

Alcohol & the Commercial Determinants of Health

Alison Douglas
HADP Session
18 March 2025

Highland's relationship with alcohol



20% of people
(14% of women, 27% of men)
exceed the weekly guideline

39% of 13-year-olds and 72% of 15-year-olds have drunk alcohol
Of those, 52% of 13-year-olds and 72% of 15-year-olds have been drunk



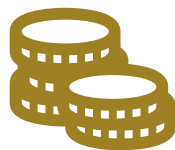
1,137 hospital admissions for conditions solely caused by alcohol in 2023/24

303 hospital admissions for alcohol-related cancers (in 2020)



53 people died in 2023 from conditions solely caused by alcohol
(higher than average death rate)

135 people died in 2020 from all conditions caused by alcohol (x2.3)



Every year, alcohol costs Highland £84.9m or £383 per person in 2007

Effective action on alcohol harm

S A F E R

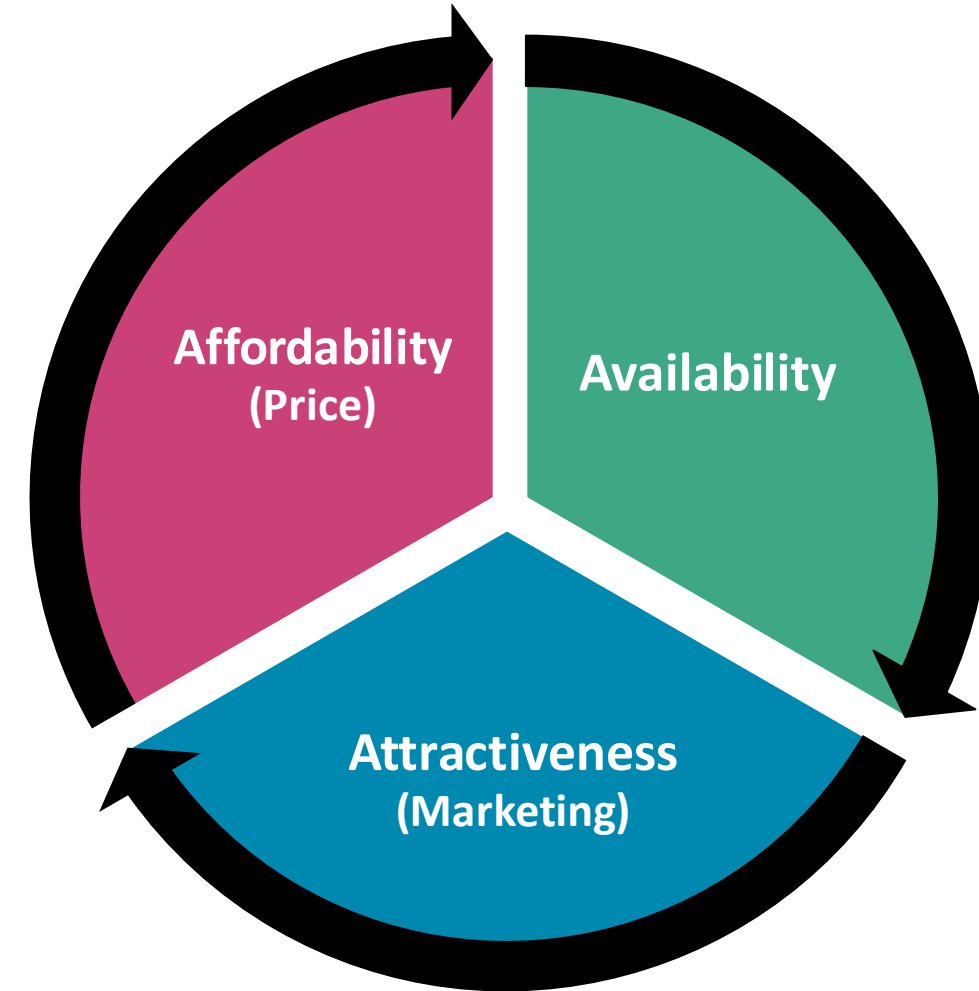
Strengthen
restrictions on alcohol availability

Advance & enforce drink driving counter-measures

Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions & treatment

Enforce bans/comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship & promotion

