

ALCOHOL ALERT

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**TAXES ON ALCOHOL
'HIGHLY EFFECTIVE',
SAYS THINK TANK**

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Institute of
Alcohol Studies

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Busiest MPs up to three times more likely to be 'risky' drinkers



Highest profile politicians at heightened risk compared to average

02 March 2020 – UK parliamentarians with additional work roles may be nearly three times as likely to be 'risky' drinkers as MPs without these extra obligations, suggest the results of a small survey published in the online journal *BMJ Open*.

The responses showed that the rate of risky drinking was higher than that of the general population in England, but comparable with that of people with similar income and job status in the 2014 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS).

MPs were also comparable to these groups in what they said about not being able to stop drinking once they started; failing to do what was normally expected because of drinking; and having no memory of the night before because of their drinking.

But, on average, compared with the general population, responding MPs were more likely to drink at least four times a week; to drink at least ten units on a typical drinking day; to drink six or more units in any one session (binge drinking); and to say they felt guilty about their drinking.

The researchers looked at the prevalence of risky drinking, defined as drinking at hazardous, harmful, or dependent levels, among UK MPs, with the aim of seeing if there might be any particular factors associated with this behaviour.

They did so by inviting all 650 MPs in the House of Commons to fill in an anonymous online survey in December 2016 using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). Answers were each scored from zero to four and added to give a maximum score of 40; a score above eight indicates risky drinking.

Responses were compared with those of the nationally representative APMS, which provides data on the prevalence of treated and untreated mental health issues among English adults.

The GHQ-12, a validated health questionnaire, was used to assess the mental health of the responding MPs.

'Given the considerable stigma associated with mental health problems, there is a need for MPs to be better informed about their own wellbeing service'

There is no formal threshold for identifying mental ill health in this questionnaire, but responses were scored and categorised as: no evidence of probable mental ill health; less than optimal mental health; or probable psychological disturbance or mental ill health.

Some 146 MPs responded to the online survey (response rate of 22.5%).

In addition to the headline findings, researchers got an indication of the pressured environment that MPs work in. Four fifths (81%) of respondents didn't work outside parliament and three quarters (77%) said they were unaware of the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service.

This is an observational study, and as such, can't establish cause, and the associations found (those with extra roles, and those who had possible mental illnesses) are weakened by the small sample size.

Nevertheless, the researchers suggest that the low levels of participation may have been prompted by stigma or fear of being identified. And given the availability of alcohol in parliament in 30 bars, restaurants, and hospitality suites, with six bars open most evenings when MPs are voting or waiting to do so, the issue warrants further study. After all, MPs are also subject to increased scrutiny, stalking/harassment, online threats, long working hours and job insecurity, all of which can affect emotional wellbeing and likely use of alcohol, they point out.

'Given the considerable stigma associated with mental health problems, there is a need for MPs to be better informed about their own wellbeing service, to reduce stigma and improve help seeking within Parliament,' they concluded.



Four every minute: Six Nations references to alcohol



Rampant marketing leads public health experts to call for ban

04 March 2020 – Scottish public health experts are calling for a ban on alcohol sponsorship in rugby and football, as a new study found drink references featured every 15 seconds in a live televised Six Nations rugby match, and every 98 seconds during a live televised Rangers v Celtic Old Firm match.

Researchers from the Institute for Social Marketing and Health at the University of Stirling found [alcohol companies represented on average 7% of the main sponsors or partners](#) in those sports in 2018/19: 15% in rugby union and 4% in football.

The study found that, where present, alcohol sponsorship ‘uses a variety of marketing activities to ensure that it is highly visible and appears salient to consumers.’ These include kit logos, stadium advertising, limited edition products and players featuring in marketing content.

Analysing the frequency of alcohol marketing in seven sports broadcasts in 2018-19, the research team found an alcohol reference featured around once every 15 seconds in the Six Nations match between Scotland and England played at Murrayfield in 2018.

