



Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol:

A view from Scotland

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No conflicts of interest



HOW PRICES HAVE DROPPED

The price of booze has dropped dramatically over the last 30 years when taken as a proportion of the average earnings. These are the prices adjusted to take account of rises in inflation and earnings.

1976	2006
Tennent's Lager: £1.36	Tennent's Lager £0.37
Wine (average bottle): £14	Wine (average bottle) £4.99
Famous Grouse whisky: £31.12	Famous Grouse whisky: £13.99
Gordon's Gin: £30	Gordons Gin £8.59
Smirnoff Vodka: £29.52	Smirnoff Vodka £11.99
Bristol Cream sherry: £14.32	Bristol Cream sherry: £7.09

(All prices taken from leading supermarkets)

The adjusted price of a pint of beer was £2.96 compared to £2.20 today. The average person's consumption has gone up in the same period from an average seven litres a year to 11.1 litres.

The figures take account of children so adult consumption is far higher in real terms. But the most worrying statistic is the number of alcohol-related deaths. Latest figures show 2052 Scots suffered alcohol-related deaths in 2004 – a rise of 250 per cent from the 1970s.

Sunday Mail 15th Jan 2006

The aim of MUP

“The policy aim of MUP is to reduce health harms caused by alcohol consumption...It aims to reduce both the consumption of alcohol at population level and, in particular, among those who drink at hazardous and harmful levels.”

Scottish Government (Interim BRIA of MUP Continuation and Future Pricing, 2023).

MUP establishes a ‘floor’ price for a unit of alcohol (10ml or 8g)

Minimum price for a product = Price per unit x Strength of alcohol x Volume (litres)

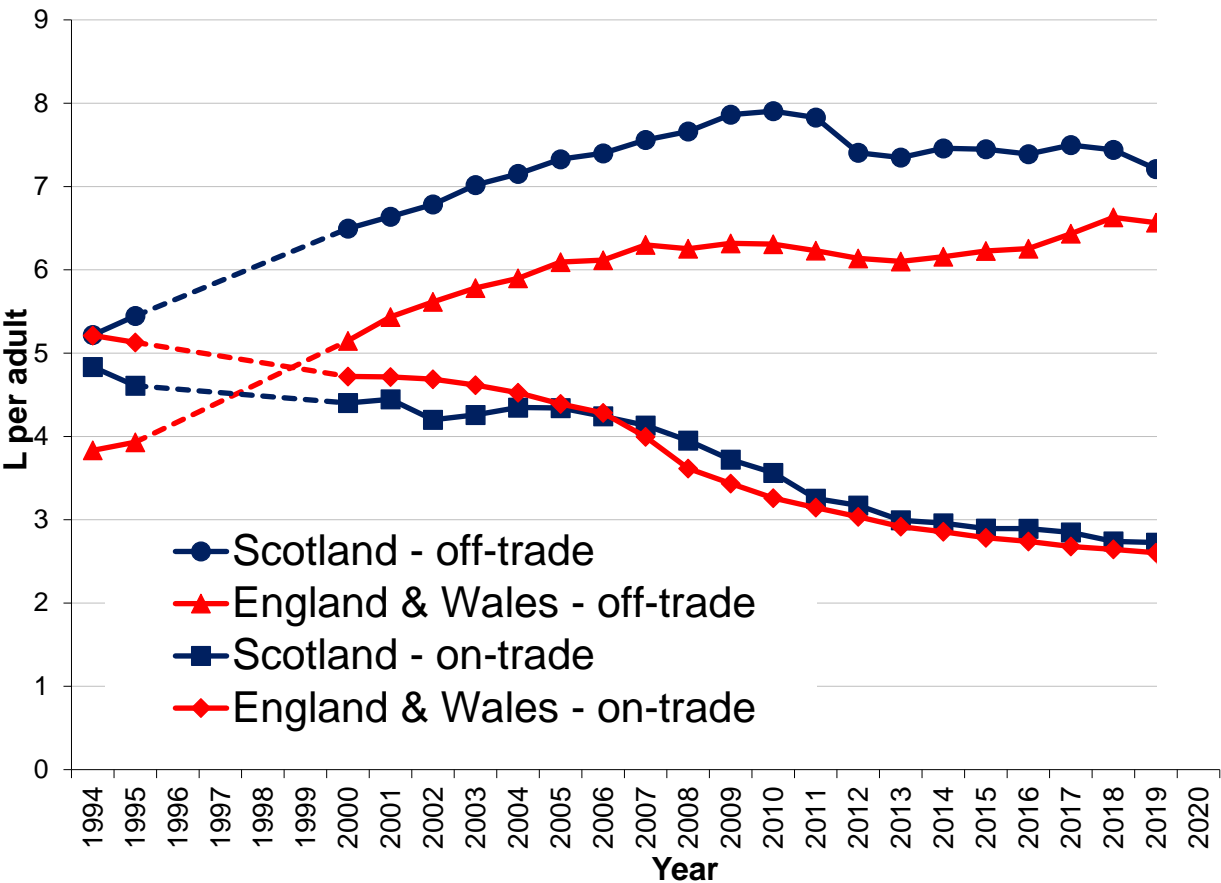
Part of a **PACKAGE** of Measures:

The Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010:

- The multi-buy discount ban, which led to a decline in total per adult off-trade alcohol sales, mostly driven by falls in wine sales.
- Increased investment in alcohol treatment and care services, with access now at a level considered high by international standards.
- Increased delivery of Alcohol Brief Interventions.
- Legislation to ban irresponsible promotions in the on-trade.
- Introduction of the lower drink drive limit to 50mg per 100ml of blood.

Impact of MUP on Alcohol sold

Volume of pure alcohol (litres) sold per adult (16+), by trade sector, 1994-2020



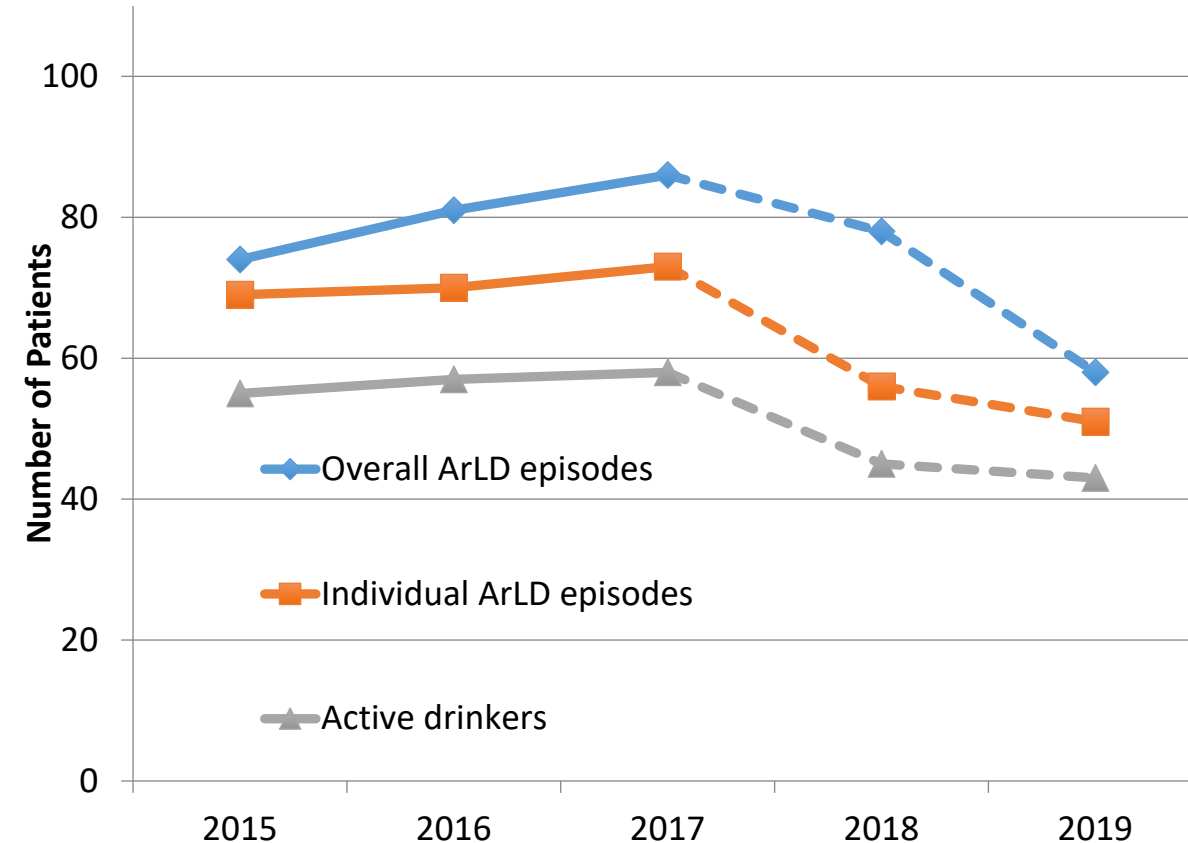
