

Marketing and alcohol



What is alcohol marketing? The four Ps • Alcohol marketing: The debate • Alcohol marketing and children • Alcohol sports sponsorship • Policies to regulate alcohol marketing • Alcohol advertising in the European Union



Alcohol is one of the most significant 'fast moving consumer goods' (FMCGs) marketed today. **It is estimated that each year more than £800 million is spent on advertising alcoholic beverages in the UK, with the global estimate approximating \$1 trillion.** Marketing can include advertising in **traditional media outlets such as print, television and radio, promotional activities in online and social media, and sponsorship of sporting and music events.**

Alcohol marketing utilises the "four Ps": the **product** itself including taste and packaging; **price** promotions as a means to drive sales; applying tactics at the **place** of sale, for example attractive supermarket promotions and sophisticated **promotion** tactics across new media and through sponsorship of sporting and cultural events. **Tactics under each of these "four Ps" have been found to increase consumption.**^{1, 2, 3, 4}

The alcohol and advertising industries argue that as alcohol is a legal product it should be legally possible for it to be advertised, while many argue that as well as promoting brands, advertising is also concerned with **recruiting new drinkers and increasing sales among existing, and especially heavy consumers.** Many see parallels between alcohol advertising and promotion and past tobacco advertising and promotion practices.⁵

Research shows that exposure of children and young people to alcohol marketing materials **leads them to drink at an earlier age and to drink more than they otherwise would.**⁶ Movies, television, sponsorship of sporting and music events, online video, social networking sites, magazine advertisements, music, video games, alcohol-branded merchandise, free samples, and price offers have all been found to affect young people's alcohol use.^{7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12}

The World Health Organisation states: "the extent and breadth of commercial communications on alcohol and their impact, particularly on young people's drinking, should not be underestimated".¹³ **Alcohol advertising in the UK is already subject to controls that seek to prevent advertisers targeting and appealing to young people.** The controls cover broadcast, print and online advertising and are a mix of co-regulation (with OFCOM) and self-regulation, administered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Portman Group. The Portman Code covers marketing such as sponsorship, promotion and product packaging. **The current regulatory system and codes of conduct have been criticised for failing to protect children and young people from exposure to alcohol marketing** and many health groups have called for greater restrictions to be introduced, such as those that are in place in France under the 'Loi Evin'.

The UK currently falls under EU Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of laws and regulations concerning the provision of audio visual media (the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)), which sets out criteria that television advertising of alcohol must comply with. **Many issues have been raised with the AVMSD** adopted in 2010. In 2016, a new legislative proposal amending the AVMSD was adopted, however these concerns have not been addressed. The AVMSD proposal has then been sent to the European Parliament and to the Council and is expected adopted in 2017.¹⁴ **Such regulation will continue to apply to Britain until such time as the country leaves the European internal market.**

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- ¹ Stead, M., Angus, K., Macdonald, L., and Bauld, L., (January 2014) 'Looking into the Glass: Glassware as an Alcohol Marketing Tool, and the Implications for Policy', *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 49: 3, pp. 317–320
<<http://alcalc.oxfordjournals.org/content/alcalc/49/3/317.full.pdf>>
- ² University of Sheffield (2008), 'Modelling alcohol pricing and promotion effects on consumption and harm', Independent Review of the Effects of Alcohol Pricing and Promotion, Part B
<https://www.shef.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.95621!/file/PartB.pdf>
- ³ Nakamura, R., Pecheya, R., Suhrcke, M., Jebba, S., Marteau, T., (May 2014), "Sales impact of displaying alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages in end-of-aisle locations: An observational study", *Social Science and Medicine*, 108, pp. 68–73 <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953614001361>>
- ⁴ Brown, K., (February 2016) 'Association Between Alcohol Sports Sponsorship and Consumption: A Systematic Review', *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 2016, pp. 1–9 <<http://alcalc.oxfordjournals.org/content/51/6/747>>
- ⁵ Hastings, G., and MacFadyen, L (2000), 'Keep Smiling – No One's Going to Die. An Analysis of Internal Documents from the Tobacco Industry's Main UK Advertising Agencies. Centre for Tobacco Control Research', University of Strathclyde <<http://www.tobaccopapers.com/keepsmiling/KeepSmilingReport.pdf>>
- ⁶ World Health Organisation [WHO] Europe (2009), 'Evidence for the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm' <http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/43319/E92823.pdf>
http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/alcohol-use/publications/2009/evidence-for-the-effectiveness-and-costeffectiveness-of-interventions-to-reduce-alcohol-related-harm-2009#_blank
- ⁷ Tanski, S., McClure, A., Li, Z., Jackson, K., Morgenstern, M., Li, Z. and Sargent, J., (2015), 'Cued recall of alcohol advertising on television and underage drinking behavior.' *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169: 3, pp. 264–271
<<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4450856/>>
- ⁸ Morgenstern, M., Sargent, J., Sweeting, H., Faggiano, F., Mathis, F. and Hanewinkel, R. (2014), 'Favourite alcohol advertisements and binge drinking among adolescents: a cross-cultural cohort study.' *Addiction*, 109: 12, pp. 2005–2015
<<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.12667/abstract>>
- ⁹ Hanewinkel, R., Sargent, J., Poelen, E., Scholte, R., Florek, E., Sweeting, H., Hunt, K., Karlsdottir, S., Jonsson, S., Mathis, F. and Faggiano, F., (2012), 'Alcohol consumption in movies and adolescent binge drinking in 6 European countries.' *Pediatrics*, 129: 4, pp. 1–12 <<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/4/709>>
- ¹⁰ Tucker, J., Miles, J. and D'Amico, E., (2013). 'Cross-lagged associations between substance use-related media exposure and alcohol use during middle school.' *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53: 4, pp. 460–464
<<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3783564/>>
- ¹¹ Bruijn, A., Tanghe, J., Leeuw, R., Engels, R., Anderson, P., Beccaria, F., Bujalski, M., Celata, C., Gosselt, J., Schreckenber, D. and Słodownik, L., (October 2016), 'European longitudinal study on the relationship between adolescents' alcohol marketing exposure and alcohol use.' *Addiction*, 111: 10, pp. 1774–1783
<<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.13455/abstract>>
- ¹² Brown, K., (February 2016) 'Association Between Alcohol Sports Sponsorship and Consumption: A Systematic Review'
- ¹³ WHO Europe (June 2011), 'European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2012–2020'
<http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/147732/RC61_wd13E_Alcohol_111372_ver2012.pdf>
- ¹⁴ Eurocare (June 2016) 'Revision of the EU audio visual media services directive (AVMSD)' retrieved December 2016
<http://www.eurocare.org/library/updates/revision_of_the_eu_audio_visual_media_services_directive_avmsd>



