

# **Alcohol: Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP): Continuation and Future Pricing: Consultation**

September 2023

# Alcohol: Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP): Continuation and Future Pricing: Consultation

## Ministerial Foreword



There were 1,276 alcohol-specific deaths registered in Scotland in 2022, an increase of 2% on 2021. Every life lost was preventable and my deepest sympathy goes to all those affected by the loss of a loved one through alcohol.

Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) was introduced as part of our strategy to reduce alcohol related harm. The policy aim of MUP is to reduce health harms caused by alcohol consumption by setting a floor price below which alcohol cannot be sold. In particular, it targets a reduction in consumption of alcohol that is considered cheap, relative to its strength. It aims to reduce both the consumption of alcohol at population level and, in particular, among those who drink at hazardous and harmful levels. In doing so, it aims to reduce alcohol related health harms among hazardous and harmful drinkers and contribute to reducing harm at a whole population level.

MUP, as implemented in 2018, is subject to a sunset clause and will expire unless continued. We are reviewing its implementation and impact and considering whether it should continue. This consultation sets out the Scottish Government's proposals on MUP, based on the evidence around impacts to date, that the legislation should continue beyond 30 April 2024, and that the level of Minimum Unit Price should be 65 pence per unit.

Public Health Scotland's evaluation of MUP, published in 2023, has found that the evidence points to minimum unit pricing having a positive impact on health – it is estimated to have cut alcohol consumption, alcohol-attributable deaths and likely to have reduced hospital admissions compared to if the policy didn't exist. There was also no clear evidence of substantial negative impacts of the policy on the alcoholic drinks industry, or of social harms at the population level.

There were, however, consequences of the policy on dependent drinkers which we must address. MUP alone was not intended to address the needs of this group where alcohol treatment and care services are key. That's why, alongside MUP, last year £106.8 million was made available to Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships to support local and national treatment initiatives.

I do recognise that there is a balance to be struck, to ensure that we take steps to improve and support good population health whilst trying to minimise the potential impacts that has both on consumers and industry. This consultation is an opportunity for the Scottish Government to understand the views of respondents on the proposals set out as part of reaching a final decision on MUP. More detail on these considerations is set out in detail in the accompanying Interim Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) document. Your responses will help shape our next steps.

Elena Whitham MSP , Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy

## Summary

In 2012, the Scottish Parliament passed the Alcohol ([Minimum Pricing](#)) ([Scotland](#)) [Act 2012](#) (the 2012 Act) which allowed Scottish Ministers to introduce a system of minimum unit pricing for alcohol. Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) was first implemented on 1 May 2018, with the minimum price of alcohol set at 50 pence per unit (ppu). MUP was introduced to mitigate the significant health harms caused by alcohol consumption in Scotland.

The policy aim of MUP is to reduce health harms caused by alcohol consumption by setting a floor price below which alcohol cannot be sold. In particular, it targets a reduction in consumption of alcohol that is considered cheap, relative to its strength. It aims to reduce both the consumption of alcohol at population level and, in particular, among those who drink at hazardous and harmful levels. In doing so, it aims to reduce alcohol related health harms among hazardous and harmful drinkers<sup>1</sup>, and contribute to reducing harm at a whole population level.

People who drink at hazardous and harmful levels in lower socio-economic groups suffer greater harms than those who drink at these levels in higher socio-economic groups due to the impact of multiple drivers of health inequality. MUP is also intended to address alcohol related health inequalities by reducing consumption and therefore harm among hazardous and harmful drinkers as a whole, having a positive effect on health inequalities given the greater harms people in lower socio-economic groups experience in relation to alcohol.

The 2012 Act states that the MUP provisions will expire after they have been in place for 6 years (30 April 2024) unless the Scottish Ministers make new legislation to continue their effect<sup>2</sup>.

The Scottish Government is consulting on whether MUP should be continued as part of the range of policy measures in place to address alcohol related harm, and, in the event of its continuation, the level the minimum unit price should be set going forward.

