

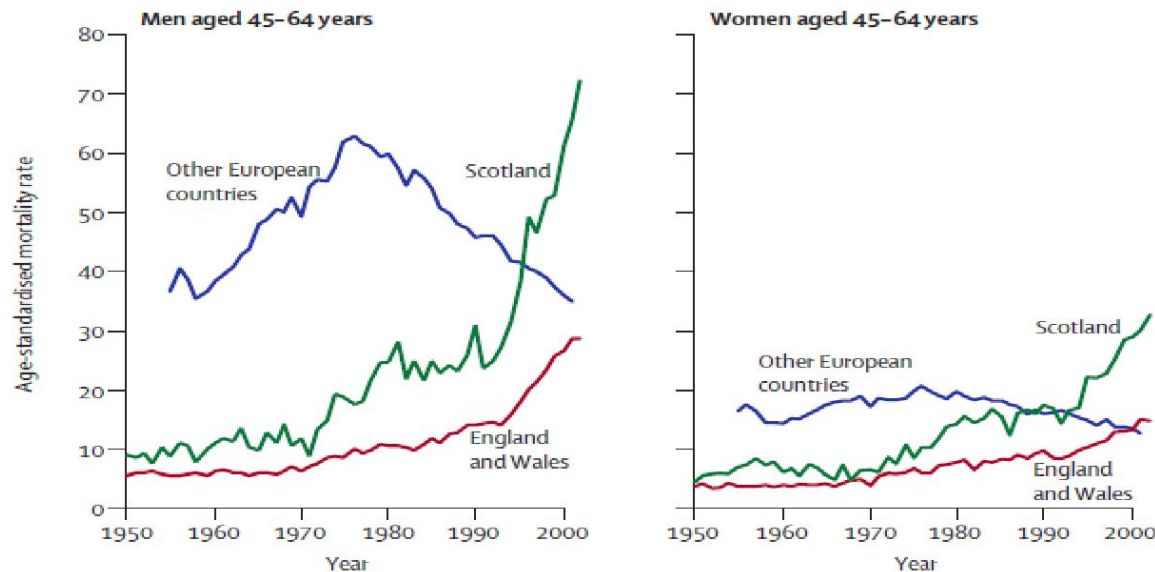
What Have I Been Doing For The Past 20 Years ? Has it been worth it?

Dr Peter Rice,
Past Chair, Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems,
Formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, NHS Tayside
President, European Alcohol Policy Alliance

From the 1980s Scotland was changing for the worse

Scotland's situation 25 years ago

Liver Disease mortality rates 1950-2002



- Alcohol related liver disease rates were increasing in Scotland and E&W
- Falling elsewhere in Europe
- Not historical or inevitable.

Figure: Time trends in age-standardised mortality rates for liver cirrhosis per 100 000 by age-group, sex, and country between 1950 and 2002

What Was Changing About Scottish Drinking ?



DISTRIBUTION OF CONSUMPTION IN SCOTLAND

Off sales (stores)

