

**Evidence.  
Policy.  
Partnership.**

**Institute of  
Public Health** 

Dear Members of the North South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group,

This newsletter provides updates on recent alcohol research and policy relevant to Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In the September edition there are a number of publications listed, including a study looking at how restrictions on alcohol advertising in Ireland have affected awareness among adults. This edition also includes recent Health Research Board (HRB) publications on alcohol treatment services as well as two factsheets on alcohol use among both adults and young people. Also featured is the HSE Health and Wellbeing Annual Report 2022 and the recently published Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023 – 2027.

This month's issue includes two featured innovations. Firstly a 'Police-led alcohol intervention checklist and toolkit' developed by Alcohol Change UK, which aims to support police forces to tackle alcohol-related harm and provide awareness training for police forces in England and Wales. Secondly, an intervention examining if counter-advertising can dilute the marketing effects of alcohol sponsorship in elite sport.

There are several in-person and online events coming up in the Autumn, including a HRB conference on 'Advancing Alcohol Research in Ireland' on 14 September and the WHO 'Less Alcohol' webinar series.

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**Data and research**

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## Have Restrictions on Alcohol Advertising in Ireland Affected Awareness Among Adults? A Comparative Observational Study Using Nonprobability Repeat Cross-Sectional Surveys



In this study, led by Dr Nathan Critchlow (and predominantly funded by the Institute of Public Health) the authors used repeat cross-sectional surveys with adults to examine (a) changes in awareness of alcohol advertising 2 years after restrictions, when COVID-19 mitigation measures had eased, and (b) how changes in Ireland compared with Northern Ireland, where the restrictions did not apply. This study concluded that Ireland's restrictions have reduced past-month awareness of alcohol advertising at the cinema and on public transport but not outdoors. Continued monitoring is required.

[Read the journal article here](#)

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### Minimum Unit Pricing in Scotland: Has it been a success?

In this blog Dr Peter Rice, President of the European Alcohol Policy Alliance and Chair of the Institute of Alcohol Studies, examines the final report from Public Health Scotland that evaluates the impact of minimum unit pricing on alcohol in Scotland.



[Read the blog here](#)

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### Trends in Alcohol-Related Deaths by Sex in the US, 1999-2020



JAMA Network™

This study examined gender differences in the burden and trends of alcohol-related mortality in the US from 1999 to 2020. A total of 605,948 alcohol-attributed deaths were identified in this time period. The mortality burden was almost three times higher among males than females. However, temporal trends showed an increase in alcohol-related deaths for both males and females in recent years, with higher rates of increase among females relative to males. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions and evidence-based treatments for alcohol use among female individuals.

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[Access the abstract here](#)

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## Health Research Board Factsheet: Alcohol - the Irish situation

This factsheet provides up-to-date information on a range of indicators, including alcohol use and consumption, health-related harms, problem use of alcohol, the number of people requiring treatment for alcohol use, and the impact of alcohol on the Irish economy.



[Access the factsheet here](#)

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## Health Research Board Factsheet: Young people, drugs and alcohol - the Irish situation



This factsheet provides a range of information on substance use among young people including alcohol use, the number of young people receiving treatment for alcohol and drug use, how many young people die from alcohol and drug use, non-fatal overdoses and what the law says about underage drinking.

[Access the factsheet here](#)

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## Social disparities in alcohol's harm to others: evidence from 32 European countries

This study examined cross-sectional survey data from 2021, with almost 40,000 respondents from 32 European countries (including 1,100 respondents from Ireland). The study showed that 13.3% of Irish men and 12.3% of Irish women surveyed reported harm from a known person's drinking; 7.1% of Irish men and 2.2% of Irish women reported harm from a strangers' drinking; and across the 32 countries shows 9.1% of men and 9.8% of women reported harm from a known person's drinking and 5.8% of men and 2.9% of women said the same from a stranger.



**ELSEVIER**

[Read more about this research here](#)

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## HSE Health and Wellbeing Annual Report 2022



This report outlines the key activities that HSE Health and Wellbeing have delivered both nationally and locally with insights from policy areas, partners and various work streams. It includes updates on the priorities of the national Alcohol Programme, Ask About Alcohol website, integrated alcohol services, clinical research fellowship in Beaumont Hospital, prevention of foetal alcohol spectrum disorders and alcohol webinars.

