



c/o Royal College of Physicians
 11 St Andrew's Place
 London
 NW1 4LE

The Rt Hon. David Cameron MP
 Prime Minister
 10 Downing Street
 London
 SW1A 2AA

27th March 2013

Dear Prime Minister,

As leading representatives of the health, police, social work, charitable, religious and research sectors from across the United Kingdom, we are writing to you to demonstrate the wide-ranging and significant support that exists in the community for your Government's commitment to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol. The list of signatories to this letter is just a snap-shot of the large body of support for minimum unit pricing, as the most effective and targeted policy the Government can use right now to spearhead its action on alcohol.

While we remain concerned about recent reports of a policy u-turn, we were encouraged by last week's Budget in which the Chancellor once again stated the Government's commitment to deal with cheap, strong alcohol. Since you and your Government committed to introduce minimum unit pricing in the Alcohol Strategy last March, the evidence to show it works has strengthened.¹

If the recent media speculation is true, and the Government was to abandon its commitment to introduce minimum pricing, this would in effect mean turning its back on the most vulnerable groups in society, including children, who need to be protected from the damage alcohol can cause. Heavy drinkers not only risk their own health, they often harm others too. The results of alcohol fuelled crime, violence, child abuse and disorder can be witnessed on our streets, in Emergency Departments and in police cells. We know further damage is done behind closed doors which can go on for years.

Whilst the Government demonstrated its support for the British pub by scrapping the beer duty escalator, it would be the introduction of minimum unit price which would reduce the price differential between the on- and off-trade, and therefore encourage people to drink in pubs where there are better controls on alcohol sales. This would show a real commitment to this sector as well as saving many lives and reducing the societal problems related to harmful drinking. The Government needs to do everything it can to protect children, families and other vulnerable groups from the destruction alcohol can cause and your assurances on this matter would be gratefully received.

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Minimum unit pricing is not a silver bullet, but it is the backbone of the Government’s Alcohol Strategy. The success of all other policies will be undermined if cheap drink continues to flood the supermarket shelves and we know that other measures on price, such as banning below cost-selling or multi-buys will simply not be enough.

The Government must stand firm and fulfil its promise to make a real impact on the levels of devastation and destruction that are driven by excessive drinking in England and Wales. Together we offer you our support and call on you to ensure the Government’s commitment to implement minimum unit pricing is realised.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how we can assist you with introducing this crucial policy.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Barton, Chief Executive
Action on Addiction

Vivienne Evans OBE, Chief Executive
Adfam

Eric Appleby, Interim CEO
Alcohol Concern

Sue Mountstevens, Police and Crime Commissioner
Avon and Somerset PCC

Dr Evelyn Gillan, Chief Executive
Alcohol Focus Scotland

Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, President
Alcohol Health Alliance UK

