

IN FOCUS



Alcohol Focus Scotland Newsletter

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50p minimum price per unit of alcohol

The Scottish Government has set the minimum price at a level that will deliver significant health benefits for the people of Scotland. A 50p minimum price could save hundreds of lives a year and will put an end to irresponsible practices by supermarkets where a unit of alcohol can be sold for less than 15p.

Children familiar with alcohol brands

A new report from Alcohol Concern, *Making an Impression*, shows that children as young as 10 are more familiar with some leading alcohol brands and adverts than those for popular foods and snacks.

The study involved over 400 school pupils aged 10 and 11 being shown the brand names and commercial logos of common alcohol products, as well as images from television alcohol advertisements, alongside those for popular non-alcoholic products such as soft drinks and breakfast cereals. The children were asked to say whether the products were 'food', 'soft drink' or 'alcoholic drink'. The number of children able to identify alcohol branding and advertising was comparable to, and in some cases, greater than those who recognised brands and advertising for products known to appeal to children, such as ice cream and cake.

The research showed:

- 79% of the children correctly recognised Carlsberg as an alcoholic drink, higher than the percentage recognising Ben and Jerry's ice cream (74%) and Mr Kipling cakes (41%) as foods
- 79% identified the logo for Smirnoff vodka as an alcoholic product. Awareness of the brand was greater amongst children who said they had tried alcohol compared to those who had not
- Three quarters (75%) of the children correctly associated an image of the fictional characters Brad and Dan from a Fosters television advert with alcohol, much higher than those who correctly identified an image from Cadbury's drumming gorilla advertisement as advertising a food product (42%).

Alcohol Concern's Mark Leyshon said:

"The drinks industry asserts very strongly that it doesn't aim its advertising at children. However, this new study provides more evidence

that alcohol marketing messages are getting through to young people well before they are legally able to buy alcohol. Research shows that children who are exposed to alcohol advertising and promotion are more likely to start to use alcohol, have positive expectations about alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol.

"It's clear that more effective controls are needed to ensure alcohol marketing messages only reach adult audiences, and are not attractive to children. We need to look at the best practice from other countries that are seeking to tackle alcohol harm, and produce a regulatory framework that's fit for purpose."

Alcohol Focus Scotland will be working closely with Alcohol Concern and other partners in the coming months to develop activity aimed at protecting children and young people from this over exposure to alcohol marketing. Watch this space for further details.

National Licensing Conference 2012

Date: Wednesday 12 September 2012 **Venue:** Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow

Alcohol Focus Scotland has been hosting the National Licensing Conference since 2004. It is widely acknowledged as the key event in the licensing calendar with the widest representation across the licensing field.

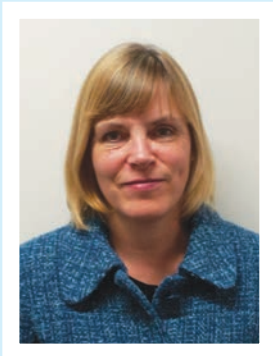
"The National Licensing Conference has become the top event for getting Boards, the police, the Government, and the licensed trade together to share experiences, share good practice, and to catch up on the latest gossip."

Kenny MacAskill MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Justice



Visit www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk for programme information over the coming weeks or call 0141 572 6703 to reserve your place now.

Welcome from the Chief Executive



Welcome to the Spring edition of In Focus. In the previous newsletter, I said that “much had happened” since the last edition and I find myself saying the same thing once again. Who would have thought that just as Scotland is poised to introduce minimum pricing, the government at Westminster looks set to follow suit?

The coalition government’s announcement that they want to adopt the same minimum pricing policy measure as the Scottish government has taken everyone by surprise. Of course, it makes perfect sense that a policy which could save hundreds of lives is introduced throughout the UK. But despite minimum pricing being the will of the governments both north and south of the border and enjoying the support of doctors, nurses, the police, children’s charities and others, sections of the alcohol industry continue to threaten legal action.

The lobbying power of global corporations is well documented and unfortunately all too often results in decisions being taken which favour business interests over the public interest. If the global alcohol producers and retailers persist in seeking to thwart laws which are likely to confer significant health benefits on the people of Scotland and the rest of the UK, they risk going down the same path as the tobacco industry. Anyone who doubts that the tobacco industry knew exactly what it was doing during the years that they sought to deny the health harm caused by tobacco, need only look at their current activities in countries which are not subject to the same stringent regulations which are in place in western countries. Recent media reports showing toddlers and children in Indonesia smoking up to 40 cigarettes a day in a country saturated with tobacco marketing were absolutely chilling.