For Scottish Premiership football highlights, it happened every 57 seconds on average, rising to 71 seconds in the Scottish Cup final and 98 seconds in a premier league iteration of the famous Glasgow city derby.

'The current system of self-regulation is no regulation'
 – Alison Douglas, Alcohol Focus Scotland

Public health experts and campaigners from Alcohol Focus Scotland and Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) see the study's results as yet more evidence that a ban on alcohol sponsorship is needed.

Alcohol Focus Scotland Chief Executive Alison Douglas said: ‘Sport should be clean, it should inspire good health and active participation - to use it as a promotional vehicle for an addictive and health-harming product is unacceptable. The current system of self-regulation is no regulation.’

SHAAP Director Dr Eric Carlin called on clubs to follow the lead of Scottish women's football in rejecting alcohol and gambling sponsorship.

He said: ‘It's easy to understand why many clubs are attracted to the income alcohol sponsorship can provide but we need to look to clubs and organisations who are managing well without this sponsorship and move away from products, like alcohol, which cause huge problems in Scotland.’

Lead author of the study, the University of Stirling's Richard Purves, said: ‘Alcohol sponsorship was particularly visible in rugby union, both in terms of the number of sponsorship relations with alcohol companies and how often alcohol marketing references appeared in the television broadcasts analysed.’

Responding to the study, a Scottish Rugby spokesperson told *The Scotsman*: ‘Sponsorship revenue helps us reinvest record amounts into grassroots rugby, for the betterment of the game and society by encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle through participation.’

‘Together with our partners, we ensure responsible messages are prevalent throughout our match-days at BT Murrayfield – from the match programme, social media, pitch-side LED and hoardings, as well as big screen and PA announcements.’



Ireland: Cross-border talk of a uniform MUP

Health Minister Simon Harris wants a level playing field with Northern Ireland

04 March 2020 – *The Irish Times* reports that the country's Minister for Health Simon Harris has written to his northern counterpart Robin Swann about implementing minimum unit pricing (MUP) on alcohol on both sides of the Border.

Pressure is increasing to introduce a base price in Ireland below which alcohol cannot be sold, in the wake of Wales implementing a minimum unit price on 02 March. Scotland implemented the measure in 2018 to cut the levels of abuse of alcohol and while the Oireachtas passed legislation the same year, Ireland's Government postponed the implementation of the measure in 2018 because the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive were in abeyance at the time. Since then, the Welsh Senedd Assembly have passed and implemented the same proposal.

In December 2019, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar told the Dáil that if the measure was introduced in the Republic but not in the North people would cross the Border to buy cheap alcohol and 'this measure will not work economically or in public health terms'. Now the Stormont Assembly is back in session, Simon Harris sees an opportunity for governments on both sides of the Border to press ahead with the measure simultaneously. Northern Ireland Minister for Health Robin Swann confirmed on Wednesday that Mr Harris had written to him about the measure and said that 'given the potential for this to impact on cross-border trade element I am keen that we discuss this issue further with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland'. Swann said legislation on minimum unit pricing could be a key health measure and he will 'be giving this active consideration as part of the development of a new substance misuse strategy for Northern Ireland'.

Head of communications and advocacy at Alcohol Action Ireland Eunan McKinney said the introduction of the measure in Wales was very significant in the effort to reduce alcohol-related harm and to support the wider population to consume less alcohol. Mr McKinney said there are more than 3,000 alcohol-related deaths on the island of Ireland every year. 'With Scotland, and now Wales, introducing MUP, we will have strong regional evidence of the efficacy of the measure. This must encourage our government, and the Executive of Northern Ireland, to expedite matters on implementing the measure on an All-Island basis.'



