



c/o Royal College of Physicians
11 St Andrew's Place
London
NW1 4LE

The Rt Hon. David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

27th March 2013

Dear Prime Minister,

As leading representatives of the health, police, social work, charitable, religious and research sectors from across the United Kingdom, we are writing to you to demonstrate the wide-ranging and significant support that exists in the community for your Government's commitment to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol. The list of signatories to this letter is just a snap-shot of the large body of support for minimum unit pricing, as the most effective and targeted policy the Government can use right now to spearhead its action on alcohol.

While we remain concerned about recent reports of a policy u-turn, we were encouraged by last week's Budget in which the Chancellor once again stated the Government's commitment to deal with cheap, strong alcohol. Since you and your Government committed to introduce minimum unit pricing in the Alcohol Strategy last March, the evidence to show it works has strengthened.¹

If the recent media speculation is true, and the Government was to abandon its commitment to introduce minimum pricing, this would in effect mean turning its back on the most vulnerable groups in society, including children, who need to be protected from the damage alcohol can cause. Heavy drinkers not only risk their own health, they often harm others too. The results of alcohol fuelled crime, violence, child abuse and disorder can be witnessed on our streets, in Emergency Departments and in police cells. We know further damage is done behind closed doors which can go on for years.

Whilst the Government demonstrated its support for the British pub by scrapping the beer duty escalator, it would be the introduction of minimum unit price which would reduce the price differential between the on- and off-trade, and therefore encourage people to drink in pubs where there are better controls on alcohol sales. This would show a real commitment to this sector as well as saving many lives and reducing the societal problems related to harmful drinking. The Government needs to do everything it can to protect children, families and other vulnerable groups from the destruction alcohol can cause and your assurances on this matter would be gratefully received.

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Minimum unit pricing is not a silver bullet, but it is the backbone of the Government’s Alcohol Strategy. The success of all other policies will be undermined if cheap drink continues to flood the supermarket shelves and we know that other measures on price, such as banning below cost-selling or multi-buys will simply not be enough.

The Government must stand firm and fulfil its promise to make a real impact on the levels of devastation and destruction that are driven by excessive drinking in England and Wales. Together we offer you our support and call on you to ensure the Government’s commitment to implement minimum unit pricing is realised.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how we can assist you with introducing this crucial policy.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Barton, Chief Executive
Action on Addiction

Vivienne Evans OBE, Chief Executive
Adfam

Eric Appleby, Interim CEO
Alcohol Concern





Evelyn Gillan

Dr Evelyn Gillan, Chief Executive
Alcohol Focus Scotland

Ian Gilmore

Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, President
Alcohol Health Alliance UK

Janet Atherton

Dr Janet Atherton, President
Association of Directors of Public Health

Colin Shevills

Colin Shevills, Director
Balance North East

Rev Stephen Keyworth

Rev Stephen Keyworth, Head of Faith and Unity
Baptist Union of Great Britain

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Bridget N. Robb

**Bridget Robb, Interim Chief Executive
British Association of Social Workers**

A. Langford

**Andrew Langford, Chief Executive
British Liver Trust**

Mark Porter

**Dr Mark Porter, Chairman of BMA Council
British Medical Association**

Kieran Moriarty

**Dr Kieran Moriarty
British Society of Gastroenterology**

S. C. Duggan

**Sean Duggan, Chief Executive
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M. Bellis

Professor Mark Bellis, Director
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John Dwyer

John Dwyer, Police and Crime Commissioner
Cheshire PCC

Barry Coppinger

Barry Coppinger, Police and Crime Commissioner
Cleveland PCC

Mike Clancy

Dr Mike Clancy, President
College of Emergency Medicine

Tony Hogg

Tony Hogg, Police and Crime Commissioner
Devon and Cornwall PCC

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Alison Wheeler

Alison Wheeler, Director
Drink Wise North West

Ron Hogg

Ron Hogg, Police and Crime Commissioner
Durham PCC

Dr Dave Landrum

Dr Dave Landrum, Director of Advocacy
Evangelical Alliance

Sarah Brighton

Sarah Brighton, CEO
Hope UK

Katherine Brown

Katherine Brown, Director of Policy
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Eileen Kaner

Professor Eileen Kaner, Director
Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle University

David Snashall

Dr David Snashall, Professor of Occupational Medicine
King's College London

Dominique Florin

Dr Dominique Florin, Medical Director
Medical Council on Alcohol

Mark Wakelin

Revd Dr Mark Wakelin, President
Methodist Conference

Colin Drummond

Professor Colin Drummond, Professor of Addiction Psychiatry
National Addiction Centre, Kings College London

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Paul Lincoln

Paul Lincoln, CEO
National Heart Forum

Susan Fleisher

Susan Fleisher, Executive Director
National Organisation for Foetal Alcohol Syndrome – UK

Andrew Flanagan

Andrew Flanagan, CEO
NSPCC

G. Gallimore

George Gallimore, National PFEW lead on Alcohol and Drugs
Police Federation for England and Wales

Helena Chambers

Helena Chambers, Director
Quaker Action on Alcohol & Drugs





Dr Nick Sheron, Co-Chair
Responsibility Deal Alcohol Network

Dr J-P van Besouw, President
Royal College of Anaesthetists

Dr Clare Gerada, Chair of Council
Royal College of General Practitioners

Professor Cathy Warwick, Chief Executive
Royal College of Midwives

Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive & General Secretary
Royal College of Nursing





Sir Richard Thompson, President
Royal College of Physicians

Professor Susan Bailey OBE, President
Royal College of Psychiatrists

Professor Jonathan Shepherd
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Professor Richard Parish, Chief Executive
Royal Society for Public Health

Charles Fraser CBE, Chief Executive
St. Mungo's





Gareth Wallace, Public Affairs Adviser
Salvation Army

Dr Peter Rice, Chair
Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems

Paul Blakey MBE, Founder
Street Angels – Christian Nightlife Initiatives Network

Professor Lindsey Davies CBE, President
UK Faculty of Public Health

Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, Moderator of the General Assembly
United Reformed Church





L Bauld

**Professor Linda Bauld
University of Stirling**

ⁱ Recent evidence has emerged from Canada, which has led the way in successfully introducing a minimum price for alcohol. It shows that minimum pricing reduces alcohol consumption, particularly of higher-strength drinks, and has a greater impact on off-trade sales than on-trade (Stockwell, 2012). 2013 research found a 10% increase in the minimum price for all alcoholic beverages in British Columbia has resulted in a 31.7% reduction in wholly alcohol attributable deaths (Zhao, 2013).
References: Stockwell T et al (2012). The raising of minimum alcohol prices in Saskatchewan, Canada: impacts on consumption and implications for public health. *Am J Public Health*. 2012 Dec;102(12); Zhao J et al (2013) 'The Relationship between Minimum Alcohol Prices, Outlet Densities and Alcohol Attributable Deaths in British Columbia, 2002 to 2009' *Addiction*