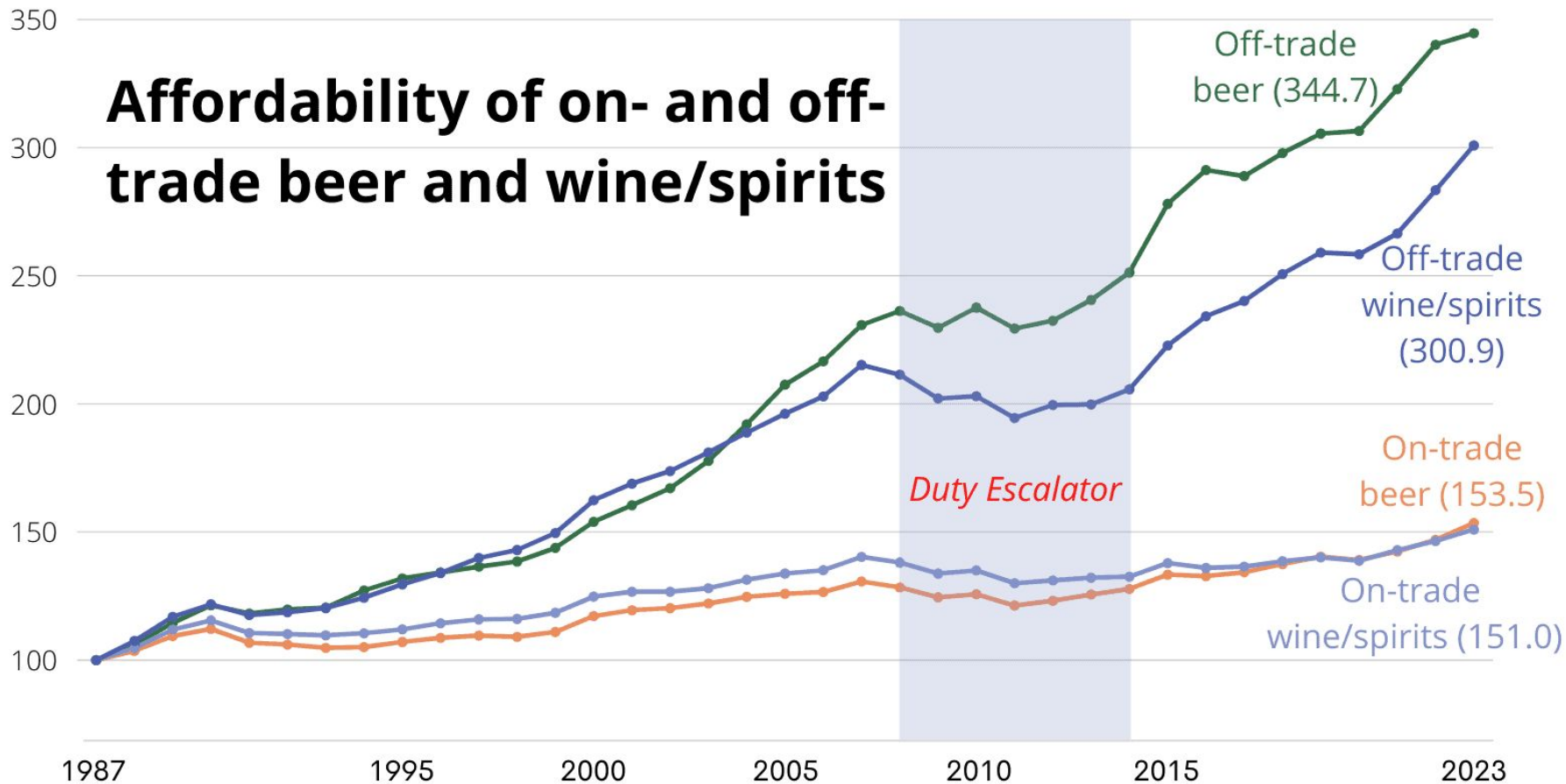
On sales (bars)

1994	49%	51%
2008	65%	35%
2019	73%	27%
2021	85%	15%
2025	76%	24%

Clinic patients	88%	12%
(25% heaviest drinkers)	97%	3%

Public Health Scotland 2020-25
Black Gill Chick 2011

Affordability of on- and off-trade beer and wine/spirits



Sources: NHS Digital, Statistics on Public Health, England 2024 - Affordability and Expenditure Statistics:
Data Tables for 2023 | ONS, Consumer price inflation tables, January 2025

(Indexed, 1987=100)

