

The Government's Consultation on policies to cut alcohol fuelled crime and anti-social behaviour

Response from the Gloucestershire Drug and Alcohol Working Group and the Gloucestershire Stronger Safer Justice Commission

These views have been collated as a partnership response from the expert drug and alcohol working group and presented at the Gloucestershire Stronger Safer Justice Commission.

We support the aim of the alcohol strategy and welcome the consideration made on the evidence of links between costs, levels of consumption and alcohol related harm. It is felt that the strategy could go further in considering health harms.

Consultation Question 1:

Do you agree that this MUP level would achieve these aims?

Yes – we agree with this policy that would result in significant benefits of reducing drinking levels. The government should be alerted to potential impact on some groups, including young people who may pay the additional price or potentially would move onto other harmful substances that have the same effect but are cheaper and to potential increases in the illegal production of alcohol or illegal importation of cheap alcohol, although the Impact Assessment considers there is no evidence to suggest this would be the case. We would like the government to consider whether to set the MUP at 50pence in line with Scotland to increase benefits gained and reduce the likelihood of cross boarder purchase issues.

Consultation Question 2:

Should other factors or evidence be considered when setting a minimum unit price for alcohol?

Yes – we would like the government to consider Scotland's decision to introduce a 50 pence MUP and feel there should be a strong case for setting a deliberate lower MUP.

It was felt that there needed to be close monitoring of any impact on acquisitive crime as while alcohol related crime and violence may reduce, there was a concern that other forms of crime, such as theft of alcohol or cash may increase. It will be important to ensure a wider perspective, for example ensuring adequate infrastructure within specialist support services, criminal justice and enforcement agencies.

Consultation Question 3:

How do you think the level of minimum unit price set by the Government should be adjusted over time?

The minimum unit price should be reviewed after a set period

There would need to be a clear system for monitoring and evaluation to analyse impacts on health and crime and across society and economy and sectors before making this decision and to help build on the evidence base.

Consultation Question 4:

The aim of minimum unit pricing is to reduce the consumption of harmful and hazardous drinkers, while minimising the impact on responsible drinkers. Do you think that there are any other people, organisations or groups that could be particularly affected by a minimum unit price for alcohol?

Yes - Small retail outlets

There could be an impact on those on low incomes; the evidence cited within the Impact Assessment was that low income customers tend not to purchase off-trade alcohol. It was also noted that the burden of alcohol related harm falls disproportionately in our most deprived communities and that the rates of alcohol related admissions and deaths increase with deprivation. Young people are also likely to be affected although the benefits would be to prevent pre-loading. Other points raised were that the reduction of cheap alcohol would help to remove temptation those recovering from alcohol addiction and there could be a beneficial effect on providing a non alcoholic focussed environment.

Consultation Question 5:

Do you think there should be a ban on multi-buy promotions involving alcohol in the off-trade?

The majority view was yes providing it was part of a multi faceted strategy to reduce alcohol consumption; the same ban on promotions should apply to pubs and clubs.

Consultation Question 6:

Are there any further offers which should be included in a ban on multi-buy promotions?

Yes – extra loyalty points e.g. supermarket cards

Any other promotional items /incentives linked to sale of alcohol e.g. buy 3 bottles get a free glass.

Consultation Question 7:

Should other factors or evidence be considered when considering a ban on multi-buy promotions?

Yes

There will impact on legitimate buyers or individuals “bulk buying” specifically for functions or events e.g. wedding. It would be difficult to regulate but test purchasing could play a role in this. A concern was that businesses will react and change pricing structures.

The government needs to look wider than this and develop strategies to impact on lifestyle choices and changing behaviours.

Consultation Question 8:

The aim of a ban on multi-buy promotions is to stop promotions that encourage people to buy more than they otherwise would, helping people to be aware of how much they drink, and to tackle irresponsible alcohol sales. Do you think that there are any other groups that could be particularly affected by a ban on multi-buy promotions?

Possibly - catering companies and business who buy from wholesalers; lower income families who drink responsibly and potentially legitimate buyers (drinking responsibly) who are buying for a specific event or function, although there is reassurance within the Impact Assessment that multi-buy is to reduce the quantity of alcohol purchased rather than reduce the value for money.

Consultation Question 9:

Do you think each of the mandatory licensing conditions is effective in promoting the licensing objectives (crime prevention / public safety / public nuisance / prevention of harm to children - see glossary)?

Please state Yes / No / Don't know in each box:

		Prevention of crime and disorder	Public safety	Prevention of public nuisance	Protection of harm from children
A.	Irresponsible promotions	YES	YES	YES	YES
B.	Dispensing alcohol directly into the mouth	NO	NO	NO	NO
C.	Mandatory provision of free tap water	NO	YES	YES	NO
D.	Age verification policy	YES	YES	YES	YES
E.	Mandatory provision of small measures	NO	NO	NO	NO

These should be considered as part of a wider strategy and not in isolation.

Consultation Question 10:

Do you think that the mandatory licensing conditions do enough to target irresponsible promotions in pubs and clubs?

Greater consideration needs to be given to Public Health and levels of alcohol harm when processing licensing applications.

Consultation Question 11:

Are there other issues related to the licensing objectives (prevention of crime and disorder / public safety/ prevention of public nuisance / protection of children from harm) which could be tackled through a mandatory licensing condition?

Yes - Responsible licensees need to engage with clients to guide people with drink problems to organisations that could help e.g. useful numbers to contact.