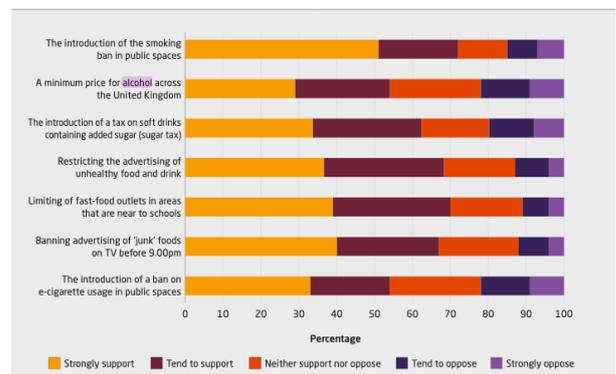
COVER STORY King's Fund: Taxes and regulation on alcohol 'highly effective'



Think tank's report urges use of population level policies

06 March 2020 – The government must start using policy levers 'that rely less on personal agency and act at a population level', to meet the challenge of non-communicable diseases (NCD) caused by behaviours such as excess drinking, say the authors of a comprehensive *King's Fund review of public health policy*. The report – *What role do taxes and regulation play in promoting better health?* – asked how far policy levers might be used 'to reduce consumption of tobacco and alcohol, and unhealthy consumption of food and drink, and ultimately improve people's health'.

The authors acknowledged that 'many countries worldwide have used excise and related taxes on tobacco and alcohol as part of a suite of policies to reduce smoking and excess drinking' and that 'for both alcohol and tobacco, evidence suggests that taxation and pricing policies can be highly effective levers for reducing consumption'. They also remarked that there was an appetite among the public for introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol: Polling conducted by Ipsos MORI for The King's Fund in 2018 showed majority support for the measure.



Views on support for or opposition to public health interventions by the government

Observing the impact of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in Scotland since May 2018, the report found that it has had positive effects on reducing alcohol consumption, 'with the greatest reduction in purchases being in the top fifth of alcohol-purchasing households', the wealthiest consumers. The report concluded that fiscal and regulatory policies 'can be highly effective when used in combination and alongside other complementary policies'.



Irish ministers lobbied daily by industry

Drinks industry met government members and officials 361 times in 2018

09 March 2020 – The *Irish Times* reports that ministers were subjected to [lobbying from alcohol industry representatives almost every day](#) of the calendar year in 2018, the same year the Dáil debated legislation aimed at combating harmful alcohol consumption.

Research presented by Alcohol Action Ireland to the biennial [Global Alcohol Policy Conference in Dublin](#) shows that in 2018, the year the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill was enacted but not implemented, drinks industry representatives registered 96 lobbying returns, displaying meetings on 361 occasions that year when the Dáil was in session for only 108 days.

The lobbying returns for the legislation in Ireland showed four of the top ten global alcohol businesses were among eight drinks producers, four public affairs consultancies and 14 linked businesses including vintners and advertisers who between them met eight cabinet ministers, including Taoiseach Leo Varadkar as well as his chief adviser and the government chief and deputy whips.

The lobbyists also had 36 separate meetings with ministers of state across all portfolios and 12 meetings with ministerial special advisers in eight departments including the Department of Health.

They also met individual TDs (representatives of the Irish lower chamber, the Dáil Éireann) on 309 occasions, and contacted each TD by letter or email 17 times that year.



Seven out of ten alcohol labels fail to display guidelines

Alcohol producers have ignored official advice for four years and counting

09 March 2020 – Four years since the UK's chief medical officers (CMOs) updated the drinking guidelines, new research from the UK's Alcohol Health Alliance (AHA UK) has found their [advice is still absent from 71% of alcoholic beverages](#). Worse still, nearly a quarter of labels on those products contained misleading, out-of-date health information.

A team of researchers looked at 424 containers (including some duplicate products) across 18 locations in October 2019, and found just one label (Brothers Toffee Apple English Cider) containing the full suggested information, explaining that the 14 weekly units should be spread across several drinking occasions.

