

# Advocacy Guide

## An Alcohol Harm Prevention Levy:

Contacting your representatives



## About the Alcohol Harm Prevention Levy

The Alcohol Harm Prevention Levy is an additional tax on shops that sell alcohol that could raise around £60m a year for local authorities. The money raised could be used to improve services for people with an alcohol problem.

This would follow the 'polluter pays' principle, with businesses paying towards the health and social costs caused by the products they sell.

In practice, this would happen by increasing the amount that shops pay in tax ('non-domestic rates') to the local Council. A similar policy called the Public Health Supplement was in place between 2012 and 2015 and raised almost £100 million.

Another levy on alcohol is currently being considered by the Scottish Government and it is possible that it will be introduced at the next budget in March 2025. Alcohol Focus Scotland is campaigning for this to be introduced to help fund local prevention and support services.

**So, the more people who are asking politicians to support this, the better. Please join our campaign and contact your representatives today.**

### More information

Click the links below to find out more information on the Alcohol Harm Prevention Levy.



- [AFS briefing on the alcohol harm prevention levy](#)
- [AFS response to the Scottish Parliament Finance Committee about the levy](#)
- [Research from the Fraser of Allander Institute](#)

## What actions can I take?



Here's how you can take immediate action to support this vital public health measure:

1

**Write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government to voice your support.**

2

**Ask your MSP to support the levy.**

3

**Ask your local Councillors to support the levy.**



**In this guide, you can find out who to contact, how to contact them, and what you can say.**

# Contacting the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

Writing to the Cabinet Secretary is the **most important** action you can take to support the levy. The [Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government](#) is primarily responsible for decisions made on the budget, which would include whether to introduce an alcohol harm prevention levy.

Shona Robison MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government. To contact the Cabinet Secretary, you can email [CabSecFLG@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecFLG@gov.scot). There is a template email below that you can use and personalise for the content of the message.

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I am writing to you today to ask you to introduce an alcohol harm prevention levy through a public health supplement on non-domestic rates for alcohol retailers.

Alcohol use currently costs Scotland up to £10 billion every year, including up to £700 million in health and social care costs. I believe that the businesses that sell alcohol should contribute towards the health and social care costs caused by the products they sell. I also do not think it is fair that retailers keep the additional revenue they make from minimum unit pricing (MUP), which is estimated to be over £30 million per year.

This policy is important because it has the potential to raise around £60 million a year to improve local services for people with an alcohol problem and to take important preventative measures to limit the harm alcohol causes.

The Scottish Government has called the record high numbers of alcohol deaths a public health emergency. I believe that introducing an alcohol harm prevention levy would help address this emergency by funding urgent improvements to alcohol treatment and support.

Last year, the Scottish Government committed in the budget to exploring the re-introduction of a public health supplement. Can you confirm whether you intend to introduce this important public health measure in the next budget?

[Share a brief personal story or experience that highlights why this issue matters to you]

I hope to hear from you soon,

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Address]

[Download the word version here.](#)



# Contacting your MSP

## Step 1

As the Alcohol Harm Prevention Levy would be implemented by the Scottish Parliament, MSPs are important people to contact.

You can write to your MSPs by visiting [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) and typing in your postcode.

First, enter your UK postcode

 

This will bring up a list of several MSPs that represent you. It is recommended that you choose the **'Write to all your regional MSPs'** option.

**Your MSPs**

Your Glasgow Cathcart MSP represents you in the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Parliament is responsible for a wide range of devolved matters in which it sets policy independently of the London Parliament. Devolved matters include education, health, agriculture, justice and prisons. It also has some tax-raising powers.

[James Dornan](#) (SNP) Write to all your regional MSPs  
(only use this option if you are writing to your MSPs about voting issues or other issues concerning matters in the Scottish Parliament. If you have a constituency matter or similar local or personal problem, please write to your constituency MSP above, or pick just one of your regional MSPs.)

7 Glasgow Scottish Parliament region MSPs also represent you; if you are writing on a constituency matter or similar local or personal problem, please write to your constituency MSP above, or pick just one of your regional MSPs. Only one MSP is allowed to help you at a time.

