

New law to introduce minimum price for alcohol in Wales

The Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill, has been introduced before the National Assembly for Wales today by the Public Health Minister, Rebecca Evans.

The Bill will address longstanding and specific health concerns around the effects of excess alcohol consumption, which is estimated to lead to 50,000 alcohol-related hospital admissions a year, costing the Welsh NHS £120m annually. In 2015, there were 463 alcohol-related deaths in Wales.

The new Bill supports the Welsh Government's comprehensive strategy to tackle harmful and hazardous drinking by tackling the availability and affordability of cheap, strong alcohol, which is part of wider efforts to improve and protect the health of the population of Wales.

The Bill proposes to introduce a minimum price for alcohol supplied in Wales, and to make it an offence for alcohol to be supplied below that price. The Bill proposes that the level of the minimum unit price (MUP) for this purpose would be specified in regulations made by the Welsh Ministers.

In 2014, research on the impacts of introducing a 50p minimum unit price (for example) estimated the following:

- a 50p MUP would result in 53 fewer deaths and 1,400 fewer hospital admissions in Wales per year
- a 50p MUP would save the Welsh NHS more than £130m over 20 years, by reducing impacts on health services, such as Accident and Emergency
- it would reduce workplace absence, which is estimated would fall by up to 10,000 days per year.

Over a 20 year period, the introduction of a MUP could contribute £882m to the Welsh economy in terms of the reduction in alcohol-related illness, crime and workplace absence.

The Bill proposes:

- a formula for calculating the applicable minimum price for alcohol using the percentage strength of the alcohol, its volume and the MUP
- powers for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation to specify the MUP
- to establish a local authority-led enforcement regime with powers of entry, powers to bring prosecutions for offences and to issue fixed penalty notices.

Public Health Minister Rebecca Evans said:

"Alcohol-related harm is a significant public health problem in

Wales. The 463 alcohol-attributable deaths in 2015 were all avoidable, and each of these deaths would have had a devastating effect on the person's family and friends. Alcohol-related harm also has a big impact on public services such as the NHS.

"There is a very clear and direct link between levels of excessive drinking and the availability of cheap alcohol. So we need to take decisive action now to address the affordability of alcohol, as part of wider efforts to tackle alcohol related harm.

"The Bill I am unveiling today will tackle excessive alcohol consumption by making it an offence for retailers to sell strong alcohol at low prices. It will make an important contribution to improving health outcomes, by putting prevention and early intervention at the heart of our efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm. This will undoubtedly help save lives."

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Frank Atherton said:

"As alcohol has become more affordable, consumption has increased. As consumption increases, harm increases. All alcohol-attributable deaths are avoidable deaths, demonstrating the urgency for further preventative action.

"Increasing the price of alcohol through the introduction of a minimum unit price provides us with an effective and efficient way of reducing excessive alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm.

"It will have a small impact on moderate drinkers. The most substantial effects will be experienced by harmful and hazardous drinkers, who are more likely to consume cheaper and higher strength alcohol products."

[New cancer drug to be available in Wales](#)

A patient access scheme between NHS Wales and the manufacturer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, means that it will be available to treat some people with advanced non-small cell lung cancer, if they have already been treated with chemotherapy.

Nivolumab, also known as Opdivo®, will be available where clinically appropriate no later than 60 days after the agreement was signed.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“I’m pleased NHS Wales has been able to reach an agreement with the manufacturer, which will make the drug routinely available in Wales, to patients who will benefit.

“Our £80m New Treatment Fund launched in January this year supports faster and more consistent access to medicines recommended by NICE and the AWMSG. This includes new cancer treatments – such as Nivolumab – even where the NICE recommendation is subject to a detailed agreement with the manufacturer.”

Development Bank of Wales opens to help more Welsh businesses succeed

It launches with the new £100m Wales Flexible Investment Fund, more micro finance available and extended lending terms. In total the Development Bank of Wales has around £440m available to invest in Welsh business.

The Wales Flexible Investment Fund will invest more and over longer periods than existing funds, offering up to £5m in a single round and repayment terms of up to 10 years.

Through the Development Bank, the Welsh Government is also trebling the amount of micro finance available from £6m to over £18m, with further funds also being developed.

With the Welsh Government’s Help to Buy – Wales scheme and private sector investment the £440m more than doubles and over the next five years, the Development Bank is targeted to have an impact of over £1bn on the Welsh Economy. As a result, it is expected to support 1,400 businesses with those businesses creating and safeguarding more than 20,000 jobs.

