



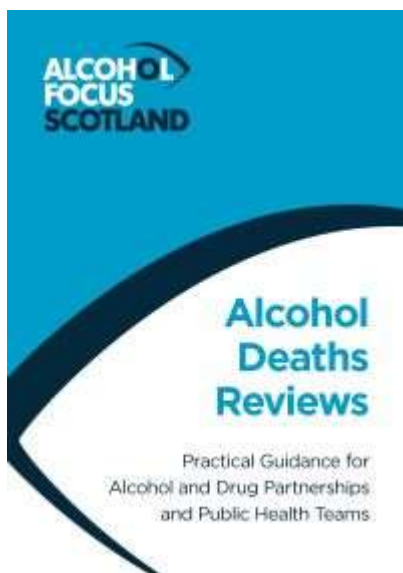
reducing harm caused by alcohol



## eFocus September 2020

### news

#### [Alcohol Focus Scotland publishes deaths review guidance](#)



The launch of our Alcohol Deaths Review Guidance for ADPs and Public Health teams took place on September 24th, with an excellent turnout from around the country. We were pleased to welcome Joe FitzPatrick, Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing to speak at the event where he encouraged local teams to make use of the guidance and AFS's project support.

The guidance is the result of 12 months of research with previous review teams, and for the first time establishes a method for reviewing which can be implemented around the country, cutting the time for reviews from 3 years to 12-18 months.

Ongoing project support is available from Simon Jones, at introductory meetings and through the Alcohol Deaths Researchers' Network, please contact [Simon](#) for more information. [Read the guidance.](#)

## Leading health charities call for action in Scotland

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Working with other charities in Scotland, we're calling for all political parties to commit to take actions that could save thousands of lives from preventable diseases.

During September's Global Week for Action on NCDs (non-communicable diseases), a joint letter from ten of Scotland's leading health charities called for all political parties to commit to the measures necessary to tackle these conditions – including heart disease, cancer, stroke and chronic lung conditions – that cause around two thirds of all deaths in Scotland.



We believe many of these deaths and lost healthy years of life are preventable through addressing modifiable and societal risk factors. Official statistics estimate that each year around 14,000 deaths in Scotland could be prevented through public health interventions.

As a collective, we have set out a series of priorities to tackle three of the biggest risk factors that affect people today – tobacco use, alcohol consumption and unhealthy diets – to improve the health of everyone in Scotland. [Read more.](#)

## Commission on Alcohol Harm: MPs and peers call on Government to urgently address Britain's alcohol harm crisis

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The independent Commission on Alcohol Harm was set up by alcohol health experts and UK Parliamentarians to examine the full extent of alcohol harm across the UK. In its [final report](#), the Commission outlines recommendations for reducing harm and calls for a new comprehensive alcohol strategy for England.

The report was launched at an online event hosted by the Alcohol Health Alliance UK. Speakers included SFAD volunteer Beverly who said, "After reading the report, I see that there are thousands of families like mine out there."

Help support the recommendations of the Commission by sharing the report with your MP [now](#).

## NICE Guidelines: Surveillance or Support?

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NICE's consultation on new guidance on preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) has made headlines, with disagreement on whether health data can and should be shared. How can we ensure people with FASD get support while

supporting women's health? [Read more in this blog post.](#)

## Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Day

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Ahead of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Day AFS created resources to raise awareness of FASD and signpost families and professionals to sources of support. The resources were widely shared by ADPs, Public Health teams and other professionals.



The same week the Scottish Parliament held a debate on recognising FASD proposed by Kenneth Gibson MSP following a meeting of the Cross Party Group on Improving Scotland's Health in February where FASD was discussed. AFS contributed a briefing to MSPs in advance of the debate, highlighting the work of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran FFAST team and the FASD Hub Scotland which supports families. Many members participated in the debate and helped raise the profile of the condition, and we are now examining how we can lend support to people working in this area in the coming months. [Watch the debate.](#)



*Kenneth Gibson MSP opened the debate in the Scottish Parliament on recognising FASD.*

## **SHAAP launches new 'Rural Matters' report**

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SHAAP's new *Rural Matters* report presents findings on the cultural and social context of drinking in rural areas and barriers to accessing services in rural Scotland, from a qualitative research study undertaken from 2019-2020. It draws on evidence from a literature review, as well as five community consultations and 25 semi-structured interviews conducted with healthcare and service providers, individuals with lived experience of alcohol harm, young people and family members of people with alcohol problems, living and working in remote and rural Scotland. Based on this evidence the report makes clear recommendations for research, policy and practice. [Read the report.](#)

## **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill**

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AFS warmly welcomes the introduction of a Bill to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law. We believe this is a significant moment in realising our vision of ensuring all children and young people growing up in Scotland have their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled.



