

Ministers press ahead with 50p minimum unit price for alcohol in Wales

Alcohol is a major cause of death and illness in Wales. It leads to a number of health and social harms, particularly for the significant minority of people who drink to excess.

In 2017, there were 540 alcohol-related deaths in Wales and in 2017-18, there were nearly 55,000 alcohol-related hospital admissions. All alcohol-related deaths and alcohol-related hospital admissions are preventable.

Ministers have long been clear that a pricing intervention must be a key component of the Welsh Government's comprehensive strategy to tackle alcohol misuse, not least because the affordability of alcohol has increased significantly over the past two decades.

The National Assembly supported minimum pricing when the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill was passed last year.

The 2018 Act is targeted at protecting the health of hazardous and harmful drinkers who tend to consume greater amounts of low-cost and high-strength alcohol. It provides a formula for calculating the applicable minimum price for alcohol by multiplying the percentage strength of the alcohol, its volume and the minimum unit price. This allows the Welsh Government to target the sale and supply of low-cost and high-strength alcohol.

Ministers have consulted on a preferred minimum unit price of 50p. A summary of the responses to that consultation have been published today. Taking into account these consultation responses, Ministers remain of the view of that a 50p minimum unit price is a proportionate response to tackling the health risks of excessive alcohol consumption.

The Welsh Government intends to lay regulations to the National Assembly for Wales, specifying this level, for its consideration later this year.

Health Minister, Vaughan Gething said:

"The Welsh Government has always said that minimum pricing forms part of a wider strategy and approach to reducing substance misuse.

"Following a public consultation, I'm pleased to confirm we will now ask the National Assembly for Wales to approve a 50p minimum unit price. We believe a 50p minimum unit price strikes a reasonable balance between the anticipated public health and social benefits and intervention in the market.

"We will continue to use all available levers to reduce the harms caused by the excessive consumption of alcohol, as we develop and

take forward a new delivery plan for substance misuse.”

Many responses to the consultation supported the principle of minimum pricing, but also raised issues regarding the potential unintended consequences of introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol.

The Minister added:

“The consultation process raised a number of issues, such as the potential impacts on vulnerable groups, household budgets, the risk of switching to other substances and the potential increase in the number of people seeking support from services. We will continue to consider these potential impacts.

“We have commissioned specific research to look at the risk of switching, which will report ahead of implementation. In December 2018, we announced an extra £2.4m in funding for Area Planning Boards for local frontline substance misuse services so that we can ensure services are widely available. We have worked closely with Area Planning Boards throughout the development of this legislation and we will continue to do so ahead of implementation.”

5,000 jobs now created by Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme

- A Welsh Government programme offering individual support to SMEs looking to grow and expand has created its 5000th job, Economy Secretary Ken Skates has revealed.

Business Wales’ Accelerated Growth Programme has been an enormous success since its inception in 2015, and reached the impressive milestone as Tiago Szabo, a factory operator for Wrexham based automotive design and manufacture company Hi-Mark, began work at the companies’ 25,000sq ft site.

Economy Minister Ken Skates was at the factory to witness their growth and to meet Tiago. He said:

“The Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme has been a real flag bearer for Business Wales and it’s fantastic to see that it’s now been directly responsible for some of our most ambitious and high potential SMEs creating 5000 new jobs across Wales. It’s a

success story that's testament to the Welsh Government's proactive support for business and the hard work and expertise of the team there.

"But what's special about this programme isn't just the growth it drives in companies but also the impact that in turn it is having on individuals the length and breadth of Wales. It's 5000 jobs that may otherwise not have been created and it's a source of great pride for me that we have been able to help people like Tiago into a job at a company with a proven track record of delivery that's looking to the future with vision and confidence.

"Hi-Mark's plans to invest in robotics and automation to drive efficiency and further growth are particularly exciting, with this the third such job we have supported there through this scheme. I would encourage businesses in Wales with strong ambitions to grow and expand to explore whether the Accelerated Growth Programme can help them too.

"It was fantastic to meet Tiago and the hard working team at Hi-Mark today. Creating 5000 jobs is no mean feat, and, as I look to the future of the programme, I feel confident in predicting there will be many more milestones to come."