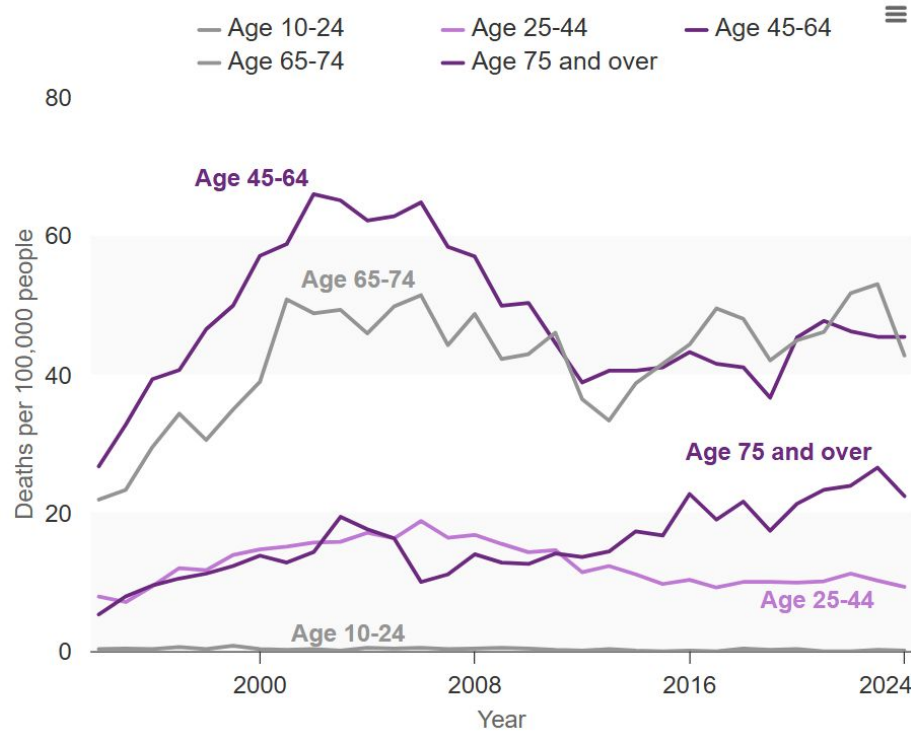
IAS 2025

The Importance of effective public communication – January 2006



RATES OF ALCOHOL HARM CHANGE

Rate of alcohol-specific deaths by broad age group, 1994-2024



Uses agreed narrow ONS definition of alcohol **specific** deaths. Approx 65% deaths are liver disease.

Number of alcohol **attributable** deaths much higher. Includes

- Cancers
- Accidents
- Suicide
- Cardiac,
- Stroke.

SHAPING THE POLICY DEBATE



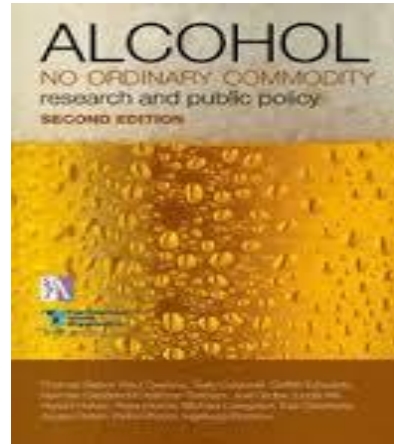
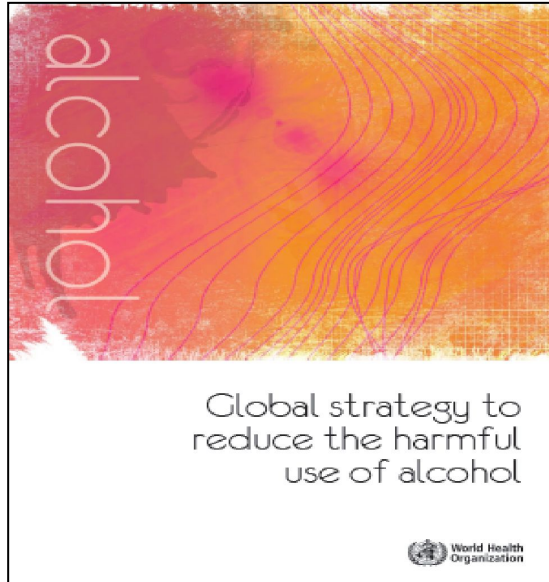
This posed photo of a model known as “bench girl” appears in many UK alcohol media stories.

But the most worrying trends in harm were in

- Men
- Older people
- Home drinking
- Long term health conditions



WHAT AFFECTS RATES OF ALCOHOL HARM IN A POPULATION ?



WHO EUROPE ALCOHOL STRATEGY 2022	ACTIONS IN SCOTLAND
Alcohol Pricing Tax Structure, Uprating, Prevent Low Cost Products	Minimum Unit Price introduced in 2018. Upated from 50p per 10mls to 65p in 2024. UK Alcohol Duties reformed in 2023.
Alcohol Availability Hours of Sale, Outlet Density, Age Controls, Server Training	Protection of public health as a purpose of Licensing. Limitation of display areas in stores. Test purchase programme to verify age checks.
Alcohol Marketing Adapt to new media, links to sport and culture, focus on delivery not content.	? Proposals in 2026. Has been strong industry opposition Scottish Women's football have sponsorship ban.
Health Information with focus on product labelling Information on product, content independently set.	UK Govt considering ending alcohol's exemption from nutritional and ingredient labelling . ?Health labelling
Health Service Response Stepped care approach, screening and brief interventions, link with mutual support, long term help model.	National screening and brief intervention programme from 2008. Investment in alcohol treatment services 2004-16.
Community Action Local Licensing policy, harm to others, reduce stigma	Local licensing forums, support for mutual aid recovery groups, anti stigma media campaign.

WHY MINIMUM UNIT PRICE AS A PRIORITY ACTION?

The most serious health harm is experienced by heaviest drinkers.

Heaviest drinkers in all income groups preferentially drink the cheapest alcohol.

Alcohol tax anomalies and low production costs mean some drinks (cider, vodka) can be sold at low price even if tax is increased.

Simple to monitor and guaranteed effect on shelf prices.

Effect would be on off sales, which were driving health harm, not on pubs.

Min Unit Price best placed to selectively impact on consumption of consumers at risk of major health and other problems.

May 2012

BBC

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24 May 2012 Last updated at 17:24



Scottish minimum alcohol pricing passed by parliament

Scotland will become the first place in the UK to introduce minimum drink pricing, after MSPs passed new laws.

The SNP government will set the price of alcohol at 50p per unit, to tackle Scotland's historic alcohol abuse problems.

Under the plans, the cheapest bottle of wine would be £4.69 and a four-pack of lager would cost at least £3.52.

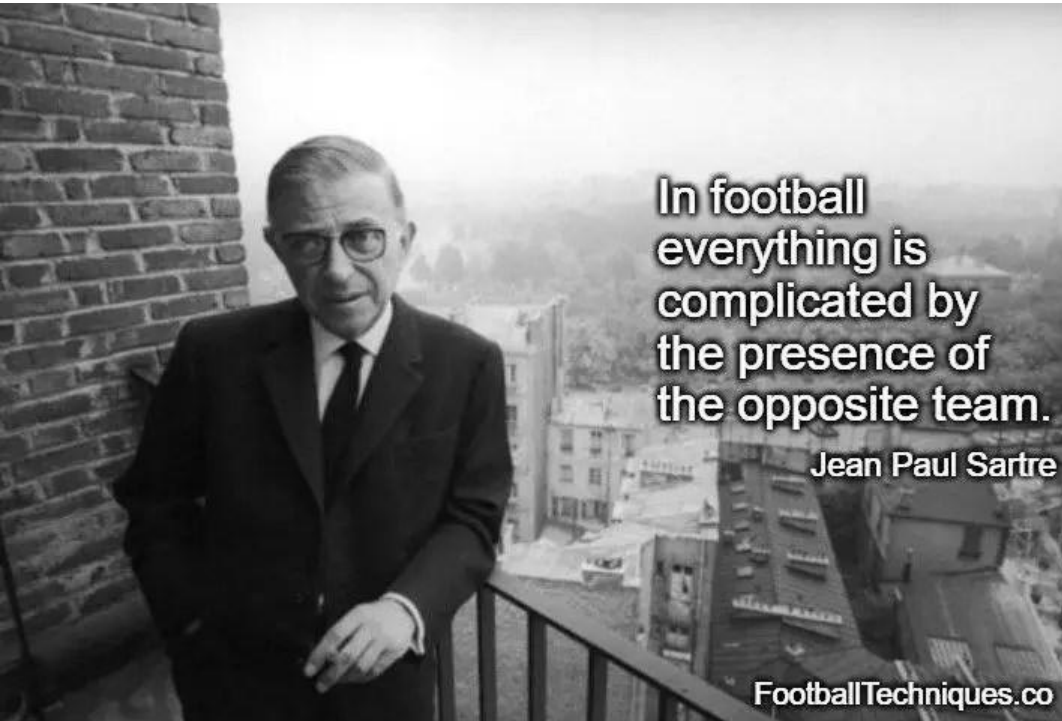
The move won broad political backing, although Labour refused to support the legislation at the Scottish Parliament.



From Democracy Live: Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon says the bill will have a "significant and historic impact".

Related Stories

Health Organisations had analysed the problem, proposed solutions and persuaded Parliament, but.....



Heaviest drinkers are very important to profitability of the industry.

25% of Scottish adult population don't consume alcohol.

