



Alcohol Focus Scotland

Manifesto

National Charity for Alcohol Issues



Promoting responsibility, Reducing harm, Changing culture

Introduction

Alcohol Focus Scotland is the national charity for alcohol issues. We are committed to improving the quality of people's lives by promoting responsible drinking behaviour and discouraging drinking to excess. Our work involves providing information and training on alcohol issues, raising awareness of alcohol-related problems, and working to influence alcohol policy.

Alcohol in Scotland: the vision

Alcohol Focus Scotland wants to see a Scotland where;

- Moderate, responsible drinking is the norm, and drunkenness has become socially unacceptable;
- Town and city centres are free from alcohol fuelled disorder and violence;
- Fewer families break up and have children taken into care because of parental drinking;
- People who do develop alcohol problems can access appropriate treatment and support quickly and effectively;
- All alcohol producers and retailers take their legal and social responsibilities seriously;
- Significantly fewer Scots have their lives cut short by alcohol misuse.

Alcohol in Scotland: the facts

Alcohol misuse has far reaching and often devastating consequences – not just for individuals but also for their families, communities and Scotland as a whole.

Cost to individuals:

- Every four hours in Scotland someone dies because of alcohol
- The alcohol-related death rate in Scotland is double that of the UK as a whole
- Every year over 40,000 people are hospitalised due to alcohol related conditions like liver disease
- There are 130,250 consultations with GPs and practice nurses for alcohol problems each year

Cost to families:

- 100,000 children in Scotland are living with a problem drinking parent – three times more than live with a drug using parent
- Drinking by 13 year olds has increased by 100% in the last decade
- Alcohol is considered a gateway drug - 20% of 15 year olds have tried drugs as a result of drinking
- Alcohol is a factor in 62% of domestic abuse incidents and 30% of divorces
- 28% of adult offenders report that their drinking affected their relationships with their family

***Every 4 hours
in Scotland
someone dies
because of
alcohol***

Cost to communities:

- 93% of adults perceive alcohol as a social problem in Scotland
- 66% of young offenders were drunk at the time of their offence
- Every day 77 victims of alcohol related assault present to A&E departments
- There were 11,257 drunk driving offences last year
- 64% of alcohol-related deaths are amongst the most deprived members of society

Cost to Scotland:

- £1.1 billion per year.
- NHS £110 million per year.
- Social Work £96 million per year.
- Criminal justice system and emergency services £267 million per year.
- Wider human costs £223 million per year.
- Wider economic costs £417 million per year.

***Cost to Scotland -
£1.1 billion per year***

Alcohol in Scotland: 10 proposals for change

- **Cheap drink promotions** which encourage people to buy more alcohol than they intended must be stamped out in shop, off-licences and supermarkets. Alcohol is a controlled product yet is now 62% more affordable than in 1980. Beer can be bought for as little as 34p per can, which is outrageous given that this is cheaper than most soft drinks. Alcohol Focus Scotland calls for a complete ban on below cost selling and heavily discounted alcohol, such as multiple purchase offers.
- As a drug, **the sale of alcohol** needs to be more effectively controlled, if we are to reduce the health and social problems which are worsening on an annual basis. Alcohol Focus Scotland calls for all alcoholic drinks to be stocked within in a clearly defined alcohol aisle, preferably with a turnstile.
- **Stricter enforcement of the laws** relating to alcohol sales. Licensees must be made to take their legal and social responsibilities seriously, with appropriate penalties for those found to be putting profits first. Alcohol Focus Scotland is calling for Licensing Standards Officers to be brought into force now, rather than waiting until the new Licensing Act is implemented.
- **Treatment & Services** - Alcohol Focus Scotland calls for high quality support and treatment services throughout the country, which are easily accessible for anyone with an alcohol problem. There is also a need for more specialist care for example, for people with alcohol and mental health problems.
- **The unit content should be printed on all alcoholic drink packaging** and should be set in the context of recommended limits. Alcohol Focus Scotland calls for drinks to carry health warnings particularly for at risk groups e.g. pregnant women. We also need a clearer and more easily understood sensible drinking message.

- **Reduce drink-drive limit** from 80mg to 50mg in line with other European countries. The Centre for Transport Studies at University College, London say lowering the limit would save 65 lives per year and prevent hundreds of injuries. There is a need to communicate to the public that the only safe limit is to simply not drink if you are intending to drive. Hard hitting messages and campaigns need to be run all year round.
- **Innovative publicity campaigns** to get the message across to the public that excessive drinking is not acceptable and carries serious risk of harm. Alcohol Focus Scotland is calling for a long-term campaign, supplemented by a programme of activities, highlighting the effects of alcohol related harm across all age (older people as well as young) and social groups.
- **A % fee levied on manufacturers** relating to their spend on advertising and sponsorship. The drinks industry spends at least £200million per year on advertising and sponsorship, promoting positive images of drinking which don't always mirror reality. Alcohol Focus Scotland would like to see a % fee to be used for work to counter-balance this activity.
- **All pubs and clubs must offer cheaper soft drinks**, free tap water and a wider range of good priced low alcohol drinks. In many bars it is cheaper to purchase a pint of lager than a lemonade so there is no incentive for people to go out and enjoy themselves without drinking alcohol.
- **More effective alcohol education**, starting at primary school age. Young people in Scotland have some of the highest levels for drinking and drunkenness in Europe. Initiatives which introduce alcohol education in late primary and use interactive methods are having some success. Alcohol Focus Scotland calls for a national standard set for educational materials used in all schools across Scotland based on research findings from existing community projects.

Challenge public attitudes to drunkenness

Sign up now

If you agree that these proposals would help to address some of the problems associated with drinking in Scotland then sign up to our manifesto. Email enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk to offer us your support.

For more information on alcohol issues please contact us.

Alcohol Focus Scotland,
2nd Floor, 166 Buchanan St
Glasgow G1 2LW

Tel: 0141 572 6700

Statistics from: Alcohol Statistics Scotland 2007, ISD, Scottish Executive Strategy Unit Alcohol Harm Reduction Project, Interim Analytical Report

Registered Charity: SCO 09538

Telephone: 0141 572 6700 Web: www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk