NHS Forth Valley

NHS Forth Valley strongly supports the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Bill and has provided a response to several of the points as shown below.

The advantages and disadvantages of establishing a minimum alcohol sales price based on a unit of alcohol

There is a clear and long standing relationship between the affordability of alcohol and levels of consumption. In the UK between 1960 and 2002 the affordability of alcohol relative to income halved. During the same period the number of litres of alcohol consumed per person over 15 years of age doubled. Addressing the price of alcohol is clearly an important aspect of tackling over-consumption of alcohol although it has to be part of a wide range of initiatives.

Introducing a minimum price would create a price below which a unit of alcohol could not be sold. Minimum pricing would apply to all alcoholic drinks but it would not result in an increase in the cost of all drinks, only those which are currently sold below the level set. It would primarily affect low cost, high alcohol products such as white-ciders and own-brand spirits and would impact most on harmful drinkers. The effect would target off sales and would be unlikely to change the price of drinks sold within public houses. Modelling work by the University of Sheffield and Prof Anne Ludbrook has indicated that this would have a positive effect and would save lives over a period of years.

The level at which such a proposed minimum price should be set and the justification for that level

Although modeling can be used to extrapolate the price per unit of alcohol to the number of expected deaths, setting a minimum price needs to be a judgement call. The suggested amount at present is 40 to 50p and this would seem a reasonable price to start with.

The advantages and disadvantages of introducing a social responsibility levy on pubs and clubs in Scotland

Alcohol related harm imposes major burdens on health service use, especially in Accident and Emergency departments. Boards are being asked to provide services for drunk and incapable persons and a social responsibility levy may be a way of providing funding for facilities.

Anne Maree Wallace
Director of Public Health
NHS Forth Valley
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