

Crime and social impacts of alcohol



Alcohol-related crime in the UK – what do we know? • Public perceptions of crime • Driving factors of alcohol-related crime and social disorder • Domestic abuse, sexual assault, child abuse and violence • How emergency services are affected • Alcohol and the prison system • Policies to reduce crime and social disorder



Alcohol-related crime and social disorder is estimated to **cost UK taxpayers £11bn per year**, at 2010/11 prices.¹

Alcohol-related crime makes up **a substantial portion of violent offences across the UK** (47% in England and Wales in 2014/15,² 54% in Scotland in 2014/15,³ and 40% in Northern Ireland in 2015/16).⁴ This supports the public perception of alcohol as one of the major causes of crime in urban Britain today.

The Conservative Government highlights drugs and alcohol as one of the six key drivers of crime in its Modern Crime Prevention Strategy.⁵

Research has highlighted the role of alcohol in domestic violence, sexual assault,⁶ child abuse,⁷ and violent crime including murder.⁸

Key features of the night time economy have been identified as possible contributors to alcohol-related crime including:

- density of drinking establishments
- encouraging higher consumption
- extended drinking hours
- vertical drinking establishments and high-risk premises
- pre-loading and cheap alcohol
- the role of the drinks industry

Problematic alcohol use has been identified as an issue at many stages of the criminal justice system.⁹ Research has identified the needs of prisoners with alcohol problems were less likely to be met than for those with illicit drug problems.¹⁰

Alcohol places a **significant burden on the emergency services**. An IAS-survey found:

- three-quarters of police and half of ambulance respondents have been **injured in alcohol-related incidents**¹¹
- between a third and a half of all servicepeople have **suffered sexual harassment or abuse at the hands of intoxicated members of the public**¹²
- 78% of police, 65% of ambulance staff, and 35% of Emergency Department Consultants **feel at risk of drunken assaults**¹³

A number of policies aiming to reduce alcohol-related crime and social disorder exist at both a national and local level in the UK. These range from licensing regulations to tough custodial penalties for criminal behaviour linked to alcohol. Research indicates Minimum Unit Pricing presents an effective policy strategy.¹⁴

¹ www.parliament.uk (July 2013), Written evidence from the Department of Health (GAS 01), in '3rd report – Government's Alcohol Strategy', Health Committee
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmhealth/132/132we02.htm#_blank>

² Office for National Statistics (ONS) (February 2016), Overview of violent crime and sexual offences, in 'Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences : Year ending March 2015', p. 21 <<http://tinyurl.com/zv5cm2t>>

³ The Scottish Government (March 2016), 'Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014/15: Main Findings', p. 49
<<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/5269>>

⁴ Police Service of Northern Ireland (May 2016), 'Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: Monthly Update to 31 March 2016', p. 12 <<http://tinyurl.com/jxcehxp>>

⁵ Secretary of State for the Home Department (March 2016), 'Modern Crime Prevention Strategy', HM Government, p. 4
<<http://tinyurl.com/gunffzo>>

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- ⁶ Galvani S (May 2010)., 'Supporting families affected by substance use and domestic violence', The Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care, University of Bedfordshire, ADFAM, p. 5
- ⁷ Galvani S. (June 2010)., 'Grasping the Nettle: alcohol and domestic violence', p. 3
- ⁸ Foran H., and O'Leary K (2008)., 'Alcohol and intimate partner violence: A meta-analytic review', p. 1,223
- ⁹ Hansard (July 2016), 'Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse:Written question – 41699' <<http://tinyurl.com/jswbj82>>
- ¹⁰ Community Justice Portal (February 2010), 'Prison Service Failing to Address Growing Problem of Alcohol Misuse in Prisons', from HM Inspectorate of Prisons (February 2010), 'Alcohol services in prisons: an unmet need' <<http://tinyurl.com/zbl9obp>>
- ¹¹ Institute of Alcohol Studies (October 2015), 'Alcohol's impact on emergency services', p. 4 <http://www.ias.org.uk/uploads/Alcohols_impact_on_emergency_services_full_report.pdf>
- ¹² Ibid, p. 4
- ¹³ Ibid, p. 4
- ¹⁴ Meng Y., et al (January 2012), 'Model-based appraisal of alcohol minimum pricing and off-licensed trade discount bans in Scotland using the Sheffield Alcohol Policy Model (v.2): Second update based on newly available data', SchARR, University of Sheffield, Sheffield Alcohol Research Group, pp. 60–62



Alcohol-related crime in the UK – what do we know?

What is alcohol-related crime?

‘Alcohol-related crime’ is a popular rather than a legal term. Normally, it is used to refer to two main categories of offences:

- **Alcohol-defined offences** such as drunkenness offences or driving with excess alcohol
- **Offences in which the consumption of alcohol is thought to have played a role of some kind in the committing of the offence**, usually in the sense that the offender was under the influence of alcohol at the time. Examples of offences often committed by people under the influence are assault, breach of the peace, criminal damage and other public order offences.

It has been estimated that in a community of 100,000 people each year, 1,000 people will be a victim of alcohol-related violent crime. The Coalition Government listed a reduction in alcohol-fuelled violent crime among its core priorities in its Alcohol Strategy¹ and today’s Conservative Government highlights drugs and alcohol as one of the six key drivers of crime in its Modern Crime Prevention Strategy.²

How are alcohol-related crimes counted?

1. *Police recorded crime statistics*: The Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard govern police recording practice. Police recorded crime statistics cover all ‘notifiable’ offences recorded by the police for Home Office records.³

Police authorities acknowledge that alcohol does have a significant role in criminal activity. While offenders are rarely tested for the presence of alcohol when caught (except in specific drunk and disorderly cases such as injury caused by drink driving), police authorities recognise that alcohol’s effects on the mind and body are thought to be more likely to induce antisocial behaviour, leading to criminal acts. For most offences, alcohol may affect the perpetrator: for violent crimes, it reduces self-control; for acquisitive crimes, the motivation can be the need to feed a habit.⁴

2. *Crime surveys*: large-scale crime surveys conducted in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland complement police recorded crime data by including non-notifiable offences, as well as the detailed responses by victims on the specific nature of the crimes suffered.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is based on an annual sample of approximately 35,000 adults and 3,000 children (aged 10 to 15 years).⁵ The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) is based on 12,000 face-to-face interviews conducted with adults (aged 16 or over) every two years.⁶ The Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) is based on the responses of approximately 4,000 adults.⁷

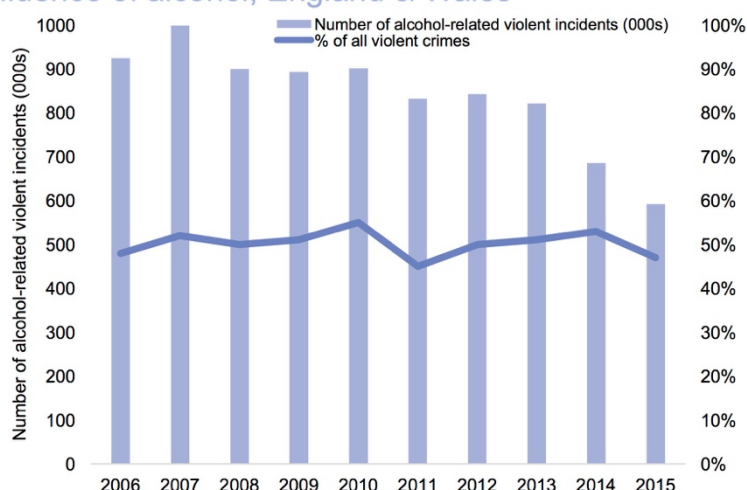
Crime survey statistics were formerly published as part of the British Crime Survey, although it ceased to include Scotland in its sample in the late 1980s. Some national crime surveys

place a special focus on the influence of alcohol on violent crime by asking victims whether they believe their offender(s) to have been under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident.

