



MINIMUM PRICING KEY POINTS

1. Lead message

- Scotland has a distinct problem with alcohol; increased consumption is driving increased alcohol harm. This is exacerbated by plummeting prices and aggressive promotion. A minimum price for a unit of alcohol can help reduce alcohol consumption and harm as part of a wider package of measures, including education and diversion.

2. Scale of the problem

- Scotland's drink problem is now significantly worse than the rest of the UK and the trends are worrying.
- The impact on our health is clear - around 1 in 20 Scots die an alcohol attributable death, from causes ranging from cancer to car accidents.
- The impact on our communities is evident for all to see – in violence, vomit and vandalism.
- The impact on our families and our children is less visible but equally damaging.
- This misuse of alcohol costs the Scottish economy around £2.25bn each year. That's a cost of around £500 per year, or £10 a week, to every taxpayer

3. The role of cheap alcohol

- Cheap alcohol is making a bad situation worse.
- Alcohol is now 69% more affordable than in 1980 and consumption has increased by around 20% over the same period.
- Up to 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women in Scotland are drinking more than the recommended daily drinking limit.
- A man can exceed his weekly sensible drinking limit by drinking a bottle of high strength alcohol such as white cider that currently costs less than £3.
- The evidence is clear: cheap alcohol is fuelling consumption and causing harm.

4. Minimum price specific

- Urgent action is necessary to turn the tide of alcohol harm.
- There is strong evidence that tackling price - as part of a wider package of measures including education and diversion – can help reduce consumption and harm.
- A minimum price would set a floor price for a unit of alcohol, meaning that alcohol could not be sold below that.
- This would not put up the price of every drink; only those, which are sold at an unacceptably low price such as, cheap spirits and white cider. It is not a tax. The extra money will go to drinks producers and retailers, not the Government.
- It will impact most on harmful drinkers. People who drink within the sensible drinking guidelines will hardly be affected. For example, if a 40p minimum price was introduced, a moderate drinker's spend on alcohol would go up by just £11 per year (21p per week), but that of a harmful drinker, who tends to buy more, cheap alcohol, would go up by £137.
- The Chief Medical Officer believes that – like the smoking ban – minimum price would save lives within a year. The Sheffield study supports this – their model suggests a 40p minimum price would save about 70 lives in year one, rising to 365 lives per year by year ten.
- You may not feel you are part of Scotland's alcohol problem, but we will all feel the economic and social benefits of the solution through healthier, happier, safer families and communities.

5. Business/ Economic specific messages

- With 80% of Scottish businesses employing three people or less, alcohol related absence has a big impact on business efficiency. Alcohol costs the Scottish economy an estimated £820m in lost productivity.
- By standardising the cost of alcohol, the introduction of a minimum price puts small retailers on a level playing field with the big supermarkets.
- Whilst minimum price means people will consume less, they will pay more and so it is unlikely that the business revenue of alcohol producers will be affected. Both off-trade and on-trade retail sectors would see increased revenue.

6. Social harm specific messages

- By reducing consumption, minimum price will have a positive effect on the safety of Scottish communities and the lives of our children.
- Less time and effort spent on treating and policing the symptoms of alcohol misuse means more resource can be spent on the care and protection of the wider community.