[Read the report here](#)

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### **Can counter-advertising dilute marketing effects of alcohol sponsorship of elite sport: A field experiment**

This study aimed to determine whether showing spectators counter-advertisements exposing alcohol harms alone, or exposing alcohol harms and alcohol sponsorship, before watching an alcohol-sponsored sporting event promotes less favourable post-event attitudes and intentions towards alcohol sponsor brands and alcohol in general. A pre and post sporting event questionnaire was completed. Results showed that at alcohol-sponsored sporting events, counter-advertisements addressing alcohol harms may promote knowledge of harms and intentions to drink less. Counter-advertisements that additionally expose and critique alcohol sponsorship may detract from perceptions of sponsor brand image and intentions to purchase the sponsor's products.



[Read the article here](#)

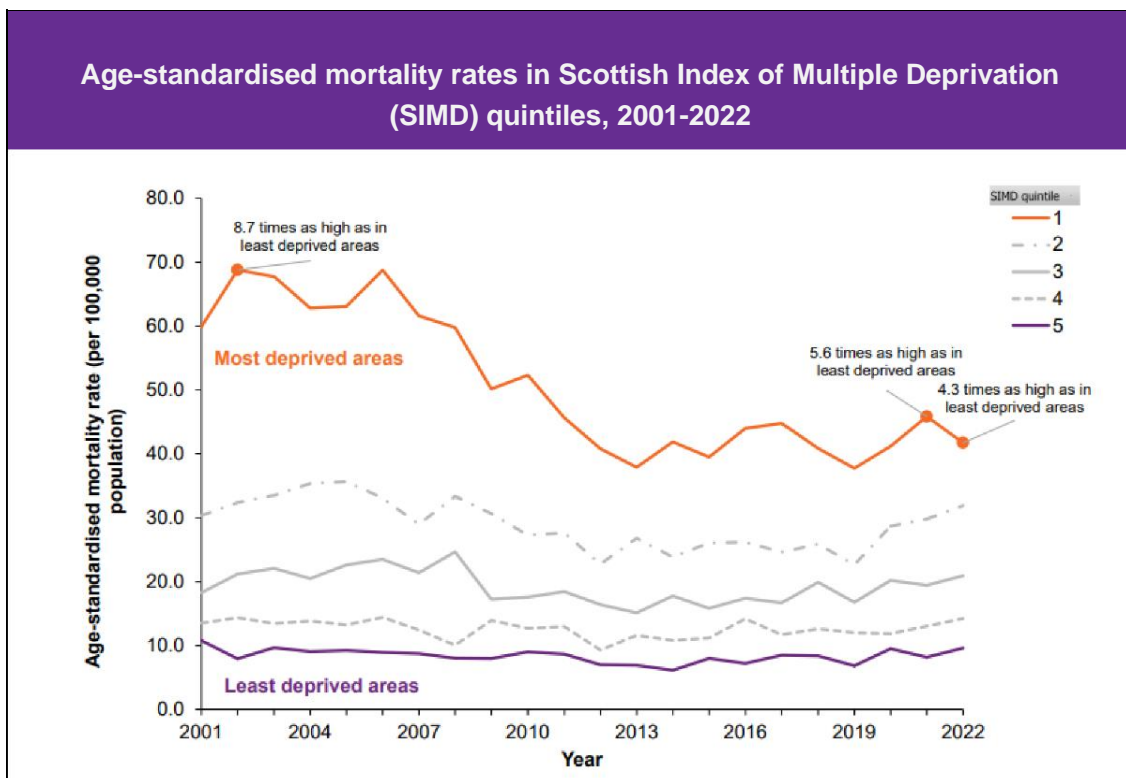
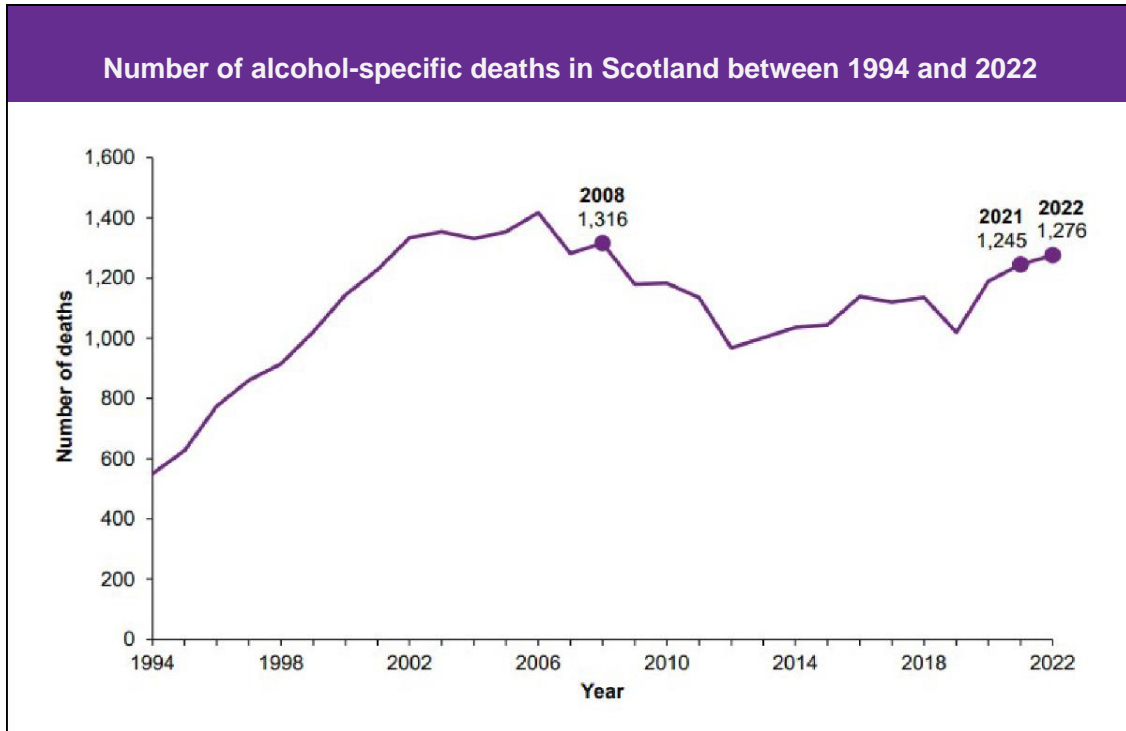
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### **Alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland**