Consultation Question 12:

Do you think the current approach, with five mandatory licensing conditions applying to the on-trade and only one of those to the off-trade, is appropriate?

No – it was felt that irresponsible promotions should also be applied to the off trade.

Consultation Question 13:

What sources of evidence on alcohol-related health harm could be used to support the introduction of a cumulative impact policy (CIP) if it were possible for a CIP to include consideration of health?

The development of a comprehensive set of indicators and monitoring systems for reductions in alcohol related harm across health, social, economic and criminal justice systems, led by Public Health England and based on the work that has already been done on the North West Public Health Observatory. Suggestions include:

- Alcohol related hospital admissions and attendances
- Alcohol related offending – affects on mental health and physical health.
- Treatment provider data

- Anti-social behaviour incidences/complaints
- Self reported alcohol consumption
- Impact of parental alcohol misuse – children taken into care and child protection orders.
- Correlation between sale of alcohol and antisocial behaviour/crime within local areas
- Alcohol related deaths
- Data on street based drinking

Consultation Question 14:

Do you think any aspects of the current cumulative impact policy process would need to be amended to allow consideration of data on alcohol-related health harms?

Yes - Robust and timely information would be required at a local level to assess the impact of CIP. It was felt that it may be difficult to obtain the level of data, e.g. at premises, street level to support this. Health being added as a CIP would support the involvement of health as a responsible body on the licence application process.

Consultation Question 15:

What impact do you think allowing consideration of data on alcohol-related health harms when introducing a cumulative impact policy would have if it were used in your local area?

It would enable better targeting of resources; the policy would need to be consistent across all communities.

Consultation Question 16:

Should special provision to reduce the burdens on ancillary sellers be limited to specific types of business, and/or be available to all types of business providing they meet certain qualification criteria for limited or incidental sales? (Please select one option in each row):

- A. YES: The provision should be limited to a specific list of certain types of business and the kinds of sales they make (see paragraph 9.5).
- B. NO: The provision should be available to all businesses providing they meet certain qualification criteria to be an ancillary seller (see paragraph 9.6).
- C. NO: The provision should be available to both a specific list of premises and more widely to organisations meeting the prescribed definition of an ancillary seller, that is, both options A and B.

Consultation Question 17:

If special provision to reduce licensing burdens on ancillary sellers were to include a list of certain types of business, do you think it should apply to the following? (Please select one option in each row):

- A. YES - Accommodation providers, providing alcohol alongside accommodation as part of the contract.
- B. NO - Hair and beauty salons, providing alcohol alongside a hair or beauty treatment.
- C. NO - Florists, providing alcohol alongside the purchase of flowers.
- D. NO - Cultural organisations, such as theatres, cinemas and museums, providing alcohol alongside cultural events as part of the entry ticket.
- E. NO - Regular charitable events, providing alcohol as part of the wider occasion.²³

Consultation Question 18:

Do you have any suggestions for other types of businesses to which such special provision could apply without impacting adversely on one or more of the licensing objectives?

Ad hoc and infrequent charitable events, village fetes, special national / local events

Consultation Question 19:

The aim of a new ‘ancillary seller’ status is to reduce burdens on businesses where the sale of alcohol is only a small part of their business and occurs alongside the provision of a wider product or service, while minimising loopholes for irresponsible businesses and maintaining the effectiveness of enforcement. Do you think that the qualification criteria proposed in paragraph 9.6 meet this aim?

Yes but with the restrictions and enforcement.

Consultation Question 20:

Do you think that these proposals would significantly reduce the burdens on ancillary sellers? (Please select one option in each row):

- A. Don't know - Allow premises making ancillary sales to request in their premises licence application that the requirement for a personal licence holder be removed.
- B. Don't know - Introduce a new, light-touch form of authorisation for premises making ancillary sales - an ‘ASN’ but retain the need for a personal licence holder.
- C. Yes - Introduce a new, light touch form of authorisation for premises making ancillary sales – an ASN – with no requirement for a personal licence holder.

Consultation Question 21:

Do you think that the following proposals would impact adversely on one or more of the licensing objectives (see glossary)? (Please select one option in each row):

Unknown

Consultation Question 22:

What other issues or options do you think should be considered when taking forward proposals for a lighter touch authorisation?

The need to ensure adequate enforcement capacity and mechanisms

Consultation Question 23:

Do you agree that licensing authorities should have the power to allow organisers of community events involving licensable activities to notify them through a locally determined notification process?

Yes

Consultation Question 24:

What impact do you think a locally determined notification would have on organisers of community events? (Please select one option in each row):

It was felt that it would reduce the burden

Consultation Question 25:

Should the number of TENs which can be given in respect of individual premises be increased?

No

Consultation Question 26:

No comment

Consultation Question 27:

Do you think that licensing authorities should have local discretion around late night refreshment in each of the following ways? (Please select one option in each row):

- A. Yes - Determining that premises in certain areas are exempt.
- B. Yes - Determining that certain premises types are exempt in their local area.

Consultation Question 28:

Do you agree that motorway service areas should receive a nationally prescribed exemption from regulations for the provision of late night refreshment? (Please select one option):

The group's response on this is with the assumption that alcohol is not sold at motorway service areas and that this question relates to food and non-alcoholic drinks. The group would strongly disagree to alcohol being provided in motorway services.

- A. Yes - Motorway service areas should receive a nationally prescribed exemption from regulations for the provision of late night refreshment.

Consultation Questions 29-35:

No comment