An evaluation of MUP has been undertaken during its first 5 years, led by Public Health Scotland (PHS)<sup>3</sup>. PHS's Final Evaluation Report<sup>4</sup> was published on 27 June 2023, and concluded:

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<sup>1</sup> Hazardous drinking is a pattern of consumption of alcohol which increases someone's risk of harm commonly defined as drinking at a level of over 14 units per week (NICE 2010, SHeS 2020). Harmful drinking refers to a pattern of consumption which is likely to cause either physical or mental harm and is commonly defined as drinking over 35 units a week for women or 50 units for men (NICE 2010).

<sup>2</sup> [Alcohol \(Minimum Pricing\) \(Scotland\) Act 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Evaluation of minimum unit pricing \(MUP\) - Alcohol - Health topics - Public Health Scotland](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in Scotland: Final report \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](#)

“Overall, the evidence supports that MUP has had a positive impact on health outcomes, namely a reduction in alcohol-attributable deaths and hospital admissions, particularly in men and those living in the most deprived areas, and therefore contributes to addressing alcohol-related health inequalities. There was no clear evidence of substantial negative impacts on the alcoholic drinks industry, or of social harms at the population level.”<sup>5</sup>

Following this, the Scottish Government has produced a report on the operation and effect of MUP over the 5 years<sup>6</sup>.

Having considered MUP’s impact, as well as the views and experiences of individuals and groups with a wide range of perspectives, the Scottish Government is satisfied that there is a strong case to continue with MUP and are consulting on this proposal. More information about engagement that took place with stakeholders can be found in the [accompanying Interim Business and Regulation Impact Assessment \(BRIA\)](#).

On that basis, the Scottish Government proposes, subject to the outcome of this public consultation, laying the necessary legislation to ensure the effect of MUP continues after 30 April 2024. This would be done by Scottish Ministers laying Orders in Parliament by early 2024 to continue MUP beyond the initial six-year period.

The Scottish Government also proposes the level of minimum unit price is revised to 65ppu to provide a proportionate response to tackling alcohol harms. It strikes a reasonable balance between public health benefits against the effects of any intervention in the alcoholic drinks market and subsequent impact on consumers.

Consideration of the range of options available, including not continuing with MUP, are set out below.

The details of how the Scottish Government arrived at this preferred price for the purpose of consultation are set out in detail in the accompanying [Interim BRIA](#) at section 6.

The Scottish Government is conducting a public consultation to gather views from people, businesses, public bodies and interested parties on the proposal to continue the effect of the MUP legislation and, if continued, to set a new price of 65ppu of alcohol going forward. This consultation is being carried out in accordance with article 9 of the General Food Law Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002), which applies to these proposals.

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<sup>5</sup> The reduction in alcohol-attributable deaths and hospital admissions found as part of the evaluation are estimates

<sup>6</sup> [The report was laid before Parliament on 20 September 2023 and is available here.](#)

This paper provides some background information for people who wish to take part in the consultation.

### **What options were considered?**

This consultation sets out proposals on two aspects of MUP: whether or not to continue MUP and, if it continues, at what price the minimum unit price should be set in future.

### **Continuing or ceasing MUP**

The Scottish Government is consulting on whether it should continue the MUP scheme beyond the current date it expires on 30 April 2024.

[PHS published an evaluation of MUP](#) which found that, in relation to the core policy aims:

- The policy has had a positive impact on health outcomes, including addressing alcohol-related health inequalities.
- MUP was associated with an estimated 13.4% reduction in deaths wholly attributable to alcohol, compared to what might have happened if MUP had not been in place. This was estimated to be equivalent to an average of 156 deaths averted by MUP per year over the study period (May 2018-December 2020).
- Overall, it is likely that MUP has reduced wholly attributable hospital admissions in Scotland compared to what would have happened in the absence of MUP.
- There was strong and consistent evidence of a reduction in population-level alcohol consumption following MUP implementation, as measured by retail sales. Total retail sales of alcohol reduced by 3% driven entirely by a reduction in sales through the off-trade (supermarkets and other shops).
- Evidence from alcohol purchasing data suggests that the greatest reductions in alcohol purchases were among those households purchasing the most alcohol prior to MUP implementation, and the majority of households were not affected, meaning the policy was well targeted at people who drink at hazardous and harmful levels.
- The fact that MUP is estimated to have decreased alcohol-attributable deaths and hospital admissions related to chronic conditions suggests that MUP has, by definition, reduced consumption in those that drink at hazardous and harmful levels;
- The estimated reductions in deaths and hospital admissions were largest among men and among those living in the 40% most deprived areas in Scotland – indicating that MUP contributed to addressing alcohol-related health inequalities.