The National Records of Scotland has published data on the number of alcohol-specific deaths registered in Scotland in 2022. There were 1,276 alcohol-specific deaths in 2022, an increase of 2% (31 deaths) on 2021. Female deaths increased by 31 to 440 deaths in 2022, whilst the the number of alcohol-specific

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male deaths remained unchanged from 2021. Male deaths continue to account for around two thirds of alcohol-specific deaths. Alcohol-specific deaths were 4.3 times as high in the most deprived areas of Scotland compared to the least deprived areas.



[Read the full report here](#)

**Treatment services**

## Ireland: National Drug Treatment Reporting System - 2022 Alcohol Treatment Demand



According to the Health Research Board, a total of 7,421 cases were treated for problem alcohol use in 2022, an increase of 8% on 2021. In 2022, the median age at which cases first started drinking alcohol was 16 years. Almost two-in-every-three (65.3%) cases were classified as alcohol dependent. Among those seeking treatment for alcohol use for the first time, the majority (64.0%) were classified as alcohol dependent, whilst 68.1% previously treated cases were classified as alcohol dependent.

[Access the research here](#)

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### Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023 - 2027

The Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023-2027 aims to build the role of the Health Services by 1. Enabling individuals to live longer, healthier lives through all stages of their life by supporting them to adopt healthy behaviours; 2. Supporting people to self-manage and live well with their chronic health condition(s); and 3. Supporting the development of healthy environments that help people and staff to adopt healthy behaviours. Table 4 (below) highlights specific actions for reducing the harms of alcohol use.