Heaviest drinking 10% consume 50%

4% of Adult population
consume 30% of all alcohol
provide 23% of sales revenue

July 2012

BBC

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19 July 2012 Last updated at 18:05

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Scotch Whisky Association challenges Scotland's minimum alcohol price law

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has said it will challenge legislation on a minimum price for alcohol.

The law, which was overwhelmingly backed by MSPs earlier this year, would increase the price of some cheaper drink brands in Scotland.

The SWA said it had lodged a formal complaint to the European Commission over the legislation.

It will also seek a judicial review of minimum unit pricing for alcohol in the Court of Session in Edinburgh.



The Scottish Whisky Association lodges a formal complaint with the European Commission

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SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS
www.shaap.org.uk

ALCOHOL, INEQUALITIES AND POLITICS

thePublican's **Morning Advertiser**

London mayor Boris Johnson criticises minimum pricing

19-Feb-2013

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Related topics: General News

London Major Boris Johnson has become the latest high-profile Conservative to criticise the Government's plans to introduce a minimum price of alcohol.

In his column for the *Evening Standard*, Johnson said: "I think there are better ways of dealing with this. It's very regressive. It hits poorest people hardest."

The Government's plans for a 45p-per-unit minimum price, championed by David Cameron, have previously met with opposition from others in the Conservative Party.



NEWS

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Supreme Court backs Scottish minimum alcohol pricing

15 November 2017

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The UK Supreme Court has ruled that Scotland can set a minimum price for alcohol, rejecting a challenge by the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA).

Legislation was approved by the Scottish Parliament five years ago but has been tied up in court challenges.

May 2012

MUP Act passed in Scottish Parliament.

Legal challenge from Scotch Whisky Association and others.

May 2013

Court of Session ruling in favour.

Appealed by SWA

April 2014

Referral to European Court Justice for advice on appeal

Dec 2015

ECJ Ruling. Back to Scottish Court

Oct 2016

Court of Session rules in favour.

SWA seek appeal to UK Supreme Court

July 2017

Supreme Court Hearing

Nov 2017

Supreme Court Verdict in favour

May 2018

MUP implementation

UK SUPREME COURT 15th November 2017

Scotch Whisky Association vs The Lord Advocate

GOVERNMENT PRIORITY: it is not for any court to second-guess the value which a domestic legislator may decide to put on health. It is “for the member states, within the limits imposed by the Treaty, to decide what degree of protection they wish to assure”:

TARGETING: A critical issue is..... whether taxation would achieve the same objectives as minimum pricing. Taxation would impose an unintended and unacceptable burden on sectors of the drinking population, whose drinking habits and health do not represent a significant problem in societal terms in the same way as the drinking habits and health of in particular the deprived, whose use and abuse of cheap alcohol the Scottish Parliament and Government wish to target.

EVALUATION: The system will be experimental, but that is a factor catered for by its provisions for review and “sunset” clause. It is a significant factor in favour of upholding the proposed minimum pricing régime.



June 2019

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Rusting nuclear subs
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The Herald

237TH YEAR NO. 123 www.heraldscotland.com WEDNESDAY JUNE 19, 2019 PRICE: £1.00 SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: FROM £1.15

Sales of alcohol plunge to lowest in 25 years

Drinking drops to record low in the year minimum pricing introduced

HELEN MCARDLE
SCOTCH CORRESPONDENT

ALCOHOL sales in Scotland are at their lowest since 1994, according to new figures from the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA).

The latest data, for 2018, reveals that sales in Scotland are now down 10% on the previous year, the lowest since 1994. The SWA says the figures show a "clear and sustained" decline in alcohol consumption in Scotland.

In 2018, sales in Scotland also showed the equivalent of an extra 0.8 litres of pure alcohol per person, on average, compared to sales in England and Wales. It is unclear exactly how strong the evidence is for the minimum pricing ban on ordinary alcohol consumption in this area, but sales of spirits and wine have both fallen since 2018, on May 1.

It is a significant fall in the price of alcohol, which has been a key factor in the decline in sales. The SWA says that the price of alcohol has fallen by more than 10% in at least 10 of the 25 years since 1994, and that the price of alcohol has fallen by more than 20% in at least 10 of the 25 years since 1994.

Compensation for those in alcohol-related industries has been a key factor in the decline in sales. The SWA says that the price of alcohol has fallen by more than 10% in at least 10 of the 25 years since 1994, and that the price of alcohol has fallen by more than 20% in at least 10 of the 25 years since 1994.