What is alcohol marketing? The four Ps

The term Marketing is defined as “the action or business of promoting and selling products or services”.

Marketing is a broad term that covers a wide range of activities and disciplines including, but by no means limited to, advertising in traditional media outlets such as print, television and radio, promotional activities in online and social media, and sponsorship of sporting and music events. A common term used to define the key aspects of marketing is the “marketing mix”, which is made up of the “four Ps” – namely Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

Figure 1: The 4Ps (the ‘Marketing Mix’)



Source: PRImageFactory, iStock

Alcohol marketing utilises all four Ps of the “marketing mix”. Alcohol marketers are able to exploit large-scale opportunities arising from the design of the **product** itself – for instance sweetened beverages or ‘alcopops’; use **price** promotions as a means to drive sales; applying tactics at the **place** of sale, for example attractive supermarket promotions and employ a wide range of sophisticated **promotion** tactics across new media and through sponsorship of sporting and cultural events. Examples of the four Ps are discussed in further detail below.

Product

Research has shown that the design of certain alcoholic drinks appeal more to adolescents than they do to an adult audience. The packaging used for ‘alcopops’, designer drinks or Ready to Drink (RTD) beverages were shown to have higher palatability amongst adolescents than adults in an Australian study, which also showed that alcopop packaging had a higher palatability amongst females.¹ In a more recent Australian study, one third of adolescents reported they would be more likely to purchase an alcohol product with energy

ingredients, and almost half would be more likely to purchase a product that looked like a soft drink.²

A study carried out for the UK regulatory authorities in 2004 suggests that alcopops make alcohol taste reliably pleasant and, therefore, make it more accessible to adolescents. While there have long been drinks that include mixers which effectively mask the taste of alcohol – rum and coke, gin and tonic, etc. – alcopops give such mixes a more unitary identity and link them with brand images which are appealing to adolescents in their own right. For example, Bacardi is perceived as signalling sophistication. The report also suggests that the brand values of alcopops are strikingly attuned to adolescence: they celebrate mocking the older generation and getting away with things, and that the packaging is designed to appeal to teenagers and young people by using animals and animation.³ The aim to appeal to this market is illustrated in this quote from Jo Sykes for SHS Drinks: “We want to make the RTD fixture look inviting and exciting again so that 18 and 19-year-olds are inspired to shop that part of the long drinks aisle.”⁴

A report from the University of Stirling has suggested that with the advent of social media, product packaging features may become a more potent advertising platform for brands, by their potential to encourage user-generated content.⁵

Glassware has also been highlighted as marketing channel which remains outside traditional marketing controls in the UK, despite it being noted that it can influence sales and consumption.⁶

Price

Price discounts and promotions can be a key marketing tool for alcohol producers and retailers. It is well established that consumers purchase greater quantities of goods when they are subject to price discounts on volume based offers. A study conducted by Alcohol Focus Scotland found that supermarket promotions and discounts on alcohol increased sales by 20 – 25%.⁷

There is evidence to suggest that when people purchase greater quantities of alcohol through volume-based price promotions, they increase their consumption levels,⁸ and that point-of-sale promotions may be associated with higher quantities purchased rather than simply switching between brands.⁹ Research from the University of Sheffield research indicates that a ban on multi-buy promotions would increase the efficacy of MUP: Modelling shows that MUP combined with a ban on off licensed trade discount bans in Scotland would show greater reductions in levels of alcohol consumption, alcohol-related hospital admissions and deaths.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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.¹² The Scotch Whisky Association have confirmed they will launch an appeal on this decision.¹³

From 2014, there has been a ban in England and Wales on businesses selling alcohol below the cost of duty plus VAT.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ **(please consult the Price factsheet for more information)**

Place

The place where alcohol is sold can have an impact on the number and volume of alcohol purchases. We know that more and more outlets selling alcohol for longer periods of time throughout the day has increased the availability and accessibility to alcohol, which has had an impact on consumption levels. It is also likely that the placement and positioning of alcohol products within stores, such as front of store and end of aisle promotions in supermarkets and shops encourages people to buy more drink than they intended to. Evidence that came to light in 2014 highlighted the substantial impact instore placement can have. End of aisle displays were found to increase the purchase of alcohol by up to 46%.¹⁶

Promotion

The promotion of alcoholic beverages covers a wide range of activities, including advertising and sponsorship. In the UK, alcohol drinks companies were the second largest source of sponsorship funding from 2003 to 2006, behind the financial services sector.¹⁷

Increasingly, alcohol is being promoted more and more in new media and online social networking sites. For example, in 2011, drinks giant Diageo signed a multimillion-pound deal with Facebook to advertise on the social networking site.¹⁸ Celebrity sponsorship, PR-generating activity and 'viral' marketing are also tools alcohol brands can deploy outside current advertising restrictions.¹⁹

Figure 2 outlines how integrated marketing tactics can be used to promote alcoholic beverages.²⁰

Figure 2: WKD – a case study in integrated marketing practices

WKD is vodka based FAB launched in 1996 by Beverage Brands UK Ltd, a relatively small player in the alcohol market. They have made use of all elements of the marketing mix to maintain a coherent and evocative 'devil may care' brand.

