



A Meeting of the Forum will be held via MS Teams
on

Wednesday 3 June 2026 at 16.00hrs

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest – Members should declare any interests they have in any business on the agenda, or any conflicts of interests arising, and decide if they should withdraw from dealing with any item of business
3. Order of Business
4. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
5. Confirm Draft Minutes of Licensing Forum Meeting held on 4 March 2026 (herewith)
6. Minutes of Licensing Board – For Information Only
 - a) [13 February 2026](#)
 - b) [13 March 2026](#)
 - c) [10 April 2026](#)
7. Updates:
 - a) Chair Update
 - b) Police Update
 - c) Other Updates
8. Workplan Updates and Current Workplan (herewith)
9. Alcohol Focus Scotland
 - a) E-Focus February 2026 (herewith)
 - b) E-Focus March 2026 (herewith)
 - c) E-Focus April 2026 (herewith)
10. Licensing Policy Q&A – LSO
11. Membership and Recruitment

NEXT MEETING – 2 September 2026

FORUM OBJECTIVES

- (a) To keep under review the operation of the 2005 Act in West Lothian and in particular, the exercise by the West Lothian Licensing Board of its functions under the Act.**
- (b) To give such advice and to make such recommendations to the Board in relation to those matters as the Forum considers appropriate.**

For further information contact Anastasia Dragona 01506 281601

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MINUTE of MEETING of WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL LICENSING FORUM held within MS TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2026

Present and Apologies

First Name	Surname	Category	
Jim	Carlin	Local Resident	Absent
Helen	Davis	WL Youth Action Project	Absent
Mike	Duncan	WL CHCP	Absent
Douglas	Frood	LSO	Present
Lisa	Moore	Education	Present
Laura	Dougall	NHS Public Health	Apologies
Mark	Vance	Social Work/Health	Present
Arun	Randev	Trade	Apologies
Nicola	Hughes	Housing	Apologies
Donna	Pearey	Police Scotland	Present
Donald	Stavert	Local Resident	Present

Anastasia	Dragona	Clerk	Present
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1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Douglas Frood was elected as temporary Chair for this meeting. The election of Chair and Vice Chair for the year was to be carried forward to the next meeting.

3. LICENSING FORUM MINUTES

The Forum approved the minutes of its meetings held on 3 December 2025.

4. MINUTES OF LICENSING BOARD

The Forum noted the Licensing Board minutes of 10 October 2025 and 15 January 2026.

5. UPDATES

Chair Update – (See also agenda item 10 – Licensing Policy Q&A.) The Chair advised that arrangements for the upcoming World Cup were at the forefront of considerations for the licensing team and Licensing Board. The licensing approach for West Lothian was yet to be finalised and would be communicated via the press in due course. In response to a question, the

Chair advised that considerations would include timings of games.

The meeting became inquorate at this point and therefore did not proceed any further.



WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

WORKPLAN – June 2026

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</u>	<u>TIMESCALE</u>	<u>PROGRESS TO DATE</u>
Election of Chair and Vice Chair	All	June 2026	Carried forward from March meeting
Chair's Update	Chair	June 2026	Standing item
Police Scotland Update	Police Scotland	June 2026	Standing item
Other Updates	Members as required	June 2026	Standing Item
Licensing Policy Q&A	LSO	June 2026	Standing item
Formulation of a Workplan	All	June 2026	Ongoing
Membership & Recruitment	All	June 2026	Standing Item
Chair's Update	Chair	September 2026	Standing item

Police Scotland Update	Police Scotland	September 2026	Standing item
Other Updates	Members as required	September 2026	Standing Item
Licensing Policy Q&A	LSO	September 2026	Standing item
Formulation of a Workplan	All	September 2026	Ongoing
Membership & Recruitment	All	September 2026	Standing Item
Chair's Update	Chair	December 2026	Standing item
Police Scotland Update	Police Scotland	December 2026	Standing item
Other Updates	Members as required	December 2026	Standing Item
Licensing Policy Q&A	LSO	December 2026	Standing item
Formulation of a Workplan	All	December 2026	Ongoing
Membership & Recruitment	All	December 2026	Standing Item
Timetable of Meetings 2027	All	December 2026	Annually in December

Dragona, Anastasia

From: Alcohol Focus Scotland <enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk>
Sent: 26 February 2026 12:30
To: Dragona, Anastasia
Subject: Alcohol Focus Scotland latest - February 2026



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- Alcohol exposure pre birth increases risk of problematic use in adulthood
- Workbook for staff of licensed premises
- Dignity and choice - ACUK
- Big Alcohol in the Global South - film screening (online registration)



AFS Comment on the new PHS 10 Year Health Strategy

Public Health Scotland has published its new 10-year health strategy for Scotland, **Together We Can**. Alcohol Focus Scotland welcomes the strategy, particularly its recognition of the scale of alcohol harm in Scotland and its

strong focus on prevention and health equity.

We are encouraged by the strategy's commitment to policies that reduce exposure to harmful products by tackling accessibility, affordability, availability, price and promotions, alongside its clear recognition of commercial determinants as a major influence on population health.

The emphasis on protecting children is especially welcome and aligns closely with our **Alcohol-Free Childhood campaign**, which makes clear that alcohol marketing has no place in childhood and that children have the right to play, learn and socialise in environments that are healthy, safe and free from alcohol marketing.

Following Public Health Scotland's report last year showing a **40% reduction in people accessing alcohol treatment** over the past decade, it is positive that the strategy's 2035 vision includes a clear commitment to fair access and faster care.

However, we'd like to have seen greater ambition to reduce alcohol deaths by 2035, comparable to the stated aim of halving obesity and creating a smoke free generation. Simply targeting a lower alcohol death rate within 10 years, whilst positive, falls far short of international targets.

[Read more](#)



Study reveals insidious impact of alcohol marketing on young people

A University of Stirling **study** has laid bare the insidious impact of alcohol sponsorship of major sporting events on young people in Scotland. It comes ahead of the men's Six Nations Championship and FIFA World Cup

2026, major tournaments which are both sponsored by multinational alcohol companies.

The research reveals that young people aged 11 to 17 are unable to distinguish between non-alcoholic products and traditional alcoholic beverages when these are promoted through sports sponsorship.

Researchers have raised concerns about sports sponsorship strategies such as alibi marketing (using brand-associated slogans, colours, or fonts in place of explicit brand names) and promoting alcohol-free and low-alcohol variants of core brands to increase exposure to alcohol brands (which is known by the industry as NoLo marketing).

One young person who participated in the study described the tactics as “sneaky”, while another participant said it “just feels wrong”.

The authors of the study say the current system of self-regulation for alcohol advertising in the UK is insufficient to limit brand exposure among young people, and they have called for stricter regulation of indirect marketing strategies to better protect young people and support public health objectives.

Alcohol consumption among young people remains a global public health concern, according to a recent [World Health Organization report](#), however young people are regularly exposed to alcohol marketing across multiple channels, including television, digital platforms, social media, sponsorships, and product placements.

Dr Richard Purves, from The Institute for Social Marketing and Health ([ISMH](#)) at the University of Stirling, who led the study, said: “Alcohol branding of major sporting events isn’t just background noise – it’s shaping young people’s attitudes and expectations from an early age in a way that parents and policymakers don’t always see.

“Our findings show that young people are growing up surrounded by alcohol branding, particularly through sport, and this repeated exposure normalises alcohol use long before the legal drinking age.

“Even in countries where advertising restrictions exist, indirect tactics like alibi branding and core-branded alcohol-free and low-alcohol sponsorships allow alcohol brands to remain highly visible.

“Without stronger regulation, these strategies risk undermining efforts to protect young people from alcohol-related harm.”



Alcohol Deaths in Northern Ireland at record high

New figures from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency show that alcohol-specific deaths reached a record high in 2024, with 397 people dying from causes wholly attributable to alcohol. This represents a sharp rise over the past decade and the highest rate since records began.

While deaths remain highest among people aged 45–64, there are growing concerns about increasing numbers of younger adults dying, highlighting the impact of high levels of consumption earlier in life. Each of these deaths represents a preventable tragic early loss of life with longer impacts for families and communities.

The data also show stark inequalities, with death rates significantly higher in the most deprived areas. With alcohol deaths now at unprecedented levels, the figures underline the urgent need for stronger population-level measures and improved access to support to prevent further loss of life.



UPDATE

AFS joins health leaders call for minimum unit pricing after record alcohol deaths in Northern Ireland

Health leaders, including Alcohol Focus Scotland, **have written** to the First and Deputy First Ministers calling for urgent action after alcohol-specific deaths in Northern Ireland reached their highest level on record.

The Alcohol Health Alliance (AHA), an alliance of more than 60 organisations including medical Royal Colleges, treatment providers and health charities, has written to Ministers expressing “deep concern” at the latest statistics, calling for the urgent introduction of minimum unit pricing (MUP) in Northern Ireland.

The group said the latest figures show the need for decisive, evidence-based action to prevent further avoidable deaths.

New data published on 11 February 2026 by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency show that 397 alcohol-specific deaths were registered in 2024 — the highest number ever recorded. Over the past decade, alcohol-specific deaths in Northern Ireland have risen by more than 80%.

The figures also highlight stark inequalities, with alcohol-specific deaths in the most deprived areas almost four times higher than in the least deprived areas between 2020 and 2024.

In its letter, the AHA — alongside signatories including Cancer Research UK, Royal College of Psychiatrists NI and the British Medical Association — urges Ministers to introduce minimum unit pricing (MUP) in Northern Ireland.

The AHA warns that, in the upcoming Office of National Statistics report on UK alcohol deaths, Northern Ireland's alcohol-specific mortality rate has now overtaken Scotland. Twenty years ago, Northern Ireland's rate was around only half that of Scotland. Since then, Scotland has introduced several evidence-based policies to reduce harm, including a minimum unit price.

 [Read more](#)

 **UPDATE**

43,000 young people aged 15-24 in Ireland living with alcohol dependence as youth drinking levels continue to surge – new report

A new report from Alcohol Action Ireland has highlighted a sharp rise in alcohol use among young people aged 15–24, warning that progress made in reducing youth drinking in the 2000s and early 2010s is now being reversed. The report draws on recent survey data showing that youth drinking has climbed steadily since 2015, with hazardous patterns increasingly common.

The report estimates that more than 43,000 young people aged 15–24 in Ireland are living with alcohol dependence, with binge drinking widespread among those

who do drink. Alcohol Action Ireland describes the findings as a “wake-up call”, warning that alcohol remains the country’s biggest drug problem for young people, with serious consequences for health and safety.

A key concern is the continued impact of alcohol marketing, particularly online, where young people are heavily exposed to advertising and branding. The report also raises concerns about alcohol industry tactics, including the promotion of zero-alcohol products designed to mirror well-known brands, potentially undermining existing marketing restrictions.

Alcohol Action Ireland is calling for urgent action through Ireland’s next national drug and alcohol strategy, including stronger regulation of marketing, improved youth-specific treatment services, and better enforcement of protections such as restrictions on deliveries to under-18s.

 [Read full story](#)

 **UPDATE**

‘No safe level’, risk, and identity: Is ‘moderation’ friend or foe to positive sobriety?

Dr James Morris, board member of Alcohol Focus Scotland and alcohol researcher, has reflected on the growing discourse around alcohol use, identity and what it means to drink “in moderation” in a new essay for the *Society for the Study of Addiction*. Drawing on both his professional work and personal experiences with drinking and periods of sobriety, James explores how public debates about alcohol risk and choice intersect with the rise of positive sobriety movements and changing cultural norms around alcohol.

He notes that in recent years, many young people have embraced alcohol-free lifestyles, celebrating the benefits of sobriety and challenging the long-standing cultural expectation that drinking is normal. While this shift has important potential to reduce harm, James also argues that some public messages — including simplified interpretations of “no safe level” of alcohol — can inadvertently position *any* alcohol use as a moral failing, rather than a complex personal choice shaped by social pressures.

James also reflects on reactions within online sobriety communities to those who talk publicly about learning to drink without experiencing problems. He suggests that defensive responses to debate — including personal attacks when moderation is discussed — may be driven by identity-based social dynamics rather than a nuanced understanding of evidence, risking alienation of people whose experiences don’t fit a single narrative.

In calling for a more balanced conversation, James highlights the importance of recognising a diversity of experiences with alcohol and risk, while still supporting efforts to challenge harmful norms and reduce pressure to drink.

 **Read the blog**

 **UPDATE**

Prisoners in Scotland face mental health and substance use crisis after release, research reveals

New research from the University of Stirling has found that people released from prison in Scotland experience extremely high levels of mental health and substance-related crisis in the years following release. The study, which tracked more than 8,000 individuals, found that those leaving prison had significantly higher rates of emergency service use compared to the general

population — highlighting severe unmet need during a critical transition period.

For alcohol policy, the findings underline the importance of continuity of care. Many people in prison have complex needs linked to alcohol dependence and mental health yet support often falls away on release. Without structured pathways into community-based alcohol treatment and ongoing support, individuals face heightened risk of relapse, crisis and preventable harm.

The research points to the need for better integration between justice, health and alcohol treatment services, with pre-release planning that ensures people are connected to local services immediately on return to the community. Strengthening throughcare models, improving access to evidence-based alcohol treatment, and embedding trauma-informed approaches could reduce avoidable deaths and ease pressure on emergency services.

The findings reinforce the case for alcohol policy that recognises imprisonment and release as key intervention points — and for sustained investment in community treatment services that can provide consistent, long-term support.

 [Read more](#)

 **UPDATE**

Big Alcohol's economic arguments busted by new study

New research from the Sheffield Addictions Research Group (SARG) has busted a long-standing industry argument that reducing consumption of products like alcohol harms the economy. Using a rigorous inter-sectoral economic modelling approach, the study examined what happens when spending on alcohol and other harmful products is reduced and money is

instead spent on a broader mix of goods and services. Contrary to industry claims, the analysis found that such shifts can actually boost jobs and economic output when spending is redirected into other parts of the economy.

The findings are especially significant because they counter the narrative commonly used by alcohol producers to oppose public health policies such as pricing reform, tax increases or marketing restrictions on the basis of potential damage to jobs and economic growth. Instead, the study shows that public health-oriented policies can have neutral or even positive effects on the wider economy, particularly when consumer spending flows into sectors with stronger local economic multipliers.

This evidence challenges a core industry talking point and strengthens the case for measures like minimum unit pricing, alcohol duty reform and restrictions on availability, which are supported by a large evidence base for reducing consumption and harms. By demonstrating that economic benefits can accompany health improvements, the research provides policymakers with a stronger foundation for advancing evidence-led interventions without fear of economic backlash.

The study also underscores the value of health economic modelling in shaping public debates about alcohol policy, offering robust tools that go beyond simplistic industry forecasts to reveal broader social and economic impacts. As Scotland continues to refine and expand its alcohol strategy, such evidence is crucial for integrating public health goals with economic planning and treatment priorities.

 **Read the study**

 **RESEARCH**

Do alcohol industry-funded organisations act to correct misinformation?

A new international study has found that alcohol industry-funded organisations continue to provide misleading information on alcohol, pregnancy and infant health, even after independent public health scrutiny. Researchers examined seven industry-linked websites, including Drinkaware (UK & Ireland), Éduc'alcool (Canada) and DrinkWise (Australia), and analysed how easily accessible and accurate their content was following a previous review.

The study found that important health information was often missing or difficult to find, with many sites failing to offer clear guidance on miscarriage, breastfeeding or other pregnancy-related risks. On some sites, search tools returned irrelevant results, and accurate content was buried or sequenced in ways that could obscure its significance for readers.

Where relevant content was present, it was frequently mixed with other material or framed in ways that downplayed known risks, rather than presenting straightforward, evidence-based advice. In a number of cases, key messages such as the absence of a known safe level of alcohol during pregnancy appeared only after other text or without a clear directive.

The findings underline persistent concerns about commercial influence on public health information. The authors conclude that warnings against relying on alcohol industry-linked sources should be part of broader efforts to ensure people receive accurate, evidence-based guidance on alcohol and pregnancy.

 **Read the study**

 **RESEARCH**

**The alcohol licensing system in Northern Ireland:
Lessons learnt from a restrictive framework**

New research published in *The Journal of Neuroscience* shows that exposure to alcohol before birth can have long-lasting effects on the brain's dopamine system and subsequent drinking behaviour in adulthood. In a unique 20-year longitudinal study with rhesus monkeys, scientists found that moderate prenatal alcohol exposure led to changes in brain chemistry and was associated with problematic alcohol consumption later in life. These findings align with human evidence suggesting that early life exposures can shape later choices around alcohol.

The study also examined the impact of prenatal stress, finding that it altered dopamine transporter levels in key brain regions linked to reward and motivation. Dopamine signalling plays a central role in how the brain responds to alcohol's effects, and lower baseline levels of certain dopamine receptors were linked to heavier drinking patterns in adulthood.

Crucially, the research suggests that some brain differences seen in adults who drink heavily may not arise *only* from alcohol use itself, but could stem from biological changes before birth, influenced by maternal alcohol exposure and stress. This challenges simplistic assumptions that alcohol-related brain changes are always a consequence of later drinking behaviour.

From a policy and treatment perspective, the findings reinforce the importance of protecting the prenatal environment through robust public health messaging and support services for pregnant people. They also emphasise the need for early, evidence-based interventions and broader strategies that address the lifelong impacts of alcohol exposure — not just consumption patterns in adulthood.

 [Read the study](#)

RESEARCH

Alcohol Marketing Exposure to Children in New Zealand: A Systematic Narrative Review

A new study has examined Northern Ireland’s alcohol licensing system, focusing on the long-standing “surrender principle”, which requires a new premises to obtain an existing licence before it can sell alcohol. The authors argue that while the system was originally intended to limit availability, it now functions largely as a mechanism that protects existing licences as private assets.

The study highlights how this approach has contributed to unintended changes in the licensed environment, including a shift away from pubs and towards a growing number of premises selling alcohol for consumption off the premises. The authors note that this is particularly concerning given wider evidence linking higher outlet density and easier access to cheaper alcohol with increased harm.

The research also identifies structural weaknesses in how the system is regulated and enforced, including limited scope to remove licences from poorly managed premises and a lack of clear public health objectives within decision-making. The authors conclude that Northern Ireland’s alcohol licensing framework is not currently fit for purpose in supporting healthier communities.

The study calls for major reform, including reconsidering the surrender principle and introducing a modernised licensing system that places public health at its core.

 [Read the study](#)

RESEARCH

Binge-drinking isn't just a young person's issue; it's a serious later-life mortality risk

New research from the University of Waikato highlights the urgent need for stronger government-led laws to protect children from alcohol advertising. A systematic review published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* found that children aged 2–17 in New Zealand are routinely exposed

to alcohol marketing in everyday settings — near schools and playgrounds, on public transport, at sporting venues, on TV and across digital platforms — despite existing industry-led guidelines. Researchers warn that this repeated exposure helps to normalise drinking and influences how children think about alcohol.

Lead author Dr Victoria Egli emphasises that seeing alcohol advertising makes drinking seem “normal and everyday”, increasing the likelihood that young people will start drinking earlier. The evidence review brings together all available New Zealand studies and shows that current self-regulation, overseen by the alcohol industry, fails to sufficiently protect children from pervasive marketing.

To address this gap, the research team is calling for mandatory, enforceable legislation to restrict alcohol advertising. Recommended measures include banning alcohol ads within 500 metres of schools, removing promotions from public services such as transport networks, tighter regulation of digital marketing and sponsorship, and stricter controls on alcohol-branded events. Researchers stress that protecting children should not fall on parents alone — government action is needed to shield young people from marketing influences that shape attitudes and behaviour.

These findings add to growing evidence that industry-led codes are inadequate and that legal restrictions on alcohol advertising are critical to reducing early initiation of drinking and long-term harm. As Scotland and other nations consider updates to alcohol policy, robust advertising controls must be part of a comprehensive public health approach.

 **Read the study**

 **RESEARCH**

Alcohol exposure pre birth increases risk of problematic use in adulthood

New research published in *Alcohol* shows that binge drinking is not just a young person’s issue, but a significant health risk for older adults too.

Analysing data from more than 129,000 Canadians aged 50 and over, the study found that people who drank alcohol in ways defined as binge drinking had markedly higher mortality risk over up to 12 years of follow-up. Even after accounting for health status, mental wellbeing and socioeconomic factors, those who never engaged in binge drinking had significantly lower risk of death compared to weekly binge drinkers.

Importantly, the research challenges the common perception that alcohol-related harm from heavy drinking is concentrated among younger people. While much public attention and prevention effort focuses on acute risks in youth, these findings show that health harms from episodic heavy drinking accumulate into later life, underscoring the need for alcohol policy and health messaging that considers all age groups.

For treatment and prevention, the study highlights the importance of age-inclusive screening and support in primary care and community health services. Older adults may not be routinely asked about patterns of heavier drinking, yet this research suggests that frequent binge drinking in later life is linked to poorer long-term outcomes and could be addressed through targeted interventions.

As populations age across Scotland and beyond, these findings add to the evidence base supporting comprehensive alcohol strategies that include clear guidance for older adults, alongside young people, on the risks associated with episodic heavier drinking and the benefits of reducing harmful patterns of consumption.

 **Read the study**

Workbook for staff of licensed premises

The Alcohol Focus Scotland Workbook for Staff of Licensed Premises is an ideal tool for personal licence holders to provide the 2 hours minimum training to all their staff as required by the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

The workbook has been specifically created to be a valuable guide for staff members, providing essential knowledge to enhance their role within the licensing framework.

[Buy Now](#)

Dignity and choice - ACUK

An Alcohol Change UK online learning event

Thursday 12th March 2026

10.00am to 12.20pm

All of us working to support people facing alcohol issues are focussed on reducing harm and promoting recovery. It is an uncomfortable truth, however, that, in some cases, recovery is unlikely and a person's health will continue to worsen.

It's something we all need to be more prepared for, so that we can recognise when someone is dying, and respond appropriately; and so that more people can have a dignified death, in a location of their choosing, with the people they want around them.

Join us on 12 March to learn more about how we can all deal with death better. We'll be looking at how to raise end-of-life issues with clients and their loved ones; how to make appropriate preparations for death; and how to manage alcohol use during the end-of-life period.

 **Book your place**



Big Alcohol in the Global South - film screening (online registration)

Tuesday 10th March 2026

3.30pm to 4.30pm

Join the Institute for Alcohol Studies for a screening of their latest short film.

The film exposes how global alcohol corporations expand into low- and middle-income countries - extracting profit for largely Western shareholders while leaving devastating levels of alcohol-related harm behind.


It features expert speakers from Colombia, South Africa, and the Philippines.

 **Book your place**



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Dragona, Anastasia

From: Alcohol Focus Scotland <enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk>
Sent: 26 March 2026 12:30
To: Dragona, Anastasia
Subject: Alcohol Focus Scotland latest - March 2026



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 - **Workbook for staff of licensed premises**
 - **“FASD: The Teenage Years” for Parents and Caregivers**
 - **Glasgow ADP Annual Networking Event 2026**
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'No More Half Measures: time to get serious about alcohol harm'

Alcohol Focus Scotland, has used the launch of our manifesto for the Scottish Parliamentary elections to warn Scotland's next MSPs that it's time to get serious about tackling the cost of harm caused by alcohol – demanding no more half measures.

The AFS **manifesto** describes the shocking human and economic cost of alcohol to Scotland, revealing that 50 Scots die due to alcohol each week, with someone hospitalised because of alcohol every 15 minutes.

Scotland's alcohol problem is not limited to a small number of dependent drinkers though, with around 1 in 5 Scots still drinking at levels that harm our health – meaning a fifth of Scots are at higher risk of liver disease, cancer, heart disease

and mental health problems.

Added to this is a staggering economic penalty of alcohol, estimated to be in the region of up to £10billion per year, including costs to the NHS, lost productivity and alcohol related crime.

We are calling on the next Scottish Parliament to rediscover Scotland's previous leadership on preventing alcohol harm by committing to six key actions including restricting alcohol marketing, introducing mandatory health warning labels, automatic uprating of the minimum unit price, licensing reform, expanding early detection of liver disease and greater investment in treatment and support.

Carolyn Lochhead, recently appointed CEO of Alcohol Focus Scotland, said:

“While Scotland was once a world leader in tackling the harm caused by alcohol, in recent years we have fallen woefully behind. Without decisive action we will continue to see deaths, ill-health and the other negative effects of alcohol rise.

“In 2018, Scotland was the first country in the world to introduce minimum unit pricing on alcohol: and it has saved hundreds of lives. But it was always intended to be part of a package of measures. We need government to act on areas like alcohol marketing and mandatory health warnings, as well as an expansion of life saving liver screening and greater investment in alcohol support and treatment – which could be part funded by a levy on off trade retailers.

“We’re asking the next Scottish Government to call time on the half measures and get serious about tackling alcohol harm – secure in the knowledge that the policies we are proposing are backed by robust international evidence and strong public support.”

Michael Hawthorne, 51, Glasgow, person in recovery, said: “Investment in alcohol services is vital in reducing the alcohol related deaths in Scotland. This could come from the revenue generated by alcohol retailers. It just doesn't seem right that they get to keep the extra money from minimum pricing while services are starved for cash.

“As a liver transplant recipient, I think it is important to detect liver disease early. Rolling out liver scanning across Scotland would really help, especially in rural areas, as access to services in these areas can be limited.

“I think the Scottish Government needs to listen to people with lived or living experience rather than using us to tick a box. We know the harms alcohol can cause and understand what needs to be done to get a handle on alcohol deaths.”



Alcohol and Drug Strategic Plan Published

The Scottish Government has published their new alcohol and drugs strategic plan for 2026-2035. The Government says that a key priority of the strategic plan is to expand treatment standards to include alcohol and all drugs, with a renewed focus on prevention, including specific measures to stop people from developing problem alcohol and drug use.

Responding to the strategy, Carolyn Lochhead, CEO of Alcohol Focus Scotland said:

“We are glad to see recognition from Scottish Government that, with fifty people a week dying from alcohol, we need urgent change. The new strategic plan incorporates measures that Alcohol Focus Scotland has been calling for including enhanced liver screening and an alcohol-specific prevention plan, including next steps on alcohol marketing and labelling.

“To tackle the near record deaths from alcohol, implementation of the strategic plan must now ensure that people affected by alcohol receive the priority, resources, and investment they need, not just on paper but in practice. We look forward to working with government to make that happen.”

Carolyn has subsequently used her first blog as CEO of AFS to do a deeper dive analysis of the strategy, detailing our hopes and ongoing concerns.

 [Read the blog](#)

 **UPDATE**

How are bars and nightclubs in Scotland using extensions in late-night alcohol trading hours?

Since 2018, two Scottish cities have allowed extensions in late-night alcohol trading hours with the aim of revitalising the night-time economy. This study looks at how bars and nightclubs use these extensions, exploring venue environment and staff behaviour.

The study found that uptake was often limited and uneven, with some venues making little use of the extra hours, raising questions about whether later trading is delivering the economic benefits often promised.

Researchers also observed concerning practices inside venues, including alcohol being sold to people who appeared intoxicated. The study notes that later hours are already associated with higher levels of alcohol-related harm, and these findings add to concerns about the impact of extending sales further into the night.

The findings challenge the argument that longer opening hours are a straightforward way to revitalise the night-time economy. Instead, they suggest that extending hours may increase risk without clear evidence of wider benefit, particularly when alcohol continues to be sold in settings where intoxication is already high.

For alcohol policy, the study reinforces the case for a precautionary approach to licensing. Decisions about trading hours should be guided by public health evidence, not assumptions about economic gain, with stronger attention to enforcement, venue practices and the wider impact on communities and emergency services.

 **Read the study**

 **UPDATE**

Binge drinking the fundamental building block of most alcohol-related harm – new report

A new Movendi International report identifies binge drinking as the “fundamental building block” of most alcohol-related harm, drawing on a wide body of international research. While often associated with immediate risks such as accidents and violence, the report makes clear that patterns of heavier drinking also contribute to long-term health conditions, including dependence, chronic disease and dementia.

The findings challenge the perception that harm is driven only by sustained high consumption over time. Instead, the report shows that how people drink is as important as how much they drink, with many people who drink at lower average levels still engaging in occasional binge drinking — and accounting for a significant proportion of overall harm.

Particular concern is raised about the impact on young people, where binge drinking is widespread and can affect brain development as well as increase the likelihood of longer-term health problems. The report also highlights wider harms linked to binge drinking, including its role in family disruption, violence and risks during pregnancy, underlining its far-reaching effects beyond the individual.

The findings reinforce the need for alcohol policy that addresses drinking patterns as well as overall consumption, including measures to reduce high-intensity drinking and protect children and families from harm. Strengthening population-level policies and ensuring access to effective support and treatment services will be key to reducing the significant burden associated with binge drinking.

 [Read the report](#)

 **CAMPAIGN**

Help us demand No More Half Measures on alcohol harm!

We've added a new page to the Involvement section of our website providing information about the upcoming Scottish Parliament election, taking place on the 7th of May.

You can find out more about the election, how you can take part in the process - and most importantly, how you can help Alcohol Focus Scotland campaign to prevent and reduce alcohol harm in Scotland and demand that the next Parliament put an end to the half measures and get serious about tackling alcohol harm.

 [Visit our election page](#)



Blog: Think Outside the Bottle: Rethinking What We Give Mums This Mother's Day

This year, we officially launched our campaign on gifting for wellbeing, encouraging people to think outside the bottle when gifting for Mother's Day. The #ThinkOutsideTheBottle campaign for Mother's Day highlighted the growing alcohol harm experienced by women, how the industry uses marketing to target women as a growth market and encouraged the celebration and honouring of our mothers with a gift that enhances their life, improves their health and wellbeing or celebrates their interests rather than opting for a gift that potentially damages their health.

We were delighted to publish a thoughtful and inspiring blog written in support of our campaign by Gillian Brown of Our Circle for Alcohol Free Mums.

Gillian reflects on how Mother's Day is often associated with gifting alcohol and

questions why drinking has become such a normalised way to celebrate or cope with the pressures of motherhood.

Drawing on her own experience of being alcohol-free, she discusses the challenges many mothers face and the way alcohol is often framed as a form of self-care, while highlighting that it can negatively affect wellbeing. She also considers the wider cultural messaging around alcohol and parenting and encourages people to “think outside the bottle” by choosing more thoughtful ways to show appreciation for mums on Mother’s Day.

 [Read the blog](#)

 **UPDATE**

NCD Alliance Scotland publishes Manifesto

The NCD Alliance Scotland, of which Alcohol Focus Scotland is a member, has published its manifesto for the Scottish Parliament elections. The manifesto outlines priority actions for early legislation in the next Parliament to reverse Scotland’s deteriorating health.

Focused on alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy food and drinks products, it calls for decisive action on the commercial determinants of health to reduce preventable harm and health inequalities.

Alcohol Focus Scotland strongly supports both key policy asks on alcohol:

- Introduce mandatory health labelling
- Enforce strict advertising restrictions in outdoor and public spaces

The manifesto emphasises strong public support for the policies put forward, quoting polling showing that 85% of people believe commercial industries should take greater responsibility for the harm caused by their products.

 Read the manifesto

UPDATE

“Who the hell is upstream pushing them all in?” Reclaiming public health’s defining metaphor to counter the commercial determinants of health

A new paper in *PLOS Global Public Health* is calling for a rethink of how public health understands and responds to alcohol harm, highlighting the role of powerful commercial actors in shaping health outcomes. The authors revisit the well-known “upstream–downstream” metaphor and argue that it has shifted over time from focusing on the causes of harm to placing greater emphasis on individual responsibility.

The study suggests that this shift risks obscuring the role of the alcohol industry and other commercial influences, which actively shape environments, behaviours and norms around alcohol. By framing harm as something individuals “fall into”, rather than something they are pushed into by wider systems, public debate can move away from the need to address the structural drivers of harm.

For alcohol policy, the findings underline the importance of focusing on population-level interventions that address availability, marketing and pricing, rather than relying solely on individual behaviour change. The authors argue that tackling the commercial determinants of health is essential if meaningful reductions in alcohol harm are to be achieved.

The paper calls for public health to reclaim its “upstream” focus — placing greater emphasis on the policies and systems that shape alcohol use — and to challenge

narratives that shift responsibility away from industry and onto individuals.

 **Read the paper**

 **UPDATE**

Big Alcohol in the Global South Explained

A new film by the Institute of Alcohol Studies has exposed shocking and exploitative practices of Big Alcohol companies in the Global South.

From bribing politicians to writing governments' own alcohol policies. Targeting children with cheap sachets and mini-bottles. Exploiting migrant workers in conditions described as modern slavery. This is the alcohol industry in the Global South – and this new film exposes it.

While markets in wealthier countries stagnate, giants like Diageo, AB InBev and Heineken are pouring billions into Africa, Asia and Latin America – extracting vast profits while leaving behind addiction, gender-based violence, and preventable death. Over 95% of Big Alcohol's value sits in Europe and the US. The money leaves. The harm stays.



RESEARCH

The effect of alcohol minimum unit pricing and cancer warning labels on cancer incidence and mortality in Canada

A new study highlights the significant potential of alcohol pricing policies to reduce cancer cases and health inequalities. Using modelling approaches, researchers found that measures such as minimum unit pricing and stronger labelling could substantially lower alcohol-related cancer burden, particularly among heavier drinkers and more deprived groups.

The findings reinforce that alcohol is a major risk factor for cancer, with risk increasing as consumption rises and no clear threshold below which harm is eliminated. Policies that reduce consumption at a population level were shown to deliver the greatest health gains, with pricing interventions especially effective at targeting higher-risk drinking patterns.

Importantly, the study demonstrates that these policies could also help reduce health inequalities, as alcohol-related harms disproportionately affect people living in more deprived communities. By targeting the affordability of alcohol, pricing measures can achieve greater impact where harm is highest, supporting more equitable health outcomes.

The authors conclude that combining pricing policies with clear health information, such as cancer warning labels, offers a powerful approach to reducing alcohol-related harm.

 **Read the study**

RESEARCH

Associations between financial hardship and alcohol reduction attempts in the context of a cost-of-living crisis and alcohol tax reforms

A new UK study suggests that financial hardship is increasingly shaping attempts to cut down on alcohol during the cost of living crisis. Analysing survey data from more than 6,000 adults drinking at risky levels between 2023 and 2025, researchers found that while over a third had tried to reduce their drinking, cost was a motive for a much smaller proportion.

Cost-motivated attempts to reduce drinking were far more common among people experiencing financial hardship, as well as among younger adults, women, heavier drinkers and those reporting psychological distress. The odds rose sharply as financial circumstances worsened, suggesting that rising prices are putting extra pressure on people who are already struggling.

The findings raise important questions for alcohol policy and treatment. While price can encourage some people to cut down, the study suggests that cost-driven change on its own is unlikely to be enough, particularly for people facing multiple

forms of disadvantage. Without access to effective, compassionate support, financial pressure may deepen hardship without reducing alcohol harm.

The research reinforces the need for alcohol policy that is both population-level and equity-focused. Alongside measures that reduce affordability of alcohol, there must be sustained investment in accessible treatment and wider support services so that people facing financial and psychological strain are not left to cope alone.

 **Read the study**

RESEARCH

Mind the Gap: Exploring Social Inequalities in Alcohol Consumption

A new study published in *BMC Public Health* highlights the persistent and complex nature of alcohol-related health inequalities in England, showing that people in more disadvantaged circumstances continue to experience the greatest harm — even when their levels of consumption are similar to or lower than those in more affluent groups.

Using national survey data, the researchers took a more detailed approach to socioeconomic status, identifying distinct groups based on factors such as income, employment, housing and education. The findings show that patterns of alcohol use and risk vary across these groups, reflecting the broader social conditions shaping people's lives rather than alcohol consumption alone.

The study reinforces the “alcohol harm paradox”, where those in the most deprived communities face disproportionately higher levels of illness and death, despite not necessarily drinking more. This highlights the role of wider determinants such as stress, access to services, and living conditions in driving unequal outcomes.

For alcohol policy, the findings underline the need for targeted, equity-focused approaches that go beyond individual behaviour change. Population-level

measures — alongside investment in treatment and support in disadvantaged communities — will be critical to reducing inequalities and preventing further harm.

 [Read the study](#)

RESEARCH

Binge drinking on the rise among gen Z in their early 20s

Around seven in ten (68%) young adults who are part of generation Z report binge drinking in the past year, with almost a third (29%) regularly consuming six or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting, according to new UCL research.

For the study, researchers from the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies analysed data from nearly 10,000 people born across the UK in 2000-02 who are taking part in the **Millennium Cohort Study**. At age 23, study participants were asked how often they used drugs and alcohol and took part in other potentially addictive behaviour such as gambling. The study's authors compared these data with reports from the same participants when they were age 17.

Published as a **briefing paper**, the research shows rates of regular binge drinking among gen Z have tripled since they were in their late teens and are slightly higher than those reported by a group of millennials when they were a similar age a decade ago. The report also finds that half (49%) of gen Z's 23-year-olds have used cannabis and a third (32%) have tried harder drugs, such as cocaine, ketamine and ecstasy.

 [Read more](#)

RESEARCH

Realist review of managed alcohol programmes for people experiencing alcohol dependence and homelessness: what works, for whom, and in what circumstances?

A new international review highlights the potential of managed alcohol programmes (MAPs) to support people experiencing homelessness and alcohol dependence — a group facing some of the most severe and complex alcohol-related harms. The study found that traditional abstinence-based treatment approaches are often unsuitable or inaccessible for this population, failing to address the wider social and health challenges they face.

MAPs take a different approach, providing regulated doses of alcohol alongside housing, healthcare and social support, with the aim of reducing harm rather than requiring abstinence. Drawing on evidence from 60 sources, the review found that these programmes can lead to a range of positive outcomes, including improvements in health, housing stability and reduced contact with emergency services.

Crucially, the study highlights that successful programmes are those that prioritise dignity, autonomy and holistic support, helping individuals build stability, trust and a sense of purpose. By addressing underlying issues such as trauma, poverty and social exclusion, MAPs can provide a more realistic and effective pathway for people whose needs are not met by conventional services.

The findings have important implications for alcohol policy and treatment, reinforcing the need for harm reduction approaches alongside traditional services. As alcohol deaths and homelessness continue to rise, expanding access to evidence-based, person-centred interventions like MAPs could play a vital role in reducing harm and improving outcomes for some of the most marginalised people in society.

