

## What next for alcohol policy? Key recommendations from the 2013 UK independent strategy

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## Outline

- Background to the strategy
- Why is it needed?
- Recommendations
- Views of the public
- Next steps

## Background

- A one day meeting bringing together key members of the public health research and advocacy communities from across the UK was held in Stirling in October 2010

Recommendations were to:

- Prepare a strategic plan which would set the vision, long-term objectives and principal mechanisms of a campaign to reduce per capita alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm in the UK
- Organise a meeting of leading charities affected by alcohol consumption to investigate the possibility of supporting the preparation of the strategic plan.

## Background

- Strategy group convened and chaired by Professor Sir Ian Gilmore from the RCP and Alcohol Health Alliance
- Group met over two years
- Draft strategy shared with a range of organisations to secure support
- Published on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 and endorsed by more than 70 organisations

## Why is this strategy needed?

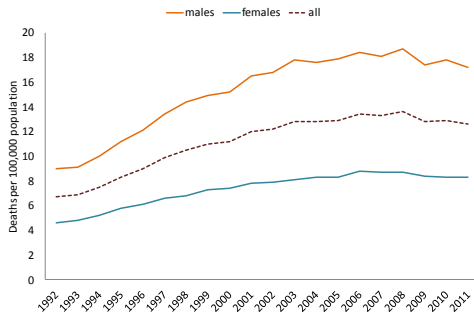
- Alcohol is an accepted and enjoyed part of life in the UK today
- However, it can cause considerable harm to the individual and those around them
- Up to a third of UK adults are drinking at harmful levels
- Almost half of all violent public crime is alcohol related, and it is linked to 40% of domestic violence cases.

## Health: Alcohol and Cancer

- Alcohol is one of the most well-established causes of cancer
- Alcohol increases the risk of head and neck cancers
- Alcohol also increases the risk of breast, liver and bowel cancer
- The risk isn't isolated to heavy drinkers

Source: Cancer Research UK

Alcohol-related deaths per 100,000 population in the UK, 1992-2011 (ONS)

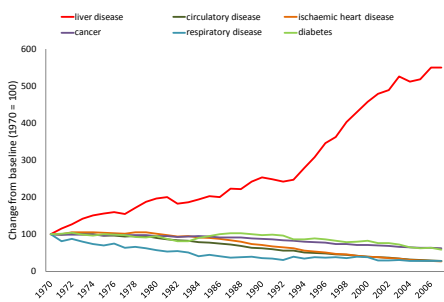


## Alcohol-related deaths in Northern Ireland

- In 2010, there were 284 alcohol related deaths registered in Northern Ireland, 191 male and 93 female.
- Between 1999 and 2010 the number of alcohol related deaths has steadily increased
- Between 2001 and 2009, 70% of alcohol related deaths were 'other alcohol related deaths' such as alcoholic liver disease and a further 27% were due to mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol use.
- Those living in the most deprived communities in Northern Ireland are around four times more likely to die from alcohol related mortality than those who live in the least deprived areas.

Source: HSC Public Health Agency, Health Intelligence Briefing, Alcohol use and alcohol related harm in Northern Ireland - April 2011

Deaths among people aged under 65 in the UK for major conditions, compared to 1970 (WHO)



## Alcohol-related Hospital Admissions

- In 2009/10 there were 3,475 admissions to acute hospitals in Northern Ireland with a primary alcohol related diagnosis.
- The number of alcohol related admissions increased between 2000/01 and 2009/10, with greater increases among females:
  - primary alcohol related diagnosis by 54% (females 68%, males 49%).
  - any alcohol related diagnosis by 61%, (females 68%, males 58%).

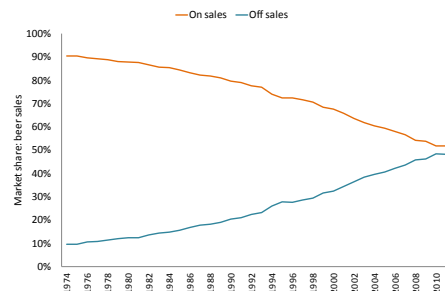
Source: HSC Public Health Agency, Health Intelligence Briefing, Alcohol use and alcohol related harm in Northern Ireland - April 2011

## What's changed? Price

- In Northern Ireland, alcohol was 66% more affordable in 2009 than in 1987, with off trade alcohol becoming much more affordable than on trade alcohol.
- Household purchases of alcoholic drinks rose by 5.5% in 2009.
- This reflects general reductions in price – overall in the UK alcohol is 45% more affordable today than it was in 1980.

