



July 2021



## ALCOHOL LABELS CONTINUE TO LACK IMPORTANT HEALTH INFORMATION

The UK Government are expected to consult in the near future on labelling of alcohol products as part of their Obesity Strategy. In 2018 the Scottish Government committed to press alcohol producers to place health information on physical products and packaging labels and to consider mandatory action in Scotland if progress wasn't made. AFS and others have been gathering evidence

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and calling for mandatory labelling requirements for alcohol and have outlined some of the recent evidence on why this is important below.

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## **Call for nutritional information on alcohol labels.**

The Alcohol Health Alliance, Alcohol Focus Scotland and leading health experts are calling for better alcohol labelling as new research suggests that most people do not know the nutritional information of popular alcoholic drinks. The research also showed that the majority of Scots do not know the Chief Medical Officers' drinking guidelines and were unlikely to look beyond the label in order to find health information on alcohol.

Findings showed that in Scotland only 22% of people were able to correctly estimate the number of calories in a medium glass of wine, while just 23% of people in Scotland knew the low risk drinking guidelines.

Unless labelling requirements are set out in law we will continue to be kept in the dark about what is in our drinks and what the health risks are. We need reliable health and nutritional information directly on bottles and cans, to enable us to make informed decisions.

 [Read more](#)

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## **How can current alcohol labels be improved?**

Alcohol Focus Scotland commissioned a review of global evidence to understand what impact health messaging and product information on alcohol labels have on people.

The researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Stirling found that large, prominent, and colourful pictograms would increase awareness and comprehension of alcohol-related harms. It was also found that health warnings focusing on both specific diseases (such as cancer) as well as the

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short-term harms of alcohol (for example violence and accidents) may be the most effective. Finally, to help people, make healthier choices graphical representations of nutritional information would be beneficial, such as, serving sizes.

 [Read the blog](#)

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## Action on Sugar Podcast with AFS

Nicola Merrin, senior policy and research coordinator at Alcohol Focus Scotland joined Holly Gabriel, nutrition manager at Action on Sugar, to discuss the importance of including nutritional information on alcohol labels, the current regulation for alcohol labelling, and how better labelling can encourage people to make healthier choices.

 [Listen to the podcast](#)

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## Knowledge Exchanges on alcohol marketing and labelling

AFS held two Knowledge Exchanges for ADP colleagues, focused on alcohol marketing, to examine what marketing means in the context of wider partnerships. The first session considered any potential barriers and opportunities for partners' involvement in marketing work, while the second focused on alcohol labelling ahead of the expected UK Government consultation on this topic. We also shared relevant research which ADPs could use in any submissions they may make as part of the consultation process – if this research would also be of interest to you then please contact [Simon Jones](#) at AFS.

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## European Commission call for feedback on alcohol labelling proposals

AFS responded to the European Commission's call for feedback on their inception impact assessment on the revision of rules on information provided to consumers for alcoholic beverages. Although the proposals will not directly affect the UK, they could establish best practice that other jurisdictions seek to match. AFS agreed with Eurocare that specifically adopted legislation for alcohol products would be ideal, but that of the proposed changes, the only acceptable option is to remove the exemption currently in place for alcoholic drinks. This would mean mandating nutritional information and ingredients on alcohol labels, as is currently the case with food and other drink.

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## New Licensing Forum Members Guide

Alcohol Focus Scotland has developed and published a new guide for Local Licensing Forum Members. The guide provides information to support people in their role as a local licensing forum member, along with practical suggestions and tips to support forums to function effectively. Informed by direct engagement with forum members the guide links to key reference materials and additional resources to enable people to access these documents easily. We hope that the guide can be used as a high quality, interactive, learning resource.

 [Read the guide](#)

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## Global evidence shows link between alcohol and cancer

The global study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) published in the Lancet identified that in 2020, over 740,000 cancer cases globally, were alcohol related.

The study found that 77% of cancer cases occurred in men, and that the largest number of cases were for oesophagus, liver, and breast cancer.

To address the harm caused by alcohol, the researchers suggest that restrictions on the availability and affordability of alcohol and health warnings on the product packaging would be beneficial.

### [Read more](#)

The authors suggest that a range of interventions could reduce the burden of alcohol, these include, restricting availability, affordability, and attractiveness of alcohol.

### [Read more](#)

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## PERSONAL LICENCE HOLDER TRAINING

Alcohol Focus Scotland are now offering regular online courses for the updated Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders (SCPLH) and refresher (SCPLHR) qualifications.

Our one-day course will be delivered online and exams will be conducted via City & Guilds new remote invigilation service.

 For further information, course dates and to book visit the [Alcohol Focus Scotland website](#)

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## REBUILD AND RECOVER

### Alcohol Change UK's 2021 online conference

On 22 and 23 September, Alcohol Change UK will be bringing you a conference that puts alcohol in context: an opportunity to reflect on the reasons people drink, and the many routes to harm reduction and recovery for a diverse population.

Across the two days of **Rebuild and Recover**, we'll be seeking to learn the lessons of the lockdown and understand how best to respond to the challenges of the post-pandemic world. Speakers include:

- Dr Lee Hogan and members of Moving On In My Recovery, on providing peer support in the pandemic
- Justina Murray of Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD), on supporting the families of drinkers through lockdown and beyond
- Dr Emmert Roberts, on what can we learn about alcohol harm reduction from the hotel-based emergency housing programme
- Author Millie Gooch, on changing how we think about not drinking
- Community development specialist Cormac Russell, on remaking connections post-Covid-19.

 [Find out more and book your places here](#)

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