 **Read the study**

 **RESEARCH**

Greater visceral fat mass accumulation with high alcohol consumption

New research published in the *International Journal of Obesity* finds that higher alcohol consumption is linked to increased levels of harmful abdominal fat, even when overall body fat is taken into account. Analysing data from more than 5,700 adults in the UK, the study used detailed imaging to show a clear dose-response relationship, with heavier drinkers accumulating significantly more visceral fat — the type most strongly linked to heart disease and metabolic conditions.

Importantly, the findings suggest that alcohol does not simply contribute to weight gain, but may lead to a greater proportion of fat being stored in more dangerous areas of the body. The increase in visceral fat was most pronounced among the highest consumption group, indicating that heavier drinking is associated with particularly elevated health risks.

This adds to growing evidence that alcohol is a significant driver of long-term physical health harms, including cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders. The study also highlights limitations in commonly used measures such as waist circumference, which may underestimate the true impact of alcohol on internal fat distribution.

For alcohol policy and public health, the findings reinforce the need for clear messaging on the physical health risks of alcohol and support population-level measures to reduce consumption.

 **Read the study**

 **RESEARCH**

Attitudes to Restrictions on the Promotion and Parental Supply of Zero Alcohol Products

This new study explores public attitudes to restrictions on alcohol-free and zero-alcohol product (ZAP) marketing, particularly where children are exposed. The research highlights growing concern that these products — often branded in ways closely linked to alcoholic drinks — can act as a gateway to alcohol branding, reinforcing familiarity and appeal among young people.

The study found modest support for tighter restrictions on advertising in settings such as public transport, near schools and through sports sponsorship, lower than for comparable alcohol advertising policies, potentially reflecting limited awareness of ZAPs' role in promoting alcohol brands.

Researchers also examined attitudes to parental provision of alcohol-free products to young people. Nearly half (45%) disagreed with parental provision of ZAPs to teenagers. Overall, older age and lower socioeconomic status were associated with small increases in support for advertising restrictions and opposition to parental supply.

The findings underscore the need for public education on ZAPs-related risks and suggest that specific messaging may be necessary to build support for regulatory interventions aimed at protecting youth.

 **Read the study**

TRAINING

Workbook for staff of licensed premises

The Alcohol Focus Scotland Workbook for Staff of Licensed Premises is an ideal tool for personal licence holders to provide the 2 hours minimum training to all their staff as required by the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

The workbook has been specifically created to be a valuable guide for staff members, providing essential knowledge to enhance their role within the licensing

framework.

[Buy Now](#)



“FASD: The Teenage Years” for Parents and Caregivers

Online Event

Tuesday, May 5 from 10am to 12pm

This course has been written to help you navigate the complex and often challenging teenage years for young people with FASD.

The "The Teenage Years" training is specifically designed for parents and caregivers. This course has been written to help you navigate the complex and often challenging teenage years for young people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and it will be delivered in two sessions on Tuesday 5th & 12th May 10am-noon.

The teenage years can be a difficult time for any family, but when FASD is part of the equation, unique challenges can arise. This new course is here to provide you with the knowledge, strategies, and support you need to help your teenager thrive. From understanding the developmental and behavioural changes to managing social and academic pressures, this course covers it all.

 **Book your place**

Managing Conflicts of Interest, Tackling Commercial Determinants of Health

Side Event, Global Alcohol Policy Conference 2026, Rio de Janeiro (in-person event)

Location TBD

Tuesday, 7 April from 9:15am to 5pm

This interactive event aims to enhance capacity to develop and apply policy instruments to minimise industry interference across policy, advocacy and research contexts.

It creates a space for an open dialogue in which participants can:

- share experiences of challenges and opportunities in developing approaches to managing conflict of interest in their organisational contexts
- increase awareness of new initiatives to strengthen governance across sectors
- promote innovation and learning in actions to tackle interference across diverse industries
- identify needs for support in advancing progress in diverse contexts
- contribute examples of organisational policies and collectively build an online resource to inform ongoing innovation and collaboration.

The event will provide opportunities for networking, interaction with international experts from around the world, and concludes with a showing of a new short film, ***Big Alcohol in the Global South: Explained***

 **Reserve a spot**

Glasgow ADP Annual Networking Event 2026

Glasgow City Chambers


Wednesday, 20 May from 10am to 12pm

Glasgow City ADP are holding their annual ADP Networking event in the City Chambers on the Wednesday 20th May.

This event is for **all** members of staff employed in Glasgow services operating in the drug and alcohol sector and is a great way to promote your service, share what you do and learn about new services in the city. It's also a lovely way to meet colleagues, share experiences and celebrate what you do.

 **Book your place**



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Dragona, Anastasia

From: Alcohol Focus Scotland <socialmedia@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk>
Sent: 23 April 2026 16:06
To: Dragona, Anastasia
Subject: eFocus Election Special

Newsletter from Alcohol Focus Scotland

[View this email in your browser](#)



April 2026



Election Special

The election for the next Scottish Parliament takes place on 7th May.

Scotland remains in the grip of an alcohol health emergency. The election takes place at a time when 50 Scots die due to alcohol each week, with someone hospitalised because of alcohol every 15 minutes.

Scotland's alcohol problem is not limited to a small number of dependent drinkers though, with around 1 in 5 Scots still drinking at levels that harm our health – meaning a fifth of Scots are at higher risk of liver disease, cancer, heart disease and mental health problems.

Alcohol Focus Scotland is calling on the next Scottish Parliament to rediscover Scotland's previous leadership on preventing alcohol harm by committing to six key actions including restricting alcohol marketing, introducing mandatory health warning labels, automatic uprating of the minimum unit price, licensing reform,

expanding early detection of liver disease and greater investment in treatment and support.

The time for half measures is over.

The next Scottish Parliament must take urgent action to reduce alcohol harm.

We need your help!



Alcohol and Party Manifestos

All the main parties have now published their manifestos setting out their policies and priorities for the next parliamentary term.

Alcohol Focus Scotland has worked hard behind the scenes to engage with parties and input into the development of their policies on alcohol – and we recently published our own manifesto setting out the policies we believe the next Government should adopt to tackle Scotland’s ongoing alcohol health emergency.

Our message is simple – ‘No More Half Measures: Time to get serious about alcohol harm’.

Our manifesto details six key actions we believe are essential to reduce alcohol

harm in Scotland, including restricting alcohol marketing, introducing mandatory health warning labels, automatic uprating of the minimum unit price, licensing reform, expanding early detection of liver disease and greater investment in treatment and support.

Our Policy Manager Sophie Bridger has worked through the detail of each manifesto to see which parties have committed to support policies that will reduce alcohol harms and save lives.

[Read our Blog](#)



[Read the AFS Manifesto](#)

We published our Manifesto for the Scottish Parliament elections in March.

Our message is simple. **No More Half Measures.** It's time to get serious about

tackling alcohol harm.

Carolyn Lochhead, CEO of Alcohol Focus Scotland, said: “While Scotland was once a world leader in tackling the harm caused by alcohol, in recent years we have fallen woefully behind. Without decisive action we will continue to see deaths, ill-health and the other negative effects of alcohol rise.

“In 2018, Scotland was the first country in the world to introduce minimum unit pricing on alcohol: and it has saved hundreds of lives. But it was always intended to be part of a package of measures. We need government to act on areas like alcohol marketing and mandatory health warnings, as well as an expansion of life saving liver screening and greater investment in alcohol support and treatment – which could be part funded by a levy on off trade retailers.

“We’re asking the next Scottish Government to call time on the half measures and get serious about tackling alcohol harm – secure in the knowledge that the policies we are proposing are backed by robust international evidence and strong public support.”

[Download the AFS Manifesto](#)



Help us campaign for No More Half Measures!

Want to support our key asks on alcohol policy?


We've published an election toolkit which provides information on the Scottish Parliament elections, how to vote, ideas for how you can support our campaigning efforts and an email template you can use to contact candidates or MSPs in your area.

[Download the Toolkit](#)

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Dragona, Anastasia

From: Alcohol Focus Scotland <enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk>
Sent: 30 April 2026 15:03
To: Dragona, Anastasia
Subject: Alcohol Focus Scotland latest - April 2026



April 2026



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 - **"FASD: The Teenage Years" for Parents and Caregivers**
 - **Glasgow ADP Annual Networking Event 2026**
 - **Vacancy: NCD Alliance Scotland Lead**
 - **Support our Work**
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Later bar opening hours linked to rise in alcohol-related ambulance call-outs

Allowing bars to stay open later into the night can lead to increases in alcohol-related ambulance call-outs and crimes, according to new research. The study examined the impact of extending alcohol trading hours for licensed premises in Aberdeen and Glasgow. It forms part of a wider project led by the University of Stirling exploring how late-night alcohol policies affect public health, businesses and frontline services.

The analysis found that when 38 pubs and bars in Aberdeen were granted permission to sell alcohol for up to two hours later at night – some until 3am – between March 2017 and October 2020, alcohol-related ambulance call-outs on weekend nights increased by 11.4%. Reported crimes also rose by 8.5% over the same period.

Researchers also found that the peak time for alcohol-related ambulance call-outs shifted to later in the night – from between midnight and 1am to between 1am and 2am – suggesting that extended trading hours may have changed drinking patterns. The increase in call-outs was particularly pronounced among men and people aged under 45.

Professor Niamh Fitzgerald of The Institute for Social Marketing and Health, who leads the wider research programme, said:

“Our study shows that local authorities need greater powers to control the number and type of venues that are allowed to open later at night because large-scale extensions will result in increased health harms and crimes.

“Whilst this part of the research didn’t find measurable impacts in Glasgow, local stakeholders reported in interviews that the 4am extension, in just 10 nightclubs there, put frontline services under severe strain.”

