



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EAST LOTHIAN LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

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TUESDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON

Forum Members Present: David Dickson (Chair)
Pat Hanson (Secretary)
Kirsten Baird
David Forrest
Rudi Fruzynski
Oskar Grodnicki
Ian Mackay
Garry Naysmith
John Thayers

Council Officials Present: None

Licensing Board Members Present: Willie Innes

Visitors Present: None

Apologies: Heather Bowsher
Nico de Freitas
Jim Goodfellow
Bernard Harkins
Stuart Logan
Kirstie MacNeill

1. FORUM MEMBERSHIP

New members Kirsten Baird and Oskar Grodnicki (QMU) and Ian Mackay (Police Scotland) were welcomed to their first Forum meeting and introductions were made.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 2013

The minutes had been previously circulated and were proposed and seconded as a correct record.

Decision

The minutes of the Forum meeting held on 3rd September 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

i Refresher Training for Personal Licence Holders

David Forrest reported on the training course put on by ITA Training at the Maitlandfield House Hotel, Haddington, on 4th November 2013. He said that it had been satisfactory, although the resultant certificate had yet to be issued. Rudi Fruzynski said that there would not be any blanket reminders to Personal Licence Holders; the system would throw up reminders two or three months before the due date. He was reminding Premises Managers about the need for PMs and relevant staff to complete their refresher training in good time. The Secretary confirmed that further local courses were expected to be organised by ITA Training at Haddington, with details awaited.

Garry Naysmith said that RASP may be organising refresher training for its members (possibly at Musselburgh Rugby Club in February 2014) through another company. In answer to a question from John Thayers, Rudi Fruzynski confirmed that refresher training for those originally trained in 2008/9 would have to be completed by 31st August 2014, with a further three months to provide evidence to the Licensing Board.

Decision

It was agreed that the Secretary and other members would pursue further local refresher training options with ITA Training as well as the timely provision of certificates.

ii Review of the Licensing Board's Statement of Licensing Policy

The Secretary introduced the Licensing Board's final Statement of Licensing Policy (2013-2016), which had been circulated prior to the meeting along with other relevant papers. He said that a number of the Forum's suggestions had been accepted, including those on Occasional Licences, the Duty to Trade and the Management of Licensed Premises. After a debate on alternative geographically split proposals, the Board had also agreed to follow the Forum's proposals on Overprovision. Willie Innes described the discussions in the Board on Overprovision in more detail and said that it would be up to new applicants to justify how they could meet the licensing objectives. Also, with the current level of Overprovision, licences would not automatically be granted to the new owners of premises. It was noted that East Lothian Licensing Board's new policy had been covered in SLTN and elsewhere.

Willie also said that the Board fully appreciated the Forum's detailed contribution to the consultation exercise on the new policy. The Chair noted with pleasure that the Board had taken account of the Forum's proposals. In response to a question from John Thayers about

Overprovision polices elsewhere, Rudi Fruzynski said that the forum website would contain links to suitable information e.g. via SLLP.

In relation to Occasional Licences, Garry Naysmith raised the case of a recent function in Musselburgh which may have been held without such a licence. After discussion Rudi Fruzynski said that he would make sure that the relevant parties were following the correct procedure.

4. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT TO THE LICENSING BOARD AND FORUM

Members considered and discussed the Chief Constable's Report for the period 1st April 2012 until 31st March 2013, which had previously been circulated. Ian Mackay said that it was strong on prevention issues, especially in relation to proxy purchasing etc. The use of social media was also making a difference. Willie Innes said that this was a good report which showed how seriously Police Scotland took the partnership with the Licensing Board. He felt that in some other areas responsible drinkers were being targeted but that the balance was about right in East Lothian.

There was further discussion about issues raised by the report, including family-friendly policies, the ID-ing of young persons, the beneficial effects of Pubwatch schemes and the identification of a banned person by photographic means.

In summing up, the Chair said that once again the benefits of calling the police to incidents should be appreciated. The report was noted.

5. POLICE REPORT

In Heather Bowsher's absence, Ian Mackay said that there was little of significance to report. Extra officers would be out on patrol until past Hogmanay and if there were any queries about policing during this period then people should get in touch. Heather was showing a DVD 'Who are You?' which was designed to help prevent sexual offences. This was being shown to interested parties, including Pubwatch meetings. Local Policing Plans for the period 2014-2017 would be published in April 2014. The report was noted with thanks.

6. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER'S REPORT

Rudi Fruzynski gave a summary of business dealt with recently by the Licensing Board. From September to November 2013 10 major variations had been sought, including three from members' clubs seeking open licences. A provisional licence application for a new build in Musselburgh had come through before the start of the Board's new Overprovision policy. A general extension to 2am for the festive period would be available to licensees from 13th December 2013 until 5th January 2014 – details were on the Forum website. The late payment of licence fees continued to be a problem, with 29 still outstanding at 24th October. These were being chased up through November. There were two reviews of premises licences, at a bar in Musselburgh and a grocer's in Fa'side. In addition to the AFS National Licensing Conference, Rudi had also attended a licensing briefing in Glasgow on 8th November.

Willie Innes added some comments about the late payment of fees and the generally good handling of incidents at licensed premises by staff and management. The report was noted with thanks.

7. PUBWATCH – REPORTS FROM LOCAL SCHEMES

Garry Naysmith reported on recent meetings of RASP, which had not been well attended. Members were being addressed before the next meeting on the need to attend. Willie Innes said that, as shown in their new statement, the Licensing Board positively welcomed active Pubwatch scheme membership and would have less sympathy with licensees who don't join and then come unstuck. There were no reports from other schemes.

8. ALCOHOL FOCUS SCOTLAND

i National Licensing Conference 9th September 2013

The Secretary introduced his report on the Conference, which had been previously circulated. There were no questions and the report was noted with thanks.

ii eFocus September and November 2013

The September document had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Secretary tabled the November eFocus. Members discussed Minimum Unit Pricing and other recent initiatives such as the ban on multiple unit discounts. The papers were noted.

9. MEETING DATES FOR 2014

It was agreed to meet at the current venue at 7pm on the first Tuesday in March, June, September and December 2014. There would be liaison with the Licensing Board over the timing of the required annual joint meeting with the Forum.

Decision

The Secretary would approach ELC to make the relevant bookings. The Chair and Secretary would liaise with the Licensing Board over the timing of the joint meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Thayers referred to SALSUS, a regular survey covering young people. This would cover 13-15 year olds in East Lothian as part of a national survey and would include the use and abuse of alcohol. He drew attention to some relevant issues, including parental attitudes and the work of MELDAP and said that it should be possible to summarise some results in mid-2014. A presentation could be made to the September 2014 Forum meeting, an idea which was warmly encouraged by members.

Decision

Subject to a report being available, John Thayers would prepare a paper for the September 2014 Forum meeting on the SALSUS results.

The Secretary said that the March 2014 Forum meeting would be his last; he was leaving the Forum as he felt that he had lost touch with the trade following his retirement and would not be undertaking personal licence refresher training.

The Chair said that the Forum had really progressed a lot recently but that he was also considering his position as Chair and Convener.

Decision

All members would be encouraged to attend the March 2014 meeting at which elections would be held for Forum Officerships.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed after a vote of thanks to the Chair.



The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Crime and Justice: Civil Justice

Review of Alcohol Licensing Fees – Steering Group: Recommendations to Scottish Ministers

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This report is available on the Scottish Government Publications Website
(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Recent>).

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Review of Alcohol Licensing Fees – Steering Group: Recommendations to Scottish Ministers

Scottish Government – 06 December 2013

Introduction

1. Since the alcohol licensing fees regime came into effect, in 2009, stakeholders have questioned how proportionate and fair the fees regime is. It has been suggested by some stakeholders that small and medium sized premises pay disproportionately large fees relative to larger premises. However, others have argued that the size of the premises should not impact on the premises licence fee, because applications take a similar amount of resources to process regardless of the size of the premises.
2. In 2010, the Regulatory Review Group (RRG) carried out a review of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, which focused on fees and the cost of applications. One of their recommendations was that the Scottish Government review whether rateable values was the most appropriate basis for the banding structure used to calculate premises licences and annual fees, as well as considering other options that could be more suitable.
3. In response to these stakeholder concerns and the RRG recommendations, in October 2011, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice announced plans for a review of alcohol licensing fees.

Background

4. The alcohol licensing regime is administered at local authority level by Licensing Boards. These Boards carry out a range of functions including granting and reviewing licences, writing policy statements, and considering if there is overprovision of licensed premises in a particular area.
5. The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 s136 enables Scottish Ministers to make provision for the charging of alcohol licensing fees by Licensing Boards in a range of situations, such as applying for premises licences, personal licences and occasional licences; annual fees and transfers or variations of licences.
6. Some of these fees are fixed, however for others such as premises applications or annual fees, Licensing Boards are empowered to set their own fee levels as long as they do not exceed the maximum limits outlined in the Licensing (Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2007. The fees are intended to reflect the Scottish Government's intention to make the system self-funding, i.e., to cover both direct and indirect costs incurred by Licensing Boards (over time, not at the level of individual applications). As stated in the Licensing (Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 s13,

“a Board is to have regard to the desirability of ensuring that the total fees payable under these Regulations to that Board in respect of any period are

likely to be broadly equivalent to the expenses incurred by the Board and the council for the area of that Board, in administering the Act generally during that period.”

7. Although the fees are set by Licensing Boards, as stated in the above quote, the fees should also include Local Authority costs such as Licensing Standards Officers (LSOs), and other indirect costs such as use of local authority staff/buildings etc. Some Boards do not currently keep a record of these costs, and it can be a complicated process to calculate these retrospectively.
8. Most of these fees, such as those charged for occasional licences or extended hours, are the same for all applicants regardless of the size of their business, however premises applications and annual fees are linked to the business’s rateable value (with a number of exceptions such as Members’ Clubs, visitor attractions, etc.).
9. The fee payable for a premises licence application is to be determined by the relevant Board but is not to exceed–

| |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) £200 in the case of premises within category 1 |
| (b) £800 in the case of premises within category 2 |
| (c) £1,100 in the case of premises within category 3 |
| (d) £1,300 in the case of premises within category 4 |
| (e) £1,700 in the case of premises within category 5 |
| (f) £2,000 in the case of premises within category 6 |

10. In addition to the initial payment for premises licence applications, licence holders must pay an annual fee. Licensing Boards are empowered to set their own annual fees for premises licences as long as they do not exceed the maximum limits outlined in the Licensing (Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2007.
11. The annual fee payable is to be determined by the relevant Board but is not to exceed–

| |
|----------------------------------------------------|
| (a) £180 in the case of premises within category 1 |
| (b) £220 in the case of premises within category 2 |
| (c) £280 in the case of premises within category 3 |
| (d) £500 in the case of premises within category 4 |
| (e) £700 in the case of premises within category 5 |
| (f) £900 in the case of premises within category 6 |

Steering Group

12. A steering group was assembled to carry out the review of alcohol licensing fees. The group was made up of representatives from the on and off trade as well as from Licensing Boards (for membership see Annex A). In September 2012, the group met for the first time and agreed that their remit would be to:

- Set the parameters for research to be carried out by an independent contractor.
- Consider the findings of the research and any implications for the alcohol licensing regime in Scotland,
- Agree recommendations to Scottish Ministers.

Research – Commissioning

13. Following a competitive tendering exercise, the Scottish Government commissioned 4-consulting to provide the independent analysis to support this review.

14. The aim of the research was to evaluate the current alcohol licensing fees regime and consider the efficacy of other potential structures to inform the Scottish Government's proposed reform of the fees regime. The research had three main objectives:

- Establish a factual baseline:

How much income do Licensing Boards currently receive from the range of alcohol licensing fees? How much does it cost Licensing Boards to administer the licensing regime? Do the boards achieve full cost recovery of direct and indirect costs? If additional funds are made, are these finances ring-fenced?

- Evaluate the current fees regime:

Do stakeholders feel that the current system is fair and proportionate to all sections of the trade? Which of the current fees are most/least appropriate? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the system?

- Evaluate these potential alternative options for premises licence applications/ annual fees:

Are the proposed alternatives workable? Do stakeholders feel that they are fair and proportionate to all sections of the trade? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed alternatives?

- A turnover-based system
- A system based on square footage of the premises
- Revision of the existing system

Research – Methods

15. An online survey and a financial data collection spreadsheet were issued to all 40 Licensing Boards to gather data on the direct and indirect costs of administering the regime, as well as the income from the fees, and the views of respondents on the current regime and proposed alternatives.

16. 4-consulting conducted semi-structured interviews with the following key stakeholders to gauge views on the current provision of alcohol licensing services and fees.
 - Alcohol Focus Scotland
 - Edinburgh Licensing Board – depute clerk
 - Renfrewshire Licensing Board – depute clerk
 - The Law Society of Scotland
 - Scottish Beer and Pub Association
 - Scottish Grocers Federation
 - Scottish Retail Consortium
 - Scottish Licensed Trade Association
 - Wine and Spirit Trade Association.

17. The research team carried out case study visits with key stakeholders to more fully understand how the current licensing system affects a variety of different licence holders:
 - Licensing Boards
 - A small pub in an urban area
 - Small pubs and a pub/restaurant in a small town in a rural area
 - An on trade operator with outlets across Scotland
 - A convenience store operator with outlets across Scotland
 - A major supermarket operator with outlets across Scotland.

Research – Findings

Licensing Board Finances

18. Responses to the qualitative survey were received from all 32 Local Authorities, however only 18 respondents completed the income spreadsheet and only 15 provided details of costs incurred administering the licensing regime. With 15 sets of cost data, 4-consulting were unable to produce robust data on the overall picture across Scotland and could not say whether most Boards were achieving cost recovery or were making a surplus or a deficit.

19. The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 provides that licensing fees be based on cost recovery. If Boards do not have reliable up-to-date data on their income and expenditure, it is not possible to state whether they are currently doing so.

20. The recent Hemming vs Westminster City Council judgement, while not having precedence in Scotland, makes clear that local authorities must be able to justify fees and demonstrate that they operate on a cost recovery basis.

21. Of the 15 Boards that submitted financial data, the majority did not cover their costs with fee income. On average, fee income covered about 72% of

expenditure. If the data from these Boards is extrapolated across the whole of Scotland then the deficit is estimated to be approximately £2.6m.

22. Most of the Boards who participated in the research do not make future projections of workload so have not taken into account the costs of the upcoming personal licence refresher process.
23. It should be noted that this dataset does not include some large Boards. Were these areas to be breaking even or making a profit due to economies of scale and more efficient processes, their absence would have an impact on the data overall.
24. There is a perception amongst the trade that all Boards charge maximum fees, however the research showed that around a third of Boards charged less than this. Of the seven Boards that did not charge the maximum for application fees and/or annual fees, six made a deficit and one made a surplus. It is not known why these Boards do not raise their fees, although they may be operating at a loss intentionally to create a business-friendly environment or, alternatively, may be unaware that they are operating at a loss and have the option to address this by adjusting fees.

Individual Fees

25. Licensing Board respondents stated that their most resource intensive activity related to the administration of applications for occasional licences, this was because there were so many of these. This had the lowest fee attached (£10) and the vast majority of Licensing Board respondents stated that the Occasional Licence fee was too low and did not reflect the costs incurred.
26. 90% of Licensing Board respondents thought the Extended Hours Licence fee was too low (£10), 77% thought the Minor Variation fee was too low (£20/ £31), and 57% thought the Major Variation fee was too low (determined by individual Boards with no upper limit although they should be based on cost recovery). The other fee levels were thought to be „about right“ by the majority of respondents.

Stakeholder Views

27. The majority of stakeholders thought that most fees were about right. Views on whether the current system was fair and proportionate to all sections of the trade varied depending on stakeholder type.
28. In recent years there has been a trend towards much larger stores. This has concentrated sales at the top end of the market. However there is a view that this is not sufficiently reflected in the fee structure. It was felt by some stakeholders that small businesses paid disproportionately high fees and that large premises should have been paying more.
29. There was said to be an inconsistent approach across the Licensing Boards – this led to frustration among multi-site businesses dealing with different systems

in each area. A number of consultees expressed support for a central administration or central setting of fees and operational systems/processes. In particular, it was suggested that the administration of Personal Licences would benefit from centralisation.

30. Under the current fees system, Members' Clubs are automatically assigned into category one and therefore pay the cheapest application fees and annual fees. Members' Clubs pay reduced rates to recognise the important social role that they play in communities throughout Scotland. There is a perception that some Members' Clubs effectively operate on a commercial basis and therefore granting them special privileges is unfair to other licensed premises. Consequently there is a view that the status of Members' Clubs should be reconsidered.

Potential Alternative Fees Regimes

31. The research team considered three alternative fees options suggested by the steering group:
- A turnover based system
 - A system based on the square footage of the premises
 - Modification of the existing system by, for example, adding extra bands, adjusting the existing bands, introducing potential discounts for some licensees such as small businesses/tourist attractions, etc.
32. Some stakeholders were in favour of the turnover based system and the square footage based system, however both of these approaches were considered to be problematic and received more arguments against than in favour of their use.
33. The turnover based system was considered to be the fairest because it linked fees directly with sales. However, this approach would increase the administrative burden both for Boards, who may not have appropriate staff to administer such a regime, and for premises, particularly off-sales businesses that were not currently obliged to gather this data. Furthermore, premises were reluctant to disclose commercially sensitive information.
34. The square footage based system was thought to be more proportionate and fairer to smaller businesses. However, a system based on square footage was considered to be difficult for Licensing Boards to administer, while not necessarily equating to the amount of alcohol sold e.g. in the case of department stores.
35. Overall, a substantial majority of Licensing Board survey respondents and stakeholder interviewees favoured modification of the existing system based on rateable value.

Steering Group Consideration

36. The Steering Group considered the findings of the research and its implications for the alcohol licensing regime in Scotland. Although they concluded that the current fees regime could be improved, there was no consensus regarding whether an alternative approach should be based on turnover, square footage, or modifications to the existing regime. There were those in favour of each of these options, and it was not possible to resolve these issues definitively based on the evidence provided by the research.
37. Therefore, it was decided that at this stage it was not possible to justify taking a fundamentally different approach from the current system based upon rateable value.
38. However, there were a number of recommendations that the group agreed were necessary and appropriate at this stage, such as amending the occasional fees, considering whether the special status awarded to Members' Clubs is still appropriate, and putting a duty on Boards to report their fee income and expenditure.

Occasional Fees

39. The research showed that occasional applications were the most labour-intensive activity for Boards, which spent between 5% and 50% of their total activity on these applications. Although many occasional applications require relatively little work, some are much more complex and labour intensive and the fee does not cover the associated costs. Furthermore, there are a large number of these compared to other applications. The group agreed that the £10 fee for the occasional licence was not sufficient to cover the cost of administration. They also felt that Boards should have the flexibility to charge an appropriate fee for occasional applications, up to a maximum fee determined by regulations. This would enable them to charge a greater fee for larger, more complicated, commercial applications, and a smaller fee for smaller, more straight forward applications.