There are suspicions that corporate lobbying power is implicated in the recent changes that have been made to the report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Alcohol and tobacco use, diet and lack of physical exercise

account for the biggest risk factors associated with NCDs. Hence the original report outlining the action that governments could take to reduce the risk factors included specific targets on reducing tobacco and alcohol use, reducing salt intake and increasing physical activity. However, in the most recent version of the report, the targets relating to tobacco, obesity and physical activity remain but the target to reduce per capita alcohol consumption by 10% has miraculously disappeared. Alcohol Focus Scotland has written to the Prime Minister David Cameron requesting that his government call for the reinstatement of the target as a matter of urgency.

You will see from the information contained in this newsletter that Alcohol Focus Scotland has been busy on a number of fronts over the last few months. We held six regional events across Scotland aimed at bringing together people working in licensing and public health to consider how policy and practice could be improved to make licensing work better to reduce alcohol harm. This is an important area of work for us as and we continue to support licensing boards, forums and public health practitioners in their efforts to control the availability of alcohol in order to reduce harm. We are pleased to see boards beginning to take decisions like the recent decision by Edinburgh licensing board to turn down applications from supermarkets on the grounds of overprovision. These decisions demonstrate that boards are getting to grips with their responsibilities to protect and improve the health of the people they serve and are also understanding better that in deciding whether or not to grant, renew or vary a licence, they need to take into account the overall availability of alcohol in their area. The national licensing conference on 12 September which will have a keynote address from Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, will provide an ideal opportunity to exchange knowledge and share good practice in licensing policy and practice.

I hope you find this newsletter useful. Please don’t hesitate to contact the staff team at AFS if you want to know more about anything in this newsletter.

Dr Evelyn Gillan
Chief Executive
Alcohol Focus Scotland

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Scotland leads the way on alcohol policy

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon has announced that the minimum price for alcohol will be 50p per unit. At this level, the price was equivalent to the 45p per unit set in 2010 after taking account of inflation. She also said that setting the price at this level would deliver significant health and social benefits.

Making the announcement on Monday 14 May at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Ms Sturgeon said:

"Cheap alcohol comes at a price and now is the time to tackle the toll that Scotland's unhealthy relationship with alcohol is taking on our society.

"It's no coincidence that as affordability has increased, alcohol-related hospital admissions have quadrupled, and it is shocking that half of our prisoners now say they were drunk when they committed the offence. Introducing a minimum price per unit will enable us to tackle these problems."

Research by Sheffield University estimates that introducing a minimum price of 50p

would see 60 fewer deaths in the first year, and up to 300 fewer deaths annually after ten years.

The Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Bill will shortly enter the final stage of the parliamentary process.

When Stage 1 of the Minimum Pricing Bill was successfully voted through the Scottish Parliament, the bill received support from the SNP, Liberal Democrats, Greens and Conservative MSPs. Regrettably the majority of Labour MSPs who were present abstained from voting.

During the Stage 1 debate in Parliament, Willie Rennie made a direct plea to the alcohol industry to stop lobbying against the measure:

"I would appeal to the industry - do not go down the route of the tobacco industry and fight this tooth and nail, because there is a will in this parliament to deliver it. I appeal to them: Let's get on with it."

Despite this, the Scotch Whisky Association, whose members include Diageo, the Edrington Group and Chivas Brothers, continue with their opposition and wrote to the Prime Minister David Cameron questioning the legality of the measure. However, the UK Government surprised many working in the alcohol control field by including proposals for minimum pricing in their new alcohol strategy for England and Wales which was launched in late March.

Minimum pricing for the UK

For a long time it appeared that Westminster would not be following Scotland's lead in introducing minimum unit pricing, favouring instead a ban on below-cost selling. It is to the coalition government's credit that, having examined the evidence, they rejected this measure on the basis that the price of the vast majority of products would not be affected. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this approach was first advocated by the alcohol industry.

Indeed, the undue influence that the alcohol industry appeared to be having on the development of the coalition government's alcohol policy led to several leading health organisations, including the BMA and Royal College of Physicians, walking away from the government's Responsibility Deal last year. Nevertheless, we should welcome the recent commitment by alcohol producers to lower the strength of many of their products. This is an example of how industry can play their part in helping to implement alcohol policy.

The Scottish Government is clearly taking a leadership role in the UK, with some commentators observing that minimum unit pricing is the biggest public health breakthrough since the ban on smoking in public places. Politicians have demonstrated their willingness to listen to public health experts about what works. The international evidence is crystal clear that without adequate controls on price and availability, the effectiveness of other measures which seek to reduce the burden of harm that alcohol causes to individuals, families, and communities will be greatly reduced.

But what about changing the 'culture'?

One of the arguments against minimum pricing that we keep hearing is that price is not the main issue; that what we need to tackle is our peculiarly British drinking culture.

Yet the UK has not always had a heavy drinking culture. Indeed, going back to the 1930s, Royal Commissions on Licensing in both England and Scotland reported that drunkenness had gone out of fashion. The Scottish Commission concluded that:

"sobriety has increased, instances of public drunkenness have become fewer... a younger generation is growing up to which, as a whole, any resort to alcoholic excess as a necessary or usual practice is almost totally unknown."

What this tells us is that there was a time in the not too distant past when alcohol did not have the central role in our society that it has today.

The relaxation of regulation over the past 30 years has created an excessively pro-alcohol environment with alcohol more affordable, more available and more heavily marketed than at any other time. **This is the culture that we need to change.** Putting regulation back into the system will begin to turn this picture around. If we want to change culture then price is a very good place to start.

Alcohol in the European Union Consumption, harm and policy approaches

A new report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) updates data on alcohol in the European Union (EU) and effective policies to address related harm.

The new report uses information gathered in 2011 to update key indicators on alcohol consumption, health outcomes and action to reduce harm across the EU. It updates the evidence base for some important areas of alcohol policy, and provides policy-makers and stakeholders with useful information to guide future action to reduce alcohol harm. Key findings in the report are:



- Policies that regulate the environment in which alcohol is marketed (particularly its price and availability) are effective in reducing alcohol harm. Enforced legislative measures to reduce drinking and driving, and brief interventions for at-risk drinkers are also effective.
- Among the 10 best practices (beside alcohol taxes) in preventive alcohol policies are interventions in the physical availability of alcohol such as the minimum purchase age, government alcohol monopolies, and restrictions on the times of sale and the density of outlets selling alcohol.
- On the other hand, school-based education is found not to reduce alcohol-related harm, although public information and educational programmes have a role in providing information and increasing attention to and acceptance of alcohol on the political and public agendas.

Alcohol is one of the world's top three priority areas in public health. Even though only half the global population drinks alcohol, it is the world's third leading cause of ill health and premature death, after low birth weight and unsafe sex. In Europe, alcohol is the third leading risk factor for disease and death after tobacco and high blood pressure.

European Workplace Alcohol Project (EWA)

Alcohol Focus Scotland continues work as a partner in the European Workplace and Alcohol project (EWA). This project began in January 2010 and will run for three years. Its purpose is to develop and disseminate a cross cultural toolkit able to support the implementation of workplace-based interventions to bring about reduced alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems in the workforce in Europe.

Using case studies submitted by each of the partners, the project has already produced a good practice review of workplace-based training to raise awareness, change behaviour and reduce alcohol-related harm. The partners are now preparing plans for the pilot phase of the project which will see workplace interventions, including training, delivered in 12 countries by early 2013. The evaluation of the pilots is scheduled for completion by April 2013 with a good practice seminar to be held in May 2013.

Alcohol Focus Scotland will be seeking 5 organisations to take part in the Scottish pilot of the project. Each participating organisation will receive free training and information for their workplace. If you would like to participate please email: training@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk or contact Mary Ellmers on 0141 572 6594 for more information.



Global alcohol target must be reinstated

AFS has responded to a World Health Organisation (WHO) consultation on a monitoring framework and targets for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). A UN high-level meeting in September identified four main common risk factors: tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity. The first draft of the WHO monitoring framework and targets included an "exposure target" to achieve a 10% relative reduction in per capita consumption of litres of pure alcohol among persons aged 15+ years. In the latest WHO discussion paper this target has been omitted.

As well as responding directly to WHO, we have made urgent representation to the UK government to request their support in ensuring this critical target is reinstated. Many countries around the world are facing the prospect of a significant rise in the burden of alcohol-related harm, as low- and middle-income countries without a history of widespread alcohol consumption are targeted by the global alcohol industry as 'emerging markets'. Stabilising current levels of alcohol consumption is imperative and a 10% relative reduction in adult per capita alcohol consumption by 2025 is the very least that many countries should be aiming for.