 [Read more](#)

 **UPDATE**

Lancet Commission calls on tax rises on alcohol to cut deaths from liver disease

A new Lancet Commission on liver health in Europe **highlights a growing and largely preventable** burden of liver disease, with around 284,000 deaths each year linked to conditions such as cirrhosis and liver cancer. Alcohol is identified as a major contributing factor alongside obesity, poor diet and viral hepatitis, with experts warning that without action the scale of harm will continue to rise.

The Commission calls for stronger, population-level measures to address the commercial drivers of ill health, including significantly higher taxes on alcohol and unhealthy food, mandatory health warnings, and tighter restrictions on marketing—particularly to children. It argues that aligning taxation with the true societal costs of these products is essential to reducing consumption and preventing harm.

These calls are echoed by the British Liver Trust, which stresses the need for policies that reflect the “true harm” caused by alcohol and unhealthy food environments, highlighting that pricing and marketing currently drive overconsumption. The Trust emphasises that action is not about restricting choice, but about creating a fairer environment that supports healthier decisions and prevents avoidable disease.

The Institute of Alcohol Studies has similarly argued that alcohol duty should better reflect the economic cost of harm, with modelling suggesting substantial increases would be required to do so. Together, the evidence reinforces the importance of prevention-focused, population-level policy—particularly pricing, marketing and

labelling measures—in reducing alcohol-related harm and tackling the wider burden of liver disease across Europe.



Teens three times more likely to start with alcohol than no/low alternatives – study finds

Young people aged 16-25 in Great Britain are three times more likely to start drinking alcohol than no- and low-alcohol alternatives (62% vs 17%), while less than one in five (18%) have never tried either, according to new research from the University of Sheffield and University College London.

The study, funded by Alcohol Change UK, is the first in the UK to explore the role of no- and low-alcohol drinks (no/low) – such as alcohol-free or low-alcohol spirits, beers and wines – in young people’s lives. It comes as sales of no/low drinks have more than doubled since 2020, soaring to £362 million in 2023. The study found mixed views on the acceptability of no and low alcohol products for young people in Great Britain. While over a third of adults considered their use by 13–17-year-olds acceptable (46% for zero-alcohol drinks and 31% for low alcohol up to 1.2% ABV), acceptability was higher in family settings (64% and 56% respectively). However, both young people and parents generally viewed these products as intended for adults choosing not to drink, with limited relevance for adolescents.

Among young people, no and low alcohol drinks were typically seen as a poor substitute, with most preferring either standard alcohol or soft drinks, reflecting the view that drinking is primarily about achieving intoxication rather than substitution.

The study also found no evidence of a “gateway effect” in Great Britain. However, alcohol remained highly normalised in family settings, with some parents considering it acceptable for young people to drink alcohol at home, despite evidence that an alcohol-free childhood is the safest option.

 [Read more](#)

 **UPDATE**

OECD: Huge health and social gains could be made in UK by reducing alcohol consumption

New OECD analysis highlights the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the UK, including cancers, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes. Without stronger action, the OECD warns that the UK could see a 15% rise in NCD cases and a 44% increase in per capita health spending by 2050, reflecting the escalating health and economic pressures associated with preventable illness.

A key driver of this burden is exposure to modifiable risk factors, including obesity, smoking, poor diet and harmful alcohol use. Harmful alcohol consumption is identified as the second most important risk factor for premature mortality, healthcare expenditure, workforce output and GDP impact, behind only obesity. This reinforces alcohol's role as a major and preventable contributor to population-level ill health and inequality.

The analysis also highlights the scale of potential gains from reducing alcohol consumption. If alcohol use in the UK were reduced to levels seen in the top quartile of OECD countries, this could deliver around 24% of the total reduction in avoidable premature deaths modelled across key risk factors. This underlines alcohol's significant contribution to preventable mortality, alongside other major drivers such as obesity and poor diet.

Overall, the findings reinforce the importance of prevention-focused, population-level action. Alongside efforts to address obesity, diet and smoking, reducing

alcohol harm remains central to improving health outcomes, easing pressure on services, and delivering meaningful social and economic benefits across the UK.



Healthy life expectancy down by 2 years in past decade

New analysis from the Health Foundation highlights a significant deterioration in the UK's healthy life expectancy, with people now spending more years of their lives in poor health. Between 2012–14 and 2022–24, healthy life expectancy has fallen by around two years, meaning a growing proportion of life is now lived with illness or disability, often before retirement age.

The analysis itself focuses on broad drivers of this trend, particularly rising levels of chronic disease and widening socioeconomic inequalities. While alcohol is not a central focus of the report, it sits within a wider and well-established evidence base identifying alcohol consumption as a key preventable risk factor contributing to conditions such as liver disease, certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, and poor mental health—all of which reduce healthy life expectancy.

These harms are not evenly distributed. Alcohol-related morbidity and mortality are known to follow a clear socioeconomic gradient, with higher levels of harm experienced in more deprived communities. This pattern aligns with the wider findings of the report on deepening health inequalities and the growing gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest groups.

Taken together, the evidence reinforces the importance of prevention-focused, population-level action to reduce avoidable ill health. Alongside broader measures to address income, housing, and structural inequality, effective alcohol policy remains an important component in improving healthy life expectancy and reducing

the burden of long-term, preventable disease.

 **Read the report**

 **UPDATE**

AFS publishes new video on evidence around Alcohol Marketing

We've published a new video on our YouTube channel summarising the recent Public Health Scotland rapid literature review on the evidence around alcohol marketing.

In the report, published in September, Public Health Scotland concluded that introducing restrictions on alcohol advertising and marketing is an effective and cost-effective way of reducing how much we drink, and in turn improving the health of people living in Scotland.

The review, commissioned by the Scottish Government, found that people are frequently exposed to alcohol marketing and advertising in their daily life, through sponsorship of their favourite sports teams, displays in shops and ads on billboards and bus stops. That exposure is associated with people drinking more.

The report states that “alcohol marketing and advertising is pervasive and persuasive, and frequent exposure to it drives alcohol consumption and related harms, including among children and young people.”

To have the greatest impact Public Health Scotland recommend restrictions be as wide-ranging as possible and well enforced.



Poverty, Prevention and Fairness – Social Attitudes Report

New findings from the Scottish Health Equity Research Unit show that public concern about health inequalities in Scotland is extremely high, with the vast majority of people agreeing that reducing the gap between richer and poorer communities should be a priority for government. While many respondents initially point to factors such as alcohol, smoking and diet, the research highlights that people also recognise the wider social conditions shaping health, including poverty and housing.

In relation to alcohol, the findings suggest that the public largely views alcohol-related harm as a social issue rather than an individual failing. When asked about the most effective ways to reduce deaths from drugs and alcohol, respondents were most likely to identify poverty reduction and improved mental health support, while support for punitive approaches such as tougher enforcement was extremely low. This reflects a clear preference for supportive, preventative responses over

criminalisation.

The research also shows strong backing for prevention, although this is often balanced with a desire to maintain investment in treatment and crisis services, particularly among people living in more deprived areas. This highlights the importance of ensuring that alcohol policy does not focus solely on prevention, but also provides accessible, well-funded support for those already experiencing harm.

Overall, the findings reinforce the need for a whole-system approach to alcohol policy, one that addresses the underlying drivers of harm such as poverty and inequality alongside population-level measures. They also point to potential gaps in current policy, including the need for greater focus on groups at highest risk, such as single adult men, and closer alignment between alcohol policy, mental health and anti-poverty action.

 [Read the full report](#)

 **UPDATE**

IAS Blog: Why alcohol warning labels and minimum unit pricing matter for cancer prevention

A new blog from the Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) highlights the growing evidence that alcohol warning labels and minimum unit pricing (MUP) can play a significant role in cancer prevention. The authors underline that alcohol is a well-established cause of at least seven types of cancer, yet public awareness of this risk remains low — limiting people’s ability to make informed choices about their health.

Drawing on recent modelling research, the blog shows that both policies can

reduce alcohol consumption and prevent cancer cases and deaths, with stronger interventions delivering greater impact. Warning labels help increase awareness of alcohol's link to cancer, while MUP reduces access to cheap, high-strength products — targeting the types of alcohol most associated with harm.

Importantly, the blog highlights that the greatest benefits are seen when these measures are combined, as they work in complementary ways to influence behaviour. The research also suggests that these policies can help reduce health inequalities, with the largest proportional gains among lower-income groups who experience the highest levels of harm.

The findings have clear implications for UK policy, where discussions around alcohol labelling and pricing continue. Together, they reinforce the case for comprehensive, population-level approaches that both inform consumers and reduce affordability of harmful products — supporting more effective action to prevent alcohol-related cancer.

 [Read more here](#)

 **UPDATE**

IAS Small Grants Scheme

The Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) opened applications for its 2026 Small Grants Scheme in the week commencing 20 April. The scheme provides funding to support research that can contribute to alcohol policy debates, with awards ranging from £500 to £15,000. Applicants will have eight weeks from the opening date to submit outline proposals.

Proposals will be assessed against a set of key criteria, including their potential to inform alcohol policy, alignment with the IAS long-term vision, the track record of applicants, and the feasibility and value for money of the proposed research.

The scheme is open to applicants based at UK universities, who would normally be expected to hold a PhD or equivalent professional qualification. IAS particularly encourages applications from early career researchers, defined as those within seven years (full-time equivalent) of completing their PhD.

Apply



Mapping the advice on alcohol-free drinks that alcohol treatment and recovery service providers give to their service users

The University of Sheffield is seeking to understand what advice alcohol treatment and recovery service providers in the UK give to their service users on their use of alcohol-free drinks, as well as their own beliefs about the benefits and risks of people in recovery using alcohol-free drinks.

