

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

16th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday, 3 May 2022

Tackling Alcohol Harms in Scotland

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. At its meeting today, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee will take evidence on tackling alcohol harms in Scotland, from the Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport.
2. This follows a session on Tuesday 1 March 2022 with Alcohol Focus Scotland, Public Health Scotland and Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP). The official report from that session is available here: [Meeting of the Parliament: HSCS/01/03/2022](#).

Background

3. In November 2018, the Scottish Government published its [Alcohol Framework 2018: Preventing Harm – next steps on changing our relationship with alcohol](#) which set out three strands of action to tackle alcohol harms.
4. In 2018 the Scottish Government and COSLA also set out six [Public Health Priorities for Scotland](#). The 4th priority was for “A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs”.
5. Under ‘Prevention and promoting active, healthy lifestyles’, the Scottish Government’s [2021-22 Programme for Government](#) committed to driving forward its Alcohol Framework. Specific actions include evaluating minimum unit pricing policy, improving alcohol labelling and consulting on potential alcohol advertising restrictions during 2022. It also commits to strengthening alcohol treatment and support services, with implementation of UK-wide clinical guidelines, improved staff training, and work to address complex needs.
6. On 22 February 2022, Public Health Scotland published a report on [Alcohol sales and harm in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).
7. Minimum unit pricing of alcohol came into force in Scotland on 1 May 2018 under the terms of the [Alcohol \(Minimum Pricing\) \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#). A review of the

policy which was due to take place in May 2020 was delayed as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Legislation on minimum unit pricing contains a 'sunset clause' which requires the Scottish Government to evaluate the policy's effect five years after its entry into force and to report to the Scottish Parliament.

Clerks to the Committee

28 April 2022