Members' Clubs

40. The research showed that many stakeholders believed that Members' Clubs should not receive reduced rates because some may be operating as commercial entities. The steering group felt that, in light of these findings, further work should be carried out to consider whether the treatment of Members' Clubs was still appropriate.

Licensing Board Duty

41. The lack of data on whether Licensing Boards are currently achieving cost recovery means that neither an overall rise nor decrease in fee levels could be empirically-proven at this time.

42. The steering group agreed that action should be taken to address this data gap so that any future changes to the fees regime could be based on robust evidence.
43. The group noted the Hemming vs Westminster City Council judgement, while not having precedence in Scotland, makes clear that local authorities must be able to justify fees and demonstrate that they operate on a cost recovery basis.
44. It was agreed that the Scottish Government should take steps to place a duty on Licensing Boards to account for their costs and fee income in a transparent manner. It is important to ensure that the required accounting be produced and that Boards use comparable approaches to data gathering/reporting.
45. The details of how a duty may work are outside the remit of the steering group. However, very clear parameters will be needed or there could be wide variations in the methods and quality of cost reporting. There are many factors to be considered – for example licensing is just one of many tasks that local authority employees carry out; there are many indirect costs to consider; and some costs are not currently calculated (such as use of council buildings/electricity).
46. It was agreed that the most suitable approach would be to wait for an appropriate legislative opportunity to insert a duty into primary legislation. An order-making power could be inserted so that the details can be finalised at a later date.
47. At the SOLAR meeting on Fri 13th September 2013 (The Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland), the group considered the steering group's recommendation to place a duty on Licensing Boards to account for their costs in a transparent manner in order to demonstrate that their fees regime operate on cost recovery (unless they choose to make a deficit).
48. There was agreement from SOLAR that this was an appropriate recommendation, although the importance of clear guidance regarding exactly what kind of data Boards should provide was emphasised.

Fairness and Proportionality

49. The Steering Group discussed whether „fairness“ and „proportionality“ should be considered when setting the alcohol licensing fees or whether cost recovery should be the only consideration in decision making. The group agreed that although the cost recovery principles set out in the 2005 Act should determine the overall amounts raised through fees, within these totals it was appropriate to consider fairness and proportionality.

Recommendations

- The group agreed that the Scottish Government should take steps to place a duty on Licensing Boards to account for their costs and fee income in a transparent manner. This will allow them to demonstrate that the fees regimes operate on a cost recovery basis (unless they choose to make a deficit).
- The group agreed that although they are not recommending substantive changes to the fees regime at this time, it will be necessary to revisit the issue once there is better data available from the new duty on Boards to report their costs and income. Furthermore, it is likely that there will be a business rates revaluation in 2017 so it may be appropriate to wait until information on this process is available before taking further action.
- The group agreed that the fee for occasional licences should be raised higher than its current £10 cost. It was agreed that Boards should have some discretion about how much to charge; to enable them to charge, for example, charity meetings less than commercial entities. The group suggested that a range of £20 – £80 may be appropriate for this purpose.
- The group agreed that it may be appropriate to revisit the special status awarded to Members' Clubs. Currently there is insufficient data to make specific recommendations, however more work should be done to consider whether some clubs are operating as commercial enterprises, and if so, whether their special status in the fees regime is still appropriate.

Annex A

The Steering Group

William Boyack – Wine and Spirit Trade Association (WSTA)

Patrick Browne – Scottish Beer and Pub Association (SBPA)

John Drummond – Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF)

Morag Leck – Depute Clerk to Renfrewshire Licensing Board (attended the steering group as representatives of the SOLAR Licensing Group)

Robert Millar – Depute Clerk to City of Edinburgh Licensing Board (attended the steering group as representatives of the SOLAR Licensing Group)

Paul Waterson – Scottish Licensed Trade Association (SLTA)

Chair – Quentin Fisher – Head of Licensing – Scottish Government

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Research

[The alcohol evidence base: identifying UK-relevant research](#)

Alcohol Research UK briefing

[Exposure of children and adolescents to alcohol marketing on social media websites](#)