Please note that this study uses a broad definition of people in recovery - including those who are abstinent and those who still drink alcohol.

Who can take part

To take part you must:

- be aged 18 or older
- currently work - or have worked within the last two years - in a service-user-facing support or advisory role within a non-NHS alcohol treatment and/or recovery service in the UK - this includes people who work in a Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO).

What taking part involves

Taking part involves an online survey that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

[Complete the Survey](#)



Help us demand No More Half Measures on alcohol harm!

We've added a new page to the Involvement section of our website providing information about the upcoming Scottish Parliament election, taking place on the 7th of May.

You can find out more about the election, how you can take part in the process - and most importantly, how you can help Alcohol Focus Scotland campaign to prevent and reduce alcohol harm in Scotland and demand that the next Parliament put an end to the half measures and get serious about tackling alcohol harm.

[Visit our election page](#)

Alcohol and Party Manifestos

All the main parties have now published their manifestos setting out their policies and priorities for the next parliamentary term.

Alcohol Focus Scotland has worked hard behind the scenes to engage with parties and input into the development of their policies on alcohol – and we recently published our own manifesto setting out the policies we believe the next Government should adopt to tackle Scotland’s ongoing alcohol health emergency.

Our message is simple – ‘No More Half Measures: Time to get serious about alcohol harm’.

Our **manifesto** details six key actions we believe are essential to reduce alcohol harm in Scotland, including restricting alcohol marketing, introducing mandatory health warning labels, automatic uprating of the minimum unit price, licensing reform, expanding early detection of liver disease and greater investment in treatment and support.

We’ve worked through the detail of each manifesto to see which parties have committed to support policies that will reduce alcohol harms and save lives.

[Read the blog](#)



End the delivery trap

Alcohol Change UK has launched its “End the Delivery Trap” campaign, highlighting growing concerns about the rapid rise of on-demand alcohol delivery services and the risks they pose to public health. With alcohol now available at the tap of an app and delivered within minutes, the campaign warns that regulation has failed to keep pace with technological change, leaving significant gaps in existing licensing systems.

The campaign sets out how this increased convenience is reshaping drinking behaviours, making it easier for people to continue drinking for longer, order more alcohol in the moment, and access alcohol without robust safeguards such as age or intoxication checks. Around one in five adults are now using rapid delivery

services to order alcohol weekly, with higher use among those already at greater risk of harm.

Crucially, the campaign emphasises that this is not about individual responsibility, but about the wider systems that shape behaviour. Rapid delivery services can make it harder for people to cut back and can exacerbate harm for those already struggling, including people in recovery. Evidence also suggests that existing protections are inconsistently applied, with weaknesses in age verification and delivery practices.

Alcohol Change UK is calling for urgent updates to the Licensing Act in England and Wales and stronger safeguards, including robust age and intoxication checks, limits on delivery hours, and options for individuals to block their own access to alcohol delivery. Together, these measures aim to ensure that digital convenience does not come at the cost of increased alcohol harm, and that the systems around us better support healthier choices.

[Join the Campaign!](#)



IAS Podcast: Reduced consumption of supermarket alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and confectionery would be unequivocally good for the UK economy

A recent Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) podcast explores new research challenging long-standing industry claims that reducing consumption of alcohol and other unhealthy commodities would damage the UK economy. The discussion centres on modelling from the Sheffield Addictions Research

Group, which finds that lower spending on products such as off-trade alcohol, tobacco, gambling and confectionery does not reduce overall economic performance when wider spending patterns are taken into account.

The analysis highlights that money not spent on these products is typically reallocated into other parts of the economy, supporting jobs and economic activity in more productive sectors. In the case of off-trade alcohol in particular, the research suggests that reductions in consumption can be associated with net economic gains, countering arguments that public health measures necessarily come at an economic cost.

The podcast also emphasises that the economic case for reducing consumption is likely to be an underestimate, as it does not fully capture wider productivity benefits linked to improved health, including reduced absenteeism, presenteeism and premature mortality. These factors, the research suggests, would further strengthen the positive economic case for reducing harmful consumption.

[Listen to the Podcast](#)



Corporate Vectors of Chronic Disease — Using Internal Industry Documents to Craft Counterstrategies

A new paper in the *New England Journal of Medicine* highlights the role of major corporations — including the alcohol industry — as key drivers of chronic disease globally. The authors argue that alcohol, alongside products such as tobacco and ultra-processed food, is part of a group of commercial

products responsible for a substantial proportion of deaths worldwide, contributing to the growing burden of conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and dementia.

The study introduces the concept of corporations as “vectors” of disease, showing how companies not only produce harmful products but also actively shape environments and behaviours through marketing, pricing and political influence. Evidence from internal industry documents reveals how these industries have historically undermined science, delayed regulation and influenced policymaking in order to protect profits.

For alcohol policy, the findings reinforce concerns about the commercial determinants of health, highlighting how industry influence can weaken effective public health measures. The authors draw parallels with the tobacco industry, where exposing corporate tactics led to stronger regulation and significant reductions in harm, suggesting similar approaches are needed for alcohol and other health-harming industries.

The paper calls for stronger safeguards to protect public health policy from industry interference, including greater transparency, restrictions on industry engagement in policymaking, and international frameworks to limit corporate influence. Together, these measures could help support more effective action to reduce alcohol-related harm and health inequalities.

 **Read the paper**

 **CONSULTATIONS**

Evaluation of Alcohol Duty Reforms

The UK Government is evaluating the impacts of the alcohol duty reforms introduced on 1 August 2023, three years on from their implementation.

The reforms moved the alcohol duty system to a strength-based structure and introduced two new targeted reliefs: Draught Relief (DR) and Small Producer Relief (SPR).

HMRC subsequently simplified and digitised the administrative processes for domestic production and duty payment, including launching the Manage your Alcohol Duty service in early 2025.

The evaluation will consider how successful these reforms have been in meeting their intended objectives, specifically:

1. Greater consumer choice, particularly of low-strength products.
2. Reduced alcohol related harm.
3. Support for on-trade business via DR, which was designed to reduce the tax burden on draught alcoholic products under 8.5% ABV sold in on-trade venues, such as pubs.
4. Support for small producers via SPR, which extended the duty relief previously only available to small brewers to all small producers of alcoholic products under 8.5% ABV and addressed barriers to growth by smoothing the withdrawal of relief as production increases.
5. Reduced administrative burden and a simplified process for users.

[Submit a response](#)

RESEARCH

Attention to Alcohol Advertising Causes Elevated Consumption via Increased Alcohol-Related Craving

A new study has added to the evidence that alcohol advertising can directly increase consumption by driving craving. The research found that when participants paid greater attention to alcohol adverts, this led to higher levels

of craving and, in turn, increased alcohol consumption shortly afterwards.

Importantly, the study moves beyond earlier observational research by demonstrating a causal link between advertising and drinking behaviour. By manipulating how much attention people gave to alcohol adverts, researchers were able to show that exposure is not passive — it actively shapes desire and decision-making in the moment.

The findings have clear implications for alcohol policy, reinforcing concerns about the impact of widespread marketing on consumption, particularly in environments where exposure is high. They add to a growing evidence base showing that alcohol marketing plays a significant role in driving demand, rather than simply influencing brand choice.

For prevention and treatment, the research highlights the importance of reducing exposure to alcohol advertising and supporting interventions that help people manage cues and cravings. Stronger restrictions on marketing could play a key role in reducing consumption and preventing harm at a population level.

 **Read the study**

RESEARCH

New Study: Binge Drinking even once a month increases risk of liver disease

New research published in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* highlights the significant risks associated with episodic heavy drinking, even among people who may not drink heavily on average. Analysing data from more than 8,000 adults, the study found that this pattern of drinking — often described as binge drinking — is common and frequently overlooked in clinical definitions of liver disease, which tend to focus on average consumption.

The findings show that episodic heavy drinking is strongly associated with more severe liver damage, including significantly higher odds of advanced liver fibrosis. Among people with metabolic-related liver conditions, those who reported this pattern of drinking had notably worse outcomes, with evidence suggesting a substantial increase in risk even when heavy drinking occurs intermittently.

Importantly, the study highlights a gap in how alcohol-related harm is understood and measured. By focusing primarily on average consumption, current approaches may miss harmful drinking patterns that contribute to disease progression. The authors suggest that incorporating drinking patterns into classification and assessment could provide a more accurate picture of risk.

For alcohol policy and treatment, the findings reinforce the need to address how people drink as well as how much they drink. They strengthen the case for population-level measures that reduce high-intensity drinking and highlight the importance of screening and support that recognises episodic heavy drinking as a key driver of harm.

 **Read the study**

RESEARCH

Lithuanian experience demonstrates efficacy of comprehensive marketing restrictions

A new study published in *BMJ Public Health* provides strong real-world evidence that comprehensive alcohol marketing bans can significantly reduce drinking among young people. Examining the impact of Lithuania's full ban on alcohol advertising, researchers found clear reductions in adolescent intoxication, alcohol use and binge drinking following its introduction.

The study found that, without the ban, levels of intoxication among young people

would have been almost twice as high, demonstrating the substantial influence of marketing on behaviour. Importantly, these reductions were observed even when accounting for other policy changes and wider trends, strengthening the case that marketing restrictions play a direct role in reducing harm.

These findings are particularly relevant given the scale of alcohol marketing exposure in digital and everyday environments. Partial restrictions can be easily bypassed, especially online, meaning that comprehensive bans are more effective at protecting children and young people from exposure that can shape attitudes and increase consumption.

The study adds to the growing evidence that restricting marketing is a key population-level measure, particularly for preventing early initiation and harmful patterns of drinking. It strengthens the case for governments to move beyond voluntary or partial approaches and implement robust, enforceable restrictions to reduce alcohol-related harm.