The evaluation did not find any consistent evidence that MUP impacted other alcohol-related health outcomes such as ambulance callouts, emergency department

attendances and prescribing of medication for alcohol dependence. There was also no consistent evidence of either positive or negative impacts on social outcomes, such as alcohol-related crime or illicit drug use at a population level.

While the evaluation did find some indication of a small estimated increase in deaths wholly attributable to alcohol consumption from acute causes, such as alcohol intoxication, there was considerable uncertainty around this finding, in part due to the relatively small number of deaths due to acute causes. There was also some evidence of an estimated increase in hospital admissions wholly attributable to alcohol consumption due to acute causes, although these findings were less certain than the estimated reductions in hospital admissions due to chronic conditions. The evaluation found overall, it is likely that MUP has reduced hospital admissions wholly attributable to alcohol consumption in Scotland, compared to what would have happened in the absence of MUP.

The evaluation noted that there was limited evidence to suggest MUP was effective in reducing consumption for people with alcohol dependence. There was also evidence that some people with established alcohol dependence with limited financial or social support, may have experienced harm, such as withdrawal, reduced expenditure on food or increased intoxication possibly from switching to spirits as a consequence of MUP. The evaluation noted, however, that people with alcohol dependence are a particular subgroup of those who drink at harmful levels and have specific needs. People with alcohol dependence need timely and evidence-based treatment and wider support that addresses the root cause of their dependence.

The Scottish Government acknowledge whilst there is limited evidence that MUP was effective in reducing alcohol consumption for people with alcohol dependence it's important to note that MUP is a whole population policy with a particular focus on hazardous and harmful drinkers. People with alcohol dependency fall within the highest consumption end as a subset of the harmful drinking category. Given the clinical needs of this particular group, MUP alone was not intended as a key intervention to address the needs of this group – treatment and care services are critical for this group. Increased investment from the national mission on tackling drug-related deaths is being used by Alcohol and Drug Partnerships across Scotland to support people facing problems because of both alcohol and drug use. Further details on the Scottish Government's alcohol treatment priorities can be found in Annex C. This includes the review into Alcohol Brief Interventions and working with the UK Government on developing new UK-wide clinical guidelines for alcohol treatment.

The evaluation also found no clear evidence overall of substantial negative impacts on the alcoholic drinks industry as a whole in Scotland, although the evidence was more mixed around the impacts to specific types of business. Little evidence was

found of MUP having had an impact on key business performance metrics of number of enterprises and business units; employment and turnover. Case studies with retailers and producers of alcoholic drinks, conducted after implementation as part of the evaluation, found that participants had come to consider MUP as business as usual, but were concerned that increasing the minimum price would cause disruption, and about the potential for new policies such as Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) to interact with MUP. Roundtable events with producers, retailers and representatives on on-trade and off-trade bodies in July 2023 found repeated themes by participants of MUP now being considered 'business-as-usual' for the sector.

The evaluation also sought to address whether some businesses were more affected positively or negatively than others. It found the decline in alcohol consumption following MUP was driven particularly by reduction in the sale of alcoholic drinks in the categories most affected by MUP price increases. The products that experienced the largest price increase, namely cider, perry and own-brand spirits, had the largest fall in sales. Large retailers did not report any change in revenue or profits due to MUP, but convenience stores were more likely to have noted a decrease in revenue and profits, particularly if they previously relied on high-strength; low-cost alcohol products.