Marketing Communications. Conventional advertising and sponsorship is combined with innovative new media activity. The WKD website was designed by one of a growing crop of specialist 'new media agencies' and is very sophisticated. It includes arcade games, downloads for screensavers and wallpaper, a list of WKD sponsored events, a competitions section, a prize attracting photo album of people out drinking WKD and the chance to sign up to become a WKD VIP member. WKD keeps in email contact with all its registered website users and text messaging and 'text and win' competitions are also used extensively. The new technology is also interactive: the website offers e-mail postcards that can be sent to friends, and a 'windup service' allowing users to send bogus letters by e-mail to their friends. In this way WKD gains from the credibility of young people marketing to each other, using what has been dubbed 'viral' or 'tribal' marketing (Jobber, 2004); a sort of corruption of peer education.

Point of Sale and Price
The communications effort keeps potential customers apprised of new features, special offers and promotions such as the 'Pub Olympics' – an event included a miniature ski slope down which drinks were poured into participants mouths

The Product
WKD comes in three flavours: Vodka Blue, Vodka Iron Brew and Vodka Silver. The name is linked to the word wicked, a fashionable 'street' term used by young people to express approval.

Source: Hastings, G., Anderson, S., and Angus K., 'The devil doesn't just have all the best tunes – he has the best symphony', Institute of Social Marketing, Stirling and the Open University

¹ Gates, P., et al (January 2007), 'The influence of product packaging on young people's palatability rating for RTDs and other alcoholic beverages', *Alcohol and alcoholism*, 42: 2, pp. 138–142

<http://alcalc.oxfordjournals.org/content/42/2/138.full.pdf+html#_blank>

² Metzner C., and Kraus L (October 2007), 'The impact of alcopops on adolescent drinking: A literature review', *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 43: 2, pp. 230–239 <http://alcalc.oxfordjournals.org/content/43/2/230.full.pdf+html#_blank>

³ Cragg Ross Dawson: Arnold Cragg (July 2004), 'Alcohol Advertising and Young People: RESEARCH REPORT', for Independent Television Commission [ITC], Ofcom, the British Board of Film Classification [BBFC], and the Advertising Standards Authority

⁴ Green, M. (August 2016), 'WKD brand revamped to tap into young adult market', *Off Licence News*

<<https://tinyurl.com/znr3hk>>

⁵ Purves, R., Stead, M., and Eadie, D. (December 2014), "'What are you meant to do when you see it everywhere?' Young people, alcohol packaging and digital media', *Institute for Social Marketing, University of Stirling*, p. 5

⁶ Stead, M., Angus, K., Macdonald, L., and Bauld, L., (January 2014) 'Looking into the Glass: Glassware as an Alcohol Marketing Tool, and the Implications for Policy', *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 49: 3, pp. 317–320

<<http://alcalc.oxfordjournals.org/content/alcalc/49/3/317.full.pdf>>

⁷ Institute of Alcohol Studies [IAS] (2006), 'Supermarket promotions and discounts on alcohol increase sales by 25%', *Alcohol Alert*, Issue 1

⁸ University of Sheffield (2008), '[Modelling alcohol pricing and promotion effects on consumption and harm](#)', *Independent Review of the Effects of Alcohol Pricing and Promotion, Part B*

⁹ Jones, S., Barrie, L., Gregory, P., Allsop, S., Chikritzhs, T., (August 2014), 'The influence of price-related point-of-sale promotions on bottle shop purchases of young adults', *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 34:2, pp. 170–176

<<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dar.12181/full>>

¹⁰ 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*

<<http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/ph/research/alpol/publications>>

¹¹ Angus, C., Holmes, J., Pryce, R., Meier, P., Brennan, A., (April 2016) 'Model-based appraisal of the comparative impact of Minimum Unit Pricing and taxation policies in Scotland: An adaptation of the Sheffield Alcohol Policy Model version 3', *SchARR: University of Sheffield*.

¹² *The Guardian* (October 2016), 'Scottish court rejects appeal against minimum alcohol pricing', accessed October 2016

<<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/oct/21/scottish-court-rejects-appeal-against-minimum-alcohol-pricing>>

¹³ *The Guardian* (November 2016) "Scotch whisky body accused of arrogance over minimum pricing" accessed December 2016 <<https://tinyurl.com/hkwjadc>>

¹⁴ Government response to the alcohol consultation', Secretary of State for the Home Department, p. 3; 'Banning the sale of alcohol below the cost of duty plus VAT

¹⁵ Leicester, Andrew (November 2011), 'Alcohol pricing and taxation policies', *Institute for Fiscal Studies*, p. 3 / Gov.uk, 'The Government's Alcohol Strategy', Secretary of State for the Home Department, p. 7

¹⁶ Nakamura, R., Pecheya, R., Suhrcke, M., Jebba, S., Marteau, T., (May 2014),

“Sales impact of displaying alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages in end-of-aisle locations: An observational study”,
Social Science and Medicine, 108, pp. 68–73

¹⁷ www.parliament.uk, ‘Alcohol First Report of Session 2009–10, Volume I’, House of Commons Health Committee

