

To: Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

By email: hscs.committee@parliament.scot

Open letter to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on the continuation and uprating of minimum unit pricing

Monday 18 March 2024

Dear Members of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee,

Minimum unit pricing (MUP) for alcohol has saved and improved hundreds of lives in Scotland since it was introduced in 2018. The extensive and robust evaluation by Public Health Scotland estimates that it had reduced deaths caused solely by alcohol by 13.4%, driven by significant improvements in chronic outcomes, particularly alcoholic liver disease. That's an estimated 156 families each year who have been spared the loss of a loved one. Alcohol can have a serious impact at every stage of life, with the impact in pregnancy having a lifelong effect on the child. Hospital admissions are down by an estimated 4.1%, reducing the pressure on our NHS. MUP has also narrowed alcohol health inequalities.

However, in order to ensure the continued effectiveness of this policy it is essential that the minimum price is uprated to 65p per unit. Failure to do so will result in an estimated 800 more deaths, and almost 10,000 additional hospital admissions at an estimated cost of £11 million to our hospitals, over five years.¹

We believe that MUP has to be the cornerstone of any alcohol strategy in Scotland. But it must be accompanied by a wider package of measures that should also include increasing access to treatment, improving support for those in recovery, restrictions on alcohol marketing and action to reduce the availability of alcohol.

Scotland's alcohol problem has been a source of public concern for decades. It causes 1 in 15 of all deaths in Scotland. The only way to address this is through bold action.

The Scottish Parliament demonstrated its leadership by coming together to support the introduction of minimum unit pricing. Now that it has been seen to work, we hope that once again there will be cross-party support to ensure the continuation of this policy and to uprate MUP to save more lives.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Douglas, Chief Executive, Alcohol Focus Scotland

Dr Alastair MacGilchrist, Chair, Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems

Kate Halliday, Executive Director, Addiction Professionals

Fiona Aitken, Director, Adoption UK Scotland and FASD Hub Scotland

Alice Wiseman, ADPH Vice President, and Addiction PAG Lead

Dr Sheila Gilheany, CEO, Alcohol Action Ireland

Dr Angela Roberts, Chief Executive, Alcohol and Drugs Support South West Scotland

Dr Richard Piper, CEO, Alcohol Change UK

Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, Chair, Alcohol Health Alliance UK

Sara Redmond, Chief Officer of Development, Health and Social Care Alliance (The ALLIANCE)

Dr Matthew Davies, President, Association of Anaesthetists

Ailsa Rutter, Director, Fresh and Balance

Martin Crewe, Director, Barnardo's Scotland

Dr Iain Kennedy, Chair, BMA Scotland

David McColgan, Head, British Heart Foundation Scotland and NCD Alliance Scotland

Pamela Healy OBE, Chief Executive, British Liver Trust

Dr Coral Hollywood, VP Hepatology, British Society Gastroenterology

Dr Sorcha Hume, Public Affairs Manager, Cancer Research UK

Becky Duff, Director for Scotland, Carers Trust Scotland

David Mackay, Head of Policy, Projects & Participation, Children in Scotland

Rev Ruaridh MacRae, Chair, Congregational Federation in Scotland

John Kinnear, National Director, Diabetes Scotland

Dr Tim Allison, Scottish Directors of Public Health

Penny Halliday, Independent Chair, Dumfries and Galloway Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Vered Hopkins, Lead Officer Protecting People, Dundee Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Pat Togher, Chair, Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Rebecca Crowther, CEO, Equality Network

Dr Peter Rice, President, Eurocare (European Alcohol Policy Alliance)

Sandra Holmes, Founder, Families Campaign for Change

Rev Bob Akroyd, Moderator, Free Church of Scotland

Lesley Ross, CEO, Glasgow Council on Alcohol

Professor Andrea Williamson, GPs at the Deep End Scotland

Professor Niamh Fitzgerald, Professor of Alcohol Policy; Director, Institute for Social Marketing and Health, University of Stirling and Deputy Director, SPECTRUM Consortium

Dr Katherine Severi, CEO, Institute of Alcohol Studies

Mia Zupančič, Secretary General, International Youth Health Organization

Kenny Leinster, Independent Chair, Inverclyde Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Mark Kelvin, CEO, LGBT Health and Wellbeing

Professor Christine Goodall, Founder and Trustee, Medics Against Violence

Rev Mark Slaney, Chair, Methodist Church in Scotland

Professor Sir John Strang and Professor Colin Drummond, National Addiction Centre, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London

John Holleran, Strategic Lead, North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Pauline Campbell, Chairperson, Northern Ireland Alcohol and Drug Alliance

Jennifer Forsyth, Interim Programme Lead, Obesity Action Scotland

Colin Shevills, Special advisor, Alcohol Health Alliance

Chris Record, Consultant Hepatologist

John Jolly, Independent Consultant

Gordon Jamieson, Chair, Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership

Joe Kirwin, Chief Executive Officer, Pancreatic Cancer Action

Amy Woodhouse, Chief Executive, Parenting Across Scotland

Alison Mather, Director, Quaker Action on Alcohol & Drugs

Ron Culley, Chief Executive Officer, Quarriers

Professor Clare Cable, Chief Executive and Nurse Director, Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland

Dr Chris Provan, Chair, RCGP Scotland

Dr Daphne Varveris, Royal College of Anaesthetists

Dr Mairi Stark, Officer for Scotland, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)

Professor Andrew Elder, President, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE)

Michael J McKirdy, President, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow (RCPSG)

Dr Jane Morris, Chair, The Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland (RCPsych)

Adrian Boyle, President, Royal College of Emergency Medicine

Jaki Lambert, Director, Royal College of Midwives

Colin Poolman, Director, Royal College of Nursing Scotland

William Roberts, CEO, Royal Society for Public Health

Professor Annie S Anderson, Co-Director, Scottish Cancer Foundation and Co-Director, Scottish Cancer Prevention Network

Neil Hunter, Principal Reporter/Chief Executive, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration

Kirsten Horsburgh, CEO, Scottish Drugs Forum

Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus & Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness, Scottish Episcopal Church

Oceana Maund, Community Engagement Officer, Scottish Trans

Dr Marsha Scott, CEO, Scottish Women's Aid

Dr Justina Murray, CEO, SFAD

Dr Donogh Maguire, Emergency Medicine Consultant, RCEM rep on SHAAP

Lorraine McGrath, Chief Executive, Simon Community

Tracey McFall, CEO, Scottish Recovery Consortium

Dr Tim Cross, President, The British Association for the Study of the Liver (BASL)

John Gibson, CEO, The Canmore Trust

Emma Jackson, Convenor, Public Life & Social Justice, The Church of Scotland

Colonel Sylvia Hinton, Secretary for Scotland, The Salvation Army

Lorraine Gillies FRSA, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Community Safety Network

Jamie Brown (PhD, FBPS, FRSB), Professor of Behavioural Science and Health, Director, Tobacco and Alcohol Research Group, UCL

Professor Kevin Fenton, President, UK Faculty of Public Health

Rev Lindsay Sanderson, Moderator, United Reformed Church

Kate Wallace, CEO, Victim Support Scotland

Aileen McLeod, Director, Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland

Graeme Callander, Policy & Public Affairs Lead (Scotland), With You

¹ Angus, C. et al. (2023). [*New modelling of alcohol pricing policies, alcohol consumption and harm in Scotland: An adaptation of the Sheffield Tobacco and Alcohol Policy Model - Final Report*](#). University of Sheffield.