The Scottish Government has considered the evidence from the evaluation, including the impacts on business and industry and the fact that the evidence base indicates MUP has achieved and is continuing to achieve its core policy objective of reducing alcohol-related health harms, in particular amongst harmful and hazardous drinkers.

On balance, the Scottish Government considers that MUP delivers public health benefits proportionate to the potential impacts of the policy on business, industry and the alcoholic drinks market. The Scottish Government is therefore proposing that MUP is continued beyond 30 April 2024.

### **Preferred Minimum Unit Price**

The Scottish Government are also consulting on the appropriate level for a minimum unit price going forward, in the event of MUP continuing as part of the range of policy actions to reduce alcohol related harm. The Scottish Government has assessed a range of options, summarised below. For the purpose of presenting the range of options, these are set out in 5p bandings. It would, however, be open to Ministers to set a price outwith those set out below.

The Interim BRIA published alongside this consultation includes information about the modelling Scottish Government commissioned the University of Sheffield Alcohol

Research Group to undertake which informed our review<sup>7</sup>. SARG is a world-leading centre for research on alcohol harms. Their work is widely used by policymakers, practitioners, and the general public. Further detailed information on the advantages and disadvantages of each price, and explanation of the Scottish Government's proposals can be found in the Interim BRIA. Below is a summary of the different price options and the conclusion Scottish Government has reached: to propose a new level of 65ppu.

### **Lowering the minimum unit price below 50 pence per unit**

Lowering the minimum unit price threshold is estimated to increase alcohol consumption compared to the control of 50ppu in 2019 prices<sup>8</sup>, and increase alcohol related health harm, with the greatest increases in the most deprived groups. Whilst MUP sets a minimum level for prices, in theory, prices at or just above 50ppu would not need to change. It is likely, however, that some of those products which are constrained by the current 50ppu MUP level would decrease to the new lower level. Products that were de-listed for the Scottish market at a minimum unit price of 50ppu might be reintroduced at a price lower than 50ppu.

The impact of lowering the minimum unit price below 50 pence per unit is counter to the intention of the policy to reduce alcohol related harm and contribute to reductions in alcohol related health inequalities. This option would be counter to the Scottish Government's ambition to reduce alcohol related harm and health impacts and is, therefore, not being proposed.

Further information used to come to this conclusion can be found in the Interim BRIA.

### **50 pence per unit**

There is evidence from the PHS evaluation that 50ppu has been an effective price. However, its effectiveness will reduce as a result of the effects of inflation. The PHS evaluation final report referred to this as a consideration for policymakers: the evaluation of MUP was conducted at 50ppu and, if MUP continues, it is likely benefits realised will only be maintained at similar levels if the value of MUP is maintained relative to the prices of other products. The report also mentions that increasing the level of MUP would potentially increase the positive impact on consumption and harms, but that any negative or harmful impacts might also increase. Maintaining MUP at its current level of 50ppu in cash terms is estimated to increase alcohol consumption and hence alcohol harms, because alcohol would become more affordable relative to other products due to inflation. This is not

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<sup>7</sup> [Sheffield Alcohol Research Group - Scottish MUP Report 2023](#)

<sup>8</sup> The Sheffield University model used 2019 as the baseline year for their modelling as well as 50ppu. All other price levels were then compared against this "control" to show changes. [Sheffield Alcohol Research Group - Scottish MUP Report 2023](#)



consistent with our policy aim of reducing alcohol-related harm and is therefore not being proposed.

Further information used to come to this conclusion can be found in the Interim BRIA.

### **55 pence per unit**

Similarly to maintaining the 50ppu rate, increasing the rate of the minimum unit price to 55ppu, whilst higher than the current rate, would be unlikely to maintain the value of MUP against inflation. Over time this will likely diminish the level of public health benefit that is expected to be gained from MUP as a result of its continuation as an intervention.

There are other factors that need to be taken into account when setting a new price, but how the price compares with inflation is a significant element in maintaining the effectiveness of MUP.

Further information used to come to this conclusion can be found in the Interim BRIA.

### **60 pence per unit**

This option is estimated to be closest to maintaining the current benefits of the policy and would uprate the minimum unit price in line with the most commonly used measure of inflation<sup>9</sup>. It would likely result in a small increase in the share of products captured by MUP compared to when it was first introduced, and therefore might increase the potential for adverse impacts to businesses. At the time the Scottish Government originally intended to introduce a minimum unit price in 2012, the proportion of the off-trade market that a 50ppu would impact was 60%. In the year prior to MUP being implemented (2017), 45% of alcohol sold in the off-trade market in Scotland was below 50ppu.<sup>10</sup> 60ppu (estimated at 2023 prices) would impact on 52% of the off-trade market.<sup>11</sup>

The principal advantage of a preferred price of 60ppu is it is estimated to achieve the health benefits intended by the policy (for example, of mortality and hospitalisations averted and years of life lost reduced) on a broadly comparable level to when MUP was first introduced in 2018.

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<sup>9</sup> Consumer Prices Index including Housing Costs, though the extent to which any new MUP level raise would be broadly in line with inflation would depend on length of time of any implementation period and ongoing inflation up to that point.

<sup>10</sup> 45% of sales below 50ppu in 2017 from latest MESAS Report. Revised from 47% published in the 2018 [Monitoring and Evaluating Scotlands Alcohol Strategy \(MESAS\), 2018 \(healthscotland.scot\)](#), page 8

<sup>11</sup> Scottish Government analysis of Circana Ltd data

On balance, it is considered necessary to capture a slightly higher share of the market given the importance of the policy aims, and the worsening situation of overall population health and inequalities in Scotland, and alcohol related health harm as measured by mortality trends in recent years.

The principal disadvantage to 60ppu is that it is not estimated to achieve the health benefits in terms of mortality, hospitalisations and years of life lost as 65ppu (or higher thresholds).

Given the level of alcohol related harms in Scotland, Scottish Ministers are seeking a MUP level which will result in additional public health benefits compared to the original level. This option is therefore not proposed.

Further information used to come to this conclusion can be found in the Interim BRIA.

### **65 pence per unit**

65ppu provides even greater positive health benefits than 60ppu, with modelling showing it could avert an additional 60 deaths in the first year and 774 fewer hospital admissions compared to 60ppu. The number of hazardous drinkers is estimated to fall by 15,742 and the number of harmful drinkers fall by 11,403, compared to 60ppu. The health benefits would be experienced most acutely by those in the most deprived groups of the population on average, with 22 fewer deaths in the most deprived SIMD quintile and 6 fewer deaths in the least deprived SIMD quintile in year one of the policy compared to 60ppu.

However, it would have an increased impact on industry and market interference. This impact, however, must be considered within the context of rising alcohol harms as latest alcohol-specific deaths show there has been an increase of 2% in 2022.

As Scottish Ministers are seeking a level which will derive greater benefits than the current policy, raising the level to 65ppu is proposed as the preferred position on price for the purposes of this consultation. This strikes an appropriate balance of achieving increased health benefits while minimising unnecessary interference in the market.

Further information used to come to this conclusion can be found in the Interim BRIA.

### **Above 65 pence per unit**

Whilst a higher price per unit would further reduce alcohol harms, the Scottish Government recognises that the impact this would have on consumers and the alcoholic drinks industry would be greater than at lower rates.

Increasing the minimum unit price to 70, 75 or 80ppu would represent a considerable increase compared to inflation and impact on up to 80% of the market, including

some premium products. This could be seen as a more significant distortion to the market.

Minimum unit prices above 65ppu are therefore not being proposed on the basis of the impact it could have on the alcohol industry and alcohol market.

It is considered that levels above 65ppu are not preferred in relation to the Scottish Government's view of balancing the harms caused by intervening with the public health benefit of doing so.

Further information used to come to this conclusion can be found in the Interim BRIA.