[Access the report here](#)

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**TABLE 4** ACTIONS FOR REDUCING THE HARMS OF ALCOHOL USE

No.	Action	Lead	Timeframe
1	Provide national guidance and leadership for the implementation of the <i>European framework for action on alcohol 2022–2025</i> <sup>13</sup> .	National Alcohol Policy Priority Programme	2023 - 2027
2	Support the evaluation and scaling up of <b>Integrated Alcohol Services</b> across each HSE Health Region.	National Alcohol Policy Priority Programme	2023 - 2027
3	Expand the provision of <b>evidence-based, alcohol-related brief interventions</b> both online and in primary healthcare settings.	National Alcohol Policy Priority Programme	2023 - 2027
4	Work with key stakeholders to progress the implementation of the actions in the <i>HSE Position Paper on Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)</i> <sup>14</sup> .	National Alcohol Policy Priority Programme	2023 - 2027
5	Support the implementation of agreed initiatives emerging from the review of the national drug and alcohol strategy, <i>Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025</i> <sup>15</sup> , including the prevention and education programme.	National Alcohol Policy Priority Programme	2023 - 2027

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## Innovation of the month

### Police-led alcohol intervention checklist and toolkit

This toolkit has been developed by Alcohol Change UK, who will also be delivering awareness sessions to police forces across England and Wales. This guidance document aims to support police forces to tackle alcohol-related harm by:

- Identifying how police officers can work strategically to reduce the impact of alcohol on crime and the non-crime aspects of policing
- Describing the interventions that frontline officers can pursue to tackle the various forms of alcohol-related harm
- Laying out the available data on the impact of alcohol misuse on policing
- Supporting other agencies to engage with the police in tackling that harm.

The toolkit does not include the role of alcohol in domestic abuse and sexual violence or issues such as spiking.



[Access the Toolkit here](#)

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## Parliamentary Questions



**Westminster**

### **Dan Carden MP (Labour)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing alcohol labelling that states the associated health risks of alcohol consumption.

[Read the full response here](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential impact of specialist alcohol teams on levels of alcohol harm.

[Read the full response here](#)

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## Events



### **Advancing alcohol research in Ireland**

The Health Research Board (HRB), in partnership with the Department of Health, will hold a research conference, "Advancing Alcohol Research in Ireland, on **Thursday, 14 September 2023**, at the Gibson Hotel in Dublin. The conference will bring together experts in the field of alcohol research to discuss evidence-based policy, existing and proposed legislation governing alcohol use, availability, and related harms. Attendees will learn about policy monitoring in other jurisdictions, and the importance of research that is trusted and independent. This event will also provide practical information on how to use the HRB's National Drugs Library and on potential sources of funding for research in this area.

The conference will be limited to those with no conflict of interest and with an interest in alcohol research.

[Register here](#)

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### **Alcohol labelling in the European Union - Supporting alcohol policy through information provision**

As part of the European Health Forum Gastein conference in September, this event has been organised as part of the WHO/EU Evidence into Action Alcohol Project (EVID-ACTION). The session discussion on 29 September will focus on the current issues related to providing consumer information in the context of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. What information do consumers need? And

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is digital provision of information enough, or does the relevant information for the consumer have to be on the label?

**Friday, 29 September 2023 | 10:00-11:15 CET | Austria**

[Register here](#)

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## **Less Alcohol Webinar Series**

WHO has announced the return of the Less Alcohol Webinar Series for its third edition, running from September to December 2023. This four-part webinar series continues its aim to start global conversations on policy blind spots critical to reducing alcohol consumption. Each webinar will last 60 minutes and include a keynote presentation, three to four spotlight country cases, active moderation and an interactive experience for online participants. All events are free with prior registration available at the links below.

### **Alcohol and the environment: how to green alcohol control policies?**

**18 September 2023, 13–14:00 CET**

### **Alcohol monopolies: what does it take for alcohol monopolies to work?**

**18 October 2023, 13–14:00 CET**

### **Youth and alcohol: do new trends demand new solutions?**

**7 November 2023, 13–14:00 CET**

### **Measuring alcohol policy implementation: are existing tools and methods fit for purpose and use?**

**7 December 2023, 13–14:00 CET**

[To find out more about this year's webinar series click here](#)

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