And then there were five...



► They took Boris Johnson, Jeremy Hunt, Michael Gove, Sajid Javid and Rory Stewart before they started over Brexit during last night's TV debate.

Stewart feels the heat for ruling out no-deal Brexit

MICHAEL BATTLE
ON POLITICAL SCENE

RORY Stewart's announcement of "no deal or no Brexit" has been a key factor in the decline in sales. The SWA says that the price of alcohol has fallen by more than 10% in at least 10 of the 25 years since 1994, and that the price of alcohol has fallen by more than 20% in at least 10 of the 25 years since 1994.

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Round two results

Boris Johnson	126
Jeremy Hunt	46
Michael Gove	41
Rory Stewart	37
Sajid Javid	33
Domonic Ash	30

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Today's ceremonies at universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde

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FirstGroup war of words with activist intensifies

Page 20



POST MIN UNIT PRICE DATA FROM SCOTLAND

Scottish consumption falling **mainly in the off trade**, and is at its lowest level for 25 years.

Scottish consumption in 2021 was 4% higher than England and Wales. In 2011 the gap was 20%

Consumer panel data shows that fall in alcohol purchase is almost exclusively in the 20% **highest purchasing households**, across all income groups.

Admission data for 2019-20 shows **downward trend in Alcohol Related Liver Disease admissions, down 8% from 17-18**.

Downward ARLD admission trends are predominately in **lower income groups**. Liver admissions in lowest income decile are at lowest level since 2004.

Alcohol mortality **fell by 10% in 2019** the first full year after MUP implementation. Likely full effect was 13.4%

Industry Impact : Industry co-operation in evaluation has been limited

Benefit to smaller retailers

No evidence of substantial cross border sales

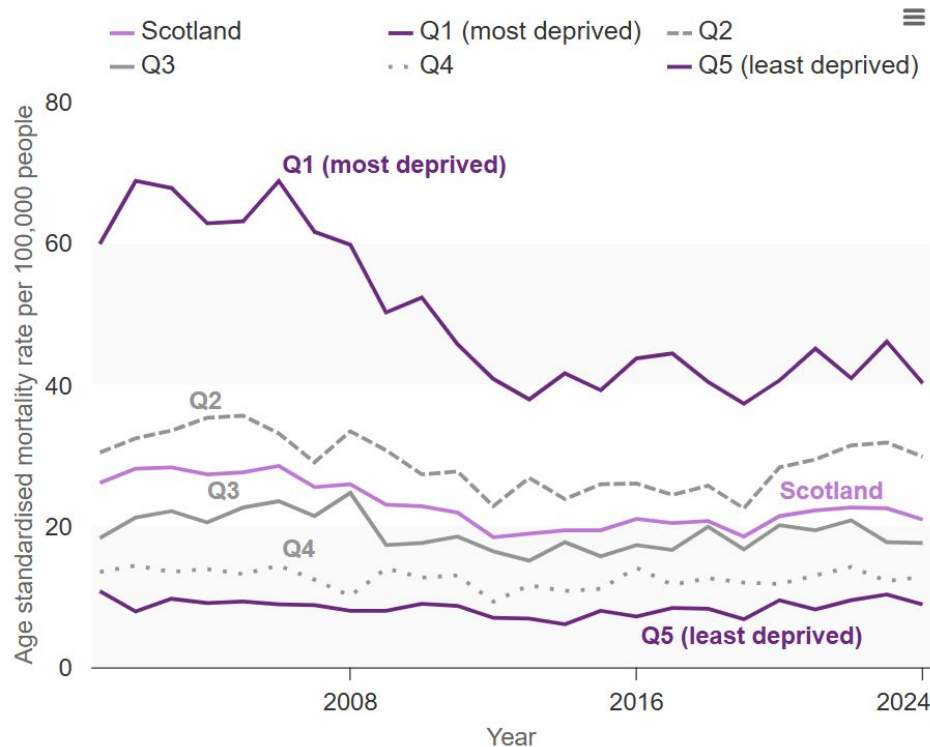
No evidence of move to other drugs

No evidence of home production.

