

To the Scotch Whisky Association: Stop fighting minimum pricing

It is now one year to the day when minimum unit pricing should have been introduced in Scotland. Yet still we wait for this vital public health policy, supported by the Scottish Parliament, to come into force. It has been delayed because the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) is fighting its implementation every step of the way. Why? Because they know it will work.

The SWA has mirrored the tactics of the tobacco industry in delaying life-saving legislation. They oppose any measure that might affect their sizeable profits, no matter the obvious benefits to people's health. By taking this legal action, they are undermining the united view of the Scottish Parliament, ignoring the democratic process and costing taxpayers thousands of pounds in legal bills.

Despite recent welcome improvements, alcohol is a huge health and social problem for Scotland. Getting rid of ultra-cheap alcohol through minimum pricing is a crucial first step in turning things round and one which will make a genuine, lasting difference to health, crime and society. Minimum pricing will cut alcohol-related hospital admissions and save lives. We cannot afford to delay any longer.

This is an appeal to the Scotch Whisky Association to immediately drop their legal challenge and bow to the will of the Scottish Parliament. It's the right thing to do.

Dr Evelyn Gillan, Chief Executive, Alcohol Focus Scotland

Dr Brian Keighley, Chair, BMA (Scotland)

Dr Peter Rice, Chair, Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP)

Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, Chair, Alcohol Health Alliance

Dr Mac Armstrong CB, Chair of Alcohol Focus Scotland and former Chief Medical Officer for Scotland

Christine Duncan, Chief Executive, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

Katherine Brown, Director, Institute of Alcohol Studies

Professor Mark Bellis, UK Faculty of Public Health

Dr Nick Sheron, University of Southampton

Professor Nick Heather, Emeritus Professor of Alcohol and Other Drug Studies, Northumbria University

Eric Appleby, Chief Executive, Alcohol Concern

Dr Gary Tanner, Consultant Psychologist (Addictions), NHS Lanarkshire

Colin Shevills, Director, Balance the North East Alcohol Office

Dr Jim McCambridge, Senior Lecturer in Behaviour Change, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Professor Linda Bauld, Director of the Institute of Social Marketing, University of Stirling and Deputy Director, UK Centre for Tobacco Control Studies

Andrew Langford, Chief Executive, British Liver Trust

Craig McNally, Senior Health Promotion Specialist (Alcohol & Drugs), NHS Highland

Catherine Chiang, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Dr Margaret Somerville, Director of Public Health and Health Policy, NHS Highland

Jackie Brock, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

Suzanne Costello, Chief Executive, Alcohol Action Ireland

Baroness Hollins, Chair, BMA UK Board of Science