## **Conclusion**

Ensuring MUP continues to deliver a significant public health benefit is central to the Scottish Government's policy. The Scottish Government proposes setting a price of 65ppu, which would not only maintain the value of the unit price relative to other products, goods and wages but would likely achieve greater public health benefits than have been seen at 50ppu. The Scottish Government is therefore proposing continuing MUP and setting the minimum unit price at 65ppu.

## Impact of Minimum Unit Prices on alcohol prices

MUP does not increase the price of all alcoholic drinks – it is the price of alcoholic drinks that are currently sold at less than 65 ppu that would have to rise if a new increased price at that level is introduced. The table below gives some examples of the lowest possible price that alcohol could be sold for if a Minimum Unit Price of 65 pence comes into effect.

Product type	Strength: Alcohol By Volume (ABV) <sup>12</sup>	Volume (millilitres)	65 ppu Minimum price i.e. cannot be sold for less than this price
Scotch whisky	40%	700ml bottle	£18.20
Vodka/ gin	37.5%	700ml bottle	£17.07
Vodka/ gin	37.5%	1000ml bottle	£24.38
Wine	12%	750ml bottle	£5.85
Wine	13%	750ml bottle	£6.34
Beer	5%	4x440ml cans	£5.72
Beer	4%	330ml bottle	£0.86
Lager	4%	4x440ml cans	£4.58
Lager	4.6%	660ml bottle	£1.98
Cider	4.5%	4x440ml cans	£5.15
Cider	7.5%	1000ml bottle	£4.88

If an alcoholic drink is already selling at a price which is higher than its minimum price, there will be no need for that price to change. For example, the minimum price for a 700ml bottle of whisky with an ABV of 40% will be £18.20 at 65ppu. In this example, if a bottle of 40% ABV whisky is already priced at £20 then the price won't have to change after the preferred price is introduced.

### Who will be affected?

The PHS evaluation found that MUP at 50ppu led to a reduction in consumption across the population, with the greatest reductions observed in households that purchased the most alcohol, with very little or no impact on those purchasing at lower levels. The analysis of alcohol sales data found that the greatest reductions were consistently reported for cider and spirits compared to other types of alcohol.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> ABV is how the strength of an alcoholic drink is measured: the number stated as a % indicates the proportion of the alcoholic drink that is pure alcohol (ethanol).

<sup>13</sup> [Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in Scotland: Final report \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](https://publichealthscotland.scot) p.45

In 2021, the Scottish population bought enough alcohol for everyone aged over 16 to drink 18.1 units every week (9.4 litres of pure alcohol in a year<sup>14</sup>). This is equivalent to around 36 bottles of spirits, or around 90 bottles of wine, per adult each year.

Positive impacts such as reduced alcohol-related harm would impact individuals and communities, including people who currently consume alcohol at levels considered to be harmful or hazardous. Setting a new minimum unit price would impact all people who purchase alcohol, however the pricing impact would likely be greatest on people who purchase (and, in many cases, consume) larger quantities of alcohol. The impact on people purchasing and consuming alcohol within the Chief Medical Officers' recommended guidelines is anticipated to continue to be small.<sup>15</sup>

There is a risk that people with alcohol dependence may be negatively impacted by an increase in MUP because the increased price of alcohol that is cheap relative to strength is likely to increase the cost for them to maintain their current levels of consumption. Scottish Government wider policy on alcohol harm treatment aims to support those with alcohol dependence to reduce their levels of consumption, given the risk it poses to health. We will liaise with alcohol treatment services in advance of any change. Further information about how the Scottish Government is working to improve access to alcohol treatment is outlined in Annex C.

There would be impacts on businesses from the continuation, or the increase, of the price per unit. This would be as a result of the price of some products rising to meet a new minimum unit price, which may reduce consumer demand, but would increase the sale price of the product. This includes off-sales (retailers such as supermarkets, convenience stores, off licences) and producers. The PHS evaluation suggested that there was no consistent evidence that MUP had had a positive or negative impact on the alcoholic drinks industry as a whole.