Alcohol-related crime in England & Wales

According to the 2014/15 CSEW, there were 592,000 violent incidents where the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol, accounting for 47% of violent offences committed that year. This represents a decrease of 6 percentage points on the previous year (2013/14).⁸ The CSEW also notes that 18% of these violent incidents in 2014/15 took place at a pub or club.⁹

Figure 1: Violent incidents where the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol, England & Wales



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) (February 2016), Overview of violent crime and sexual offences, in 'Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences : Year ending March 2015', Nature of Crime Table 3.1

Figure 1 illustrates little variation in the annual number of alcohol-fuelled violent crimes in England and Wales over the past decade. Between 2006/07 and 2012/13, there were roughly just over 800,000 alcohol-related violent crimes committed every year, peaking in 2006/07 at almost 1 million, or 52% of all violent crimes. While there has been a decrease in the number of alcohol-related incidents in the last two years, the proportion remains relatively stable – the decrease seen is consistent with an overall decrease in violent crime.¹⁰ Alcohol still accounts for over 40% of all violent crimes committed.

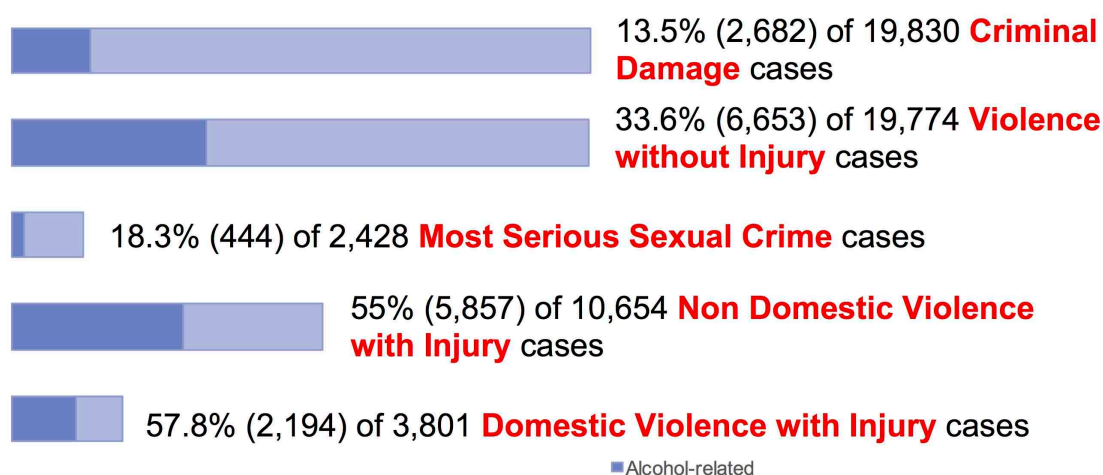
Alcohol-related crime in Scotland

The estimated number of violent crimes was 186,000 in 2014/15, according to the SCJS of that year; 54% of these incidents were said to have occurred under the influence of alcohol, a higher proportion than in England.¹¹ 17% of violent crimes happened in or around a pub or club¹² and 32% occurred at the weekend between 6pm and 6am.¹³

Alcohol-related crime in Northern Ireland

The NICS does not record alcohol-related crime data for Northern Ireland. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) began collecting provisional statistics on alcohol-related recorded crime in April 2012. In 2015/16, alcohol was found to be a contributory factor in 19% of all recorded crime and 40% of all violent crime.¹⁴

Figure 2: The number of crimes where alcohol is a contributory factor (by crime type) – 2014/2015 Financial Year



Source: Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) (May 2015), 'Quarter Four Performance Report to Service Executive Board', p. 13

Underreporting – underestimating the problem

Despite the substantial and sustained presence of alcohol-related crime in police recorded crime statistics and the crime surveys discussed, underreporting is likely to obscure the scale of the issue.

Police recorded crime statistics encounter a range of underreporting issues:

- Most minor summary offences (i.e. driving under the influence of alcohol) or antisocial behaviour offences are not included in this figure.
- Victims may choose not to report crimes to the police for a range of reasons; for example, if they are fearful of repercussions.
- Crimes reported that the police do not record will not be included in this count.

Even for crimes that are reported to and recorded by police, the alcohol-related nature of the crime may not be discovered – as mentioned above, except in specific drunk and disorderly cases such as injury caused by drink driving, offenders are rarely tested for the presence of alcohol when caught. In addition to this, the victims of crime incidents may not always be able to detect whether the offender(s) was under the influence of alcohol.

Crime surveys will also be affected by underreporting issues:

- As household surveys, they do not cover crimes committed against businesses
- Again, victims may choose not to report crimes in such surveys
- Those living outside a household (for example students living in university halls, those living in institutions or those without a fixed address) are not surveyed
- These surveys only discuss crimes against the individual; crimes without a defined individual victim (such as criminal damage to public property) will not be counted
- As a survey which asks people to recall their victimisation experiences, crimes which resulted in a fatality cannot be counted by this measure.¹⁵

The impact of alcohol-related crime is evident from both the police recorded crime statistics and the national crime surveys discussed. However, it is clear there may be alcohol-related crime that goes uncounted, and the scale of the problem may be much greater.

¹ Secretary of State for the Home Department (March 2012), 'The Government's Alcohol Strategy', HM Government, pp. 8–9 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-strategy#_blank>

² Secretary of State for the Home Department (March 2016), 'Modern Crime Prevention Strategy', HM Government, p. 4 <<http://tinyurl.com/gunffzo>>

³ Home Office, 'Police recorded crime'

⁴ Civitas, 'Alcohol and Crime', in Crime Factsheets, p. 3 <<http://www.civitas.org.uk/research/crime/>>

⁵ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (July 2016), 'Crime in England and Wales: year ending Mar 2016', p. 44 <<http://tinyurl.com/zgcmd6x>>

⁶ Scottish Government, accessed October 2016

<<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey>>

⁷ Department of Justice, accessed October 2016 <<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-crime-survey>>

⁸ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (February 2016), Overview of violent crime and sexual offences, in 'Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences: Year ending March 2015', p. 21 <<http://tinyurl.com/zv5cm2t>>

⁹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (February 2016), Overview of violent crime and sexual offences, Nature of Crime Table 3.2

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (February 2016), p. 21

¹¹ The Scottish Government (March 2016), 'Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014/15: Main Findings', p. 49 <<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00496532.pdf>>

¹² Ibid, p. 46

¹³ Ibid, p. 47

¹⁴ Police Service of Northern Ireland (May 2016), 'Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: Monthly Update to 31 March 2016', p. 12 <<http://tinyurl.com/jxcehxp>>

¹⁵ Hansard (September 2014), Column 696W <<http://tinyurl.com/j39aogs>>



Public perceptions of crime

Public concern about 'alcohol-related crime' often relates to offences involving a combination of criminal damage offences; drunk and disorderly and other public order offences involving young males, typically between 18 and 30 years of age, but increasingly, also young females; and to those often occurring in the entertainment areas of town and city centres.

England & Wales

The most recent National Statistics figures show that "there were 21,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND) issued in relation to non-notifiable offences for the year ending December 2015...the majority of these PNDs related to drunk and disorderly behaviour".¹

Alongside this, in 2010/11, almost a quarter (24%) of the public in England and Wales were found to believe drunk or rowdy behaviour poses a significant problem to their local community.² They cite alcohol as the third major cause of criminal activity in Britain today (figure 3).

Figure 3: Factors considered as causes of crime in Britain today, 2009/10

Percentages	England & Wales, 2009/10 BCS	
	Major causes of crime ^{1,2}	Main cause of crime ¹
<i>Percentage perceiving this as a factor:</i>		
Drugs	69	26
Lack of discipline from parents	65	27
Alcohol	53	9
Too lenient sentencing	39	11
Breakdown of family	36	6
Lack of discipline from school	34	3
Unemployment	36	5
Too few police	23	2
Poverty	25	5
None of these	0	n/a
Do not think there is one main cause	n/a	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>11,003</i>	<i>11,003</i>

1. Respondents were asked to select from a list the factors they thought were the major causes of crime in Britain today. If respondents selected more than one factor they were then asked which of the factors they believed to be the main cause of crime.

2. Percentages add to more than 100 as respondents could select more than one cause.

Source: Flatley, J., Kershaw, C., Smith, K., Chaplin, R., and Moon, D., 'Crime in England & Wales, 2009/10', Table 5a

Scotland

Similar to England, a substantial proportion of the 42,933 Antisocial Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notices (ASBFPNs) issued as a main penalty in Scotland in 2014-15 were for an alcohol-related offence – 41% were issued for consuming alcohol in a public place.³

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) further highlights the extent to which alcohol misuse affects the nation's citizens (see figure 4). In 2010/11, 74% of respondents identified alcohol abuse as a “big problem” in Scotland today.