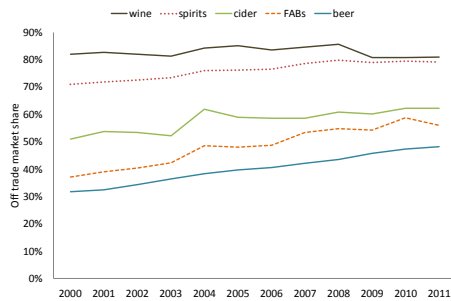
Source: HSC Public Health Agency, Health Intelligence Briefing, Alcohol use and alcohol related harm in Northern Ireland - April 2011

## What's changed? Place



Beer sales in Britain, 1974-2011 by sector market share (BBPA)

## What's changed: Place



Off-trade market share of alcohol sales in Britain 2000-2011 by drink type (BPA)

## Costs

- Recent estimates put the cost of alcohol to society at up to £55 billion in England
- In Northern Ireland, a 2008/09 estimate suggested that alcohol generates overall social costs of £679.8m per annum across the areas of healthcare (£122.2m), social work (£48.5m), fire and police services (£223.6m), courts and prisons (£83.8m), and the wider economy (£201.7m).

Source: DHSSPS (2010) Social Costs of Alcohol Misuse in Northern Ireland for 2008/09

## Health First Recommendations

- The strategy sets out 30 recommendations for action
- 10 of these were selected as particular priorities
- They are accompanied, at the back of the strategy, by an indication of current practice in each part of the UK mapped against each recommendation.

## Health First Recommendations

- A minimum price of at least 50p per unit of alcohol should be introduced for all alcohol sales
- At least one third of every alcohol product label should carry a health warning specified by an independent regulatory body.
- The sale of alcohol in shops should be restricted to specific times of day and in designated areas.
- The tax on every alcohol product should be proportionate to the volume of alcohol it contains and this taxation should increase with product strength in order to incentivise the development and sale of lower strength products.
- Licensing legislation should be comprehensively reviewed and licensing authorities given the power to tackle alcohol-related harm by controlling the total availability of alcohol under their jurisdiction.

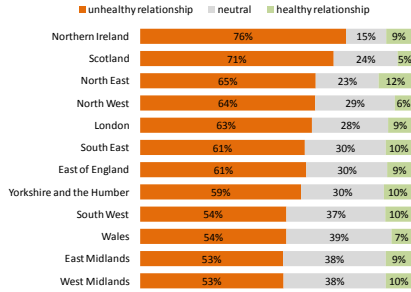
## Health First Recommendations

- All alcohol advertising and sponsorship should be prohibited. In the short term, alcohol advertising should only be permitted in newspapers and other adult press and only limited to factual information about the brand
- An independent body should be established to regulate alcohol promotion, including product and packaging design, in the interests of public health and community safety.
- The legal limit for blood alcohol concentration for drivers should be reduced to 50mg/100ml.
- All health and social care professionals should be trained to routinely provide early identification and brief alcohol advice to their clients.
- People who need support for alcohol problems should be routinely referred to specialist alcohol services for appropriate treatment.

## Public Opinion Survey

- We found public support for tackling the harm from alcohol in the UK.
- As part of the Strategy development, a national public opinion survey was conducted by YouGov in June 2012 including a sample of 2,075 adults recruited from a UK panel of 350,00 individuals.
- The results were weighted to ensure representation of the entire adult population in the UK.

### Assessment of our relationship with alcohol



### Harms

#### Alcohol affects (a great deal)

- Health: NI 58%, UK 50%
- Disorderly and anti-social behaviour: NI 72%, UK 65%
- Cost to the NHS: NI 65%, UK 59%
- Cost to policing: NI 60%, UK 53%

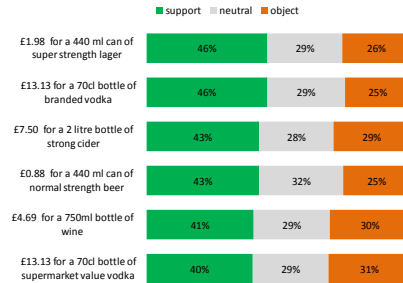
#### Alcohol causes harm to (a great deal)

- Children and families: NI 42%, UK 36%
- Society as a whole: NI 41%, UK 36%

### Price

- **44%** of those surveyed in NI thought alcohol in supermarkets was too cheap compared with **39%** across the UK.
- **87%** of those surveyed in NI had heard of MUP compared to **80%** across the UK.
- **37%** of those surveyed in NI thought that putting up the price of alcohol would encourage people to drink less compared to **30%** across the UK.
- **58%** of those surveyed in NI thought that the availability of cheap alcohol is harmful to society compared to **51%** across the UK

### Minimum Unit Pricing



Respondents' support for specific minimum prices for alcohol products based on a minimum unit price of 50p per unit of alcohol.

### Promotion & information

- **56%** of those surveyed in NI thought that there should be more restrictions on the way that alcohol is advertised compared to **49%** across the UK
- **72%** of those surveyed in NI thought it is not ok for children to be exposed to alcohol advertising compared to **62%** across the UK.
- **82%** of those surveyed in NI thought it is important to have public information campaigns to raise awareness of harms from alcohol compared to **67%** across the UK.
- **67%** of those surveyed in NI thought that alcohol products should have warning labels on them to warn people about the harms from alcohol compared to **57%** across the UK.

### Next steps

- The strategy calls for appropriate targets to be established by Westminster and each of the devolved governments
- A key current priority is to align policy on price including minimum unit pricing
- The strategy is also intended to inform and build on work in other countries and plans are under way to look at the implications of the recommendations overseas.