'The alcohol industry is not taking the nation's health seriously and cannot be trusted to regulate itself'
– Sir Ian Gilmore, Alcohol Health Alliance

299 containers (71%) did not display the current guidelines, of which 199 had no official information on drinking guidelines on the label (46.9% of all 424 labels). 158 containers (37.3% of all 424 labels) instead referred to the website of alcohol industry-funded charity Drinkaware, for advice about drinking habits.

The other hundred containers that did not display the current guidelines had misleading, out of date guidelines (23.6% of all 424 labels).

Commenting on the findings, [Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, chair of AHA UK, told the *Daily Mail*](#): 'The alcohol industry has been dragging its heels for four years in updating product labelling to display current drinking guidelines. It is simply outrageous that the vast majority of products still fail to include up-to-date guidelines. The message is clear: the alcohol industry is not taking the nation's health seriously and cannot be trusted to regulate itself.'



Budget 2020: Alcohol duty frozen, again



Pro-business approach to cost public purse £1bn over next five years

11 March 2020 – Alcohol duties were frozen for the second year running, making 2020's spring Budget the seventh year out of the last eight that alcohol duties failed to keep up with inflation.

According to the Office for Budget Responsibility's costings, the freeze in alcohol duties – a cut, in real terms – are estimated to cost just over £1bn to the year 2024–25.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Exchequer impact	-30	-190	-195	-200	-205	-210

Exchequer's impact of alcohol duty changes on HM Treasury revenue (£million)

In his statement to parliament, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak also promised to lobby the United States Government to remove tariffs on Scotch Whisky imports, and to help small pubs by increasing their business rates discount fivefold (from £1,000 to £5,000) for the coming fiscal year.

Further alcohol-related policy actions from HM Treasury include the publication of its review into Small Brewers Relief in the spring, and launching a call for evidence of potential reforms to the duty system after the United Kingdom's transition period for leaving the European Union (EU) by the summer.

Responding to the announcements, IAS Chief Executive Katherine Severi said:

'It is disappointing that the chancellor has cut alcohol duty in real terms in today's Budget. It is a short-sighted move that will cost the public purse another £1 billion over the next five years, on top of the £6 billion it was already set to lose due to previous duty cuts. That is money that could have been used to relieve pressure on an NHS facing record numbers of alcohol-related admissions every year.

This decision calls into question this government's commitment to supporting our health and social care services as they continue to struggle with the consequences of cheap alcohol. It also represents a step backwards in tackling health inequalities: people from disadvantaged backgrounds are over-represented among the estimated 2,000 additional alcohol-related deaths resulting from recent duty cuts.

'We will continue to press the government to put an end to the harms linked to the ultra-cheap alcohol that blights some of our poorest and most vulnerable communities.'

Commission tells government to make alcohol harms a priority

The news came as attendees gave evidence to the new [Commission on Alcohol Harm](#).

The Commission has been established to examine the current evidence on alcohol harm, recent trends in alcohol harm and the changes needed to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. The Commission will also examine the need for a new comprehensive alcohol strategy for England, which takes account of the strategies in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and considers UK-wide priorities in areas where policy is not devolved.

Drink and Drugs News reports that former special adviser Alastair Campbell told the second of three oral evidence sessions the government needs to make alcohol harm a priority. 'This is an issue whose time has come,' he said.

'Leadership should now be focused on closing inequalities and improving national health. It's obvious what needs to be done – alcohol has a cultural hold on this country and that needs to change. There needs to be better education for children about the harmful effects of alcohol and for all of us about how to speak to and support someone with alcohol dependency. Minimum unit pricing seems to be working in Scotland and ought to be introduced here. England is lagging behind the rest of the UK in tackling alcohol harm.'



Barnsley backs call for Minimum Unit Pricing in England

Council's leaders add support to growing support

11 March 2020 – [Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council reports](#) that it 'is joining civic leaders across England in the call for the urgent introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) for alcohol, after new evidence revealed that it could save almost 8,000 lives across the North over the next 20 years.'