Labour's proposals to 'shift the culture'

Scottish Labour MSPs Dr Richard Simpson and Graeme Pearson have brought forward a Private Member's Bill, *Shifting the Culture*. This proposes to bring forward measures to help change culture in relation to alcohol in Scotland. The Bill seeks to promote public health through restrictions on alcohol marketing, improved alcohol education and public information, and requiring the Scottish Government to issue guidance on applying the "promotion of public health"

and "protecting children from harm" licensing objectives. The Bill also seeks to reduce alcohol-related offending through limiting the amount of caffeine in pre-mixed alcoholic drinks, introducing fine diversion and alcohol arrest referral schemes, and extending Drug Treatment and Testing Orders to alcohol. Consultation responses should be submitted to Dr Richard Simpson MSP by 29 June 2012. Email: Richard.simpson.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



Review of drinking guidelines

In addition to the launch of the new alcohol strategy for England and

Wales, the UK government has now responded to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Report recommending that drinking guidelines are reviewed. The Government insist that current guidelines are "consistent with scientific knowledge" but agree the review is necessary. The Government Review will be led by Dame Sally Davies, the UK's Chief Medical Officer and it has been recommended that the devolved health departments are involved in this.

The closing date for the consultation is 29th June 2012.

Children & Young People Update

Oh Lila

In 2010 Glasgow City Alcohol & Drug Partnership funded 64 nurseries across Glasgow City to receive the Oh Lila Learning Resource Pack and training.

Oh Lila is a resource which aims to build resilience and protective factors in young children, helping to develop their social skills and encouraging them to communicate.

Alcohol Focus Scotland has delivered 11 training sessions throughout the city with 140 practitioners now being trained to use the resource.

Key findings from our evaluation of the work show that practitioners who undertook training were:

- More confident to use the resource.
- More aware of the effects of alcohol on children and families.
- More confident to manage disclosure that may arise as a result of using the resource.
- More aware of alcohol related issues in Scotland.

We also gathered information on how the resource was used by practitioners. From the information obtained we know that:

- 99% of nurseries trained are now using the resource.
- The resource has been very positively received by practitioners, children and parents.
- 89% agreed it did help children to understand asking for help was a positive behaviour.
- 75% agreed the resource helped children to identify trusted adults.
- 75% agreed the resource helped children to explore emotions.
- 71% agreed the resource helped children to develop social skills.
- 71% agreed the resource helped children to develop problem solving skills.



Jane Wilson, Senior Officer – Children and Young People said:

"Oh Lila aims to build resilience and protective factors in children through helping to develop their social skills, explore emotions and encourage children that asking for help is a positive behaviour. I am delighted that the Oh Lila resource has been so well received by practitioners, parents and children throughout Glasgow".

Since the initial roll out of Oh Lila in Glasgow, further funding received from local Health Improvement Teams in Glasgow South and East and from North and South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnerships has enabled more nurseries, family centres and early years centres to receive resources and training.

More than 150 nurseries are now using Oh Lila with over 300 practitioners trained to date and more training planned.

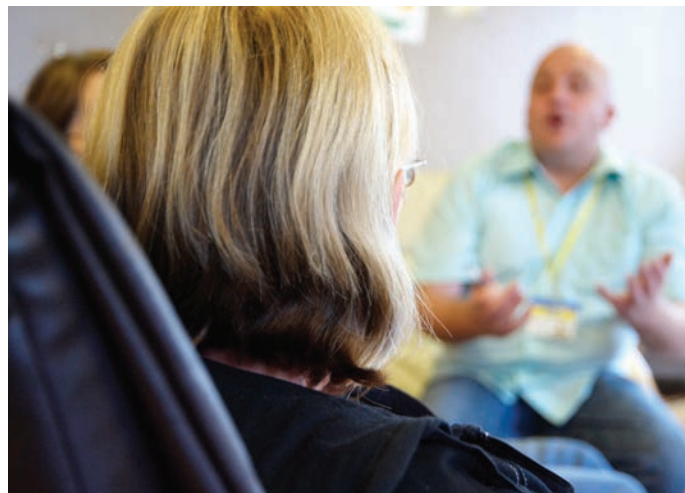
To see a copy of the full evaluation report, go to www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/oh-lila