[Harm to others from alcohol consumption in the minimum pricing policy debate - analysis of UK newspapers](#)

[Alcohol screening and brief interventions for adolescents](#)

Resources

[European Workplace Alcohol Toolkit](#)

Toolkit for good practice in alcohol-related workplace interventions

Healthy Development in Young People: for professionals working with substance use in young people
Free, interactive e-learning resource from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
[More info](#)

Events

SHAAP and SARN debate and discussion with Professor David Nutt
Alcohol without the hangover? Using science to reduce the harms of alcohol
19 February, Edinburgh
[More info](#)

Alcohol Research

Alcohol Policy

Wishing all our readers a happy Christmas and very best wishes for 2014. Our office will be closed from Tuesday 24 December and will reopen on Friday 3 January.



Alcohol consumption and deaths higher in Scotland than northern England

Twenty Scots are still dying every week because of alcohol, despite a recent downward trend. The latest [MESAS report](#) shows higher deaths in central Scotland are consistent with more alcohol being sold. The most apparent difference between the regions was the substantially higher level of spirits sold in supermarkets and off-licences in Scotland.

Meanwhile, figures released by the [Office for National Statistics](#) show 3 in 5 adults say they drank alcohol in the past week, continuing a decline since 2005, and the proportion of adults

drinking more than 5 days a week has also dropped.

Alcohol interventions in the workplace

The European Workplace and Alcohol project has published a [toolkit](#) and a [leaflet](#) of key findings and policy recommendations to support workplaces in developing and implementing alcohol interventions. Alcohol Focus Scotland was an associated partner in this 3 year pan-European project, and we will be incorporating the learning and good practice in our future work.

Clamp down on alcohol advert scheduling breaches

The Advertising Standards Authority will begin proactively testing whether alcohol adverts are breaching new scheduling standards formed to minimise their exposure to children. The clampdown is in response to an Ofcom report earlier this year that suggested children might be at risk from inappropriate content from alcohol brands due to the broader range of content they are now watching. [Read more](#)

Have you spotted an irresponsible supermarket alcohol promotion?

We would like to hear from you if you spot irresponsible alcohol promotions in your local supermarket over the festive period. Please [email us](#) the details and if possible, a photo.

Public support for minimum pricing in England greater than previously thought

Analysis by the Institute of Alcohol Studies of submissions to the Home Office consultation on minimum pricing shows that the Home Office failed to distinguish between those responses that were against the principle of minimum pricing at any level, and those who actually wanted a price higher than the 45p proposed by the government. [Read more](#)

Campaign highlights alcohol cancer link

Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, have produced a hard hitting TV advert which shows a man drinking a pint of beer containing a growing tumour at the bottom of the glass. Drinkers are warned that alcohol is in the same cancer-causing category as tobacco and asbestos, and the more you drink, the more you increase your cancer risk. [View the advert](#)



James Bond at high risk of liver damage, impotence and an early death

Doctors analysing the Ian Fleming novels have found that James Bond drinks the equivalent of one and a half bottles of wine every day - 92 units a week. The report in the Christmas edition of the British Medical Journal concluded: "Although we appreciate the societal pressures to consume alcohol when working with international terrorists and high stakes gamblers, we would advise an immediate referral for further assessment and treatment, a reduction in alcohol consumption to safe levels, and suspect that the famous catchphrase 'shaken not stirred' could be because of alcohol-induced tremor affecting his hands." [Read more](#)

**UK annual
conference**
18 March, London
[More info](#)

Study uses texts to cut binge drinking

Researchers at the University of Dundee are recruiting 700 men aged between 25 and 44 who drink more than 8 units of alcohol per session. The participants will receive regular texts for three months, followed by a phone interview to assess if there has been a change in their drinking behaviour. [Read more](#)

Alcohol Focus Scotland, 166 Buchanan St, Glasgow G1 2LW
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www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk
Twitter [@alcoholfocus](#)