Figure 4: How much of a problem is ALCOHOL ABUSE in Scotland today?

	Total	GENDER		AGE											
		Male	Female	16 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 59	60+	Male 16 - 24	Male 25 - 44	Male 45 - 59	Male 60+	Female 16 - 24	Female 25 - 44	Female 45 - 59	Female 60+
Sample size	13010	5595	7415	1084	3801	3346	4775	496	1583	1482	2032	588	2218	1864	2743
A big problem	74%	69%	78%	67%	73%	77%	76%	64%	69%	71%	71%	70%	76%	82%	79%
A bit of a problem	23%	26%	19%	29%	24%	21%	19%	32%	27%	25%	23%	26%	21%	16%	16%
Not a problem	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%	1%	2%
A problem	96%	96%	97%	96%	97%	97%	95%	96%	96%	97%	94%	97%	97%	98%	96%
Refused	*	*	*	*	-	-	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	*
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%

Fieldwork: June 2010 - March 2011

Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) 2010/11, 'Data tables volume 1 – main survey – demographic breaks', p. 16

96% of all respondents found alcohol to abuse to be a problem in Scotland today. A greater proportion of females than males found alcohol abuse to be a “big problem” (78% and 69% respectively) across all age groups. 45 – 59 year-olds were most likely to treat alcohol abuse as a “big problem”.

Northern Ireland

Alcohol is the second most commonly identified cause of crime in Northern Ireland, according to the 2014/15 NICS (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Perceptions of the causes of crime (%) in Northern Ireland

	Major causes of crime ³	Main cause of crime
Drugs	73	29
Alcohol	62	11
Lack of discipline from parents	51	20
Unemployment	39	7
Sectarianism	39	10
Too lenient sentencing	30	8
Poverty	26	6
Breakdown of the family	25	3
Racism	22	1
Lack of discipline from school	18	2
Too few police	16	2
None of these	1	2
Unweighted base	2,071	2,071

N.B.
Percentages may add to more than 100 as respondents could select more than one cause.

Source: NICS 2014/15

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Respondents were asked to select from a list the factors they considered to be the major causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. If respondents selected more than one factor they were asked which of the factors they believed to be the main cause of crime. If respondents gave only one factor, this was taken as the main cause.
3. Percentages may add to more than 100 as respondents could select more than one cause.

Source: O'Donnell, C., and Campbell, P., 'Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2014/15 Northern Ireland Crime Survey', Research and Statistical Bulletin 1/2016, Table A1

Alongside this, findings from the NICS in both 2012/12 and 2012/13 showed that around a third of respondents felt alcohol-related anti-social behaviour had increased in the last year.⁴

Penalty Notices for Disorder were introduced within Northern Ireland in June 2012. Therefore there are no figures on non-notifiable offences where the offender(s) was believed to have been under the influence of alcohol.⁵

¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (July 2016), 'Crime in England and Wales: year ending Mar 2016', p. 9 <<http://tinyurl.com/zgcmd6x>>

² Chaplin R., Flatley J., and Smith K (July 2011)., 'Crime in England and Wales 2010/11: Findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime (2nd Edition)', Home Office Statistical Bulletin 10/11, London: Home Office, p. 95 <<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1011/>>

³ The Scottish Government (February 2016), 'Criminal Proceedings in Scotland 2014-15', pp. 35-36 <<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00501678.pdf>>

⁴ Campbell P., and Cadogan G (October 2014)., 'The Night-Time Economy: Findings from the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Northern Ireland Crime Surveys', Research and Statistical Bulletin 13/2014 <<http://tinyurl.com/gm8boeo>>

⁵ Police Service of Northern Ireland (August 2012), 'User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland', Crime Statistics, pp. 7-8 <http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/update_crime_statistics.htm>



Driving factors of alcohol-related crime and social disorder

Crime and disorder in the night time economy

In 2015/16, police-recorded crime from 28 forces in England and Wales showed that Friday and Saturday nights (9pm–3am) accounted for the highest proportion of all weekend violent crime – 39% and 41% respectively. It has been suggested this is largely influenced by the increased consumption of alcohol between these times.¹

In recent years, two important parallel trends in the night time economy have been evident:

1. The growth of the night time economy and the associated problems of alcohol-related crime and disorder in town and city centres
2. An overall relative decline in the proportion of alcohol consumed in on-licensed premises and a growth in the proportion of alcohol purchased from off-licensed premises and consumed at home.

In both cases, the effects of alcohol misuse can impact negatively on the wider society, leading to increased instances of crime and disorder. Key features of both trends have been identified as potential contributors to the issue:

A density of drinking establishments

Research into crime and disorder in urban areas has tended to identify a correlation between the density of licensed premises in a locality and the numbers of people present. Studies of violence in Cardiff found that serious violence in the city's entertainment thoroughfare was directly proportional to the capacity of licensed premises in that street.² This was partly explained by the simple fact that being in a crowd provides more opportunities for conflict with others, for example in situations where there is competition for scarce resources such as transport to get home.

Encouraging higher consumption?

Targeted street-based studies suggest that participants in the night time economy drink more than the national average and more significantly, drink at levels which are above average for their age group.³ The findings appear to suggest that heavy drinkers are disproportionately attracted to the night time economy, and/or that the night time economy encourages heavier alcohol consumption. It is likely that there is an interaction between the two.

Extended drinking hours

Could changes to the hours of sale for alcohol – in the night time economy in particular – positively encourage heavier consumption? This issue has been at the heart of debates around reform of licensing laws and regulations governing the management of licensed premises in recent years.

A core premise of the Labour Government's licensing reforms was that binge drinking was largely the result of artificially early closing times, which encouraged rapid consumption of alcohol in order to “beat the clock”. The proposed solution was to extend drinking hours so as to encourage more leisurely consumption. The expectation was that, provided with longer drinking hours, customers would not drink any more alcohol but that they would drink the same amount more slowly, thus reducing levels of drunkenness. However, survey data suggest that, contrary to the assumption underlying the new Licensing Act, prolonged stays in premises with extended drinking hours actually result in higher levels of reported consumption **(please consult the Licensing factsheet for more information)**.⁴

Vertical drinking establishments and high-risk premises

Other features of the night time economy have also been identified as causes of excessive or otherwise problematic consumption - in particular, the presence of youth orientated “vertical drinking” establishments where drinking is an end in itself rather than an accompaniment to other activities such as having a meal while seated at a table. Specific factors have been linked to a higher likelihood of aggression in public drinking settings including:⁵

- crowding
- poor bar layout and traffic flow
- inadequate seating or inconvenient bar access
- dim lighting, noise, poor ventilation or unclean conditions
- discount drinks and promotions that encourage heavy drinking (e.g. ‘happy hours’)
- lack of availability of food
- a 'permissive' environment that turns a blind eye to anti-social behaviour
- punters with a history of aggression and who binge drink
- bar workers who don't practice responsible serving
- aggression/intimidation by security staff.

Pre-loading and cheap alcohol as a driver for crime and disorder

In addition to the problem of public disorder in and around city centre bars and nightclubs, there is considerable concern over heavily discounted sales of alcohol at off-licensed premises - this is the source of a recent phenomenon known as “pre-loading”. The act of pre-loading involves groups of drinkers consuming alcohol – purchased from off-licenses – in private settings prior to attending nightlife venues.

The effects of pre-loading are obvious to researchers studying the social environment of the night time economy. One survey of 18 – 35 year olds in the North West region of England found that those who reported pre-loading reported significantly higher total alcohol consumption over a night out than those who waited to drink until reaching the bars and nightclubs. Pre-loaders were also more than twice as likely to have been involved in a fight. The researchers concluded that measures to reduce drunkenness and alcohol-related violence in the night time economy should not be restricted to premises within the nightlife environment but should also tackle disparities in pricing and policing between on and off-licensed premises.⁶

Role of the drinks industry

It is argued that the problems of sustained alcohol consumption in social settings go beyond the failings of a minority of high-risk premises in town centres, but that drinks industry organisations play a role.

