

There is a strong body of evidence to show that making alcohol less affordable has the biggest impact in reducing consumption levels and, therefore, in reducing health and social harms.

Attempts to increase the cost of alcohol through levying higher taxes have not been successful because retailers, particularly supermarkets, have tended to absorb the cost of the increased taxes and have sold alcohol as a loss-leader.

Focus has therefore shifted to the possibility of introducing a minimum price for alcohol. This would ensure that retailers cannot sell alcohol below a certain baseline cost. The minimum price would be set per unit of alcohol, termed 'minimum unit pricing'.

Outcomes

The PHA has placed its support firmly behind measures proposed by the Northern Ireland Assembly to control the consumption of alcohol by introducing minimum unit pricing and bans on irresponsible drink promotions.

Next steps

We must continue to lobby for local measures to restrict the availability of alcohol. Reducing alcohol consumption will reduce the impact on health and other public services and there has never been a more urgent time to do so, given the increasing pressure on public finances.

Key resources:

- [Public reminded “alcohol is a powerful drug”: Alcohol Awareness Week | HSC Public Health Agency](#)
- [Alcohol | Drugs and Alcohol - PHA](#)
- [Finding Help | Minding Your Head](#)
- [Lifeline | Lifeline Helpline](#)

[Print](#)