Supporting front line services

Alcohol awareness training for non-specialist staff

As part of the implementation of the national alcohol strategy, *Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol*, and the drugs strategy, *The Road to Recovery*, service commissioners and providers need to consider the development needs of their alcohol and drug workforce. To support this, the Scottish Government produced a strategy, *Supporting the Development of Scotland's Alcohol & Drug Workforce*, which identifies key learning priorities. This strategy particularly promotes learning from people who use services, as their direct experience gives them a unique insight. The strategy further identifies the need to educate and raise awareness about alcohol and drugs across the health and social workforce to improve the identification of alcohol and drug problems at an early stage. To support the delivery of these learning priorities, Alcohol Focus Scotland has been working in partnership with Glasgow Addiction Services to deliver a series of alcohol awareness training workshops to a range of health and social care practitioners.

Now in its third year, the one day alcohol awareness training workshop, developed and delivered by Alcohol Focus Scotland, includes a presentation from a team of service users originating from Glasgow Council on Alcohol (GCA) and Greater Easterhouse Alcohol Advisory Project (GEAAP). The workshop aims to inform participants on the effects of alcohol and interventions that lead to treatment and recovery



for people with alcohol problems. Having a service user present allows people attending the opportunity to see and hear what an alcohol problem 'looks and sounds like' as well as exploring the efficacy of interventions experienced through their recovery and treatment.

Bill, from the service user group at GCA, says:

"I enjoy giving something back and see this as contributing to my own recovery. Also it is an opportunity to say 'thanks' and remind everybody of the difference they are making in people's lives".

Since the introduction of service user presentations nearly 300 staff members have participated. The evaluations consistently show high satisfaction with the presenters with many staying behind to speak personally to the presenter. The trainer, John Marletta, says:

"Having a service user talk openly of their good and bad experiences using services in the area helps attendees see the positive outcome that can occur even with people with the most chronic alcohol problems."

The alcohol awareness training day is aimed at health and social care staff from the statutory and voluntary sectors who do not necessarily have a specialism in alcohol support. Typically, the training workshop has 20 participants from a range of backgrounds including pharmacists, homecare workers and residential support officers. Providing alcohol awareness training to non-specialist staff supports a whole population approach by raising awareness among a wide range of practitioners to enable the identification of hazardous or harmful drinking. It also equips participants with the knowledge and skills to offer or direct someone to an early intervention.

One attendee recently said that the workshop helped refresh where other training had let him down. The workshop certainly does try to challenge assumptions and complacency around alcohol issues and introduce optimism and evidenced based interventions that can support health behaviour change.



Making licensing work to reduce alcohol harm

A toolkit for stakeholders



AFS is currently working on a stakeholder's guide to developing effective licensing policy and practice. New Scottish licensing legislation and changing patterns in the way we buy and consume alcohol mean that we now have to do licensing differently to make sure it works to reduce high levels of alcohol harm.

The toolkit, which will be rolled out in sections throughout 2012, will explain the new approach to licensing. It is aimed at all those involved in the licensing process, including health professionals, the police, ADPs, licensing board and forum members.

Key sections of the toolkit will cover:

- Collecting evidence on licensing trends and indicators of alcohol-related harm.
- Preparing an evidence-based statement of licensing policy and how the policy statement should be used in decision-making to promote the licensing objectives.
- Assessing overprovision of licensed premises and why it is important to consider the overall availability of alcohol over larger areas.

The first part of the toolkit, *Changing Times: Why we need to change licensing practice*, looks at recent trends in alcohol licensing in Scotland; what happens in the licensing process and who's involved; and provides a timeline for the production of new licensing policy statements that are due by November 2013. Copies are available to download now on www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Licensing Board member training 2012

Following the May local council elections, all Licensing Board members need to undergo statutory training. Alcohol Focus Scotland has taken part in a Scottish Government group working to update the training specification that the qualification is based on to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose. There were a number of changes made including a greater emphasis on the context of licensing in Scotland and the development of licensing policy.

In light of these changes, Alcohol Focus Scotland has also been updating its own Licensing Board member training and support materials and has had the new Licensing Board Members' Qualification accredited with SQA. We are offering Licensing Board member training from the 15th May onwards, with most Boards electing to undertake their training either in late May or early June.

To book a place please email training@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk or call 0141 572 6700.

CONTACT US

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