We know from international experience that incorporation encourages a culture change in which children and young people are better valued and respected. In uncertain times like these, the importance of legal protections for children and young people's human rights is more evident than ever. As a member of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), AFS signed a [joint letter to MSPs](#) in support of the Bill and we will continue to monitor developments as the Bill is considered by the Scottish Parliament.

The Bill can be [viewed here](#) alongside its accompanying documents.

### **[Scottish Parliament's Finance and Constitution Committee call for for views on the UK Government's Internal Market Bill](#)**



The Finance and Constitution Committee has called for views to inform its scrutiny of the UK Government's Internal Market Bill, which is currently going through the House of Commons.



The Bill sets out to create an internal market for the UK, following the UK's exit from the EU. AFS responded to the Committee's request for views, on the area of the operation of the internal market. We stressed our concern that the Bill would substantially undermine devolved regulatory autonomy and limit the ability of devolved governments to implement measures to improve public health. We also highlighted the potential for the Bill's market access principles to impact public health policies such as minimum unit pricing and alcohol labelling. [Read our response.](#)

## research

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### > **Dark Nudges and Sludge in Big Alcohol: Behavioral Economics, Cognitive Biases, and Alcohol Industry Corporate Social Responsibility**

'Nudges' steer people toward certain options but also allow them to go their own way. "Dark nudges" aim to change consumer behaviour against their best interests. "Sludge" uses cognitive biases to make behaviour change more difficult. Researchers systematically searched websites and materials of alcohol industry (AI)-funded corporate social responsibility (CSR) organisations (e.g., IARD, Drinkaware, Drinkwise, Éduc'alcool). These examples were coded by independent raters and categorized for further analysis. The study identified dark nudges and sludge in alcohol industry CSR materials which undermine the information on alcohol harms that they disseminate, and may normalise or encourage alcohol consumption. Researchers suggested that policymakers and practitioners should be aware of how dark nudges and sludge are used by the alcohol industry to promote misinformation about alcohol harms to the public. [Read the paper.](#)

### > **Signalling Virtue, Promoting Harm: Unhealthy commodity industries and COVID-19**

This report offers a preliminary analysis of results from a crowdsourcing project mapping unhealthy commodity industry actions around the world in response to

COVID-19. Respondents to an online survey contributed 786 submissions describing industry activities in over 90 countries. The report outlines four broad categories of strategic responses evident in multiple countries and across diverse industries: adapting marketing and promotion of product; corporate social responsibility and philanthropy; pursuing partnerships and collaborations; and shaping policy environments. The actions outlined in this report raise concerns about the prospect of a corporate capture of COVID-19 in which the involvement of unhealthy commodity industries in the pandemic response risks directing public policy efforts away from broader health and social goals and towards the entrenchment of industry interests. This highlights the importance of continuing to monitor their corporate political activity around COVID-19 if the potential to build back better is to be realised. [Read the report.](#)

## training

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### Alcohol Focus Scotland learning opportunities

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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](#).



# events

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## Working with the whole person: Alcohol, mental health and complex needs

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### **Alcohol Change UK's first online interactive conference**

**> Wednesday 2 December and Thursday 3 December 2020**

Alcohol misuse is often just one symptom of the complex challenges someone faces in their life. Drinking may be a means to cope with underlying trauma or ongoing mental distress. It may bring its own problems with it, such as low mood and impaired cognition.

To consider complex needs and solutions Alcohol Change UK is gathering together a multidisciplinary group of academics, practitioners, and people with lived experience, to help us all work towards interventions that support the whole person. [Find out more and book your place.](#)

### **Alcohol workshops, seminars and conferences**

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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.



Alcohol Focus Scotland, 166 Buchanan St, Glasgow G1 2LW  
tel. 0141 572 6700 email. [enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)

[www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)



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Our mailing address is:

Alcohol Focus Scotland, 2nd floor, 166 Buchanan St, Glasgow G1 2LW

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