Research from the University of Sheffield reveals that a 50p MUP in England would see alcohol consumption in some areas in the North falling by almost twice the national average, leading to greater reductions in alcohol attributable deaths, hospital admissions and crimes.

In fact, almost half of the deaths and hospital admissions prevented and 39% of the crimes avoided from a MUP of 50 pence would come from the three Northern regions – the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber.

Cabinet Spokesperson for Public Health, Councillor Jim Andrews, said: 'We would welcome this scheme in Barnsley.'

'An MUP of 50 pence would not affect the price of alcohol in pubs or for moderate drinkers. As MUP is aimed at the cheapest, strongest alcohol sold in supermarkets and shops, pub prices would be left virtually untouched – less than one per cent of products sold in pubs would be affected.

'Those in most need of help for alcohol problems are more likely to buy stronger types of alcohol, and the scheme will seek to complement the access to treatment for those dependent on alcohol.'

Based on research conducted by the University of Sheffield, Barnsley modelling suggests that a 50p MUP would mean:

- the NHS would save £571,140 per year,
- alcohol-related hospital admissions would fall by 253 per year,
- 116 deaths would be avoided over the ensuing 20-year period,
- 345 fewer associated crimes would be committed per year.

'We would welcome [MUP] in Barnsley'
– Jim Andrews

MUP is designed to reduce the availability of very cheap, strong alcohol by setting a floor price below which a unit of alcohol cannot be sold. The scheme was first introduced in Scotland in May 2018, after a protracted legal battle with alcohol producers led by the Scotch Whisky Association, and has since been taken up in Wales, with plans for Ireland and Northern Ireland to follow suit soon.

In England, however, has not implemented the policy, despite the government saying it would do so in 2012. The annual number of hospital admissions caused by alcohol have [reached record highs](#) every year since.

Through the Barnsley Alcohol Alliance, the council's Public Health team will be supporting discussions about the benefits MUP would bring to Barnsley, as well as writing to the relevant government departments at Westminster.



Irish drank less in 2019

Encouraging signs, says public health experts, but a long way still to go

18 March 2020 – Data on provisional alcohol clearances and receipts from Irish tax and customs authority Revenue suggests that annual consumption dropped slightly in 2019.

Newstalk reports that [the Irish Treasury took in 0.05% less in revenue](#) that year: Charity Alcohol Action Ireland (AAI) say this is indicative of a small but encouraging fall in consumption of 2.13%. When projected onto population estimates, tax receipts suggest each person consumed 10.78 litres of pure alcohol.

Wine saw a 1.43% consumption increase, spirits a further 0.66% increase year-on-year, while beer saw a 2.0% decrease and cider fell by 1.74%.

'This latest data continues to demonstrate the long way we, as a nation, have to travel to bring our drinking patterns down within a low-risk approach to alcohol consumption', Alcohol Action Ireland says.

'Ireland's drinkers consume 68% more than the global average rate of alcohol consumption and some 45% above Ireland's low risk drinking guidelines'.

According to AAI, over 2,790 deaths per annum in Ireland are alcohol-related, and public health services continue to spend in excess of €1.5bn on alcohol-related illnesses and incidences, while more than 200,000 children continue to live in family circumstances where alcohol is having a negative impact on their development and their lives.

'The most encouraging aspect of this data is that perhaps the message of alcohol-related harms is beginning to have some modest impact on people's behaviour,' said head of communications at AAI, Eunan McKinney.

'The *Public Health Alcohol Act* continues to hold many of the key policy instruments to bring real and sustainable reductions.

'And while some aspects have been advanced, and implemented, many crucial aspects remain stalled such as minimum unit pricing, which as demonstrated in Scotland, has the potential to drive sustainable reductions in consumption.

'We would hope that a new government will expedite the full implementation of the *Act*.'



