

Minimum pricing - key facts and constituency questions for MPs



Key facts and misconceptions about minimum pricing

- Some people are concerned that a minimum price of 50p per unit could be unfair to moderate drinkers on a low income, but ultra low price alcohol is currently disproportionately affecting those from disadvantaged communities. A recent report for the Department of Health from September 2011, "Narrowing the Health gap", stated that were it not for alcohol related deaths, the objective to narrow the overall life expectancy gaps for the most deprived local authorities would almost certainly have been achieved.
- Minimum pricing would not increase the price of alcohol sold in pubs and nor would it increase the price of most off licence alcohol. It seeks to prevent the sale of the damagingly cheap alcohol which is targeted by harmful and binge drinkers.
- A minimum price of 45p per unit would mean only that a standard sized bottle of whisky could not be sold for less than £12.60 and a 10-unit bottle of wine for less than £4.50. A pint of beer with 2 units would have to cost at least 90p.
- Harmful drinkers buy fifteen times more alcohol than moderate drinkers yet they pay on average 40% less per unit. Minimum pricing has recently been shown from a study in Canada to significantly lower the consumption of alcohol.
- Minimum pricing would help to protect our local pubs and reduce the trend to people drinking cheap alcohol at home or on the streets. Alcohol remains 40% more affordable than it was in 1980.
- With a 50p per unit minimum price, a harmful drinker will spend on average an extra £163 per year whilst a moderate drinker will spend an extra £12 per year.
- Alcohol harm costs our economy at least £20 billion per year and is likely to be much higher if the full range of costs are included.
- In 3 years time this Government will be judged not just on the economy but on a range of markers such as waiting times in A&E, antisocial behaviour, violent crime and our prison population. Health inequality and even teenage pregnancy rates...It is hard to think of many that would not be improved by an effective alcohol strategy and I believe that has to include an effective minimum price for alcohol.

Possible further questions for your MP:

- Can you tell me how many alcohol-related deaths occurred in this constituency in the last year for which figures are available?
- Have you spoken to your local consultant in A&E, liver specialist or Director of Public Health to find out what impact alcohol has on local NHS resources?
- Have you spoken to your Chief Constable to find out what impact alcohol is having on local police resources?
- Have you been on patrol with your local police force to discuss the impact that alcohol is having on police resources locally?