An expose by one newspaper prior to the relaxation of the licensing laws in 2005 uncovered a concerted attempt by organisations in the drinks industry to “exploit Britain's binge drinking culture”, including offering manager bonuses of up to £20,000 for exceeding sales volume targets, races between bar staff to sell as many 'shots' of spirits as possible within a set time, and constant pressure to 'upsell' singles to doubles.⁷

The Royal College of Practitioners (RCP) 2005 paper 'Alcohol and violence' coined the extent of the problem of alcohol-fuelled violence in public settings:

Half of all incidents of alcohol-related violence in England and Wales take place in or around pubs and clubs. Amongst 18-24 year olds, twice as many women and nearly three times as many men classified as 'binge-drinkers' have participated in a violent crime or group fight in a public place than those classified as 'regular' drinkers. Such bingeing is encouraged by irresponsible drinks promotions (e.g. happy hours). Insufficient transport services, poor street lighting and overwhelmed or inappropriately targeted police resources also increase the likelihood of violence.⁸

After encouraging the alcohol industry voluntarily to abandon socially undesirable marketing practices, the New Labour Government of the day then introduced a mandatory code on the retailing of alcohol in 2010.⁹

However, the café culture much promised by the previous administration's legislative efforts “failed to materialise”.¹⁰ The Coalition Government made provision for further regulatory reform in its Alcohol Strategy, accusing the previous administration of failing in its duty to tackle the problem of alcohol-fuelled crime and social disorder.

The Alcohol Strategy promised to:

- end the availability of cheap alcohol and irresponsible promotions
- (provide an) extensive range of tools and powers... to local agencies to challenge those people that continue to behave in an unacceptable way
- give stronger powers to control the density of licensed premises and make health a licensing objective for this purpose... give areas the powers to restrict alcohol sales if late opening is causing problems through extended powers to make Early Morning Restriction Orders; introduce a new late night levy so that those businesses that trade into the late night contribute towards the cost of policing; and end the notion that drinking is an unqualified right by piloting sobriety schemes for those people whose offending is linked to excessive alcohol consumption
- build on the Responsibility Deal to drive greater industry responsibility and action to prevent alcohol misuse, including giving consumers a wider choice of lower strength products in both the on-trade and off-trade, taking one billion units out of the market by 2015

Despite these promises, the Government of the day did not take forward their commitment to address cheap alcohol, and have u-turned on MUP after industry pressure (**please consult the Price factsheet for more information**). Many of the licensing powers have

not been effective in practice, with no Early Morning Restriction Orders being put in place, and only a handful of areas introducing Late Night Levies (**please consult the Licensing factsheet for more information**). The Responsibility Deal, a primary arm of the strategy, has also been broadly criticised by health groups as obstructing more effective action, while evidence of its effectiveness is limited and unreliable.¹¹

Today's Conservative Government has further emphasised the importance of the night time economy in tackling alcohol-related crime identifying three arms to its approach in its Modern Crime Prevention Strategy:¹²

- 1. Improving local intelligence so that decisions taken about the sale of alcohol and the management of the evening and night time economy are based on reliable data and the latest evidence.**
- 2. Establishing effective local partnerships where all those involved in the operation and management of the evening and night time economy work together, so that people can enjoy a safe night out without fear of becoming a victim of alcohol-related crime or disorder, whilst also enabling local economies to grow.**
- 3. Equipping the police and local authorities with the right powers so they can prevent problems and take swift and decisive action after they have occurred.**

This strategy has been seen as a somewhat missed opportunity, likely only to have minimal impact on crime prevention as it fails to address key, well-evidenced issues such as alcohol pricing, while focusing on more poorly evidenced initiatives such as industry voluntary schemes. There are however some welcome changes to licensing such as the reformed Late Night Levies and Group Review Intervention Powers.¹³

There is ongoing work towards including public health as an objective relating to licensing decisions in the upcoming Police and Crime Bill, showing promising results.¹⁴

In February 2007, the Scottish Government – then a Liberal Democrat/New Labour Coalition – entered into a Partnership Agreement with the alcohol industry. Both sides recognised, among other things, the need for enforcement of licensing legislation to 'ensure a zero tolerance approach to the illegal purchase of alcohol and the resultant alcohol-related disorder'.¹⁵

However, the proportion of violent crimes committed under the influence of alcohol is still significantly higher in Scotland (54%) than in England and Wales (47%). The current executive – led by the Scottish National Party – has since acquired devolved powers to combat alcohol-fuelled criminal behaviour, such as the ability to lower the drink-driving limit.

A Member's Bill Consultation was lodged by 2 Labour Members of Scottish Parliament (MSP) (Dr Richard Simpson & Mr Graeme Pearson) ahead of the introduction of the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012. It offered 14 proposals which aimed in part to reduce alcohol-related offending through directing offenders towards treatment or restricting their access to alcohol. One such measure involved expanding on tentative steps taken by the Scottish Government to include General Practitioners in the process of alcohol-related interventions when a patient is convicted of an offence involving alcohol.¹⁶ A final proposal was put forward in May 2014, for:

... a bill to promote public health and reduce alcohol-related offending through (a) restrictions on the retailing and advertising of alcoholic drinks; (b) changes to licensing laws; (c) obligations on Scottish Ministers to issue guidance and report on its alcohol education policy; (d) directing offenders towards treatment or restricting their alcohol consumption.¹⁷

Cross-party support was gained, and a Bill was introduced on 1 April 2015. The Bill was not taken to Stage 2 after its general principles were not agreed in Stage 1 debate.¹⁸

¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) (February 2016), Overview of violent crime and sexual offences, in 'Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences : Year ending March 2015', p. 21 <<http://tinyurl.com/zv5cm2t>>

² Warburton A L., and Shepherd J P (2004)., 'An evaluation of the effectiveness of new policies designed to prevent and manage violence through an interagency approach', Welsh Assembly Government, Wales Office of Research and Development

³ Hadfield P., Newton A (September 2010)., 'Alcohol, crime and disorder in the night time economy', Alcohol Concern Factsheet, p. 4

⁴ Green C., Bruce Hollingsworth B., and Navarro M (March 2016)., 'Longer opening hours lead to heavier drinking and severe health damage' <<http://tinyurl.com/hk8rcq9>>

⁵ The Portman Group (1998), 'Keeping the Peace: A Guide to the Prevention of Alcohol-Related Disorder', revised edition, Belmont Press Limited

⁶ Hughes K., et al (January 2008), 'Alcohol, nightlife and violence: the relative contributions of drinking before and during nights out to negative health and criminal justice outcomes'. Addiction, 103 (1): 60–5

⁷ Hinsliff G., and Asthana A (October 2005)., 'Drink giants' plans to fuel binge Britain', The Guardian <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2005/oct/23/drugsandalcohol.politics1>>

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¹³ Institute of Alcohol Studies (March 2016), 'Budget 2016: Fourth successive real terms cut for beer, spirits and cider duty', Alcohol Alert <<http://bit.ly/al2016mar>>

¹⁴ Local Government Association (December 2016), 'LGA briefing: Policing and Crime Bill' <http://www.local.gov.uk/briefings-and-responses/-/journal_content/56/10180/7730394/ARTICLE>

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¹⁷ The Scottish Parliament (January 2016), 'Stage 1 Report on Alcohol (Licensing, Public Health and Criminal Justice) (Scotland) Bill', p. 2

¹⁸ The Scottish Parliament, accessed October 2016 <<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/88187.aspx>>



Domestic abuse, sexual assault, child abuse and violence

Domestic abuse and sexual assault

Research typically finds that between 25% and 50% of those who perpetrate domestic abuse have been drinking at the time of assault,¹ although in some studies the figure is as high as 73%.² However, cases involving severe violence are twice as likely as others to include alcohol,³ and other research found that the risk of rape was twice as high for attacks involving drinking offenders.⁴

Alcohol misuse is consistently found in a high proportion of those who perpetrate domestic abuse and sexual assault, and it has been found that within intimate relationships where one partner has a problem with alcohol or other drugs, domestic abuse is more likely than not to occur.⁵

However, the impact of alcohol on domestic abuse and sexual assault is complicated. Where alcohol is involved in domestic abuse, much of the evidence suggests that it is not the root cause, but rather a compounding factor, sometimes to a significant extent.⁶ Domestic abuse agencies agree that alcohol misuse should not be seen as taking responsibility away from those who commit domestic violence. In the past, domestic abuse organisations have not always focused on the role of alcohol because they primarily work with the victim, although some are now engaging on a policy and practical level with perpetrators and their use of alcohol.

While the majority of domestic abuse is attributable to men, and men are more likely to be recorded as using alcohol,⁷ it can impact in a variety of other ways. At times it can fuel child-to-parent violence, and alcohol seems to be particularly significant where both partners use violence.⁸

Child abuse

While parental drinking does not automatically have a harmful impact on children, it can lead to significant emotional and physical abuse, violence and a general lack of care and support.⁹ Indeed, alcohol misuse is estimated to be involved in between 25% and 33% of child abuse cases¹⁰ and concern about parental drinking is the number one reason that children contact ChildLine, with over 5,300 children doing so per year – more than 100 per week.¹¹ The NSPCC view alcohol abuse as a high risk factor, which can increase the risk to children who live in families where domestic abuse is present.¹²

Violent crime

Alcohol is well documented as a risk factor for many aggressive and violent acts; indeed around 60% of murders are committed under the influence of alcohol.¹³ This is supported by statistics from the National Probation Service, who advise offenders that ‘alcohol is a factor related to a lot of crimes including many assaults, murder and rape cases (between 50 and 80%)’.^{14, 15}

¹ Bennett L., and Bland P., 'Substance Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence', National online recourse centre on violence against women

² Gilchrist E., Johnson R., Talriti R., Weston S., Beech A, and Kebbell M (2003)., 'Domestic Violence offenders: characteristics and offending related needs', Findings, 217, London, Home Office

³ McKinney C. et al (2008), 'Alcohol Availability and Intimate Partner Violence Among US Couples', *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, Volume 33: Issue 1, pp. 169–176

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⁶ Abby A., Zawacki T., O Buck., Clinton M., McAuslan P (2001)., 'Alcohol and Sexual Assault', *Alcohol Research and Health*, Volume 25: Issue 1, pp. 43–51

⁷ Hester M (2009)., 'Who Does What to Whom? Gender and Domestic Violence Perpetrators', Bristol: University of Bristol in association with the Northern Rock Foundation, p. 15

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⁹ Galvani S (June 2010)., 'Grasping the Nettle: alcohol and domestic violence', p. 3

¹⁰ Strategy Unit (2004), 'Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England', London, Cabinet Office

¹¹ Belfast Telegraph (May 2014), 'Jump in child calls over parents'

¹² NSPCC (November 2013), 'Learning from case reviews where abuse was a key factor', Briefing

¹³ Foran H., and O'Leary K (2008)., 'Alcohol and intimate partner violence: A meta-analytic review', p. 1,223

¹⁴ Interventions & Substance Misuse Group: National Offender Management Service, Alcohol Concern, and MP Consultancy (August 2008), 'Alcohol Information Pack for Offenders Under Probation Supervision', in *Alcohol Information Pack Offenders' Guide*, Alcohol Learning Centre, p. 41

¹⁵ The Institute of Alcohol Studies (September 2015), 'Alcohol, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault'

<<http://bit.ly/iasdomabuse>>



How emergency services are affected

It is becoming increasingly clear that alcohol places a significant burden on the emergency services. Not only on the servicepeople's health and wellbeing, but on the services' resources.

An IAS survey of front line staff confirms the magnitude of the problem: alcohol takes up as much as half of their time. The issue is particularly acute for the police, for whom 53% of their workload, on average, is alcohol-related – up to 80% of weekend arrests are alcohol-related.¹

The cost?

Research has shown that **the police and justice system spend £1.7bn every year responding to alcohol-related crime.**²

The harm

- Three-quarters of police respondents, and half of ambulance respondents, had been **injured in alcohol-related incidents**³
- Between a third and a half of all servicepeople had **suffered sexual harassment or abuse at the hands of intoxicated members of the public**⁴
- 78% of police, 65% of ambulance staff, and 35% of Emergency Department Consultants **feel at risk of drunken assaults.**⁵

What can be done?

It was clear from survey respondents that there was a desire for policy action, although there was discussion over how best to reform current practices. Suggestions included:⁶

- Alcohol Treatment Centres
- Delivery of Identification and Brief Advice (IBA)
- A lower drink drive limit of 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood to bring England and Wales in line with Scotland, Northern Ireland and the rest of Europe.
- Improving information sharing between emergency departments, police services and local authorities
- More assertive use of licensing powers by local authorities
- Reducing the affordability of alcohol.

There was support from the police for stronger control and regulation, particularly on licensing and alcohol prices. Many called for a return to earlier closing times for pubs, bars and nightclubs – the huge strain that later opening hours have created for police officers was apparent. They were also very supportive of levies on licensed premises to fund police activity – 89% were in favour⁷ – and were keen that this should not be focused solely on pubs and bars, but that supermarkets and off licenses should be targeted as well. Such schemes have been implemented in some locations, with varying success – Cheltenham for example cancelled their scheme after it only raised a portion of the projected funds,⁸ whilst Newcastle did meet the projected revenue from the scheme.⁹

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- ¹ Stoddart J (2011)., 'Alcohol's impact on policing', Balance – The North East Alcohol Office <<http://bit.ly/2jy3OtW>>
- ² Leontaridi R (2003)., 'Alcohol misuse: how much does it cost?', London: United Kingdom Cabinet Office, p. 59
- ³ The Institute of Alcohol Studies (October 2015) Alcohol's impact on emergency services, p. 4
<http://www.ias.org.uk/uploads/Alcohols_impact_on_emergency_services_full_report.pdf>
- ⁴ Ibid, p. 4
- ⁵ Ibid, p. 4
- ⁶ Ibid, p. 7
- ⁷ Ibid, pp.18–20
- ⁸ The Publican's Morning Advertiser (February 2016), 'Cheltenham late-night levy to be scrapped after scheme flops'
<<http://tinyurl.com/zd697oa>>
- ⁹ The Publican's Morning Advertiser (May 2015), 'Newcastle councils raises £300k from late night levy'
<<http://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Legal/Licensing-law/Newcastle-council-raises-300k-from-late-night-levy>>



Alcohol and the prison system

The Home Office estimates alcohol-related crime to cost UK taxpayers £11bn per year, at 2010/11 prices.¹ But the wider costs of alcohol-related crime and disorder to society may be even higher, because solutions to the issue focus only on those offenders who admit they have a problem.

Alcohol and the criminal justice system: the scale of the problem

It has been estimated that around three-quarters of those who come into contact with the UK's criminal justice system (those in police custody, probation settings and the prison system) have a problem with alcohol, and over a third are dependent on alcohol.² Many prisoners surveyed have indicated they had been drinking at the time of committing their offence. Figures ranging from 41%–70% have been reported.^{3,4}

A review of evidence of alcohol use disorders in the criminal justice system, ranging from 2000-14, found that:

“... between 64 and 88% of individuals in the police [sic] custody setting had an alcohol use disorder. In the magistrates court this was 95%; 53-69% in the probation setting and between 13 and 86% in the prison system.”⁵

According to estimates from the National Offender Management Service, based on completed Offender Assessment System (OASys) assessments, 25,153 offenders on supervision by the probation service had alcohol misuse issues in the 2011/12 financial year (see figure 6). Although this represents a significant drop in the annual number of offenders who have experienced problems with alcohol, it must be noted that a full OASys assessment is not required with all offenders, and therefore the actual number of offenders with alcohol misuse problems is almost certainly higher than the recorded figures suggest.