### **How do you work out what the Minimum Unit Price is?**

If Minimum Unit Pricing is continued, it will continue to apply to the price of all alcoholic drinks in Scotland. All licensed premises in Scotland will have to continue to ensure that alcoholic drinks are not sold below their minimum price according to the units contained in each drink.

The minimum price for an alcoholic drink is calculated as follows:

- price per unit of alcohol (£) x strength of alcoholic drink (ABV) x volume of alcoholic drink in litres<sup>16</sup>

For example using the format from the original policy notes for the 2012 Act<sup>17</sup>:

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<sup>14</sup> [Monitoring and Evaluating Scotlands Alcohol Strategy \(MESAS\), 2022 \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](#), page 4

<sup>15</sup> [Sheffield Alcohol Research Group - Scottish MUP Report 2023](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Information for retailers - mygov.scot](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Alcohol \(Minimum Pricing\) \(Scotland\) Act 2012 - Explanatory Notes \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

A standard size (700ml) bottle of spirits with an ABV of 37.5% would have a minimum price of:

- $0.65 \times 37.5/100 \times 0.7 \times 100 = \text{£}15.75$

A standard size (750ml) bottle of wine with an ABV of 12.5% would have a minimum price of:

- $0.65 \times 12.5/100 \times 0.75 \times 100 = \text{£}5.63$

### **What effect would an increased minimum unit price have?**

At 50ppu, the PHS evaluation found strong evidence that MUP was associated with an estimated 13.4% reduction in deaths that were directly caused by alcohol consumption, and an estimated 4.1% non-significant reduction in hospital admissions that were directly caused by alcohol consumption, relative to England. These estimated reductions were largely made up of reductions in deaths and hospitalisations due to chronic alcohol-attributable conditions<sup>18</sup> (e.g. alcoholic liver disease). Increasing the minimum unit price to 65ppu is estimated to achieve greater levels of benefits to those that the evaluation found.<sup>19</sup>

One study from the PHS evaluation considered data from over six years pre-MUP, and over two and a half years of MUP implementation. The Scottish Government is aware that for some illnesses that are associated with drinking alcohol, it will take a long time to see the full benefit of drinking less. It may take 20 years for all the benefits of the policy to be realised<sup>20</sup>.

Further details are in the [Interim BRIA](#).

If MUP continues and the price is increased, the unit price will be kept under review to ensure it remains effective and proportionate.

As set out in the Interim BRIA it is the Scottish Government's assessment that the alcohol industry is likely to be impacted by the proposal to continue MUP and increase the minimum unit price. This impact is an accepted consequence of the decision to pursue the public health benefits associated with the intervention.

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<sup>18</sup> A chronic condition is one that develops slowly and may worsen over time. A chronic alcohol-attributable condition is one that develops due to long-term alcohol consumption, such as alcoholic liver disease.

<sup>19</sup> [Sheffield Alcohol Research Group - Scottish MUP Report 2023](#)

<sup>20</sup> [The temporal relationship between per capita alcohol consumption and harm: A systematic review of time lag specifications in aggregate time series analyses \(whiterose.ac.uk\)](#)

**Consultation:**

1. Do you think Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) should continue?

Yes

No

2. If MUP continues, do you agree with the proposed Minimum Unit Price of 65 pence?

Yes

No

3. We invite comments on:

- the Scottish Ministers' proposal to continue MUP, and
- the proposed Minimum Unit Price of 65 pence.

## **Annex A**

### **Responding to this Consultation**

We are inviting responses to this consultation by 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023. This public consultation follows targeted engagement with stakeholders in both 2022 and 2023. In order to allow Scottish Ministers an appropriate length of time to reflect on the findings of this consultation it is necessary to have a nine week consultation. This will also ensure there is enough time, if legislation is brought forward, to allow for the required period of Parliamentary scrutiny before the sunset clause takes effect, on 30 April 2024.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation platform, Citizen Space. You view and respond to this consultation online [here](#). You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

### **Handling your response**

When using Citizen Space (<https://consult.gov.scot/population-health/review-of-the-minimum-unit-pricing-and-continuation>) you will be directed to the Respondent Information Form. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be published.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

### **Next steps in the process**

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use Citizen Space to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence as part of policy consideration. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so.