Hi-Mark has been designing and manufacturing injection moulded products for over 40 years. The firm's 40-strong workforce use cutting edge technology to manufacture products that are used by some of the largest automotive companies in the world.

Jack Yates, Managing Director of Hi-Mark:

"The support we have received through the Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme has been invaluable to us. It helped us through a tricky negotiation phase with a major customer, resulting in us securing a significant order which we may not otherwise have been in a position to win.

"Having access to a highly-respected sales specialist meant we were able to set up a new framework for the way we approach sales and networking. Even though it's early days of adopting these new ways of working, the results speak for themselves.

"I'm delighted that we are the company responsible for creating the 5000th job, which is a great honour for our team. Tiago is settling into the team really well so far and we are confident that our team will continue to grow over coming months.

"I would strongly encourage other businesses looking for support to apply for the programme. Since signing up Hi-Mark has gone from strength to strength, and I'm very grateful for all the help we've received."

Further information on the Business Wales Accelerated Growth Programme can be found at businesswales.gov.wales.

[£1.5m to grow the foundations of Wales' economy](#)

The Foundational Economy, which accounts for around 40% of jobs in Wales, describes the organisations SMEs, microbusinesses and social enterprises that are rooted in local communities and deliver the goods and services people need.

From construction and childcare, through to social care and retail, the Foundational Economy describes the jobs that provide the goods and services that people across Wales rely on.

Deputy Economy Minister, Lee Waters, recognises the contribution that these type of companies make to the wellbeing and identity of communities right across Wales.

Building on the Economic Action Plan's commitment to building stronger and more resilient communities, he wants this funding to support projects that will help us to understand how best to nurture and grow the Foundational Economy in order to reverse the deterioration of employment conditions, stop the leakage of money from Wales' communities and reduce the environmental cost of extended supply chains.

The intention is that this will help to spread benefits into communities where it has historically proven difficult to attract large companies.

Lee Waters said:

“Care, food, housing, energy and construction are just some of the sectors that make up our Foundational Economy. They are the industries and firms that are in our communities because our people are there.

Accounting for around four in ten jobs, and around £1 in every three that we spend these firms already make up a significant part of our economy. By nurturing and growing them further, I believe we can go a long way towards increasing wellbeing and improving the quality of people's lives, and addressing some of the issues and concerns that were expressed by many communities in their response to the Brexit referendum.

Our new £1.5m fund will test innovative ways of supporting and

growing our Foundational Economy so that we can spread good practice right across Wales. I want it to fund experimental projects that are collaborative and innovative and challenge the conventional ways of doing things.

By providing space and support for projects that challenge the status quo I want to empower local government, wider public and third sector and business to work together in order to drive and retain local wealth.

This is about developing creative solutions to local challenges that really do deliver for our communities.”

The £1.5m was secured as part of a 2 year budget agreement with Plaid Cymru and will open for applications in the next financial year.

It is announced on the same day as an event, hosted by the Deputy Minister, that brings together partners and experts to consider how best to support Wales Foundational Economy.

[First Minister announces St David Awards finalists](#)

The St David Awards are the national awards of Wales, which recognise the extraordinary achievements and contributions of people in, or from, Wales and from all walks of life.

Announcing the finalists, the First Minister said:

“Being involved with the St David Awards for the first time, I was struck by the inspiring talent Wales has across so many different areas.

“These awards are a celebration, acknowledging some amazing and remarkable people. Each of the finalists have made a significant difference – overcoming adversity and achieving something truly inspirational.

“All of our St David Awards finalists are exceptional – every person and organisation is a credit to our nation. I look forward to celebrating their achievements at the awards ceremony on 21st March.”

The award categories are: Bravery, Citizenship, Culture, Enterprise,

Innovation, Science and Technology, International, Sport and Young Person.

The finalists are:

Bravery

Andrew Niinemae

Andrew risked his life trying to stop a car from driving into a crowd of around 20 people outside a pub in Whitchurch, Cardiff. He suffered serious injuries to his leg but his actions prevented other people from being seriously injured. Andrew acted on instinct and showed courageous behaviour to put others before himself. Witnesses say that without his intervention, there could have been many injuries and possible fatalities.

Ceri and Aaron Saunders

Ceri and Aaron gave no thought to their own safety when they saw someone in trouble in the sea on the Gower Peninsula. The pair were spending the weekend on a camping trip in the area and while out for a walk, the mother and son saved a 10-year-old boy from being swept out to sea near Broughton Bay. The RNLI said the situation was very dangerous and the boy was lucky that Ceri and Aaron took action and helped save his life.

Darran Kilay

Darran put himself in a dangerous and potentially life-threatening situation to support police officers when a man approached him and a co-worker waving a knife. He quickly informed police officers and then followed the man as he ran away. Following the chase, the police were able to detain the knifeman. Darran was praised by a judge at the subsequent trial and commended for his brave actions – he said he was just doing his job.

Citizenship

Cardiff Street Pastors

Cardiff Street Pastors is an initiative involving 25 local churches. Trained volunteers patrol Cardiff city centre on Friday and Saturday nights to help those in need. The team of more than 60 street pastors work with South Wales Police, Cardiff Council, Cardiff University, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and local businesses and has volunteered thousands of hours of service to Cardiff's night-time economy.

Emma Picton-Jones

Emma set up the DPJ Foundation in 2016 after her husband Daniel, an agricultural contractor, took his own life due to struggles with his mental health. The charity helps people in the rural community with mental health problems, especially men in the agricultural sector. Emma speaks at agricultural events to raise awareness of the foundation's work to support other businesses, which may then recognise the signs of mental health struggles among their customers. Emma has raised around £75,000 to support

the foundation's work.

Glenys Evans

Glenys is one of the founding parents of Bobath Children's Therapy Centre Wales, which provides specialist therapy to children diagnosed with cerebral palsy and support to their families. Her son Thomas has cerebral palsy and Glenys was frustrated by having to travel to London to access specialist therapy. Together with a few other parents, she helped set up and open Bobath in 1992. To mark Bobath's 20th anniversary, Glenys undertook a 100km Sahara Trek and raised £20,000 for the charity.

Janet Rogers MBE

Janet is a volunteer and member representative on the Board of Trustees at the Ponthafren Association. The charity was set up in 1992 to provide a range of mental health support services in North Powys and Janet was a trustee for 9 years. Janet is responsible for looking after Ponthafren's community garden in Newtown and she has shared her own experiences of mental health with other organisations in Wales to help them make positive differences to people's lives.

Culture

Elfed Roberts

Until his retirement in August, Elfed was the chief executive of the National Eisteddfod, a post he held for 25 years. Under Elfed's leadership, the Eisteddfod developed significantly, offering new opportunities for visitors to the festival. Elfed ensured the Welsh language and Welsh heritage were central during the Eisteddfod's development. Elfed's final Eisteddfod typified what he achieved over the past 25 years – relevancy to contemporary life in Wales and attracting thousands of Welsh speakers, non-Welsh speakers and learners annually.

Fiona Stewart

Fiona is the CEO and owner of the annual Green Man Festival, which started in 2003. It is the largest contemporary arts and science festival in Wales, one of remaining large independent UK music festivals, and it is held in the Brecon Beacons. She is the only woman with controlling ownership of a large commercial UK festival and in a competitive market, Green Man sells out each year, attracting 25,000 people a day from around the world to Mid Wales. The Green Man Trust Charity was founded in 2013 and has supported 3,000 artists, trained 2,000 people, 200 science engagement projects and 27 Welsh community projects.

Hijinx Theatre Company

Hijinx is a pan-Wales theatre company which always casts neuro-divergent and learning disabled actors in its award-winning theatre productions. Hijinx uses theatre to tackle the complex social problems of integrating learning disability into the workplace and into society. It is driven by the ambition

to reduce inequality and believes everyone should have the right to access a rich cultural education and lead a dynamic, creative life.

Theatr Clwyd

Tamara and Liam lead Wales' largest producing theatre. In the last 2 years, Theatr Clwyd has created 23 critically-acclaimed productions and more than 700,000 people have seen shows produced and presented by the organisation. Theatr Clwyd's many achievements over the past 24 months include the creation of a number of new community companies, engaging with a variety of age groups.

Enterprise

Hilltop Honey

Scott established Hilltop Honey in 2011 and since then the company has seen exceptional levels of growth with turnover increasing from £234,000 to more than £4 million. Hilltop Honey was the first company to go to market with an organic Fairtrade honey and now all of their products are available in reusable glass jars or 100% recyclable bottles. The company donates 25% of its profits to a children's charity.

Jem Skelding

Jem is the CEO of Naissance, a company selling natural and organic health and beauty products. Based in Neath, the company has grown considerably and now employs 134 staff in the UK and Germany and produces more than 1,000 products. Jem has built partnerships with sustainable and ethical growers around the world, sourcing the finest quality raw materials and ensuring that growers receive the best price for their products. One example of this is a cooperative of women in Ghana where 600 women support a community of more than 2,400 individuals.

Steve Downey

Steve is the business owner of Hannaman Material Handling, in Deeside. The company specialises in providing full 360 material handling solutions to its customers by supplying and servicing forklift trucks, access platforms, fleet management systems, operator training and industrial floor care equipment. Following a career in the armed forces, Steve bought the company in 2013 and has turned it into a modern, effective and profitable business with a growing reputation for the supply of quality products and excellent service support.

International

Dr Laith al-Rubaiy

Dr Al-Rubaiy is a gastroenterologist from Cardiff. After graduating from the Basra School of Medicine in Iraq, he came to the UK in 2005. Having only visited his homeland on a number of occasions during his time in Wales, he decided to volunteer with the AMAR Foundation to provide medical treatments

to some of Iraq's poorest citizens. As well as helping to set up a mobile clinic, Dr Al-Rubaiy, is a clinical lecturer at Swansea University's School of Medicine.

Liam Rahman

From Carmarthenshire, Liam studied at Yale-NUS College (Singapore) and Yale University (USA), majoring in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. Returning to Wales in 2017, Liam became the Director of E-Qual Education, a company he co-founded in 2011 and now employs more than 100 people in Wales. Liam is an avid supporter of the Seren Network, the Welsh Government's flagship initiative to assist pupils to gain places in top universities, for which he mentors students and guides schools to learn more about international opportunities.

Rhinal Patel

Rhinal, who grew up in Pontypridd, gave up a high-profile career working with A-list celebrities to travel the world and help people less fortunate than herself. After donating all her travel budget to slum children in India, she travelled home to Wales with no money. She has now set up a charity called the Pursuit of Happiness, through which she gives workshops on human rights in partnership with international organisations like Amnesty International, looking after the environment and mindfulness.

Innovation, Science and Technology

Cerebra Innovation Centre

Cerebra is a charity dedicated to helping families with children with brain conditions discover a better life together. It has established a partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David to establish the Cerebra Innovation Centre (CIC). Based at the Swansea College of Art, a team of engineers design and build innovative, bespoke products to help disabled children to discover the world around them. Their designs are exciting as well as functional, promoting social inclusion and peer acceptance for the children they help. Products and advice are provided free of charge.

Go Safe Cymru

GoSafe Cymru is a partnership between Wales' police forces, the 22 local authorities and the Welsh Government with the aim of making Welsh roads safer for everyone by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of all road users. With dashcams becoming more popular and an increase in helmet cameras, there has been a large increase in video evidence being sent to Wales' police forces. The GoSafe website enables the public to upload their video evidence and complete a statement about the offence they have witnessed. It receives 200 submissions each month.

Ian Bond

Ian, a retired businessman from Aberdare, has used his chronic and life-limiting condition to build a successful business offering digital health

solutions. With business partner Dave Taylor, he set up Bond Digital Health Ltd in Cardiff and worked with local universities to create a smart diary and app platform to help patients with chronic conditions to monitor their health. Mr Bond is also working in collaboration with Hywel Dda University Health Board to help develop an electronic diary app that will help COPD patients self-manage their condition.