Alcohol policy in the time of a pandemic



A summary of coronavirus-related coverage

27 March 2020 – In Great Britain and Northern Ireland, March 2020 will be remembered as the month a worldwide virus took hold of the nation, forcing its inhabitants indoors for their safety. The threat of the COVID-19 strain of coronavirus has affected the activities of public health alcohol experts, alcohol producers, retailers, and the plans of policymakers. It will also make a significant impact on the lives of those affected by alcohol harm, a fact recognised by specialist support services. Here are some of the most prominent examples of what has happened so far.

Depleted attendance to GAPC

The biennial Global Alcohol Policy Conference 2020 still went ahead in Dublin, although fewer delegates attended than expected, as the first few cases of the virus emerged in Europe. Ireland's Minister for Health [Simon Harris delivered the opening speech](#), in which he declared his pride at the work the Irish Government are doing to deliver the *Public Health Alcohol Act*. 'I'm ok with being a Nanny', Harris declared. 'Sometimes we need Nannies – we care for people and mind them, and have to protect our children'.

While GAPC happened, the show could not go on for subsequent parliamentary events centred on alcohol and health. The Alcohol Health Alliance's *Drink on your doorstep* and Eurocare's *Alcohol and cancer* events were both postponed until further notice.

Alcohol as sanitiser?

As the virus hit British shores, the government announced it will [fast-track alcohol licence applications to make hand sanitiser](#) to address shortages caused by the coronavirus crisis.

Perhaps as a national duty, or perhaps as a corporate social responsibility exercise, alcohol producers have chipped in, although the efforts of renegade brewer Brewdog were declared [not particularly useful to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary](#).

'I'm ok with being a Nanny'
– Simon Harris



Last orders

Retail wise, alcohol was doing a rip-roaring trade in the run up to a government-authorised lockdown of the country on Friday 20 March, with many eyewitness reports on social media of [pubs 'heaving' with punters](#). After the lockdown was confirmed, some pubs seemed desperate to hold on to business. Lancashire Police said it had been told of [pubs 'holding lock-ins'](#). Derbyshire and South Yorkshire forces received similar reports.

During that week before lockdown, the best-known of pub chains, JD Wetherspoons, was at the centre of a public row over whether pubs should be open. [Owner Tim Martin claimed](#) that pubs were 'less crowded' than supermarkets, that there had 'hardly been any transmission' of the virus' on his premises, and that to close them down would be 'over the top'. Martin has since relented, just as his desire to keep pubs open has revealed his company's [unsavoury employment practices](#).

Pub owners' exasperation at closing was compounded by the government's position on off-licences, which were regarded as ['too essential'](#) to close. This has come as a relief to [some retailers seeking to take advantage](#) of the surge in demand for take-home alcohol by declaring themselves essential. In response, trade bodies including the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) and the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) have asked the government to consider letting pubs make deliveries, as well as to cancel paying their monthly beer duty dues to HM Treasury, which they claim ['threatens their survival'](#).

Unintended consequences

The prospect of a spike in home drinking – at-home beer consumption is set to almost double from 60 million pints a week to up to 100 million a week – coupled with the rise of communication apps such as Zoom has created a new phenomenon, the virtual pub. Undeterred by lockdown, the [Daily Star](#) reported that 'millions are expected to join the virtual pub phenomenon as at-home drinkers knock back pints in front of their phones' video-conferencing apps showing friends doing the same', putting a new spin on 'social distancing' as an order.

Public health warning

In the absence of a coordinated campaign from the government, it was left to public health experts to make the case for minimising the risk of engaging in unhealthy behaviours.

The World Health Organisation warned that alcohol is an ['unhelpful coping strategy'](#) for the possible stress and isolation of coronavirus lockdown. In Britain, more than 100 medics and public health professionals signed an [open letter](#) urging the government to consider emergency measures to reduce the strain on the health service during the pandemic, of which the 'urgent implementation of high-enough minimum unit pricing of alcohol to reduce some of the most problematic drinking which puts so much strain on Emergency Departments' was one.

