

As alcohol has become more affordable and accessible in the UK, so consumption has risen sharply.^v This is a particularly worrying trend, as a large body of evidence shows that incidences of alcohol-related harm to health within the population are strongly linked to levels of drinking.^{vi}

We are therefore calling for a substantial effort by the Government to reduce overall consumption levels of alcohol in Scotland. In particular, Cancer Research UK believes the following measures are necessary and we support Scottish Government proposals on these issues:

- x A review of the impact of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, to ascertain the effect on overall consumption levels and on the accessibility of alcohol.
- x Legislation to prevent the irresponsible promotion of alcohol by retailers, including a ban on the sale of alcohol below cost price.
- x Information labels on all packaged alcoholic beverages, giving details of the drink's alcoholic content and a health message that makes clear that the less you drink, the more you reduce your risk of a raft of chronic health conditions.

Information for parents

We would support the provision of information for parents and other groups as part of a sustained campaign to raise awareness of the health and other risks associated with drinking alcohol.

Cancer Research UK believes that more attention must be paid to the long-term health risks associated with alcohol consumption. Strategies designed to tackle alcohol-related harm have focussed largely on the dangers of binge drinking (acute health risks and societal impact of alcohol), but little attention is paid to the consequences of sustained moderate levels of drinking over a long period. We believe that individuals should be aware of the range of risks associated with alcohol consumption, and call for cancer to be consistently identified as a potential consequence of alcohol consumption.

Not only should individuals be aware of the risks associated with different levels of drinking, but they should also be aware of what constitutes an appropriate level of consumption to minimise risk. Cancer Research UK believes the use of guidelines to inform consumers can be helpful, but we are concerned that many individuals are unaware of what these guidelines are and what these mean in terms of different drinks. We urge the Scottish Government to make every effort to ensure that there is widespread recognition of drinking information across Scotland.

Cancer Research UK supports sustained high levels of investment in public information campaigns that alert individuals to the long-term risks associated with alcohol consumption.

The Government and other stakeholders should do more to alert people to the link between alcohol and cancer. We believe that more resource must be used to tackle the long-term health risks associated with drinking, and this requires measures that seek to both reduce the demand for, and the availability of, alcoholic beverages.

For further information or clarification on any point made in this response, please contact Vicky Crichton, Cancer Research UK's Public Affairs Officer for Scotland on 0131 243 2641 or at [vicky.crichton@cancer.org.uk](mailto:atvicky.crichton@cancer.org.uk)

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