Sport

Geraint Thomas OBE

2018 was an amazing year for cyclist Geraint, who won the iconic Tour de France road race last summer. He became the first Welshman to win the event and only the third British rider after Sir Bradley Wiggins and Chris Froome. His achievement was celebrated at a homecoming event in Cardiff with more than 10,000 people present to congratulate him on his achievement and the National Velodrome of Wales in Newport was renamed the Geraint Thomas Velodrome.

Jess Fishlock MBE

Jess has been a member of Wales Women's national football team since 2006. In 2017, Jess became the first Welsh player (woman or man) to earn 100 caps. She's also won the Welsh Footballer of the Year title times. Jess has appeared 113 times for the Wales team and scored 29 goals. She was a key part of the squad in its attempt to qualify for the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup, playing in every game despite the intense travel commitments. She is currently on loan to Olympique Lyonnais in France from Seattle Reign FC in the USA.

Menna Fitzpatrick MBE

At just 19 years old, Menna Fitzpatrick became the most successful British winter sport Paralympian in history at the 2018 games. Menna is visually impaired, having only 5% vision, and along with her guide Jennifer Kehoe, won a bronze, 2 silvers and a gold in the Pyeongchang Paralympics. She carried the flag for Team GB at the closing ceremony of the games and at the end of January this year, Menna and Jennifer won 2 gold medals at the Para Alpine Skiing Championships in Italy. Menna became the youngest person on the recent Queen's birthday honours list, receiving an MBE for her service to sport.

Young Person

Bethan Owen

Bethan is currently a sixth form pupil but from a young age she has been helping her father to care for her mother who has epilepsy. When she was 6, Bethan was introduced to karate to give her a focus away from her responsibilities at home. By the age of 12, Bethan was a black belt and a qualified karate instructor. Once qualified, Bethan opened her first not-for-profit karate club for other young carers between the ages of 6 and 9. The club supports them to develop confidence, self-esteem and have a break from

their caring responsibilities.

Hannah Adams

17-year old Hannah is an anti-bullying campaigner from Cardiff and uses her own experience of being bullied to help others. At 7, Hannah moved from London to Cardiff. Following the move, Hannah was bullied for years at school and online. At 13, she took the first step by confiding in her mum about the bullying. She received counselling and after her complaints were ignored by teachers, she decided to move schools. She is now an outgoing young woman, happy at her new school where she has many friends and supportive teachers. Hannah is an anti-bullying ambassador for the Diana Awards and she speaks to others her age to encourage them to speak up and not suffer.

Lowri Hawkins

Lowri is a survivor of child sexual exploitation and has been incredibly brave in going public about what happened to her. She provided evidence against her abuser, resulting in his conviction and imprisonment. While the offences committed against her and the subsequent criminal justice process had a significant impact on her health and wellbeing, she has volunteered to support agencies to improve their response to child sexual exploitation. Lowri has given up a considerable amount of her time to engage with practitioners, senior leaders and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner to provide feedback about how policing and other services could improve the service delivered to children. Lowri is currently studying a course in social care as she is committed to helping protect vulnerable children.

Minister celebrates enhancement of MyTravelPass young persons' discount scheme

The scheme, which has evolved and improved since its pilot in 2015, now offers a third off the fares for all journeys taken by young people aged between 16 and 21 – right up until their 22nd birthday.

Transport Minister Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted to be welcoming this enhancement of the MyTravelPass scheme, which will allow more young people to take advantage of discounted journeys.

“The scheme has proved popular. The success of this idea since its conception in 2014 through to its expansion now, can be charted in

the number of passes that have been issued.

“By last August, there were 14,939 live passes in circulation. Since the scheme began, there has been a total of 20,953 pass-holders, and there were an estimated 1.344m discounted journeys in 2017-18.

“Encouraging more young people to use the bus for more of their journeys will have an immediate and long-term benefit by reducing road congestion, improving air quality and making the bus network a more attractive place for the bus industry to invest.

“Also, attracting more young people onto public transport is vital if we are to achieve a sustainable public transport network that supports our Prosperity for All objectives.

“We will continue to work closely with the bus industry and our local authority partners to achieve a sustainable bus network, which is key to achieving our objectives for a socially-responsible, greener and prosperous Wales.”

Go to the [MyTravelPass](#) website for more information and to apply.