Public health Professor Linda Bauld also gave advice for those struggling with their mental health during self-isolation and social distancing on the [BBC Debate Night](#) programme, warning that [alcohol use 'may go up'](#) in times such as these.

Support during difficult times

A number of alcohol support services have advertised how they intend to help people during these difficult times. Please see below for more guidance for those at risk of suffering from alcohol-related problems during the lockdown:

- Alcohol Health Alliance UK: [Online resources for alcohol addiction recovery during the coronavirus](#)
- Alcohol and Families Alliance: [COVID-19 – What AFA members are doing to support families and the sector](#)
- SHAAP: [New Guidance for COVID-19 and people with alcohol-related problems](#)



ALCOHOL SNAPSHOT

The effectiveness of duty increases in raising prices at the checkout varies widely between drink types

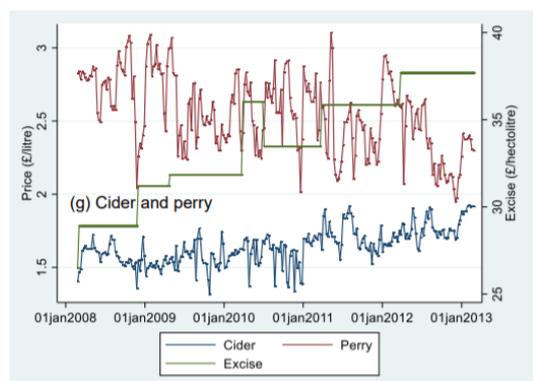
There is substantial evidence to show that people drink less if alcohol prices go up. As a result, increasing alcohol taxes is widely recognised to be one of the most effective ways to reduce alcohol harm. Yet alcohol duty, at least in the UK, is levied on drinks producers not end consumers. As a result, producers or retailers may choose not to increase the price of their product to reflect a duty increase, but may decide instead to absorb it in the form of lower profits. Moreover, consumers may respond to a price increase by 'trading down' from premium to cheaper products. In both cases, the impact of alcohol taxes on prices, and ultimately harm, is blunted.

Luca Panzone and Viviana Albani explore these issues in a [report published by Alcohol Change UK](#) earlier this month, using loyalty card data on purchases made by 17 million supermarket customers between 2008 and 2013. That corresponds to the period of the 'duty escalator', when alcohol duties were increased by 2% above inflation each year.

Panzone and Albani looked at the relationship between alcohol taxes and the price paid by consumers. Some of their findings are shown in the charts below.



Relationship between excise duty and price paid for gin, rum, vodka and whisky by loyalty scheme customers in a UK supermarket, 2008–13



Relationship between excise duty and price paid for cider and perry by loyalty scheme customers in a UK supermarket, 2008-13

The first chart shows that the average price paid for gin, rum, vodka and whisky behaves as would be expected, rising alongside the increase in spirits duty. By contrast, the second chart shows that there was no systematic relationship between cider and perry prices and the amount of tax the government levied on them.

Overall, the researchers conclude that alcohol taxes do succeed in raising prices: across all products, for every £1 that duty goes up, prices paid rise by 66p. However, the apparent failure of cider and perry prices to respond to tax increases is concerning, not least because these are the [cheapest products](#) on the market, [disproportionately favoured](#) by harmful drinkers.

The findings highlight a clear benefit of minimum unit pricing (MUP). Because MUP directly stipulates the minimum retail price, the government does not need to rely on producers and sellers to pass on the price to consumers. Moreover, because it increases the price of the cheapest drinks, it limits people's scope to trade down. Indeed, it is unsurprising that since MUP came into force in Scotland, cider prices have rocketed and sales [have plummeted](#).

You can read the full report 'Understanding the link between alcohol excises and the price of alcoholic drinks in UK supermarkets using scanner data' [here](#), and a blogpost summary [here](#).





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