

In 2018 there was enough alcohol sold in for every adult in Scotland to drink 19 units of alcohol every week, which is 30% more than the low risk guidelines of 14 units a week for men and women. The link between the consumption of alcohol and harm is evident and research indicates that affordability is one of the drivers of increased consumption.

On 1st May 2018, Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) was introduced in Scotland. It sets the lowest price that an alcoholic drink can be sold for. This has been set at 50 pence per unit of alcohol. MUP is designed to impact most on harmful drinkers and will mean improved health, safer communities and lives saved in Scotland. Modelling by the University of Sheffield estimates that the following benefits will be achieved:

- Alcohol related deaths will fall by about 120 deaths per year, by year twenty of the policy.
- There will be a fall in hospital admission of around 2,000 a year by year twenty of the policy.

MUP for all alcoholic drinks has not been put in place anywhere before and the legislation, the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012, contains a sunset clause. This means that MUP will expire after the sixth year of implementation unless the Scottish Parliament vote for it to continue.

To inform the Parliament's decision that is a review clause which requires Scottish Ministers to present a report to the Scottish Parliament on the impact of MUP after five years of operation. The Scottish Government has tasked Public Health Scotland (formerly NHS Health Scotland) with leading an independent evaluation of MUP which will inform the report presented to the Scottish Parliament.

The evaluation will focus on to what extent MUP has contributed to reducing alcohol-related health and social harms, and determine if some people and business are more affected (positively or negatively) than others.

The evaluation includes a portfolio of studies which are either undertaken by Public Health Scotland, commissioned by Public Health Scotland to external research bodies or separately funded and led by academic partners.

Public Health Scotland are leading on eighteen studies which cover a wide range of themes including:

- Implementation and compliance,
- Alcohol market,
- Alcohol consumption,
- Alcohol harm.

As studies are completed Public Health Scotland are publishing the findings, however they always come with the caveat that individually the studies don't tell the full story of the impact MUP is having on Scotland's relationship with alcohol. Although each study is useful on its own it is important to remember that the final report produced after five

years will give a more balanced picture of the impact MUP has had on alcohol related health and social harms in Scotland.

As studies are published the full report, summary findings and details about the whole evaluation can be found here: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-topics/alcohol/evaluation-of-minimum-unit-pricing-mup>

The key headlines from published studies so far include:

- [The first analysis of off-trade alcohol sales over the full year following the introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing \(MUP\) shows the volume of pure alcohol sold per adult in Scotland fell by 3.6%.](#)
- [Interviews with young people under 18 years old who reported drinking alcohol found that Minimum Unit Pricing did not impact on their acquisition, consumption or related behaviours, either positively or negatively. Many of the products favoured by the young people were, on average, already being sold above 50 pence per unit before MUP was introduced.](#)
- [Minimum Unit Pricing had modest short-term economic impact on alcohol drinks industry in Scotland. In an initial assessment of the effects of Minimum Unit Pricing, participants reported that a decrease in alcohol sold was offset by increased prices. The overall impact on retailers varied depending on the types of products sold. The effects of MUP on producer revenues and profits was thought to be negative but small, with only a small proportion of producers' total outputs affected.](#)
- [MUP well implemented and compliance amongst alcohol licensed premises high. Minimum Unit Pricing for alcohol has been implemented effectively, with compliance high amongst licensed premises in Scotland. These are the key findings of the first study from the MUP evaluation, published today by NHS Health Scotland.](#)