Alcohol Prevention, Harm and Inequalities

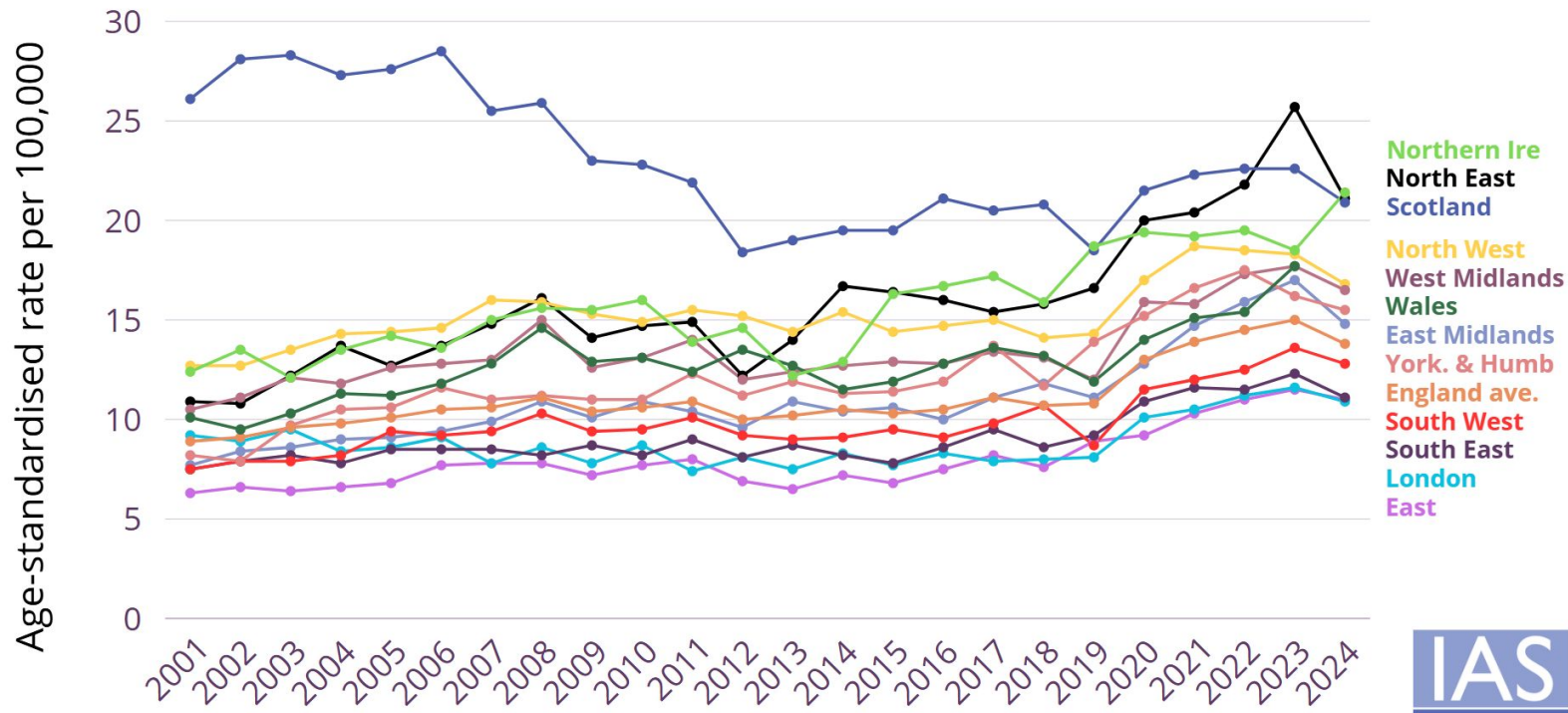
Scottish Mortality Trends

Age-standardised mortality rates of alcohol-specific deaths by SIMD quintile,
2001-2024



UK ALCOHOL MORTALITY TRENDS

Alcohol-specific death rate, English regions and UK nations, 2001-2024



Source: ONS (2025), Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK in 2023 | NRS data | Alcohol Profiles for England | NISRA

THE TAKE HOME MESSAGES

Importance of trend data and demographics (age, gender, deprivation)

Advocacy is a team game. Use your players strategically.

Consistent message, including on the uncertainties and the impact of doing nothing.

International experience counts. Sometimes.

If the political window opens, notice it and use it. And hope it stays open.

Emphasise evaluation.