[Dr. Sandesh Gulhane](#) (Conservative)  
[Anas Sarwar](#) (Labour)  
[Paul Sweeney](#) (Labour)  
[Patrick Harvie](#) (Green)  
[Pauline McNeill](#) (Labour)  
[Pam Duncan-Glancy](#) (Labour)  
[Annie Wells](#) (Conservative)

## Step 2

You can then add a message to the chosen MSPs, along with your contact details. The message will be sent from your own email address.

There is a template email on [page 6](#) which you can use and personalise for the content of the message.

### Write your message

Writing to your Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Dear Patrick Harvie, Paul Sweeney, Pam Duncan-Glancy, Pauline McNeill, Annie Wells, Anas Sarwar and Dr. Sandesh Gulhane,

Yours sincerely,

<p><b>About You</b></p> <p>Your name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Your email <input type="text"/></p> <p>Confirm email <input type="text"/></p> <p>Phone <input type="text"/> <small>optional</small></p>	<p><b>Your Address</b></p> <p>Address Line 1 <input type="text"/></p> <p>Address Line 2 <input type="text"/> <small>optional</small></p> <p>Town/City <input type="text"/></p> <p>County <input type="text"/> <small>optional</small> UK postcode <input type="text" value="G41 3AG"/></p>
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All the information you provide here will be sent to your representatives or their offices.

Any response from them will come directly to you via email or letter. After you use WriteToThem, you will receive a maximum of two follow-up messages from us, checking whether you received a response.

## Contacting your Councillors

As the levy will be a local tax, and the money will be distributed among local authorities, you could also write to your local Councillors about this. The [Write to Them website](#) can also be used to contact your Councillors.

You can either click on an individual's name to open an email or click 'write to all your councillors'.

There is a template email on [page 6](#) which you can use and personalise for the content of the message.

### Choose your representative

You have several elected representatives at different levels of government.

[Not sure who to contact?](#)

#### Your councillors

Your 4 Ayr North councillors represent you on South Ayrshire Council. The Unitary Authority is responsible for all aspects of **local services and policy**, including **planning, transport, roads** (except trunk roads and motorways), public rights of way, **education, social services and libraries**.

[Mark Dixon](#) (SNP)

[Laura Brennan-Whitefield](#) (SNP)

[Ian Cavana](#) (Labour)

[Ian Davis](#) (Conservative)

[Write to all your councillors](#)

[Correct a mistake in this list](#)



# Email template

This template is designed to make it easier to contact your MSPs and Councillors, don't feel you have to stick to it. Please add in your own experiences and reasons why you personally support the levy.



Dear [MSP or Councillor name],

I am writing to you today to ask you to support the introduction of an alcohol harm prevention levy through a public health supplement on non-domestic rates for alcohol retailers.

Alcohol use currently costs Scotland up to £10 billion every year, including up to £700 million in health and social care costs. I believe that the businesses that sell alcohol should contribute towards the health and social costs caused by the product they sell. I also do not think it is fair that retailers keep the additional revenue they make from minimum unit pricing (MUP), which is estimated to be over £30 million per year.

This policy is important because it has the potential to raise around £60 million a year to improve local services for people with an alcohol problem and to take important preventative measures to limit the harm that alcohol causes in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has called the record high numbers of alcohol deaths a public health emergency. I believe that introducing an alcohol harm prevention levy would help address this emergency by funding urgent improvements to alcohol treatment and support.

Last year, the Scottish Government committed in the budget to exploring the re-introduction of a public health supplement and I would like to know whether you support this important public health measure?

And, if you do support it, I would like to know what steps you are taking to show your support either within parliament or publicly.

[Here, you can share a brief personal story or experience that highlights why this issue matters to you]

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,

[Name]

[Address – including postcode.

This allows your MSPs/Councillors to know that you are their constituent.]

[Download the word version here.](#)

## Stay in touch

If you send a letter to the Cabinet Secretary, your MSPs or Councillors, we would be grateful if you could let us know! Please feel free to copy us into your emails.

We are always keen to hear from you about your ideas about advocacy or any examples you'd like to share. Please contact us with any ideas or examples you may have.

If you need any assistance when using this guide, or would like to give us feedback, please get in touch.

Contact us at [involvement@alcohol-focus.org.uk](mailto:involvement@alcohol-focus.org.uk).

**Thank you for supporting our campaign for an Alcohol Harm Prevention Levy.**





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Glasgow  
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 [@alcoholfocus](https://twitter.com/alcoholfocus)

[www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)

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