Figure 6: Offenders on supervision by the probation service with alcohol misuse issues



<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Alcohol Misuse Need</i>
2008-09	46,914
2009-10	38,552
2010-11	30,888
2011-12	25,153

Source: www.parliament.uk (April 2013), 'HC Deb, c867W', Justice: On Probation

Data published by the Ministry of Justice in 2013 showed that 63% of prisoners who drank alcohol in the four weeks before custody would be classified as binge drinkers under NHS Choices measures.⁶

In 2014, 1,091 prisoners in England and Wales were found in the possession of alcohol. Initial data for 2015 (up to 31 October) shows that 1,045 prisoners were found in the possession of alcohol, although this increase may be somewhat due to improved recording practices.⁷

Is this being addressed? Current strategies and room for improvement

A thematic review published in 2010 by the HM Inspectorate of Prisons highlighted the failure of the Prison Service adequately to address the problems of alcohol misuse in prisons, despite repeated warnings by the Prison Reform Trust about its harmful effect on reoffending rates and the growing prevalence of alcohol-related crime.⁸ The review, drawing on inspection surveys of 13,000 prisoners, 72 inspection reports and surveys of drug coordinators in 68 prisons, revealed that in 2008/09, 19% of prisoners reported having an alcohol problem when they entered the prison, rising to 30% for young adults and 29% for women.⁹

Yet, at every stage in prison, prisoners' needs were less likely to be either assessed or met than those with illicit drug problems. Alcohol problems were not consistently or reliably identified and few prisons even had an alcohol strategy based on a current needs analysis.¹⁰

A 2009 review conducted by the National Probation Service into alcohol-related interventions in prisons established that their effective commissioning and delivery had been **hampered at a national level by a lack of:**

- resources and dedicated funding for the provision of alcohol interventions and treatment
- guidance and protocols to inform the targeting of available interventions
- appropriate and accessible alcohol treatment provision
- probation staff confidence, skills and knowledge around alcohol-related issues
- success engaging and influencing local commissioners to afford greater priority and resources to work with alcohol-misusing offenders

The report concluded that the resulting shortage of British research evidence means there is currently limited scope for developing empirically informed guidance to instruct senior probation managers and practitioners on key issues.¹¹

The Coalition Government acknowledged the importance of prisons as places for rehabilitation and tackling dependency on alcohol. In its Alcohol Strategy, there are plans to develop an alcohol interventions pathway and outcome framework in 4 prisons, to inform the commissioning of a range of effective interventions in all types of prison. From April 2013, they also proposed to grant responsibility for commissioning health services and facilities for those in prisons and other places of prescribed detention to the NHS Commissioning Board (NHSCB).¹² As of October 2013, a National Partnership Agreement was reached between NHS England, the National Offender Management Service and Public Health England “for the co-commissioning and delivery of healthcare services in prisons in England.”¹³

¹ www.parliament.uk (July 2013), Written evidence from the Department of Health (GAS 01), in ‘3rd report – Government’s Alcohol Strategy’, Health Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmhealth/132/132we02.htm#_blank>

² Hansard (July 2016), ‘Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse:Written question – 41699’

<<http://www.parliament.uk/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/commons/2016-07-04/41699>>

³ Scottish Prison Service (March 2016), ‘Prisoners Survey 2015’, p. 3

<<http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publication-3895.aspx>>

⁴ Addaction (2014), ‘The Alcohol and Crime Commission Report’, p. 9

<https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/blogs/alcohol_crime_commission_report_1.pdf>

⁵ Newbury-Birch D., McGovern R., Birch J., O’Neill G., Kaner H., Sondhi A., Lynch K., (2016), ‘A rapid systematic review of what we know about alcohol use disorders and brief interventions in the criminal justice system’, International Journal of Prisoner Health, Vol. 12 (1) pp. 57–70

⁶ Hansard (November 2015), ‘Prisoners: Alcoholism:Written question – 17328’ <<http://tinyurl.com/jon4zfq>>

⁷ Hansard (November 2015), ‘Prisons: Alcoholic Drinks:Written question – 17683’ <<http://tinyurl.com/z3fp7lu>>

⁸ Community Justice Portal (February 2010), ‘Prison Service Failing to Address Growing Problem of Alcohol Misuse in Prisons’, from HM Inspectorate of Prisons (February 2010), ‘Alcohol services in prisons: an unmet need’

<<http://tinyurl.com/zbl9obp>>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ McSweeney T., et al (September 2009), ‘Evidence-based practice? The National Probation Service’s work with alcohol-misusing offenders’, Institute for Criminal Policy Research, School of Law, King’s College, London, Ministry of Justice, pp. iii and iv

¹² Secretary of State for the Home Department (March 2012), ‘The Government’s Alcohol Strategy’, HM Government, p. 26

¹³ National Offender Management Service (July 2014), ‘Healthcare for offenders’

<<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-offenders>>



Policies to reduce crime and social disorder

A number of policies aiming to reduce alcohol-related crime and social disorder exist at both a national and local level in the UK. These range from licensing regulations to tough custodial penalties for criminal behaviour linked to alcohol.

Price

Evidence from both natural experiments and modelling studies support a link between alcohol pricing and overall crime, where increases in tax/price were associated with reductions in overall crime and decreases in tax/price were associated with an increase in overall crime.¹ One study examining the influence of the price of beer on injuries suffered in England and Wales suggested that increased alcohol prices would result in substantially fewer violent injuries.² Similar findings have been identified in Canada, where a 10% increase in provincial minimum alcohol prices was associated with a 9.17% reduction in crimes against persons.³

The Home Office also acknowledged the relationship between price and harm in its review of the research literature:

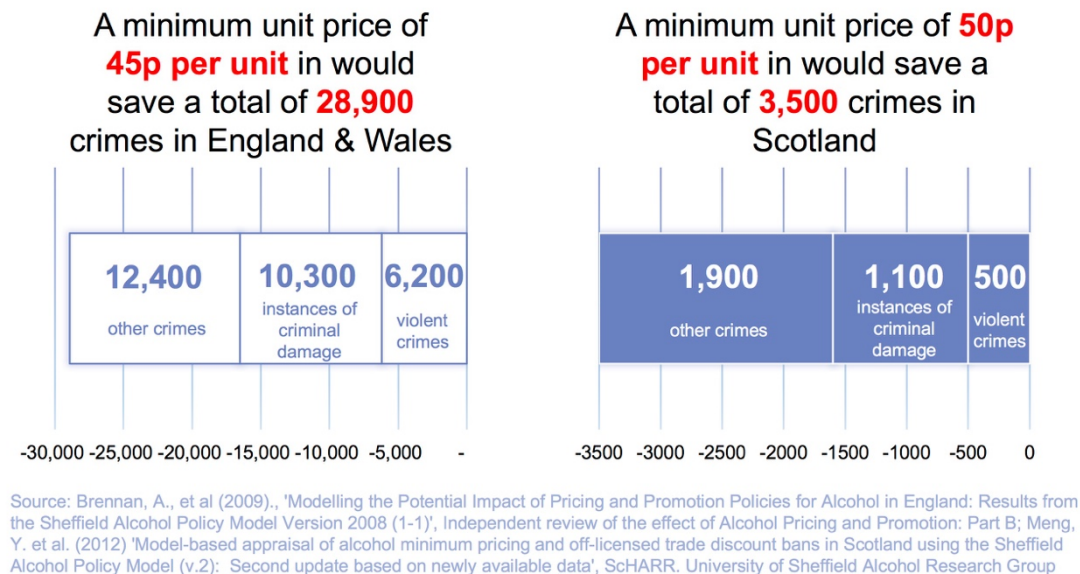
When considering individual crime types rather than overall crime, there is a larger evidence base for a link between alcohol price and violence than for other crime types. The balance of this evidence tends to support an association between increasing alcohol price and decreasing levels of violence.⁴

Research released in 2016 from Cardiff University estimates* that a 1% increase in on- and off-trade prices above inflation in England and Wales could avoid more than 6,000 violence-related emergency department attendances every year.⁵

In the face of such evidence, **minimum unit pricing (MUP)** presents itself as one such policy tool designed among other things to reduce the level of crime and social disorder. Modelling estimates produced by the University of Sheffield indicates that the proposed level of 45 pence per unit would see a reduction of 28,900 crimes a year in England & Wales. This is broken down as follows:

* FOOTNOTE: The authors of this study suggest that taxation may be a more effective strategy than minimum unit pricing (MUP) for reducing such violence-related injury. However, they do not provide evidence to support this, and this study did not model the potential impact of MUP - taxation's effectiveness was proposed by the authors. This study focused on the on-trade which may account for this suggestion, as off-trade prices would be affected more by MUP, whereas on-trade prices are more likely to be impacted by rises in taxation

Figure 7: Estimated effects of MUP on crimes committed, England & Wales and Scotland



Potential impact?