¹⁸ Bradshaw, Tim (September 2011), ‘Facebook strikes Diageo advertising deal’, Financial Times

<<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/d044ea24-e203-11e0-9915-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2TLmvtNNk>>

¹⁹ Guy, D., (March 2016) ‘How to market alcohol where alcohol marketing is banned – Focus’, retrieved October 2016

<http://www.just-drinks.com/analysis/how-to-market-alcohol-where-alcohol-marketing-is-banned-focus_id119700.aspx>

²⁰ Hastings, Gerard, Anderson, Susan, Angus Kathryn, ‘The devil doesn’t just have all the best tunes – he has the best symphony’, Institute of Social Marketing, Stirling and the Open University <<https://tinyurl.com/grpuhg4>>



Alcohol marketing: The debate

The alcohol and advertising industries argue that as alcoholic drink is a legal product it should be legally possible for it to be advertised, and that bans on alcohol advertising would have adverse effects on the alcohol market and on the media. They also argue that bans are not justified as advertising is concerned with promoting sales of individual brands and there is no evidence of a causal link between advertising and the overall level of alcohol consumption or the amount of alcohol-related harm.

The main counterarguments are that as well as promoting brands, advertising is also concerned with recruiting new drinkers and increasing sales among existing, and especially heavy consumers. Intensive advertising and promotion of alcohol appears to sanction and legitimise use of a product which causes high levels of damage to individuals and society; for example, restrictions on alcohol advertising has been found to be associated with lower rates of hazardous drinking in participants aged 50–64 years.¹

By definition, alcohol advertising is one-sided, avoiding any reference to the negative aspects of alcohol consumption. In today's circumstances, it is also necessary to enable alcohol to compete against other alternative drugs as well as soft drinks. There is in fact some evidence that bans on alcohol advertising can have beneficial effect on the level of harm, at least in the longer term.

The arguments regarding alcohol advertising are in most respects parallel to those concerning tobacco advertising. An analysis of internal documents from advertising agencies working for tobacco companies² exposed as highly disingenuous the standard tobacco (and alcohol) industry arguments that advertising is only about expanding or protecting brand share, not total consumption, and that if there are any problems, industry self-regulation is the answer.

The analysis concluded that:

- The aim was to increase consumption as well as brand share. Individual brands gain from market expansion and therefore deliberate plans were made to encourage it
- Other industry strategies included undermining government policy and evading regulation – for example, resisting and circumventing restrictions on advertising and tax increases on tobacco products
- Voluntary, self-regulatory codes were treated cynically, the advertising agencies playing cat and mouse with the regulatory body, pushing to the limits and avoiding the rules whenever possible
- The young were a key target, and the imagery used in the advertising was designed to attract them, although for public consumption, care was taken always to refer to the young adult market. The lifestyles, motivations and aspirations of young people were continuously assessed. It was concluded that young people smoked for emotional reasons and that the branding could meet their needs by adding aspiration, coolness and 'street cred' to the products. This in itself was counter to the regulatory code which stipulated that cigarette ads should not suggest that smoking was associated with social success or play on the susceptibilities of the emotionally vulnerable, especially the young
- The issue was marketing, not just advertising alone. All aspects of marketing such as price, distribution and other commercial communications such as point of sale

material and direct mail were brought into play to maximise the uptake and continuance of smoking and thus to increase sales

- Advertising and sponsorship became one, performing the same key task of promoting the all-important brand images that appeal to young smokers.

Critics of the alcohol industry see many parallels here with the case of alcohol advertising and promotion.

Analysis of alcohol industry internal documents

In 2009, the House of Commons Health Select Committee launched an inquiry into the conduct of the UK alcohol industry. As part of this investigation, the Committee gained access to internal marketing documents from both producers and their advertising agencies.

An analysis of these documents presented the following findings:³

- There are major shortcomings in the self-regulatory codes for alcohol advertising, which mean the codes do not protect young people
- Young people are a clear target for alcohol advertisers
- Producers are well aware that segments of their market do drink irresponsibly and analyse this behaviour for market opportunities
- Advertisers seek to promote social success as a key element of brand campaigns
- Advertisers regularly appeal to masculinity and femininity
- Sponsorship is a large and powerful part of alcohol promotion
- New media are a fast-growing channel for alcohol advertising, however the rate of innovation and volume of user generated content makes regulation very difficult

Since 2009 there has continued to be indications that the industry aims to increase consumption amongst existing drinkers, rather than simply advertising to maintain market share. In its 2013 Annual Report AB InBev claimed that its strategy aims to “create new occasions to share our products with consumers”, and to associate specific contexts with specific products to try to ensure that people drink on these occasions.⁴ In 2014, the British Beer Alliance, a consortium of major British brewers, launched the £10m marketing campaign ‘There’s a Beer for That’, aiming to showcase “the variety of beer available in the UK and how these different styles fit perfectly a wide range of occasions” **(please see the alcohol industry factsheet for further info)**.⁵

¹ Bosque-Prous, M., Espelt, A., Guitart, A. M., Bartroli, M., Villalbí, J. R. and Brugal, M. T. (2014) ‘Association between stricter alcohol advertising regulations and lower hazardous drinking across European countries.’ *Addiction*, 109: 1634–1643 <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.12562/full>>

² Hastings, G., and MacFadyen, L (2000)., ‘Keep Smiling – No One’s Going to Die. An Analysis of Internal Documents from the Tobacco Industry’s Main UK Advertising Agencies. Centre for Tobacco Control Research’, University of Strathclyde <http://www.tobaccopapers.com/keepsmling/#_blank>

³ Memorandum by Professor Gerard Hastings, Institute for Social Marketing, University of Stirling & the Open University [AL 81] (January 2010)., “‘They’ll Drink Bucket Loads of the Stuff’: An Analysis of Internal Alcohol Industry Advertising Documents”, to the House of Commons Health Select Committee Inquiry

⁴ Anheuser-Busch InBev (2013), 2013 Annual Report <<https://tinyurl.com/quel27d>>

⁵ Green, M. (2014), “There’s a Beer for That”: biggest names in British beer unite for £10 million campaign, *Off Licence News* [Online]. 30 October. [Accessed 17 December 2015]. Available from: <<https://tinyurl.com/pvqlfbp>>



Alcohol marketing and children

Much of the debate around alcohol advertising concerns the possible effects on children and young people. The Advertising Codes prohibit the specific targeting of minors, but the ubiquity of alcohol advertising ensures that they can hardly miss it. Ofcom report that since a period of gradual decline of exposure to television alcohol advertising for children aged 10–15 from 2002 to 2006, 2007 to 2011 represented a period of absolute increase in exposure.¹ With the proliferation of online streaming services, there has also been shown to be a “substantial potential” for young people to be exposed to alcohol advertising through internet television.² Research examining exposure to television alcohol advertising indicated that 10 to 15-year-olds in the UK were significantly more exposed to alcohol advertisements per viewing hour than adults (25 years and over).³

In the UK, the proportion of children drinking alcohol remains well above the European average.⁴ Evidence shows that exposure to alcohol marketing encourages children to drink at an earlier age and in greater quantities than they otherwise would. The Science Committee of the European Alcohol and Health Forum concluded in 2009 that “alcohol marketing increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol”.⁵ Longitudinal research from Europe has suggested that adolescents’ alcohol use is affected by exposure to alcohol marketing,⁶ while research from the US has suggested that exposure to alcohol-related media may in fact begin a mutually influencing process in adolescents, escalating alcohol use over time; the more alcohol-related media they see, the more they drink, and the more they drink, the more they seek out alcohol-related media.⁷

Indeed, the evidence is that even young children are aware of alcohol advertisements and tend to remember them. Manufacturers further reduce the chances of young people failing to get the message by sponsorship of sports teams and events and music concerts having particular appeal to the young. A 2016 systematic review of seven studies exploring alcohol sports sponsorship found a positive association between exposure to such marketing and alcohol consumption, with two of the studies reviewed showing this relationship held for schoolchildren.⁸ There is also evidence that underage drinking and the likelihood of alcohol problems in later life are closely related to positive expectations of benefits from alcohol use, precisely the expectancies advertising is designed to encourage.⁹

American studies have found that children and teenagers respond particularly positively to TV advertisements featuring animals, humour, music and celebrities. It is suggested, therefore, that policy makers should ensure that advertisements should focus on product-related characteristics, using content less appealing to children and teenagers.¹⁰

An American study found that heavy advertising by the alcohol industry in the US has such considerable influence on adolescents that its removal would lower underage drinking in general and binge drinking in particular. The analysis suggested that the complete elimination of alcohol advertising could reduce monthly drinking by adolescents from about 25% to about 21%, and binge drinking from 12% to around 7%. However, these estimated reductions were substantially less than those which the analysis suggested would result from significantly increasing the price of alcoholic drinks.¹¹

Another American study found that youth who saw more alcohol advertisements drank more on average, each additional advertisement seen increasing the number of drinks consumed by 1%. Also, youth in markets with greater alcohol advertising expenditures drank more,

each additional dollar spent per capita increasing the number of drinks consumed by 3%. Youth in markets with more alcohol advertisements showed increased drinking levels into their late 20s whereas drinking plateaued in the early 20s for youth in markets with fewer advertisements.¹²

A study of the impact of alcohol advertising on teenagers in Ireland found:¹³

- Alcohol advertisements were identified as their favourite type of advert by the majority of those surveyed
- Most of the teenagers believed that the majority of the alcohol advertisements were targeted at young people. This was because the advertisements depicted scenes – dancing, clubbing, lively music, wild activities – that identified with young people
- The teenagers interpreted alcohol advertisements as suggesting, contrary to the code governing alcohol advertising, that alcohol is a gateway to social and sexual success and as having mood altering and therapeutic properties

A review of seven international research studies¹⁴ concluded that there is evidence for an association between prior alcohol advertising and marketing exposure and subsequent alcohol drinking behaviour in young people. The forms of exposure included both direct exposure to advertising using broadcast and print media, and indirect methods such as in-store promotions and portrayal of alcohol drinking in films, music videos and TV programmes. Three studies showed that onset of drinking in adolescent non-drinkers at baseline were significantly associated with exposure to alcohol marketing. One study showed that for each additional hour of TV viewing per day the risk of starting to drink increased by 9% during the following 18 months. Another found that youth with higher exposure to alcohol use depicted in popular movies were more likely to have tried alcohol 13 to 26 months later. Yet another showed that exposure to in-store beer displays significantly predicted drinking onset two years later. Two studies demonstrated dose response relationships. In one, in Flemish school children, increased frequency of TV viewing and music video viewing was highly significantly related to the amount of alcohol consumed while going out. In the other, of individuals aged 15 to 26 years, for each additional advertisement seen the number of drinks consumed increased by 1%, and for each additional dollar spent per capita on alcohol advertisements the number of drinks consumed increased by 3%.

