**DRAFT 6 High Level Statement. Public Health Priority 4: Alcohol**

**Background:** The Scottish Government’s alcohol and drug treatment strategy[[1]](#footnote-1) and alcohol prevention framework[[2]](#footnote-2) aim to reduce alcohol harm, using a whole population approach. Alcohol screening and brief interventions, minimum unit pricing, restrictions on alcohol display and banning of multi-buy discounts have had some impact, but, 1 in 4 Scots still exceed the low risk drinking guidelines[[3]](#footnote-3),[[4]](#footnote-4) and overall the Scottish population drinks 50% more than in the 1980s[[5]](#footnote-5). Most (73%) of this alcohol is purchased in off-sales[[6]](#footnote-6). The Rights, Respect and Recovery Action Plan 2018 identified that we should[[7]](#footnote-7):

* have the right to life free from the harms of alcohol and drugs
* be treated with dignity and respect and
* be fully supported within communities to find their own type of recovery.

Evaluation of public policies to reduce alcohol related harm has shown that the most effective measures are those that address availability and affordability of alcohol and restriction of alcohol marketing[[8]](#footnote-8).

The Scottish Directors of Public Health will:

* + - 1. **Support environmental change:** Ensure that the current licensing legislation is fully exploited to protect and improve public health and protect children and young people from harm. This will address:
* overprovision by ensuring that sufficient health evidence is provided to support licensing boards in designating overprovision in areas which need that protection
* identifying public health measures that should be incorporated into licensing board policies
* supporting licensing boards in ensuring that their policy demonstrates measures to protect children and young people in licensed premises and ensuring the policy is upheld.
* the normalisation of alcohol use by resisting the introduction of alcohol licensing into traditional alcohol frees spaces such as hairdressers, cinemas, cafes and fast food restaurants
* Monitoring and control of internet sales of alcohol through local licensing policy and advocate for amended legislation where this is required.
* cultural change in attitudes to alcohol consumption including advocating that all premises that currently sell alcohol have below or zero alcohol alternatives for consumers to purchase.

1. **Address price**:
   * support the evaluation of minimum unit pricing (MUP)
   * advocate for the reintroduction of the alcohol duty escalator which will support MUP in reducing deaths by addressing the affordability of more expensive brands, extending protection to a wider population.
2. **Address the normalisation of alcohol** in our populations by:
   * advocating for restrictions on alcohol advertising and sponsorship and promoting alcohol free schools, sporting and cultural events. This will protect children and young people from exposure to marketing that encourages alcohol consumption in drinkers and non drinkers
   * reduce the risk of relapse in dependent drinkers recovering from alcohol use
   * shift the alcohol consumption curve to the left, decreasing the proportion of hazardous and harmful drinkers in our population.

4. **Promote Recovery**:

* support all health and social care services to provide stigma free, evidence based and co-ordinated support to individuals and families in recovery, ensuring a person- centred approach, acknowledging the multiple risk factors that contribute to problematic alcohol use and maximising interventions across health, social and criminal justice services.
* recognise that peers and the recovery community are integral to voluntary and statutory agencies’ services in ensuring recovery from the commencement of treatment, together with family members and friends.
* promote support for families of drinkers whether or not their relative engages with services.

1. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/rights-respect-recovery/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/alcohol-framework-2018-preventing-harm-next-steps-changing-relationship-alcohol/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/545937/UK_CMOs_report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www/gov/scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2018-volume-1-main-report/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/media/1230/scotpho080526_alcoholsurveys_rep.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www/healthscotland/scot/publications/mesas-monitoring-report-2019> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/rights-respect-and-recovery-action-plan/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Pan American Health Organization, Regional Office of the World Health Organisation. Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity. Research and Public Policy. 2nd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)