A minimum unit price of 45 pence per unit in England and Wales, and 50 pence per unit in Scotland would be predicated to:

- Save roughly £31 million in costs to the criminal justice system in the first year, rising to nearly £260m over a 10-year period.⁶
- Show a predicted fall of 3,500 crimes committed throughout the population in Scotland, saving the Scottish criminal justice system £2.9m in costs in the first year, rising to £24m over a 10-year period.⁷

Implementation in Scotland

In response to such evidence, Scotland has attempted to implement MUP, passing the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act in June 2012. However, due to a legal challenge led by the Scotch Whisky Association, this has yet to be implemented. Recent research has shown that were the Act to be implemented, after twenty years when it has achieved its full effect, it would account for an estimated 121 fewer deaths and 2,042 fewer hospital admissions each year.⁸ After hearings in the Court of Session and the Court of Justice, the case returned to the domestic court (Court of Session) where the proposal was ruled not to be in violation of EU law.⁹ As the judgement read:

The Advocate General was convinced (para 135) that the measure: “meets the objective of combating alcohol abuse in a consistent and systematic manner by maintaining, in particular, that the measure forms part of a more general strategy of combating the harm caused by alcohol, including other measures such as the prohibition of specific promotional offers, and that the targeting of cheap alcoholic beverages may be justified by the fact that hazardous and harmful drinkers, including, in particular, the young, whose

protection as a matter of priority is a legitimate concern, to a large extent consume that category of drinks.”¹⁰

Alternative approach in England and Wales

From 2014, there has been a ban in England and Wales on businesses selling alcohol below the cost of duty plus VAT.¹¹ However, whilst this may appear a positive step, it has been demonstrated that this strategy would have little substantive impact, and that MUP approaches would be more effective in reducing excessive consumption^{12, 13} **(please consult the Price factsheet for more information).**

Density of premises

There is also evidence that indicates a correlation between the density of outlets licensed to sell alcoholic beverages and the occurrence of alcohol-related crime and social disorder. This can be explained by the combination of licensed outlets clustered in close proximity to one another – especially in town centres – with the high crowd density that occurs at night time, which can lead to acts of aggression fuelled by the intoxication of alcohol.

The evidence

US based research on the relationship between alcohol and violence in the local vicinity found that:¹⁴

- In a study of Camden, New Jersey, neighbourhoods with higher alcohol outlet density had more violent crime (including homicide, rape, assault, and robbery). This association was strong even when other neighbourhood characteristics such as poverty and age of residents were taken into account
- In a study of 74 cities in Los Angeles County, California, a higher density of alcohol outlets was associated with more violence, even when levels of unemployment, age, ethnic and racial characteristics and other community characteristics were taken into account
- In a 6-year study of changes in numbers of alcohol outlets in 551 urban and rural zip code areas in California, an increase in the number of bars and off-premise places (e.g., liquor, convenience and grocery stores) was related to an increase in the rate of violence.

From this, one report drew the following conclusions:¹⁵

- In neighborhoods [sic] where there are many outlets that sell high-alcohol beer and spirits, more violent assaults occur
- Large taverns and nightclubs and similar establishments that are primarily devoted to drinking have higher rates of assaults among customers

A recent study on female alcohol consumption in and around licensed premises also found that a significant relationship between both factors, with acts of aggression most commonly motivated by an emotional reaction or to address a grievance.¹⁶

Implications for the UK?

In the UK, there has been a rapid increase in the capacity of licensed premises in city centres nationwide. In Manchester, for example, the number of people who could fit into all the city centre's pubs and clubs rose by 240% between 1997 and 2001.¹⁷

Central Cardiff has more licensing capacity per square metre any other city centre in the UK. Their night time economy is estimated to be worth £413m a year, employing over 11,000 people.¹⁸ But the city has also become a case study for explaining the rise in alcohol-related crime and social disorder on Britain's streets.

England & Wales has been shown to have higher levels of alcohol outlets density than Scotland, the USA, and Australia,¹⁹ and it has been suggested there would need to be a reduction of as much as 10% in density to see an impact on alcohol related harms.²⁰ It is however, important to note that while density of premises in the UK has increased, overall rates of alcohol related crimes have reduced, which points towards the complex interplay of different factors which influence both consumption and crime.

Solutions?

The introduction of Cumulative Impact Policies (CIP) was intended to reduce the level of crime and social disorder occurring in the night time economy. They were designed to prevent the proliferation of licensed premises concentrating in a designated area by making it harder to obtain an alcohol licence in areas where there are high levels of alcohol related problems. There has been mixed evidence on the impact CIPs have had since their introduction. They do not reduce, but rather slow down, the growth of the night time economy. For example, it has been shown that 86% of new or variation applications in CIP areas have still been granted, which may suggest a limited impact.²¹ However, some areas, such as Newcastle, have seen use of CIPs inhibit growth of the off-trade,²² where they are recognised as a useful 'place shaping' tool, enabling local authorities to encourage best practice, and to positively influence the development of the licenced trade in ways less likely to have a negative local impact. The Government have pledged to put CIPs on a statutory footing in their Modern Crime Prevention Strategy.²³ It should be noted, that the use of policies such as CIPs are limited by competition law.²⁴

In addition to this, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 gave local agencies a set of powers which would enable them to counter the most damaging effects of the 2003 Licensing Act, most notably flexible opening hours for licensed premises. For instance, by strengthening local authority control over opening and closing hours – as signalled by the creation of the Late Night Levy and Early Morning Restriction Orders (EMRO) – the new law allows them to target specific trouble zones in the night time economy in an attempt to stop crime and social disorder occurring into the early hours of the morning.²⁵ However, initial assessment of Late Night Levies has shown mixed results in their capacity to raise expected funds, and there is yet to be a formal evaluation into their impact. In their Modern Crime Prevention Strategy, the Government have pledged to improve the scheme, promising to make it "more flexible for local areas, fairer to business and more transparent" **(more on licensing solutions can be found in the Licensing factsheet)**.^{26, 27}

Place of sale

The role of atmosphere

Evidence suggests that the aesthetic environment of drinking establishments can have an influence on the prevalence of alcohol-related violence and social disorder. Research has identified specific factors that can cause violent incidents to occur in pubs, clubs and bars. These include:²⁸

- low comfort levels (due, for instance, to limited seating availability or crowding caused

by intersecting traffic flows resulting from inappropriate locations of entries, exits, bar serving areas, dance floors and toilets)

- poorly trained staff
- permissiveness towards deviant behaviours
- poor access to late night transport

In addition to this, factors such as prominence of alcohol promotion, aggressive content in music, and a “rowdy atmosphere” have also been identified as linked to alcohol-related aggression.²⁹

How can this be mediated?

In Canada, the Safer Bars training programme has shown success in reducing aggression by developing staff skills in managing and reducing aggressive behaviour. A randomised trial showed that the programme reduced severe and moderate aggression in intervention premises; these effects were moderated by the turnover of managers and door staff in bars, with higher staff turnover associated with higher aggression post-intervention.³⁰

In the UK, the Home Office has produced a summary of the various strategies available to owners/managers of licensed premises to help reduce violence in and around their businesses, including a set of interventions on the layout and management of bars and clubs as alcohol vendor venues in the night time economy.

Figure 8: Summary of strategies for reducing violence in and around licensed premises

Nature of intervention	Examples
Manipulation of the physical environment of pubs/clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No 'hidden' alcoves that prevent the easy monitoring of behaviour ● Attention to the spacing of furniture, including, tables, chairs, stools and pool tables to avoid customer crowding ● Raised bar-areas to permit staff monitoring of customer behaviour
Controlling the social atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attractive, well-maintained premises ● Registered door-staff schemes and employment of well-trained staff who discourage anti-social behaviour in a manner that does not escalate violence ● The reduction of excessively loud music
Alcohol control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No 'happy hours'/drinks promotions ● Serving of food and soft beverages
Control of drinkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Well ventilated premises with controls over the number of customers entering ● Well trained and socially skilled door staff and bar staff experienced at dealing with aggressive or violent individuals (see also above) ● Refusal of alcohol to already intoxicated customers ● 'Pubwatch' schemes ● The use of CCTV to monitor disorder and violence ● Staggered closing times to avoid large numbers of individuals gathering in the same area together ● Regular and reliable transportation away from pubs and clubs
Injury reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of toughened glass ● Use of plastic cups ● The banning of bottle-served alcohol ● Swift removal of any glassware used ● Weapons searches on entry to public houses and clubs
Criminal justice policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Heavier penalties for breaches of licensing laws such as serving to underage drinkers (relevant to both 'on' and 'off' licences) ● Courts to divert alcohol-offenders to treatment and education programmes ● Monitoring of 'problem/violent' premises ● Alcohol education schemes