Raise prices on alcohol through excise taxes & pricing policies



MUP: Coordinated challenge

Study into Industry Responses to 2008 Consultation

- Strong evidence is misrepresented
- Weak evidence is promoted
- Unsubstantiated claims about the adverse effects of policy proposals
- Promoting alternatives without evidence e.g. education, enforcement, self-regulation

Industry Use of Evidence to Influence Alcohol Policy: A Case Study of Submissions to the 2008 Scottish Government Consultation, Jim McCambridge et al, April 2013

MUP: Playing the economic card

"I can give you a guarantee that, if Scotland goes ahead with a health-based justification for a minimum price, jurisdictions around the world will use that precedent against Scotch whisky. **would lose 1**

Outcome:

- **Delayed MUP implementation by nearly 6 years**
- **Hundreds of lives could have been saved during this period**

*...isky
...association CEO (former)*

...tling facility that we
... in the Grangemouth constituency
would be severely impacted by the
introduction of a 50p minimum price, as
would our main grain distillery in the
Highlands, near Inverness. It is on that
basis that we calculated that **we
could lose 300 jobs."**

...mer)

MUP Renewal: Broadening voices



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Drinks industry workers: Minimum price hike will cost jobs

Monday, December 4, 2023



Drinks workers: Don't increase minimum unit price of alcohol, scrap it

Workers in Scotland's drinks industry fear a proposed increase to the price of alcohol will cost jobs while doing nothing to protect problem drinkers, according to a poll.

A union in the sector, surveyed members on the issue, with 50% of respondents saying they would not support a price increase.

Daily Record

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Raising minimum unit price of alcohol 'unfair' as 'poorest Scots hit hardest'

The GMB said a hike in minimum unit pricing (MUP) would dent Scots' spending power during a cost of living crisis.

David Hume, GMB Scotland organiser in the drinks industry, said: "By design, MUP increases the price of the cheapest drinks and those on lower incomes are disproportionately affected.

"That is unfair and unjustified while any public health benefits have yet to be conclusively proved by data and research rather than good intentions and wishful thinking.

"The benefits of this policy remain theoretical and Scotland's economy will be hit hard.

Marketing: Broadening voices

Scottish Government Alcohol Marketing consultation Nov 2022 – Mar 2023

The consultation received 2,411 personalised responses from 1,985 individuals and 426 organisations. In addition, it received 585 responses through campaigns organised by the Campaign for Real Ale and the Scottish Beer and Pub Association.

Respondents fell into two main groups:

- **The first group** comprised a large majority of individuals (around 3 in 4) and most organisational respondents (i.e. advertising and media organisations; alcohol producers; music, culture, events and sporting organisations; retail and hospitality organisations; business and private sector organisations; and organisations involved in setting advertising standards or developing self-regulatory codes). Respondents in this group were content with the status quo and opposed further restrictions of any kind.



STA Update: An open letter to Scottish Government to halt the proposed ban on alcohol advertising and promotion

TRNSMT organiser warns ban on booze ads in Scotland would destroy festival industry

organisers of TRNSMT, said T in the Park and outdoor festivals it inspired would not have happened without government plans to "reduce the appeal" of alcohol to young people.

Marketing: challenging the evidence base

HOLYROOD

Partner content

Associate Feature: Bust
people are inc
advertising on

The trope that young pe
largely been accepted as
parties.

However, new research published by the ~~Adve~~
in stark terms just how flawed assumptions underp

Outcome:
Second consultation delayed
Public Health Scotland evidence review

BIGGAR
Economics

Economic Co
Propo



TLT LLP
41 West Camp
Glasgow G2 6S
T +44 (0)333 0
tlr.com

on Alcohol Advert

Policy Proposals (Pages 7-87)

take action? (Pages 8-14)
mful to children and young people? (Page 15)
vention – how will restricting alcohol marketing prevent a
Pages 16-45)

ent regulatory system? (Pages 46-47)
ctions (Pages 48-54)
its Sponsorship (Pages 55-60)
public spaces marketing (Pages 61-63)

7. Outdoor
8. In-store alcohol marketing (Pages 64-65)
9. Brand-sharing and merchandise (Pages 66-70)
10. Print advertising (Page 71)
11. Online marketing (Pages 72-78)
- and Radio Advertising (Pages 79-80)

Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs)

