



ALCOHOL KILLS

six people every day in Scotland¹

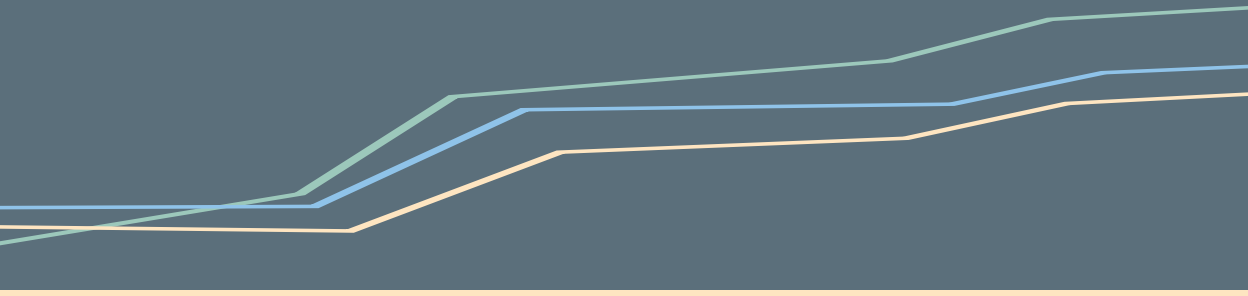
Doctors believe that urgent action is required to tackle the growing problem of alcohol-related harm in Scotland. Twice as many people are dying an alcohol-related death in Scotland than anywhere else in the UK². In most European countries, trends of alcohol-related harm are on the way down. In Scotland, they are on the way up. SHAAP (Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems) has been established by the Scottish Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties to raise awareness of alcohol-related health problems and to promote solutions based on the best available evidence.

1 in 2 women and

2 in 3 men

DRINK MORE

than the recommended daily limits³

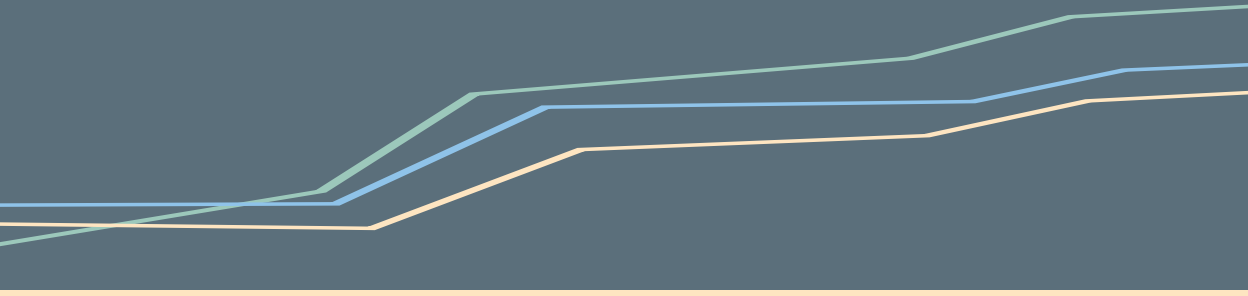


Scotland and alcohol - a problem of excess

Nine out of ten adults drink alcohol in Scotland⁴. Alcohol taken in moderation can be a source of pleasure within society. It can also be the cause of significant health, social and economic damage. The increasing levels of alcohol-related harm confirm that in Scotland, we've got the balance wrong. Drinking to excess has become the norm. As a nation we cannot go on drinking more and more without increasing health damage. Alcohol consumption in Scotland and the UK has doubled between 1960 and 2002⁵. The UK is now one of the heaviest drinking countries in the world and whilst consumption in other countries is falling, our consumption continues to rise⁶.

52% increase in ALCOHOLIC LIVER DISEASE

between 1998 and 2002⁷



The price we pay

Tackling harmful drinking would affect every area of our national life. Up to one hundred thousand children in Scotland are affected by their parents' excessive drinking⁸ and alcohol is involved in many domestic abuse incidents⁹. Every day in Scotland emergency departments deal with over 70 alcohol-related-assaults¹⁰. Alcohol-related problems are estimated to cost Scotland over £1 billion every year¹¹. Taking into account increased disposable income; alcohol was 62% more affordable in 2005 than in 1980¹². Low pricing is found to have a particularly powerful effect on young people's drinking¹³ and there is evidence of a link between regular recreational alcohol use in adolescence and alcohol dependence in early adulthood¹⁴. A recent investigation by the Competition Commission found that 10 supermarket chains were using alcohol as a loss leader¹⁵.

1 in 3 young people in the UK report

BEING DRUNK

on two or more occasions compared

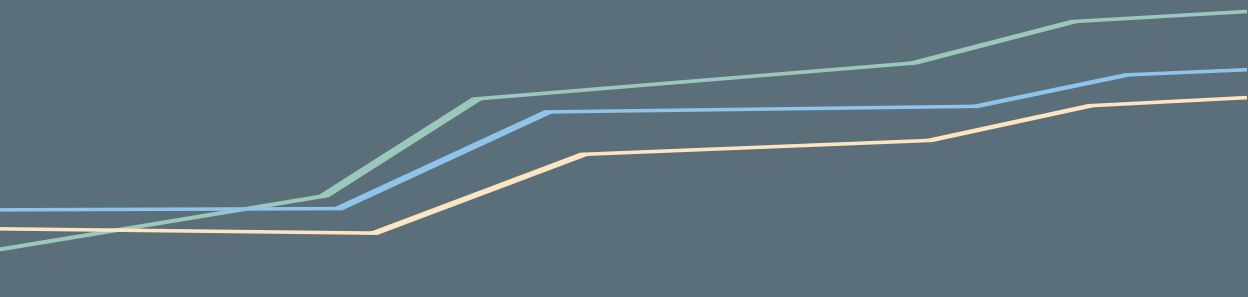
to 1 in 6 in other countries¹⁶

Price and availability

SHAAP believes that cheap drinks promotions and multiple purchase offers are irresponsible given the evidence linking low pricing with increased alcohol-related harm¹⁷. The new Licensing (Scotland) Act will restrict the ability of pubs and clubs to run cheap drinks promotions but given that there has been an increase in the amount of alcohol bought in shops, supermarkets and off-licences¹⁸, SHAAP believes that irresponsible promotions should be outlawed in all sectors. SHAAP would like to see:

- The promotions mechanism in the Licensing (Scotland) Act extended to cover supermarkets, off-licences and corner shops
- The discretionary code in the Act requiring alcohol to be displayed separately from other goods made a mandatory condition
- Stricter enforcement of the laws relating to alcohol sales.

People living in deprived communities are
four times more likely to die an
ALCOHOL-RELATED DEATH
than those living in more affluent areas¹⁹

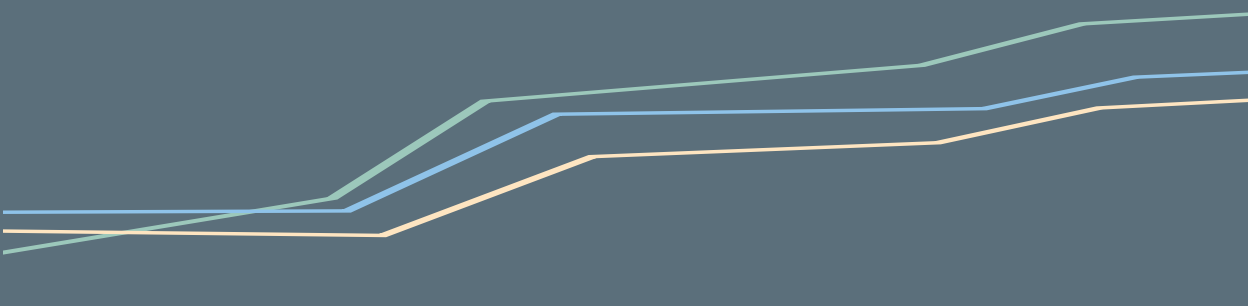


Treating people with alcohol problems

One in three heavy drinkers in Scotland has tried to reduce their drinking²⁰. Brief advice given by health professionals is highly cost effective in reducing alcohol consumption for people who are drinking hazardously²¹. A UK treatment study in 2005 estimated a health cost saving of £5 for every £1 invested in treatment²². More needs to be done to ensure the implementation of brief interventions in primary health care and hospital settings. This should include giving information to pregnant women on the hazards of drinking during pregnancy. SHAAP would like to see:

- Effective treatments from brief interventions to residential programmes available to people with alcohol problems
- Staff trained and supported to deliver evidence-based interventions
- Services of sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the populations they serve.

Medical undergraduates today receive
less teaching on alcohol despite the rise in
ALCOHOL-RELATED HEALTH DAMAGE²³



Educating doctors about alcohol

It is crucial that the doctors of tomorrow are adequately educated about alcohol problems to enable them both to detect problems and treat patients. Doctors must also recognise the important role they have in society regarding their own relationship with alcohol. SHAAP believes that teaching on alcohol problems must be in proportion to the harm it causes and would like to see:

- A core curriculum on alcohol for both undergraduate and postgraduate medical education
- The five Scottish Medical Schools, the Deaneries, the Royal Colleges and NHS Education Scotland collaborating to deliver a core curriculum on alcohol across the career span
- Medical students and doctors receiving training on the potential for alcohol-related impairment and trained in accessing help for themselves and colleagues as part of their duty of care to protect patients.

4 in 10 prisoners

WERE DRUNK

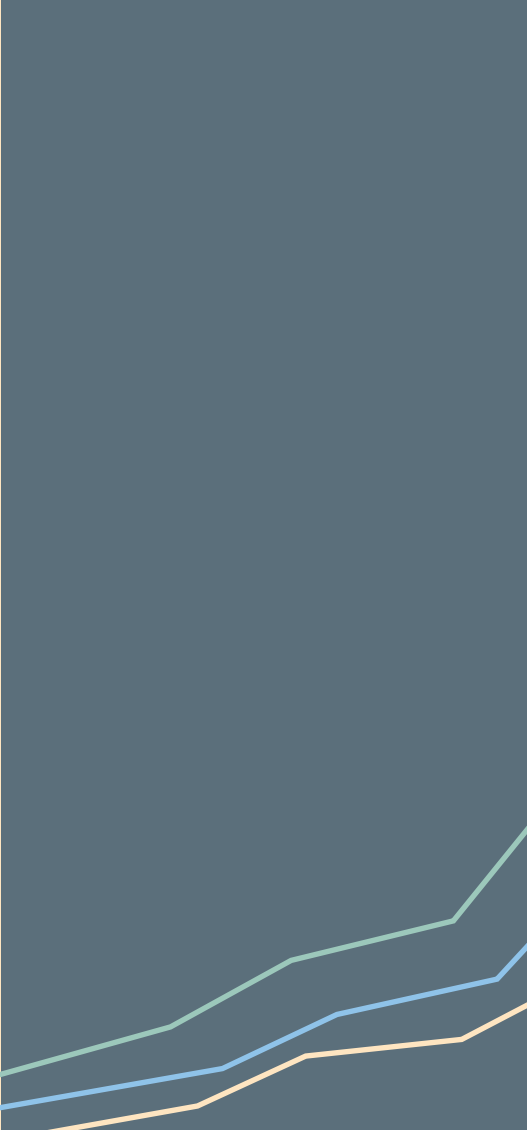
at the time of the offence²⁴

Challenging the culture of excessive drinking

Alcohol has always played an important part in Scottish society. SHAAP recognises the social benefits of moderate consumption but believes that we need to challenge the culture in Scotland which condones heavy drinking. Scotland is paying too high a price for alcohol excess. It's time to acknowledge the harm caused to individuals, families and to society and to take action to address this. SHAAP believes that public health messages in Scotland should emphasise the harmful consequences of heavy drinking and that our current drinking culture should not be seen as a source of pride to Scotland but seriously damaging to our nation's health, wealth and well-being.

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