Economy and Infrastructure Secretary, Ken Skates said:

“I am delighted we have been able to quickly progress Welsh Government’ plans to establish The Development Bank of Wales.

“The bank will use Welsh Government funding to support investments that will help grow Wales’ economy both today and into the future and provide businesses with the support they need.

“As our businesses thrive and repay the loans, that money will be re-invested meaning that the capital doesn’t just help businesses succeed now, it funds the next generation of Welsh success stories too.”

Giles Thorley, Chief Executive of the Development Bank of Wales said:

“Ninety-nine % of all businesses across Wales are micro to medium size. They account for 60% of all private sector employment. As businesses face the uncertainty of Brexit, the need to provide stability and stimulate growth is more immediate than ever.

“For Welsh businesses the changes mean that there is more finance available to support them no matter what their stage of business. Micro, small and medium businesses are vital to the Welsh economy and we are proud to have worked with so many ambitious and dedicated entrepreneurs. The message to Welsh businesses is simple: get in touch. We’re here to help your business succeed.”

[Carl Sargeant to launch new £100 million regeneration programme](#)

Local authorities, along with partner organisations, will be able to apply for the capital investment for projects that promote economic regeneration and serve the aims of wider sustainable development with activities focussed on the individuals and areas most in need.

Carl Sargeant said the programme has a crucial part to play in driving prosperity and building resilient communities in all parts of Wales, rather than just in those areas that offer the best commercial returns.

The Cabinet Secretary visited a scheme in Pontypridd, which has recently received regeneration funding, to launch the programme.

Carl Sargeant said:

“There are particular challenges around tackling inequality and developing well-connected and sustainable communities in areas which are economically disadvantaged or blighted by earlier heavy industries. We also recognise there are different challenges in rural areas.

“Local authorities and regional partnerships should use these funds to complement and reinforce the other investments we are making to widen prosperity such as the work being pursued under the City Deals, our investment in the Metros, proposals from the Valleys Taskforce and with the work to prepare for Wylfa Newydd.

“I am also keen that this new capital investment should act in support of the other programmes underway seeking to build more resilient communities, including our employability and skills programmes.”

Carl Sargeant said resources would be focused on a limited number of investment proposals with a strong and clear economic basis for regeneration. The new regeneration programme will be able to invest in projects from April 2018 onwards.

A National Regeneration Investment Panel will also be established which will be charged with ensuring that the investment available is utilised as effectively as possible across Wales.

[Gethin Jones stars in film to promote Wales in North America](#)

TV presenter Gethin Jones is flying the flag for Wales as he talks about how Wales has inspired him during a short film set in Caernarfon.

The four two-minute documentary-style films, created by BBC StoryWorks, BBC Advertising’s commercial content production arm, challenge the perceptions of traditional Britain, offering a modern take on the stunning landscapes, fashion, culture and history, and will air on BBC’s commercial, international news channel, BBC World News, to an American audience between October 2017 to March 2018.

Focusing on London, Manchester, Scotland and Wales, the films each feature a well-known local personality; in addition to Gethin Jones, the films feature science and technology reporter Dr Shini Somara, illustrator Stanley Chow and fashion designer, Siobhan Mackenzie. The ‘local heroes’ talk about how their British roots have inspired them, with the films highlighting and showcasing some of the experiences to be found in each region.

Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, said:

“I’m delighted that Visit Wales has worked with VisitBritain in a bid to attract more north Americans to Wales – North America is one

of our key markets and we're looking at increasing the number of visitors and Wales' market share of visitors from this key market.

It's great news that Gethin has come on board as our local hero to show a different side of Wales, set against the stunning backdrop of Snowdonia.

Gethin Jones, said:

"It was a pleasure to be involved in this campaign – I take every opportunity to fly the flag for Wales and to wax lyrical about what Wales has to offer and there are so many areas and places which are close to my heart. When I heard we'd be filming in Caernarfon I was over the moon, I think I went over-board with suggestions."

The partnership is funded jointly by the UK Government's global GREAT campaign, , and the tourist boards, London & Partners, Marketing Manchester, VisitScotland and Visit Wales to showcase what Britain has to offer as a place to visit, study and do business.

International visitor volumes to Wales increased during the period January –June 2017 with 493,000 overnight trips, an increase of +9% compared to the same period in 2016 and the highest level recorded since 2008. There were 38,500 trips to Wales from the US during January to June 2017, an increase of +11%.

Tourism is worth £127 billion to the UK economy, creating jobs and boosting economic growth across its nations and regions.