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Reducing harm caused by alcohol

eFocus January 2014

Events

Cross Party Group on Drug and Alcohol Misuse

5 March, Edinburgh
AGM, presentations and discussion on 'legal highs'.
Register on [Eventbrite](#)

Addictions and the Liver conference

25 March, Motherwell
To register your interest email [Fiona McIntyre](#) or [Pamela Scott](#)

New Directions in the Study of Alcohol annual conference

23-26 April, Dundee
[More info](#)

Research

[Does legislation to prevent alcohol sales to drunk individuals work?](#)

Resources

[New Renfrewshire ADP website](#)

SSKS website
Social Services Knowledge Scotland (SSKS) has a remit to share knowledge and improve practice across the public sector. Their website features a [drug and alcohol portal](#)

[European Workplace and Alcohol Toolkit](#)

Toolkit for good practice in alcohol-related workplace interventions

AFS training

Working with children using our resources

14 February, Glasgow
[More info](#)

Personal licence

News & Policy



Court to hear minimum pricing appeal

The Scotch Whisky Association has appealed the judgement of Lord Doherty in the Judicial Review of minimum pricing. The appeal will commence at the Court of Session in Edinburgh on 4 February and is expected to run for two weeks. It could be several months before we hear the decision, adding further delay to the implementation of a policy which was passed by the Scottish Parliament in May 2012.

Public health supplement on large retailers scrapped

The Scottish Government has announced it will scrap the public health levy on large retailers which sell both alcohol and tobacco. The £95 million levy was introduced in 2012 but Finance Secretary John Swinney confirmed during a reception with retail bosses that it would not be continued after 2015. The director of the Scottish Retail Consortium said the climbdown sent a "positive signal" that the government supported a "favourable business environment". [Read more](#)

"Cosy relationship" between Westminster and drinks industry

An [investigation](#) by the BMJ has revealed the extraordinary level of access granted by the government to the alcohol industry as it successfully fought last year to kill off a minimum unit pricing policy in England and Wales. The Department of Health alone had at least 130 meetings with alcohol industry representatives. In an open [letter](#) the Alcohol Health Alliance says this information "serves to fuel fears that big business is trumping public health concerns in Westminster" and they urge the government to "stop dancing to the tune of the drinks industry".

Read liver specialist Dr Nick Sheron's [blog post](#)

Dundee has overprovision of alcohol

A [report](#) by Dundee City Alcohol & Drug Partnership for the Council's Licensing Board has found an over provision of alcohol in the city. The ADP warns the situation is taking its toll on the city's health and economy. They are calling for future licences to be refused unless applicants can show they will not contribute to the problem. Since 2009, off-sales licences in Dundee increased by 24.5% while on-sales licences went up 13.6%. [Read more](#)

Lottery funding available for recovery projects

At the [Big Lottery Fund](#), we want to support individuals to overcome substance misuse and other related, and to build a positive future for themselves. With grants of up to £1million available over five years, we can support a range of projects that help people with alcohol problems to overcome or prevent related issues such as homelessness and mental ill health. There's never been more help to apply so contact our Big Advice team on 0300 123 7110 or [email](#) if your group has an idea for funding.



Fall in number of alcohol-related GP consultations

New data for 2012/13 shows there were an estimated 94,630 alcohol-related primary care consultations by 48,420 patients, a fall from the 109,170 consultations by 57,740 patients the previous year. Consultation rates were highest for those aged 65 and over, and there were two and a half times more patients consulting for alcohol misuse in the most deprived quintile compared with the least deprived quintile. The data is available on [ScotPHO](#).

Pubs encouraged to offer 125ml wine measures

Bars and pubs across Scotland are being encouraged to increase the availability of 125ml wine measures as part of a new campaign by the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership. Public Health Minister [Michael Matheson](#) said: "A



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large glass of wine can contain over 3 units of alcohol. Clearly it is important that people have the ability to choose a smaller measure if they wish." Materials for bars to promote the 125ml measure are available [here](#).

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