## **Comments and complaints**

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to [Minimumpricingconsultation@gov.scot](mailto:Minimumpricingconsultation@gov.scot)

## **Scottish Government consultation process**

Consultation is an essential part of the policy making process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Consultations may involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as public meetings, focus groups, or other online methods such as Dialogue (<https://www.ideas.gov.scot> ).

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

## Annex B

### Respondent Information Form

Improving Scotland's Health:  
Minimum Unit Pricing of Alcohol – Consultation Document

#### RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

**Please Note** this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the type of organisation for which you are providing a response.

Alcohol Industry Representative body

Alcohol Retail Representative body

Producer

Retailer – off-trade

Retailer – on-trade

Public Sector Health Organisation

Third Sector Health Organisation

Local Government body

If other, please share the type of organisation in the box provided

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
- No

## Consultation

1. Do you think Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) should continue?

Yes

No

2. If MUP continues, do you agree with the proposed Minimum Unit Price of 65 pence?

Yes

No

3. We invite comments on:

- the Scottish Ministers' proposal to continue MUP, and
- the proposed Minimum Unit Price of 65 pence.

Accompanying documents:

[Alcohol \(Minimum Pricing\) \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#)

[Alcohol \(Minimum Pricing\) \(Scotland\) Act 2012: Report on the operation and effect of the minimum pricing provisions 2018 – 2023](#)

[Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in Scotland: A synthesis of the evidence](#)

[Interim Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment \(BRIA\)](#)

## Annex C

### What else are the Scottish Government doing to reduce alcohol harms?

Minimum unit pricing is included within the [Alcohol Framework: Preventing Harm](#), which was launched in November 2018 and follows the recommended international evidence-based approach to reducing alcohol harms as set out in the WHO Global Action Plan<sup>21</sup>. The Framework contains [20 wide-ranging actions](#).

Also launched in November 2018, [Rights, Respect, and Recovery \(RRR\)](#) is the Government's alcohol and drug treatment strategy, which aims to improve health by preventing and reducing alcohol and drug use, harm and related deaths.

A 2021 monitoring [report](#) reviewed the delivery and impact of RRR since its launch and reported on a series of indicators related to the chapters of RRR. It describes policy interventions that have been made during this time, and highlights areas of improvement and gaps in knowledge. An [indicators dashboard](#) was also developed to sit alongside the report, where users can interact with the indicators used within the report online.

The Scottish Government considers a range of activities to support this including:

- Supporting the Public Health Scotland (PHS) review of Alcohol Brief Interventions
- Working towards a set of alcohol treatment standards and targets
- Working with the UK Government over the upcoming consultation on Alcohol Treatment Guidelines.
- Providing guidance and oversight on the improvement of alcohol treatment data, which will include a key role in the review of treatment data. This includes Drug and Alcohol Information System (DAISy<sup>22</sup>) surveillance data and the PHS surveillance system.
- Lead on the analysis of the impact COVID-19 has had on alcohol treatment and what steps need to be taken to reduce waiting times etc.
- Engaging widely with influential senior stakeholders, including in the public, private and third sectors, academics and Public Health Scotland in particular to ensure policy delivery is coordinated and effective.
- Working in partnership with the Simon Community Scotland to pilot and evaluate a Managed Alcohol Programme in Glasgow.

Further information can be found on the Alcohol and Drug pages on the [Scottish Government website](#).

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<sup>21</sup> [Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity](#), published December 2022 (chapter 16)

<sup>22</sup> [Drug and Alcohol Information System \(DAISy\) - Data and intelligence - Substance use - Our areas of work - Public Health Scotland](#), DAISy is a national database that holds data on drug and alcohol across Scotland delivering specialist interventions.



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The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83521-376-6 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, September 2023

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS1358462 (09/23)

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