



ALCOHOL
FOCUS
SCOTLAND

Strategic plan
2024-2027

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WHO WE ARE

Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS) is an independent charity working to prevent and reduce alcohol harm.



Our vision

A future free from the widespread health and social harm caused by alcohol.



Our mission

To deliver effective and cost-effective action to reduce alcohol consumption and harm in Scotland and beyond.



Our values

Independent, equitable and fair, evidence-based, rights-based, respectful and collaborative.

OUR UNIQUE ROLE

Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS) makes a unique contribution to preventing alcohol harm in Scotland by promoting cost-effective action that works for people and reduces inequalities. We work to ensure that policy and practice relevant to alcohol in Scotland is grounded in evidence and in the experience of people affected by it. We provide decision makers with access to quality research and insight on preventing alcohol harm and achieving the best outcomes for communities. We campaign for change and promote the sharing of good practice at local, UK, and international level.

We work with a wide range of people and partners who put the public interest first. We do not work with the alcohol industry. We believe that there is an inherent contradiction between the interests of alcohol producers and those of public health. We fully endorse and adopt the World Health Organization's position that the alcohol industry has no role in the formulation of alcohol policies, which must be protected from distortion by commercial or vested interests.



WHAT WE DO

We work to create a Scotland where alcohol is no longer a major cause of harm, including by:

- promoting effective alcohol policies at local, national and international level
- gathering and producing evidence of the harm caused by alcohol and of the most effective ways to address it
- engaging and informing people about our work and the need for change
- involving and supporting people to influence change
- developing learning opportunities and resources to support best practice
- holding decision makers and the alcohol industry to account

OUR IMPACT

We will update our monitoring and evaluation framework to enable us to demonstrate delivery and to support improvement activity.



WHY WHAT WE DO IS IMPORTANT

Alcohol claims over 50 lives per week in Scotland, with those of us living in deprived areas more than four times more likely to die. Scotland's relationship with alcohol needs to change so that everyone is able to fulfil their potential to live a healthy, safe, and full life.

Scotland had been making progress in reducing alcohol consumption and harm from record levels, not least due to the positive effects of minimum unit pricing of alcohol (MUP). Unfortunately, alcohol deaths have risen significantly since 2020, due to the effect of the pandemic on consumption by heavier drinkers combined with reduced access to services. Research suggests levels of harm will continue to rise for some time.

Scotland must urgently respond to this emergency by renewing its efforts to

implement evidence-based alcohol policies as well as ensuring access to high quality treatment and recovery support. We know the most effective ways to bring about change: reducing the affordability of alcohol, controlling its availability and restricting how it is marketed.

Such action will be opposed by global alcohol producers whose profits rely on people drinking above the low-risk guidelines. Evidence has shown they use their influence to undermine evidence, and obstruct, delay and weaken regulation, compromising public health goals. AFS, along with our colleagues in the NCD Alliance Scotland, will continue to make the case for public health policies that put people's human rights above industry profits. We will collectively advocate for and support the effective management of conflicts of interest in the development of public health policies.

What's New

We will work with individuals and communities to campaign for change and support people to share their lived experience with decision makers and the public.

We will take a human rights-based approach which empowers people to know and claim their rights.

We will work with partners across health-harming commodities to promote a coordinated approach to tackling non-communicable diseases.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



People

Every one of us is able to live a healthy and full life, free from alcohol harm



Communities

Our communities promote good health, uphold our human rights and are free from alcohol-fuelled inequality



Children and families

Our families are nurturing and thriving, free from the corrosive effect of alcohol on relationships

Our children are able to enjoy a happy and safe childhood, free from the negative effects of alcohol



Scotland

We are a flourishing and progressive country with an international reputation for using the most effective and cost-effective approaches to prevent and reduce alcohol harm

OUR APPROACH

The Most Effective Actions

The international evidence is clear these are the three best ways to prevent harm, which should form part of any alcohol policy.

Increase Price

Broadening support for retaining and optimising minimum unit price as well as for complementary tax increases at UK level

Reduce Availability

Increasing support for stronger controls on where, when and how alcohol is sold

Ensuring the effective implementation of licensing legislation by supporting licensing boards and forums to promote the licensing objectives

Restrict Marketing

Promoting regulation that reduces the level of exposure – particularly of children and young people and people struggling with alcohol-related issues – to alcohol marketing

A Human Rights Based Approach

We will use human rights standards to help ensure that people's rights are put at the very centre of alcohol related policy and practice. We will support people to know and claim their rights. We expect decision makers to meet their human rights obligations and to manage conflicts of interest in policy and practice and will hold them to account.

Building Advocacy Capability

Encouraging the development and implementation of effective rights-based alcohol policies at local, national and international level by identifying and sharing evidence and good practice

Supporting Community Advocacy

Supporting individuals and communities to communicate their lived experience of alcohol and to influence change



Understanding & Reducing Harm

We will analyse and communicate independent evidence on the scale and range of harms caused to individuals, families and communities by alcohol and on cost-effective ways to reduce it.

My Drinking

Helping people understand and make informed decisions about their drinking by facilitating access to the best independent information on the health risks and the impact on others

Harm to Others

Increasing understanding of the wide impact of others' drinking on children, families, colleagues, public services and the economy, and the best ways to reduce this

Improving identification of and support for those affected

Treatment & Care

Supporting local Alcohol & Drug Partnerships to reduce alcohol deaths



Sustainable AFS

We will ensure that AFS continues to be able to operate effectively.

Capacity and Capability

Developing and maintaining the necessary knowledge and skills in both board members and staff to deliver our priorities

Continuous Improvement

Using sound programme management practice and reflection to continuously improve our effectiveness

Good Governance

Providing good governance and sound management so we can continue to deliver effectively and efficiently

Funding

Ensuring financial sustainability by developing and implementing a fundraising strategy to diversify funding streams

OUR VALUES



Independent

We are a charity which promotes the public interest

We are transparent, and independent from government and from the alcohol industry



Rights-based

We are committed to ensuring that people's human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled



Collaborative

We are committed to working with others who share our Mission and Values, in order to achieve our Vision



Equitable & Fair

We are committed to reducing inequalities and to promoting positive outcomes for all



Respectful

We act professionally, and treat everyone with dignity and respect and expect the same in return



Evidence-based

We use the best available evidence and lived experience

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