

Sirs,

Much debate around the problems of alcohol centres on individual drinkers, both in terms of health and social impacts. Less attention is given to hidden victims who are invisible to the public eye: As the recent report from the Children's Commissioner for England highlighted, children and families all too often suffer the consequences of problem drinking, with some 2.5 million children in the UK living with a hazardous drinker.

The Alcohol Health Alliance UK and other organisations with an interest in safeguarding children and families support the Children's Commissioner's call for the Government to take action. We support the Government's commitment to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol and call for this to be set at 50p in the first instance as this is in line with existing evidence. This policy will tackle head-on the problems caused by cheap drink, not only to drinkers but to those around them – the innocent victims of alcohol harm.

Minimum unit pricing will target the heaviest drinkers, those who cause the most damage to themselves and others. A child who lives with a problem drinker is vulnerable to neglect, violence and abuse and a significant number of child protection cases are linked to alcohol.

It is essential that the Government stands firm in tackling problem drinking to turn the tide of alcohol harm. Whilst minimum unit pricing is not a silver bullet, there is good evidence to suggest it will make a real difference. Harmful alcohol consumption impacts on more than just the drinker. We must support measures to help protect the next generation.

Signatories

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