Source: Brookman, I., and Maguire, M (January 2003)., 'Reducing Homicide. Summary of the Review of Possibilities', RDS Occasional Paper 84. Home Office

The licensed trade often champion voluntary schemes as effective at reducing crime and disorder. While these can be effective in some instances, they are poorly evidenced and appear to be better at encouraging best practice and information sharing as opposed to significantly impacting on crime and disorder.³¹

Transport

Some policies relate specifically to alcohol-related crime and social disorder on public transport. For example, in London, an alcohol ban was introduced on all Transport for London (TfL) services from 1 June 2008 by Mayor Boris Johnson, under the claim that it would reduce crime in the capital.³²

The ban has so far proved popular with commuters; research carried out by the Greater London Authority found that 87% of Londoners were in support. It is also said to have had a significant influence on the 15% fall in the number of assaults on Tube staff between 2008 and 2011.³³

In 2016, TfL introduced 24-hour service on some tube lines. With the introduction of this service, TfL themselves have projected an increase in alcohol-related incidents at end of line stations.³⁴

Anonymous data sharing: The Cardiff Model

Research has shown that the dissemination of information via the emergency services is key when dealing with social problems, crime and violent assault. The College of Emergency Medicine has produced guidance, which is based on the 'Cardiff model for Violence Prevention', that sets out the importance of sharing non-personal data with the police, particularly core information on the date, location and type of assault.

Findings from a study conducted by the University of Cardiff highlight the important role of senior clinical, police and local authority leadership in promoting active use of the intelligence to target policing and tackle problem premises.³⁵ Data sharing and local advocacy on the part of trauma surgeons has prompted the formation of local police task forces responsible for targeting city street crime, and overt and covert police interventions, targeted at violence hotspots such as particular licensed premises, and the use of injury data to oppose drinks/entertainment license applications by the alcohol industry.³⁶

Implementation of these measures in Cardiff has been followed by:

- an overall decrease of 35% in numbers of assault patients seeking Emergency Department (ED) treatment (2000-5), compared with an overall 18% decrease in England and Wales over the same period
- a 31% decrease in assaults inside licensed premises in Cardiff city centre (1999–2001)
- lower levels of violence than all [but 4 of the] 55 towns and cities in England and Wales with a population greater than 100,000 (by 2005)

In its Home Office 'family' of 15 similar cities (based on socio-economic and demographic variables) the Welsh capital was safest of the group for 3 years (2003–6). On the basis of such evidence, the Coalition Government intends to encourage all hospitals to share non-confidential information on alcohol-related injuries with the police, by granting licensing and local health bodies the status of 'responsible authorities' under the Licensing Act 2003.³⁷

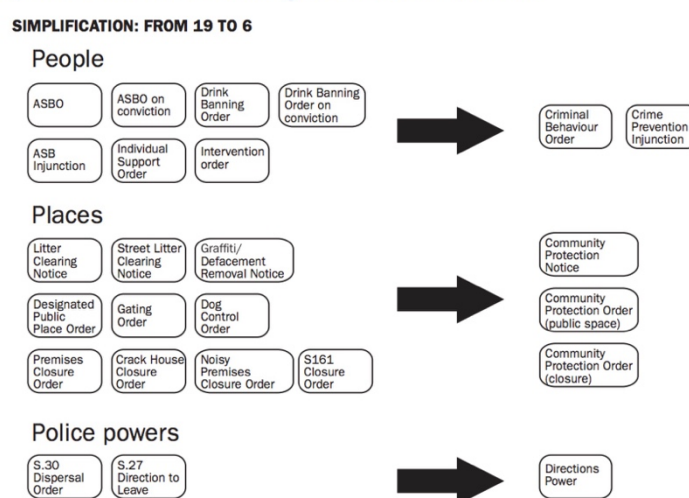
In line with this, the Government have highlighted the role of information sharing in tackling alcohol-related crime in their Modern Crime Prevention Strategy. They emphasise the need to improve local intelligence, in order to make evidence based decisions about “the sale of alcohol and the management of the evening and night time economy”, and that they “expect

more local NHS trusts to share information about alcohol-related violence to support licensing decisions taken by local authorities and the police, adopting the success of the Cardiff Model".³⁸

Streamlining: an updated alcohol policy?

Shortly after the release of the Alcohol Strategy, the Home Office presented to Parliament a document titled 'Putting victims first: more effective responses to antisocial behaviour', a white paper setting out plans to replace 19 existing powers to tackle antisocial behaviour with 6 new ones.³⁹

Figure 9: Simplification of existing antisocial orders



Source: Secretary of State for the Home Department, 'Putting victims first: more effective responses to antisocial behaviour'

This streamlining of the categorisation of orders available to courts when sentencing offenders has since been enacted in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.⁴⁰ The powers which tackle alcohol-related crime are the Criminal Behaviour Order and the Public Space Protection Order.

1. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs – previously DPPOs)

In England, provisions for dealing with alcohol-related crime disorder were created in the Police & Criminal Justice Act 2001.⁴¹ These permitted the introduction of Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) at a local authority level. These have now been replaced by PSPOs under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. PSPOs ban specific acts in a designated geographical area, such as the consumption of alcohol. All current DPPOs will expire on 20th October 2017, unless renewed and converted to a PSPO.⁴²

2. Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) / Drink Banning Order (DBO)

CBOs can be assigned by criminal courts on conviction for any criminal offence, and are designed to tackle serious antisocial behaviour, including that relating to alcohol such as persistently being drunk and aggressive in public.⁴³

DBOs came into force in August 2009, and were replaced by CBOs in 2014. They can last for any specified period of time between 2 months and 2 years. Offenders who breach a DBO are liable to pay a penalty of up to £2,500.⁴⁴

After 20th October 2019, any existing DBOs will be considered CBOs.⁴⁵

Other initiatives

Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR): imposed either as part of a community sentence of up to 3 years, or attached to a suspended sentence order of up to 2 years, to offenders who present serious problems with alcohol and where it is identified as a significant factor in the person's offending. Once an ATR order is issued by the courts, the individual must agree to a treatment plan with probation and the treatment provider. S/he will have access to a tailored treatment programme with the aim of reducing or eliminating alcohol dependency. This requires a high level of intervention, including prescribed treatment including detoxification, 1-to-1 contact or interventions, care planned counselling and assistance to obtain Residential Rehab subject to Community Care funding and general waiting lists. Breaching an ATR will result in a return to court for more onerous conditions to be applied, or a substituted prison term. The completion rate for ATRs has remained relatively stable between 2009/10 and 2013/14 at around 70%.⁴⁶

Alcohol Arrest Referral (AAR): In England, a trial of Alcohol Arrest Referral (AAR) began in 2007. These were piloted in 4 constabularies, before being phased in across 8 others the following year. AAR involves offering a brief intervention to individuals arrested and deemed by a police officer to be under the influence of alcohol and typically involves a brief intervention session with an AAR worker, with a view to 'follow-up' sessions in some cases. A Home Office evaluation report on the AAR scheme, published shortly before the 2012 Alcohol Strategy, concluded that there was no strong evidence to suggest that AAR had a criminal justice impact in terms of reducing re-arrest, although there was some limited evidence of reduced alcohol consumption among the intervention groups.⁴⁷

Sobriety tagging: This scheme aims to reduce alcohol-related crime by fitting binge drinkers who commit a defined set of alcohol-related crimes with monitors that assess their sobriety. Following a successful trial in London (with a 92% compliance rate)⁴⁸ the scheme will be rolled out nationwide.⁴⁹ Treatment and advice is also available to participants; a factor charity Alcohol Concern has emphasized as key.⁵⁰

'The Alcohol Fund' project: This £1 million project identified 10 key areas to support to address alcohol-related problems. A variety of strategies across the areas were employed, and some regions saw reduction in alcohol-related crime.⁵¹ It will be important to see the sustainability of these outcomes longer term.

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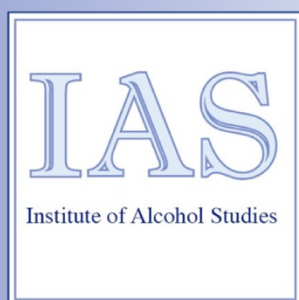


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