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. The study found that most participants reported no long-term financial impact on their business, but a few, mainly from rural areas, reported some reduction in alcohol sales. Observed drinking changes included fewer people drinking after work or leaving premises earlier on weekdays. Adaptations to businesses included improving the range of no/low-alcohol drinks and food offered. Changes such as these were seen as key to minimising economic impact. The researchers concluded that opposition to legislative measures that impact on commercial interests is often strong and receives significant public attention. This

study found that Scottish businesses that adapted to the drink-drive limit change reported little long-term economic impact. [Read the article](#).

training

Alcohol Focus Scotland learning opportunities

Learning and development is an integral part of our work at Alcohol Focus Scotland. Our wide range of evaluated training courses can help people understand, manage and prevent the harm caused by alcohol. We can provide training for

- People working in the licensed trade and in the regulation of licensing
- Early years workers, teachers and others working with children and young people affected by a family member's drinking
- Employers who want to raise awareness of and manage alcohol/drug issues in the workplace
- People in a professional or personal role caring for someone affected by alcohol

To find out more about our diverse learning opportunities visit our [website](#), and read our [Learning Brochure](#).

Licensing training

Personal Licence Holder (PLH) full course (can include refresher)

> *Wednesday 12 February, 17 March, 22 April 2020, Glasgow*

AFS runs Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holder and Refresher courses once a month at our offices in Glasgow. [Find out more](#) about course dates, times and costs.

Licensing Standards Officers training

> *3 day training course -Tuesday 17, Wednesday 18 and Thursday 19th March 2020, Glasgow*

This is a mandatory three day course for Licensing Standards Officers employed by local councils. [Find out more](#) about course dates, times and costs.

events

Free training workshop: International Human Rights in Scots Law

The Scottish Government's Human Rights Task Force is currently working to develop new legislation that will incorporate more international human rights into Scots law.

This training is designed to enable all interested civil society organisations and human rights advocates to increase their knowledge and understanding of the what, why and how of incorporating human rights. [Find out more and book your place.](#)

Alcohol workshops, seminars and conferences

Are you organising an alcohol-related workshop, seminar or conference? Please let us know and we can help you promote it here in eFocus and on the AFS website.



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