

**Evidence.  
Policy.  
Partnership.**



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 May edition you will find a number of data and research publications, including a recent report on the costs and benefits of the Sale of Alcohol Bill as well as a WHO report on zero and low alcohol drinks. This edition also features plans by the Irish government to introduce health labels for alcohol products and a House of Commons briefing paper on the new alcohol duty system coming into effect in the UK. A new 'innovation of the month' features the Leeds City Council Alcohol Licensing Matrix. The newsletter also includes details of a new all-island Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Hub and the PEACEPLUS Funding Programme.

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## Policy and Legislation

### **Ireland to introduce comprehensive health labelling of alcohol products**

Ireland has signed into law the Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2023, which will see comprehensive health labelling of alcohol products sold in Ireland from 2026 and provide that similar health information will be available for customers in licensed premises. The law will apply from 22 May 2026 and there is a three-year lead-in time to give businesses time to prepare for the change.



[Read the press release here](#)

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## Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021

All provisions within the Act have now been brought into operation. A [guide](#) to the Act has been published by the Department for Communities.



[Read the guide here](#)

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### The new alcohol duty system



The UK Government will implement a new alcohol duty system from 1 August 2023. This briefing discusses the current and new duty regime, and how the new system has been developed. The incoming system simplifies the current structure, and broadly taxes alcoholic products more the stronger they get. Provisions under the Windsor Framework will apply the new alcohol duty system in Northern Ireland.

[Read about this legislation here](#)

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## Data and Research

### The Sale of Alcohol Bill (2022): An analysis of costs and benefits



This report by Prof Thomas Babor (University of Connecticut) notes that many provisions in the Sale of Alcohol Bill have the potential to increase alcohol availability and facilitate access to drinking opportunities. Based on alcohol availability theory and the considerable amount of supporting research, it is highly likely that the Bill could contribute to an upward trend in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm. The report concludes that the costs of expanding the night-time economy are likely to far outweigh the benefits if public health issues continue to be ignored.

[Read the report here](#)

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## A public health perspective on zero and low-alcohol beverages

According to the WHO, significant uncertainty remains about the effects of zero and low-alcohol beverages (NoLos) on alcohol consumption at the population level and their effects on public health. Relatively little is known about the effectiveness of policy-levers to address the availability of NoLo products. The WHO recommends that additional research, independent from the alcohol industry, is needed to determine viable policy solutions to NoLo products.



[Read the brief here](#)

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## Alcohol control policies reduce all-cause mortality in Baltic Countries and Poland between 2001 and 2020



The aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of alcohol control policies in the Baltic countries and Poland, which were implemented between 2001 and 2020, on all-cause mortality. The authors concluded that there was a reduction in all-cause mortality among men 20+ years of age in Baltic countries and Poland, and thus, the policies should be continued.

[Read more about this study here](#)

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## Guidance

### Reporting about alcohol: a guide for journalists

This WHO guide presents ways for journalists to cover and think about alcohol consumption and its harms more broadly, as well as the proven solutions to this problem. It was developed by researching how alcohol is covered in media worldwide and how it can reflect and affect attitudes, practices and beliefs about alcohol consumption. [Access the guidance here](#)



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## Parliamentary Questions



Deputy Martin Kenny asked the Minister for Justice if he is considering carrying out a public health assessment on the Sale of Alcohol Bill 2022, as recommended by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice in its pre-legislative scrutiny report of the Bill; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[Read the full response here](#)



Deputy Alan Dillon asked the Minister for Health if the assessment that has been undertaken by his Department on the proposed "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan" that would impose EU-wide labels on alcohol products; if these measure will impact any unilateral measures proposed under the Public Health (Alcohol) (Labelling) Regulations 2022; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

[Read the full response here](#)



Rachael Maskell MP asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of creating control zones for the licensing of venues selling alcohol.

[Read the full response here](#)

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## Innovation of the month

### Leeds City Council Alcohol Licensing Data Matrix

Within Leeds, there are some areas which have high levels of deprivation, as well as high levels of alcohol related harm and alcohol related anti-social behaviour. Leeds City Council licensing and public health teams worked together to develop an alcohol licensing data matrix. This matrix demonstrates where a locality is at risk of health harms from licensing activity by ranking localities against each other through comparing different data sets.



[Read more here](#)

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## North-South Co-operation

### FASD Hub Ireland and Northern Ireland



FASD Hub Ireland and FASD Hub Northern Ireland is a free and confidential support service providing signposting and advice for Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The Hub is open to individuals living with FASD, or who think they may be; parents, carers and guardians; and those working with or supporting people living with FASD, including educators, health care workers, social workers, welfare and residential.

[Read more here](#)

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### PEACEPLUS Funding Programme

PEACEPLUS is a new European Union funding Programme, designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. The PEACEPLUS Programme has been divided



into six themes – each of which aims to address longstanding social, environmental and economic challenges which have and continue to impact communities.

[Read more about the programme here](#)

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## Events



**‘Advancing alcohol research in Ireland’ conference hosted by the Health Research Board and Department of Health is taking place in the Gibson Hotel, Dublin on 14 September 2023 from 10:00 – 16:00.**

NB This is an invitation only event.

[Click here for further details](#)

**The Institute of Alcohol studies is hosting an online webinar - Alcohol use in the cost-of-living crisis on Thursday 22 June 14:00 – 15:00.**

[Click here to register.](#)

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