A US study further found that receptivity to alcohol advertising on television predicted the onset of drinking, binge drinking and hazardous drinking for young people aged 15 to 23 years.¹⁵ A similar European study found that for adolescents, naming a favourite alcohol advertisement increased their likelihood of beginning to binge drink within the next year.¹⁶ Recent findings from the UK found that exposure to alcohol use in films was linked with higher risk of alcohol use and alcohol-related problems in adolescents.¹⁷ Such a link between alcohol use in movies and adolescent binge drinking was found to be relatively stable across cultures in a 2012 European study.¹⁸

Social media and online represent a substantial marketing channel for many brands; in April 2016, Facebook was visited by 38.9 million unique users in the UK alone, whilst Twitter and Instagram received 20.9 million and 16.5 million respectively.¹⁹ Australian researchers investigating drinking behaviours of 15 to 29-year-olds have found an association between liking or following alcohol social media profiles and riskier alcohol consumption.²⁰ US research found YouTube profiles created for fictional users aged 14, 17 and 19 were able to subscribe to 100% of the alcohol brand YouTube pages explored.²¹ Research from

Australia found the alcohol websites they investigated typically had poor filter systems protecting underage visitors.²²

¹ Ofcom, (May 2013) 'Children's and young people's exposure to alcohol advertising 2007 to 2011', p. 7

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/51507/alcohol_report_2013.pdf>

² Siegel, M., Kurland, R., Castrini, M., Morse, C., de Groot, A., Retamozo, C., Roberts, S., Ross, C., and Jernigan, D. (2016) 'Potential youth exposure to alcohol advertising on the internet: a study of internet versions of popular television programs', *Journal of Substance Use*, 21: 4, pp. 361–367

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Alcohol sports sponsorship

Alcohol brands were the second largest source of sponsorship funding from 2003 to 2006 in the UK, behind only the financial services sector.¹ Many high-profile events broadcast in the UK are currently sponsored by alcohol brands, including the FA and World Cups, UEFA Champions' League, Rugby World Cup and Formula 1, and concerns have been raised about the high number of children this advertising may reach.² Carlsberg have been a sponsor of the England football team since 1986, and will sponsor the team at the 2018 World Cup³ while Team GB were sponsored by Strongbow for the 2016 Olympic Games.⁴ It has been reported that the jump in UK beer sales experienced during the Euro 2016 tournament was equivalent to an extra 31 million pints consumed by the country between April and June, compared to the same period in the previous year.⁵ As well as this, Formula 1 racing has been found to have “the highest level of alcohol brand exposure of any sports event reported in peer reviewed literature.”⁶

Evidence suggests there is an association between alcohol sports sponsorship and harmful drinking among schoolchildren and sportspeople. A 2016 systematic literature review⁷ assessing the evidence on the relationship between alcohol sports sponsorship and alcohol consumption found that of seven studies investigated^{8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14} all indicated that exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship is associated with increased levels of consumption and risky drinking amongst schoolchildren and sportspeople.

The seven studies investigated presented findings for 12,760 people in several high-income countries (Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Poland) with data collected between 2006 and 2012, The reliability of results varied across the studies. Two of the studies included were conducted in the UK. A study of 2,048 sportspeople from several universities found those receiving alcohol industry sponsorship were four times more likely to report hazardous drinking than non-sponsored sportspeople. The second UK study surveyed 294 Welsh schoolchildren in Year 10 (aged 14/15), finding awareness of alcohol sports sponsorship was linked to a 17% higher chance of boys, and 13% higher chance of girls getting drunk at the weekend. When the same schoolchildren had both positive attitudes towards alcohol and awareness of alcohol sports sponsorship, the chances of getting drunk at the weekend were 26% higher for boys and 27% higher for girls.

One other study included in this analysis investigated an association between alcohol sports sponsorship and harmful drinking in schoolchildren; in a multi-country study of children aged 13–14 years, it was shown that exposure to alcohol branded sports sponsorship was associated with increases in the expectancy of positive effects from alcohol and drinking in the last 30 days.

Major medical and public health institutions in the UK currently call for a ban of alcohol sports sponsorship. Bans are in place in France and Norway, and the governments of Republic of Ireland and New Zealand are considering proposals.^{15, 16}

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Policies to regulate alcohol marketing

Alcohol advertising in the UK is subject to controls that seek to prevent advertisers targeting and appealing to young people. The controls cover broadcast, print and online advertising and are a mix of co-regulation (with Ofcom) and self-regulation, administered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Portman Group. The Portman Code covers marketing such as sponsorship, promotion and product.

Current codes of practice

The possibility that alcohol advertising can have socially adverse effects is recognised in the special rules drawn up in relation to how, where and when alcoholic drinks can be advertised. Currently, the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is responsible for all advertising standards and consumer complaints, both broadcast and non-broadcast. As a result, all alcohol advertisements must adhere to the self-regulatory UK Code of Non-Broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP code), and the co-regulatory UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP code), that is overseen by Ofcom.*

The drinks industry funded body, the Portman Group, regulates all other forms of drinks producer marketing including naming, packaging, and promotion of alcoholic drinks. A fifth edition of the Portman Code was announced in November 2012 and was updated in December 2015.¹ The Portman Group also released a first edition of Code of Practice on Alcohol Sponsorship in 2014.² This code states that: “Prior to sponsoring an event, team or activity, drinks companies must use their reasonable endeavours to obtain data on the expected participants, audience or spectator profile to ensure that at least the aggregate of 75% are aged over 18.” However, even adhering to this standard, a substantial number of young people could be exposed to such sponsorship. For example, with Manchester United and Manchester City attracting 1.98 million viewers in 2015 for their tie, even if young people represent only 15% of this audience, that means 495,000 young people may have been exposed to advertising from Premier League sponsors, Carling.³

From 1 March 2011, the CAP Code has applied in full to marketing messages online, including the rules relating to misleading advertising, social responsibility and the protection of children. Journalistic and editorial content and material related to causes and ideas are excluded from the remit. Previously, the remit online was limited to paid-for ads (such as pop-ups and banner ads) and sales promotions wherever they appeared.