 **Read the study**

RESEARCH

Adolescents' intention to reduce alcohol use: a health belief model approach to cancer prevention

A new international study published in *Alcohol and Alcoholism* explores adolescents' intentions to reduce alcohol consumption, highlighting important implications for prevention and policy. Surveying more than 4,000 young people aged 12–18 across eight European countries, the research found that while around half reported drinking, motivation to cut down was only moderate overall and declined as young people got older.

The study identifies key factors influencing whether young people are willing to reduce their drinking. Perceived benefits of cutting down — particularly long-term health impacts such as cancer — alongside confidence in their ability to change

behaviour, were the strongest predictors of intention. In contrast, those who drank more frequently were significantly less likely to want to reduce their consumption.

These findings highlight the limitations of current public health approaches. While many campaigns focus on raising awareness of risk, the study suggests that messages alone may not be enough, particularly for older adolescents and those already drinking regularly. Instead, interventions need to strengthen young people's sense of agency and focus on clear, tangible benefits of reducing consumption.

For alcohol policy, the research reinforces the importance of early, targeted prevention efforts, including school-based interventions and wider measures that reduce exposure and access to alcohol. Supporting young people to delay initiation and reduce consumption is critical to preventing long-term harm, including alcohol-related cancers, and shaping healthier attitudes across the life course.

 **Read the study**

RESEARCH

Alcohol as social glue and gloom in men's mutual help for mental health

A study published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence Reports* explores the role alcohol plays within men's peer support settings for mental health. Drawing on qualitative research with men participating in mutual help groups, the study examines how alcohol can function both as a social lubricant and a source of harm within these environments.

The findings highlight that alcohol is often positioned as a form of “social glue”, helping to build connections, ease conversation and support bonding among men. However, this social role sits alongside more negative impacts, with alcohol also contributing to poor mental health, reinforcing harmful coping mechanisms, and, in some cases, undermining recovery and wellbeing.

The study points to the complex and gendered nature of alcohol use, particularly in contexts where social norms around masculinity and drinking are closely linked. While peer support is identified as an important resource for improving mental health, the presence of alcohol within these spaces can both support and hinder these outcomes.

Overall, the findings reinforce the need to better understand the social role of alcohol and its interaction with mental health. They highlight the importance of creating supportive environments that promote connection without reliance on alcohol, particularly in efforts to improve men's mental health and reduce alcohol-related harm.

Read the study

RESEARCH

Moderate exercise reduces alcohol cravings in heavy drinkers

A recent study published in *Addictive Behaviors* explores whether short bouts of exercise could help reduce alcohol cravings among heavy social drinkers. The research tested the impact of a single 20-minute session of moderate-intensity exercise, compared with a non-active distraction, following exposure to an alcohol-related cue designed to trigger craving.

The findings show that exercise led to a greater reduction in alcohol craving and “wanting” during the activity itself compared to the control condition. Participants who exercised also consumed less alcohol in a subsequent test scenario, suggesting a potential short-term effect on drinking behaviour. However, by the end of the session, differences between the groups had narrowed, indicating that the effects may be temporary.

While the study points to exercise as a potentially low-cost and accessible strategy

to help manage alcohol urges in the moment, it is based on a small sample and short-term outcomes. As such, further research is needed to understand whether these effects can be sustained over time or translated into meaningful reductions in real-world alcohol consumption.

 **Read the study**

TRAINING

Workbook for staff of licensed premises

The Alcohol Focus Scotland Workbook for Staff of Licensed Premises is an ideal tool for personal licence holders to provide the 2 hours minimum training to all their staff as required by the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

The workbook has been specifically created to be a valuable guide for staff members, providing essential knowledge to enhance their role within the licensing framework.

[Buy Now](#)

EVENT

“FASD: The Teenage Years” for Parents and Caregivers

Online Event

Tuesday, May 5 from 10am to 12pm

This course has been written to help you navigate the complex and often challenging teenage years for young people with FASD.

The "The Teenage Years" training is specifically designed for parents and caregivers. This course has been written to help you navigate the complex and often challenging teenage years for young people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and it will be delivered in two sessions on Tuesday 5th & 12th May 10am-noon.

The teenage years can be a difficult time for any family, but when FASD is part of the equation, unique challenges can arise. This new course is here to provide you with the knowledge, strategies, and support you need to help your teenager thrive. From understanding the developmental and behavioural changes to managing social and academic pressures, this course covers it all.

 **Book your place**

EVENT

Branding the Game: Alcohol Sponsorship, Sport, and Young People

Online Event

Monday 18th May

12.30pm – 2pm

The first seminar in the 2026 Alcohol Occasionals series will be delivered by Dr Richard Purves (University of Stirling). Titled *“Branding the Game: Alcohol Sponsorship, Sport, and the Normalisation of Drinking Among Young People.”* Drawing on an extensive programme of research, Dr Purves will explore how alcohol companies strategically embed their brands within sport to normalise and glamorise drinking - particularly among younger audiences.

Combining insights from his previous work on alcohol sports sponsorship with new and emerging research, the seminar will reveal how marketing practices - ranging from high-profile sponsorship deals to the subtle use of alibi branding and zero

alcohol products - can shape perceptions and blur the boundaries between sport and alcohol. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how these strategies operate, why they are effective, and what they mean for public health, policy, and the future regulation of alcohol marketing.

 **Book your place**

EVENT

Early and Mid-Career Alcohol Researcher Event

In Person Event

**Wednesday 6th May 2026 at the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh,
10.30am – 2.30pm**

Join SARN for the Early & Mid-Career Alcohol Researcher Event, offering a space to present work, explore ideas, and network.

This event will provide PhD students, early career researchers, and mid-career researchers with an opportunity to present their work and discuss future projects, whilst networking with colleagues from their field.

View the provisional agenda for the event on our website: **Early and Mid-Career Alcohol Researcher Event - Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems.**

 **Book your place**

EVENT

Alcohol Change UK: Food and Belonging

An Alcohol Change UK online learning event

Thursday 2nd July

10.00am to 12.35pm

£70 including VAT and booking fee

Alcohol issues are rarely just about alcohol. Harmful alcohol use often goes hand-in-hand with social disconnection and disordered eating. People who are alcohol-dependent are often underfed, underweight and undernourished, and this can increase the harm that alcohol causes in their lives.

Supporting people with severe alcohol problems to eat well is one clear route to reducing alcohol harm. Cooking and eating with others boosts physical and mental health and helps build the friendships and community that are the foundations of recovery.

Join Alcohol Change UK on 2 July to find out why food and nutrition should be an integral part of drug and alcohol treatment, and what you can do to make that happen.

 **Book your place**

 **EVENT**

FASD Hub: Wednesday Webinar with Jessica Birch

Online

Wednesday 6th May 8pm

Join the FASD Hub for an inspiring and thought-provoking webinar with Jessica Birch, a national advocate and speaker living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Jessica is a national advocate and speaker living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

 **Book your place**

 **EVENT**

Balance Lunchtime Learning Session - Alcohol Toolkit Study

Online

Tuesday 5th May, 12.30pm

The rearranged event will feature an in depth presentation from Dr. Melissa Oldham from UCL, who will showcase the findings of the **Alcohol Toolkit Study (ATS)**. The ATS is a monthly, nationally representative survey measuring alcohol consumption in Great Britain, alongside demographic information and other health behaviours such as smoking. Some data is available at a North-East level. It allows partners to:

- Monitor trends in alcohol consumption and related behaviours
- Evaluate the impact of alcohol policies
- Quickly understand the impact of social events (e.g. COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis)

Attending this event will give you an insight into the ATS data set, enable you to understand how this data can support your work and explore how partners can work together to ensure this valuable data resource reaches its full potential in supporting reductions in alcohol harm.

 **Find out more**



Alcohol Research 2026: New Thinking New Directions

6th-7th October 2026

University of Stirling

Researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders are invited to join Alcohol Research 2026: New Thinking, New Directions, a new conference dedicated to advancing innovative, interdisciplinary perspectives on alcohol research, policy, and practice.

Organised by the University of Stirling in collaboration with the New Directions in the Study of Alcohol Group, the conference aims to foster fresh ideas, highlight emerging evidence, and facilitate critical dialogue in addressing complex and evolving challenges in alcohol-related harm, prevention, treatment, and policy. The conference is also supported by the Scottish Alcohol Research Network.

 [Find out more](#)

Glasgow ADP Annual Networking Event 2026

Glasgow City Chambers

Wednesday, 20 May from 10am to 12pm

Glasgow City ADP are holding their annual ADP Networking event in the City Chambers on the Wednesday 20th May.

This event is for **all** members of staff employed in Glasgow services operating in the drug and alcohol sector and is a great way to promote your service, share what you do and learn about new services in the city. It's also a lovely way to meet colleagues, share experiences and celebrate what you do.

 [Book your place](#)

Vacancy: NCD Alliance Scotland Lead

This is a unique opportunity to shape the direction of our efforts to combat non-communicable diseases in Scotland. You will work closely with NCD Alliance Scotland members as well as government bodies, politicians, academics and third sector partners to drive impactful policy changes.

If you are passionate about making a difference in public health, this role offers a platform to create lasting change and improve the health of communities across Scotland.

As NCD Alliance Scotland Lead, you'll support all joint activity for the alliance, working with the chair, advisory board and members, building consensus within the alliance. Work will span policy development, public affairs and communications to ensure effective evidence-based policy around commercial determinants of health is at the forefront of the political agenda.

[!\[\]\(41ce11edeec1381a4e9c966de16a76b8_img.jpg\) Find out more and apply](#)




Support our Work

Do you share our passion for reducing alcohol harm in Scotland?

To fundraise for AFS, or if you would rather support us with either a one off or regular donation, visit our [JustGiving page](#).



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