

Minimum unit pricing is now live in Scotland

As of 1st May 2018 Scotland has introduced minimum unit pricing (MUP), a policy which targets harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption. This factsheet gives an overview of why minimum unit pricing is necessary and encourages individuals and churches to push for England to follow suit.

What does this mean for alcohol pricing in Scotland?

- A new minimum unit price of 50p per unit of alcohol in Scotland means prices of cheap drinks with high alcohol content will rise. If you're living in Scotland you can now expect a minimum of around £1 for a typical can of lager, £1.50 for a pint of larger in a pub, £4.50 for a bottle of wine, and £14 for a 700ml bottle of whisky.
- This will only affect a small proportion of the alcohol sold in Scotland. Minimum unit pricing links the cost of alcohol to its strength and targets the excessively cheap price of certain drinks preferred by hazardous and harmful drinkers.
- For example, a recent study from the Alcohol Health Alliance UK found that 3-litre bottles of high strength white cider are being sold for as little as 16p per unit. This means it is possible to pay as little as £3.50 for the equivalent alcohol content of 22 shots of vodka. With a minimum unit price of 50p in place it will now be £11.25 in Scotland.
- Minimum unit pricing will cost responsible drinkers just a few pence a week, but save lives and a huge cost to society.

Is this really necessary?

- For 15 to 49 year olds, the leading cause of death is alcohol.
- The cost to the NHS of alcohol misuse is an estimated £3.5 billion per year, and the cost to law enforcement in England and Wales is an estimated £13 billion.
- It has been calculated that of all child social care costs, 34% are related to alcohol.

Why now?

- Scottish Parliament voted in 2012 to introduce minimum unit pricing, a measure that targets harmful drinking. However, the drinks industry reacted with a legal challenge, delaying this important legislation.
- The UK Supreme Court finally ruled that minimum unit pricing is legal on 15th November 2017. This policy is long awaited.

What next?

- The National Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland are making progress towards introducing similar policies.
- Research suggests that a minimum unit price of 50p in England would save 525 lives a year, reduce hospital admissions by 22,000 and alcohol related costs to wider society would be cut by £3.7 billion over the next two decades.¹ And yet the UK Government has failed to take the necessary steps to introduce this life saving policy.
- Now that Scotland has become the first country in the world to implement minimum unit pricing, it is time to **remind the UK Government not to leave England behind.**

Take action

- Living in England, Wales or Northern Ireland? **Tweet your local MP** saying you want to follow Scotland's example using **#mupsaveslives**
- Living in Scotland? Celebrate! Why not tweet your local MP or MSP telling them how pleased you are?
- Write to your local MP or arrange to meet them to discuss alcohol pricing (find out who your MP is and their contact details at www.theyworkforyou.com)
- Write to the letters page of your local newspaper, pointing out the cost of alcohol misuse in your local area and describing the difference that minimum unit pricing would make.



You may also wish to:

- Start conversations in your church; talk to those who work in alcohol counselling, members of your communities and churches with first-hand experience of the cost of harmful drinking.

Useful links

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Alcohol-Briefing.i.pdf> - Our full briefing on MUP

www.ahauk.org/ –The Alcohol Health Alliance brings together more than 40 organisations that have a shared interest in reducing the damage caused to health by alcohol.

www.qaad.org – Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs



Produced by the [Joint Public Issues Team](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk)

¹ Angus, C. et al (2016), Alcohol and cancer trends: Intervention Scenarios. University of Sheffield and Cancer Research UK