The new remit covers:⁴

- Advertisers’ own marketing messages on their own websites
- Marketing communications in other non-paid-for space under the advertiser’s control, such as social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter
- Marketing communications on all UK websites, regardless of sector, type of businesses or size of organisation

* You can download the following documents from each advertising agency below:

[The CAP code section on alcohol](#)

[The BCAP code section on alcohol](#)

[The Portman Group code on advertising](#)

[The Portman Group code on sponsorship](#)

In December 2013, following research from Ofcom into children's exposure to alcohol advertising on television, the Broadcasting Committee of Advertising Practice published new, strengthened guidance on scheduling of such adverts.⁵

Despite these codes being in place, Alcohol Concern's Youth Alcohol Advertising Council have reported complaints to the ASA, which have led to removal of online marketing material for brands such as Frosty Jack, Jägermeister and Fireball whisky.⁶

Criticisms of the current regulatory system

The current regulatory system and codes of conduct have been criticised for failing to protect children and young people from exposure to alcohol marketing. 29% of participants surveyed in a study of UK alcohol television adverts felt at least one advert presented to them breached the Advertising Standards Authority Code of Broadcast Advertising rule that such advertising "Must not appeal strongly to people under 18...reflecting or associated with youth culture or showing adolescent or juvenile behaviour."⁷ As part of its 2009 investigation into the conduct of the UK alcohol industry, the House of Commons Health Select Committee obtained access to internal marketing documents from both producers and their advertising agencies. The subsequent report concluded that there are: "major shortcomings in the current self-regulatory codes covering alcohol advertising. Specifically, the codes do not, as they are supposed to, protect young people from alcohol advertising; prevent the promotion of drunkenness and excess; or the linking of alcohol with social and sexual success. Nor do they even attempt to address sponsorship, and the documents show this is being systematically used to undermine rules prohibiting the linking of alcohol with youth culture and sporting prowess. Finally, the codes are extremely weak in their treatment of new media which are rapidly becoming the biggest channel for alcohol promotion".⁸

Calls for greater regulation: The Loi Evin

Many health groups have called for greater restrictions on alcohol marketing to be introduced in the UK, such as those that are in place in France under the 'Loi Evin'.

The articles relating to alcohol advertising in this French law may be summarised as follows:

A clear definition of alcoholic drinks is given:

- All drinks over 1.2% alcohol by volume are considered as alcoholic beverages

Places and media where advertising is authorised are defined:

- No advertising should be targeted at young people
- No advertising is allowed on television or in cinemas
- No sponsorship of cultural or sport events is permitted
- Advertising is permitted only in the press for adults, on billboards, on radio channels (under precise conditions), at special events or places such as wine fairs, wine museums

When advertising is permitted, its content is controlled:

- Messages and images should refer only to the qualities of the products such as degree, origin, composition, means of production, patterns of consumption

- A health message must be included on each advertisement to the effect that “l’abus d’alcool est dangereux pour la santé”: alcohol abuse is dangerous for health

WHO Global Alcohol Strategy – Marketing recommendations

The *WHO Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol* was published in 2010. This Strategy, which was endorsed by all 193 Member States of the WHO, identified Marketing as a key policy area that required action at the national level in order to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

Below are the recommendations made by WHO in the Strategy:⁹

Area 6. Marketing of alcoholic beverages

29. Reducing the impact of marketing, particularly on young people and adolescents, is an important consideration in reducing harmful use of alcohol. Alcohol is marketed through increasingly sophisticated advertising and promotion techniques, including linking alcohol brands to sports and cultural activities, sponsorships and product placements, and new marketing techniques such as e-mails, SMS and podcasting, social media and other communication techniques. The transmission of alcohol marketing messages across national borders and jurisdictions on channels such as satellite television and the Internet, and sponsorship of sports and cultural events is emerging as a serious concern in some countries.

30. It is very difficult to target young adult consumers without exposing cohorts of adolescents under the legal age to the same marketing. The exposure of children and young people to appealing marketing is of particular concern, as is the targeting of new markets in developing and low- and middle-income countries with a current low prevalence of alcohol consumption or high abstinence rates. Both the content of alcohol marketing and the amount of exposure of young people to that marketing are crucial issues. A precautionary approach to protecting young people against these marketing techniques should be considered.

31. For this area policy options and interventions include:

(a) Setting up **regulatory or co-regulatory frameworks, preferably with a legislative basis**, and supported when appropriate by self-regulatory measures, for alcohol marketing by:

- i. Regulating the content and the volume of marketing;
- ii. Regulating direct or indirect marketing in certain or all media;
- iii. Regulating sponsorship activities that promote alcoholic beverages;
- iv. Restricting or banning promotions in connection with activities targeting young people;
- v. Regulating new forms of alcohol marketing techniques, for instance social media;

(b) Development by public agencies or independent bodies of effective systems of surveillance of marketing of alcohol products;

(c) Setting up effective administrative and deterrence systems for infringements on marketing restrictions.