- **23 CAPs in Scotland**, backed by alcohol industry funding (incl. Fort William).
- Funding sources include major alcohol industry groups
- **Plans to establish another 40-50 CAPs**
- Claim to reduce underage drinking, but concerns exist over their long-term **impact on policy and public health.**

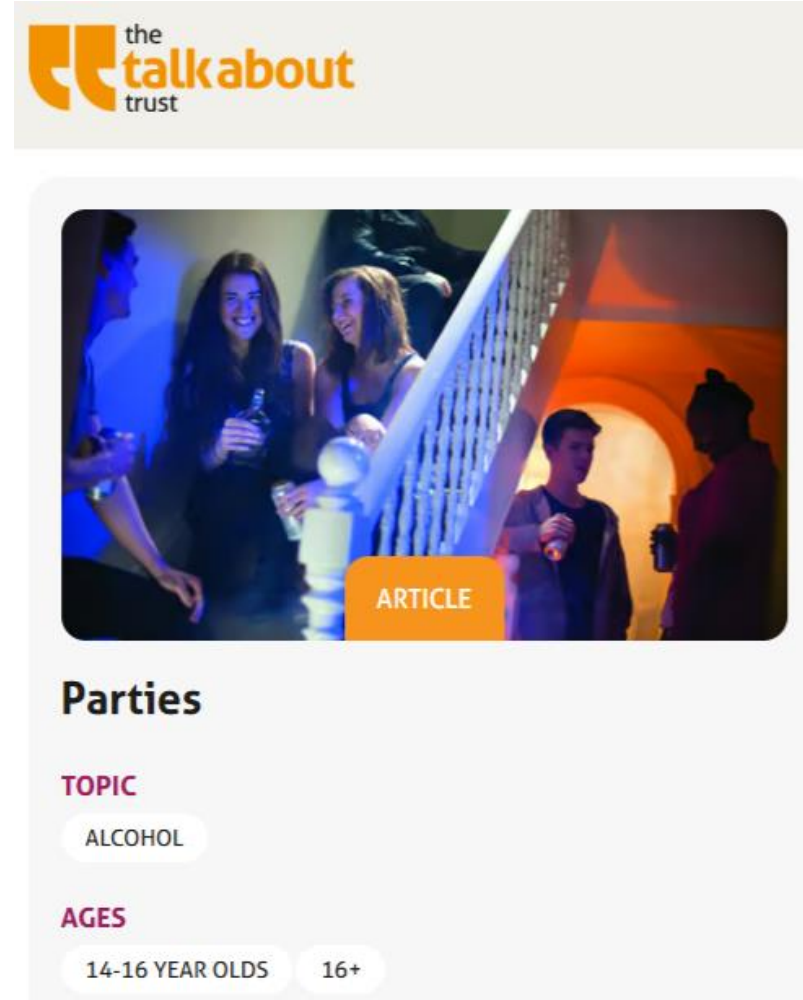


**PROGRESS
THROUGH
PARTNERSHIP**

COMMUNITY ALCOHOL PARTNERSHIPS (CAPS)
IN SCOTLAND

Industry Influence: Talk About Trust

- **Talk About Trust** receives funding from alcohol industry sources.
- Delivers alcohol education in Scottish schools, training **785 professionals** across **33 organisations**
- Research shows industry-backed education materials **downplay risks** and **shift responsibility** onto young people.



Priority primary prevention actions

PRICE

Introduce automatic uprating of the minimum unit price (MUP) for alcohol

AVAILABILITY

Reform the system for licensing off-trade and online sales to firstly cap and then reduce off-trade availability of alcohol

MARKETING

Restrict alcohol marketing, including advertising outdoors, in public spaces and sport and event sponsorships, as well as displays in shops

What can HADP do?

- Raise awareness of evidence base and of industry tactics
- Develop a conflict of interest policy for HADP
- Resist the development of CAPs in Highland
- Encourage schools not to use industry-funded materials such as Talk about Trust or Smashed
- Challenge normalisation of alcohol by:
 - local action to restrict alcohol marketing on publicly-owned sites
 - creating health promoting spaces and encourage alcohol-free events and spaces



Thank you!

Alison Douglas, Chief Executive

alison.douglas@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

[@AlisonDouglas18](#)

alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

[@AlcoholFocus](#)