

Scotland Alcohol Profile

References and Methods

October 2023

Alcohol Focus Scotland has developed an alcohol profiles demonstrating the high levels of availability of alcohol, alcohol consumption and related harm in Scotland. This document provides full references for our sources and explains how some data was calculated.

Please note that not all data available for Scotland can be directly compared to the [Local Alcohol Profiles](#).

Licensing

The number of places to buy alcohol

- Source: Scottish Government (2022). [Scottish Liquor Licensing Statistics 2021-22](#).
- The number relates to licences in force on 31 March 2022. The on-sale licence category includes licences which allowed for both on sale transactions and off sale transactions.



Parental drinking

The percentage of children for which parental alcohol use was noted as a concern

- Source: Scottish Government (2023). Children's Social Work Statistics 2021-2022
- This relates to children on the child protection register at 31 July 2022, and to the child's most recent case conference.
- Percentages were calculated using the "Parental alcohol misuse column" and the "All children on register" column of Table 1.10.



Ambulance callouts

The percentage of ambulance callouts which were alcohol-related

- Source: Manca, F. et al (2021). Estimating the Burden of Alcohol on Ambulance Callouts through Development and Validation of an Algorithm Using Electronic Patient Records. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 18(12), 6363. <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/12/6363>



Hospitalisations

The number of alcohol-related hospital admissions

- Source: Public Health Scotland (2023). [Alcohol related hospital statistics: Scotland financial year 2021-2022](#).
- Both acute and psychiatric admissions, for year 2021-2022.



Deaths

The number of alcohol-specific deaths

- Source: National Records of Scotland (2023). [Alcohol-specific deaths 2021](#).

True number of alcohol deaths

- Sources: Tod, E. et al. (2018). [Hospital admissions, deaths and overall burden of disease attributable to alcohol consumption in Scotland](#). NHS Health Scotland; National Records of Scotland (2022). [Alcohol-specific deaths](#).
- The NHS Health Scotland report estimated that in 2015, there were 3,705 deaths caused by alcohol in Scotland. This includes deaths from conditions that are only ever caused by alcohol (alcohol-specific deaths, or deaths 'wholly attributable' to alcohol), and deaths caused by alcohol from conditions where alcohol is not the sole cause (deaths 'partially attributable' to alcohol).
- Wholly attributable deaths are caused by conditions such as alcohol-related liver disease and alcohol dependence. Partially attributable deaths are caused by conditions such as cancers and heart disease.



- According to National Records for Scotland, there were 1,045 alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland in 2015.
- Therefore, the true number of alcohol deaths is estimated to be over three times (3.54) as high as the alcohol-specific deaths, when including all the conditions attributable to alcohol.

Alcohol consumption

The proportion of people drinking above the Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines

- Source: Scottish Government (2022). [Scottish Health Survey 2021 – Volume 1: Main Report](#).
- This refers to the [guideline](#) for people to not regularly exceed 14 units per week.



Youth drinking

The proportion of S2 and S4 students who drink alcohol and who drink alcohol at least once a month

- Source: Table 11a of the 'Substance use – supplementary tables' of Scottish Government (2023). [Health and Wellbeing Census Scotland 2021-2022](#).
- The proportion of students who drink alcohol was calculated by subtracting the proportion who answered 'I never drink alcohol now' from 100%.
- The proportion of students who drink alcohol at least once a month was calculated by subtracting the sum of those who answered 'I never drink alcohol now' and 'Only a few times a year' from 100%. This leaves those who answered 'More than once a week', 'About once a week', 'About once a fortnight', and 'About once a month'.
- S2 = Ages 12–14 and S4 = Ages 14–16



Burden of disease

The burden of disease attributable to alcohol consumption

- Source: Tod, E. et al. (2018). [Hospital admissions, deaths and overall burden of disease attributable to alcohol consumption in Scotland](#).

The cost of alcohol use

How much alcohol costs per year

- Source: York Health Economics Consortium, University of York (2010). [The Societal Cost of Alcohol Misuse in Scotland for 2007](#). Scottish Government Social Research.
- The total cost of alcohol use is broken down for health service, social care, crime and productive capacity.