¹ The Portman Group (December 2015), 'Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks, Fifth Edition' <<https://tinyurl.com/hm5cmxp>>

² The Portman Group (January 2014), 'Code of Practice on Alcohol Sponsorship, First Edition' <<http://www.portmangroup.org.uk/docs/default-source/recruitment-jds/sponsorship-code-booklet.pdf?sfvrsn=0>>

³ The Mirror (November 2015), 'Which televised Premier League matches have attracted the most viewers this season?' <<http://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/football/news/televised-premier-league-matches-attracted-6863816>>

⁴ Advertising Standards Authority [ASA] (September 2010), 'Landmark agreement extends ASA's digital remit' <http://www.asa.org.uk/News-resources/Media-Centre/2010/ASA-digital-remit-extension.aspx#_blank>

⁵ BCAP (December 2013) 'Identifying TV programmes likely to appeal to children, Advertising Guidance (broadcast)', retrieved November 2016 <<https://tinyurl.com/hty2xnv>>

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⁹ World Health Organisation [WHO] (2010), 'Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol' <http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/activities/gsrhua/en/#_blank>



Alcohol advertising in the European Union

There are a variety of national restrictions and controls across Europe and mixtures of the statutory and the self-regulatory marketing systems. In terms of EU-wide legislation, this began with the Television Without Frontiers Directive (TWF) which was originally issued in 1989, has been incorporated into national laws. This was designed to harmonise regulations so that cross border transmissions would not contravene national regulations.

The current EU Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of laws and regulations concerning the provision of audio visual media (the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)), sets out criteria that commercial communication (television advertising, teleshopping, sponsorship and product placement) of alcohol and other commodities must comply with. These include that television advertising and teleshopping of alcohol must not be aimed at minors or depict minors drinking; it must not link alcohol with enhanced physical, sexual or social performance; and it must not encourage immoderate consumption. Such regulation will continue to apply to Britain until such time as the country leaves the European internal market.

Many concerns have been raised with the AVMSD adopted in 2010, including the strength of the guidelines, an over-reliance on industry self-regulation, the exclusion of sponsorship and product placement as alcohol advertisement, and the movement of alcohol advertising across borders and regulatory environments (for example, advertising which is illegal in Sweden being broadcast on Swedish channels established in the UK). In 2016, a new legislative proposal amending the AVMSD was adopted by the European Commission. The AVMSD proposal has now been sent to the European Parliament and to the Council and is expected adopted in 2017.¹

Levels of regulation of marketing vary between Member States. A WHO European Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2010 identified 3 WHO European Region countries that had no legally binding regulations of any kind for alcohol advertising, while 14 countries had no legally binding regulations for product placement.

The main features of national regulations are summarised below.²

Figure 3: Drinks advertising in the European Union

Source: Just-Drinks.com (February 2004)

Nation	Alcohol marketing regulatory environment
 Austria	Legal ban on advertising of spirits on TV and radio, on broadcast advertisements linking alcohol with children, driving or sport, or promoting alcohol abuse, and on sponsorship of TV and radio programmes by companies primarily concerned in alcohol production. Otherwise, self-regulatory code under auspices of the Austrian Advertising Council, which prohibits advertising encouraging abuse, targeted at children or adolescents, associating alcohol with success or containing allusions to stimulating or therapeutic effects of alcohol. Advertisements are not allowed to depict alcohol consumption or people in a drunken state.
 Belgium	No commercial advertising on State TV, and legal ban on spirits advertising on Commercial TV. No alcohol advertising on radio. In other media, voluntary guidelines prohibit the encouragement of 'drinking to excess' and advertisements targeted at the under 21s.
 Denmark	Until 2003, there was a legal ban on alcohol advertising on Danish TV and radio channels but this was rescinded. The self-regulatory code governing content was agreed in 2000 and follows the normal guidelines e.g. advertisements must not be directed at minors, suggest that alcohol is good for health or improves mental or physical capacities. The code also prevents alcohol being associated with sport, alcohol sponsorship of sport and sports grounds not being allowed, nor advertising in sports magazines.
 Finland	Legal ban on all alcohol advertising until 1994 when the Alcohol Act allowed advertising of alcoholic beverages up to 22% ABV. The law prohibits targeting minors and imposes the usual restrictions on content – e.g. no depiction of excessive consumption, claims in regard to therapeutic properties or being necessary for social or sexual success, etc. In addition, advertising must not promote the idea that alcohol is refreshing.
 France	The Loi Evin, which came into operation in 1993, bans the advertising of all alcoholic beverages over 1.2% ABV on TV and in cinemas and also prohibits the sponsorship of sport or cultural events by alcohol companies. Radio advertising of alcohol is not permitted between 5PM and midnight. As well as forbidding the targeting of minors, the law also effectively outlaws 'lifestyle' advertising of alcohol products, advertisements only being allowed to refer to the actual characteristics of the product such as its brand name, ingredients, provenance, how to prepare and serve the drink, etc.
 Germany	By voluntary agreement, most spirits are not advertised on TV. On other media, a voluntary code is in operation similar to that in the UK. Other than the Television Without Frontiers Directive (TWF), the system is self-regulatory, the Code on Alcoholic Beverages Advertising dating from 1976, extended in 1998 to cover teleshopping.
 Greece	As well as the TWF Directive, there are restrictions on the number of alcohol advertisements per day on each television and radio station.
 Ireland	A legal ban on spirits advertising on TV and radio, and alcohol advertisements may not be shown before sports programmes. The same advertisement may not appear more than twice per night on any one channel. On other media, a voluntary code is in operation.

¹ Eurocare (June 2016) "Revision of the EU audio visual media services directive (AVMSD)" Retrieved December 2016 <http://www.eurocare.org/library/updates/revision_of_the_eu_audio_visual_media_services_directive_avmsd>

² Just-Drinks.com (February 2004), 'Drinks advertising in the European Union'



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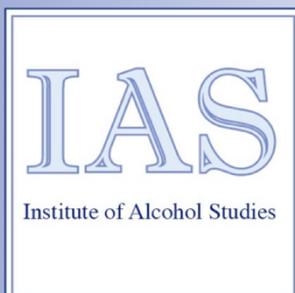
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