

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Clare Haughey
Convener, Health, Social Care and Sport
Committee
hscs.committee@parliament.scot

16th April 2024

Dear Clare,

MINIMUM UNIT PRICING OF ALCOHOL

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Committee for their deliberations on Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) and ultimately for their approval of the two Orders that seek to continue the MUP of alcohol, and to increase the price per unit to 65 pence from 30 September 2024.

During the committee session I agreed to supply the following information which I hope committee members will find helpful. This includes the Scottish Government's final Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment, and details on the Simon Community Managed Alcohol Programme:

[Minimum Unit Pricing \(MUP\) Continuation and future pricing: Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Information/ImpactAssessments/MinimumUnitPricing(MUP)Continuationandfuturepricing:BusinessandRegulatoryImpactAssessment-gov.scot)

[Managed Alcohol Programme - Simon Community Scotland \(simonscotland.org\)](https://simonscotland.org/ManagedAlcoholProgramme)

I also committed to follow up in writing in relation to Paul Sweeney's question about whether we received feedback from the on-trade regarding MUP impacting on consumer behaviour. I can confirm that through our engagement with industry stakeholders during roundtables held in both 2022 and 2023, feedback from the on-trade was that the minimum unit price was not at a high enough level to impact on-trade prices. They reported no noticeable change to on-trade consumer behaviour as a result of minimum unit pricing.

I would also like to take the opportunity to provide further detail to an answer I provided in relation to the impact of MUP on sales of products such as whisky and other spirits. I would like to clarify that whilst there was no evidence of any noticeable impact on the on-trade, there was an impact on the off-trade.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

The PHS evaluation found the price per unit of beer, wine and spirits increased moderately, and by approximately the same relative amount. For example, one study found that the price of beer per unit increased by 7.3% in the year following MUP, compared to 6.1% for wine and 7.0% for spirits. This study also showed that supermarket own-brand spirits increased in price by a greater relative amount compared to the spirits category as a whole.¹ A further study summarised in PHS's final report analysed data on sales of alcohol at three years post-implementation of MUP, which estimated reductions in the off-trade sales of spirits of 5.5%, compared to if MUP had not been in place.²

I would also like to outline again the Scottish Government's actions when it comes to alcohol treatment and support for people with alcohol dependence. We have provided record funding of £112 million this year to Scotland's Alcohol and Drug partnerships, and this funding supports the critical delivery of services for those affected by alcohol dependency including:

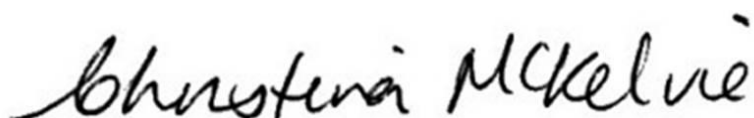
- Outreach;
- Psychosocial counselling;
- In-patient and community alcohol detox;
- Access to medication;
- Alcohol brief interventions (ABIs);
- Alcohol hospital liaison; and
- Alcohol related cognitive testing.

In addition, we continue to work with the UK Government on developing new UK-wide clinical guidelines for Alcohol Treatment. This guidance will look to introduce new approaches to treatment and will apply to a broad range of settings including primary care, hospital and justice. Finally, I would like to mention the work that is being carried out with Public Health Scotland to review the evidence on current delivery of Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs) to determine how the system could better meet the needs of individuals.

I hope that the additional information I have supplied is helpful.

I am delighted to mark this milestone as part of the next step for MUP in Scotland. The Committee's support for the continuation of MUP, and to increase the price per unit to 65p, will show that Scotland continues to be world leading with our policies to improve the health of people in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,



CHRISTINA MCKELVIE

¹ [Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in Scotland: Final report \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](https://publichealthscotland.scot)

² [Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in Scotland: Final report \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](https://publichealthscotland.scot)

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot