

75% of alcohol in Wales is drunk by just over a fifth of the population – new report

Within this – the 3% of the population who are harmful drinkers, account for 27% of all alcohol consumed.

In October 2017, the Welsh Government unveiled a new Bill that will, if passed by the National Assembly for Wales, introduce a minimum price for the sale of alcohol. The Bill is designed to reduce hazardous and harmful drinking in Wales.

The report published today by the Sheffield Alcohol Research Group at the University of Sheffield concludes the greatest impact of a minimum unit price would be on the most deprived harmful drinkers – those groups at greatest risk of experiencing harm due to their drinking.

The report reveals the population of Wales buys 50% of its alcohol for less than 55p per unit, 37% for less than 50p per unit and 27% for less than 45p per unit. It finds heavier drinkers are more likely to buy alcohol sold below these thresholds.

The Sheffield Alcohol Research Group at the University of Sheffield were commissioned by the Welsh Government in June 2017 to update the 2014 model-based appraisal of the likely impact of a range of minimum unit pricing policies in Wales.

The research also shows:

- Moderate drinkers consume an average of 211 units of alcohol per year compared to 1,236 for hazardous drinkers and 3,924 for harmful drinkers.
- Harmful drinkers spend an average £2,882 a year on alcohol compared to £1,209 for hazardous drinkers and £276 for moderate drinkers.
- Alcohol-attributable deaths and hospital admissions are concentrated in hazardous and particularly harmful drinkers who are more deprived.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“People who drink alcohol at hazardous and harmful levels drink 75% of the alcohol consumed in Wales. The introduction of a minimum unit price would be effective in reducing alcohol consumption among these groups, as well as reducing the number of alcohol-related deaths and hospitalisations.

“The report shows the greatest impact of a minimum unit price would be on the most deprived harmful drinkers, while moderate drinkers would experience only small impacts on their alcohol consumption

and spending. This is because moderate drinkers tend to buy alcohol which would be subject to little or no increase in price under the policy.

“If passed, this law will potentially save lives.”