

**Evidence.
Policy.
Partnership.**



Dear Members of the North South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group,

The December edition of the NSAPAG newsletter includes the latest data from the Healthy Ireland Survey and Health Survey Northern Ireland. As part of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 in Ireland, restrictions on the times which alcohol advertisements can be shown on radio and television have been commenced and will come into effect in January 2025. Also featured in this edition is guidance published by the UK Government for in-person and remote alcohol and drug treatment services. This newsletter also includes details of a new video campaign “Alcohol is Toxic” launched by ‘Balance’ warning of the direct cause of alcohol in seven different types of cancer.

Data and Research

Healthy Ireland 2023 Survey

The Healthy Ireland Survey is conducted annually, with a representative sample of the population aged 15 and older living in Ireland. The 2023 report includes results related to alcohol consumption and information. 70% of individuals aged 15 or older report consuming alcohol during the past 12 months (73% of men and 67% of women). 38% of people drink at least once a week and 21% drink multiple times per week. Men are more likely than women to binge drink (37% and 12% respectively), with younger people more likely to do so than older people (36% of 15-24 year olds; 7% of those aged 75+). 12% of all respondents and 14% of drinkers report they often or always see health messages when looking at alcohol packaging, while 59% of all



respondents and 53% of drinkers report that they never see health messages on alcohol packaging.

[Access the report here](#)

Health Survey Northern Ireland 2022/23



The Health Survey Northern Ireland was conducted using a telephone survey with 3,582 interviews achieved. 77% of adults aged 18 and over reported that they drank alcohol (81% of men and 74% of women). Half of all drinkers reported drinking at least once a week. Over the last 12 months, 61% reported drinking the same as before, while almost a third (30%) reported drinking less and 9% reported drinking more. A quarter of male respondents and 9% of female respondents reported drinking above recommended weekly limits. Male drinkers (16%) were more likely than female drinkers (10%) to report drinking on three or more days per week. Almost three-fifths (57%) of male drinkers drank at least once a week compared with 42% of female drinkers.

[Access the report here](#)

Policy and legislation

Minister for Health commences broadcast watershed for alcohol advertisements

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has commenced section 19 of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 which introduces a restriction on the times which alcohol advertisements can be shown on radio and television. Under Section 19, there can be no advertisement for an alcohol product on television from 3am - 9 pm and on radio on a weekday from 3pm - 10am the following morning. The purpose of the



measure is to reduce the exposure of children and young people to advertisements for alcohol products. The provision will come into operation on 10 January 2025.

[Access the press release here](#)

The House of Commons Guidance on Alcohol Licencing



**House of Commons
Library**

The House of Commons Library has issued a series of briefing notes in relation to alcohol licencing, including an overview of alcohol licencing and cumulative impact assessments in England and Wales, how to object to a licence, mandatory licencing conditions, children in pubs, and drinking in the street.

[Access the briefings here](#)

HM Treasury Autumn Statement 2023

The UK government has announced it will freeze alcohol duties until 1 August 2024 and delay its annual uprating decision to Spring Budget 2024 to give businesses time to adapt to the duty system introduced on 1 August 2023 (page 95).



HM Treasury

[Access the statement here](#)

The Price of Alcohol: Explained (YouTube)



**Institute of
Alcohol Studies**

This video produced by the Institute of Alcohol Studies explains how the cost of alcohol impacts consumption rates and subsequent harm, how alcohol duties have changed over time, how minimum unit pricing works and whether it is effective in reducing drinking, and the cost of alcohol harm to the economy.

[Watch the video here](#)

Guidance

Substance misuse: providing remote and in-person interventions

This guidance is for alcohol and drug treatment services and provides advice on the appropriate use of remote and in-person interventions for different service user groups. It covers different parts of the treatment journey (including assessment, key working and review), treatment interventions (including opiate substitute treatment and physical and mental health interventions), harm reduction interventions (including needle and syringe programmes and hepatitis C tests) and specific vulnerable groups (including young people and victims of domestic abuse).



[Access the guidance here](#)

Blog

British Medical Association: One drink, don't drive



In this blog, the BMA is calling to lower the legal drink-drive limit to the European average (50mg/100ml of blood) as an important first step. This policy change will come up against significant financial and political lobbying, from an industry that has a vested interest in minimising the impact of alcohol-related harm. And, while crucial on its own, this change won't address the wider impact of drugs and alcohol on our society.

[Read the full blog here](#)

Parliamentary debates

Department of Justice and Equality - Alcohol Sales: 28 November 2023

Cathal Crowe (TD) To ask the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality if plans for the deregulation of the pub industry will result in more off licences in the future; if this will de-value the cost of a licence; and if off-licence hours of businesses will be extended under the plans ([details supplied](#)).



[Read the Minister's response here](#)

Department of Justice and Equality - Departmental Data: 28 November 2023

Peadar Tóibín (TD) To ask the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality the number of persons served with the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 in the State where a declaration was made to the courts as having an official diagnosis of a [disability](#) or health condition under categories ([details supplied](#)), in each of the past five years, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.



[Read the Minister's response here](#)

Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill 2023: Committee Stage

Senator Ruane welcomed the inclusion of "drug or alcohol use" in Amendment 2 of this Bill. Senator Ruane noted "It is a simple amendment which seeks to add drug and alcohol use to the definition of what constitutes vulnerability in the context of the Bill. Section 9 provides that one of functions of An Garda Síochána is to prevent "harm to individuals, in particular individuals who are vulnerable or at risk. I welcome this provision,



but I think we have an opportunity, through this amendment, to expand on how we conceptualise and understand vulnerability for the purposes of the Bill.”

[Read the full transcript here](#)

Innovation of the month

‘Alcohol is Toxic’ Campaign



‘Balance’ has launched the “Alcohol is Toxic” campaign supported by Cancer Research UK and local authorities to warn alcohol is a direct cause of 7 types of cancer, including bowel, breast, liver throat and mouth cancer. This campaign follows the journey of alcohol through the body, mutating cells and leading to the formation of a tumour. It has been developed with input from doctors to depict the evidence on how alcohol causes cancer.

[View the campaign video here](#)

Season’s greetings and wishing you every success for the coming year.

