

Living Healthier and Longer: The Role of Alcohol



**FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

Overview

The Faculty of Public Health's Special Interest Group on alcohol is committed to reducing the substantial ill health and premature mortality attributable to alcohol, and wider impacts of alcohol use such as domestic violence and accidents.

Despite the harmful effects of alcohol, it is widely accepted, available, promoted and advertised to such an extent it is difficult to avoid. It is essential that we tackle availability, affordability, advertising, promotion, and support for dependent drinkers, to reduce the harms associated with alcohol across the UK. We have highlighted some key recommendations for public health action and policy development.

FPH policy recommendations

Affordability:

- The successful introduction of minimum unit pricing (MUP) in Scotland, Wales and Ireland flags an ongoing anomaly in the efforts to restrict cheap high strength alcohol in England. We would urge the adoption of a minimum unit pricing throughout the UK.
- Integral to the success of MUP in protecting population health is a mechanism for automatically uprating the minimum price in line with RPI or another means of linking to inflation.

Availability:

- To limit the display and promotion of alcohol within shops so that it is only visible to those seeking to purchase alcohol. At present, it is challenging to place legally binding restrictions on the display of alcohol or alcohol promotional activity within retail outlets.
- To support public health teams to continue to restrict the availability of alcohol and reduce population health harms, by taking account of the health and wider adverse impacts of alcohol in local decision-making processes around alcohol licensing.

Advertising/marketing/promotion:

- To restrict the advertising and promotion of alcohol, including radio shows, television, sports and public events, and small-scale community and sporting events where alcohol is routinely offered as a prize or promotion.

Treatment and support for those who need it:

- People who need support for alcohol problems including those dependent on alcohol should be routinely referred to specialist alcohol services for comprehensive assessment and appropriate treatment, for which adequate provision should be in place in all areas.
- All health and social care professionals should be trained to routinely provide early identification and brief alcohol advice to their clients. There is now a wealth of evidence to suggest that alcohol brief interventions can be effective in reducing alcohol consumption across a wide range of settings (1, 2).

References

Please visit <https://bit.ly/3qyllxX> for a complete list of references.