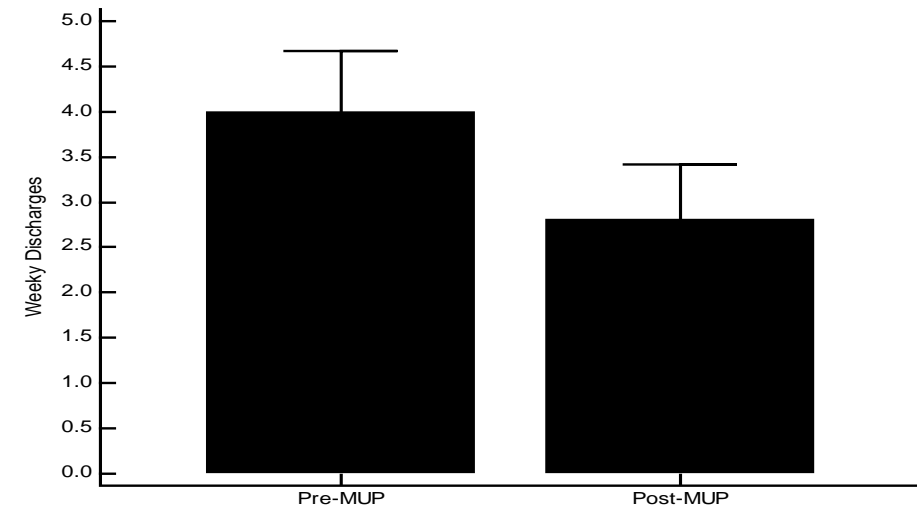
Estimated change % in alcohol sales in Scotland, with England and Wales as control

	Total (on- and off-trade combined) after three years % change (CI)	Off-trade after three years % change (CI)
All alcohol	-3.0 (-4.2 to -1.8)	-3.6 (-4.8 to -2.5)
Beer	-2.3 (-3.9 to -0.7)	-1.6 (-3.7 to 0.5)
Spirits	-4.9 (-6.6 to -3.1)	-5.5 (-7.5 to -3.4)
Wine	0.6 (-0.6 to 1.7)	1.8 (0.8 to 2.8)
Cider	-13.5 (-16.9 to -10.0)	-21.5 (-24.6 to 18.3)
FW	13.5 (7.5 to 19.8)	13.8 (8.6 to 19.3)
RTD	-0.5 (-6.9 to 6.3)	3.6 (-3.4 to 11.1)
Perry	-31.6 (-38.4 to -24.1)	-31.3 (-37.7 to -24.2)

Note: FW = fortified wine; RTD = ready-to-drink beverages

Patterns of ArLD: effect of MUP

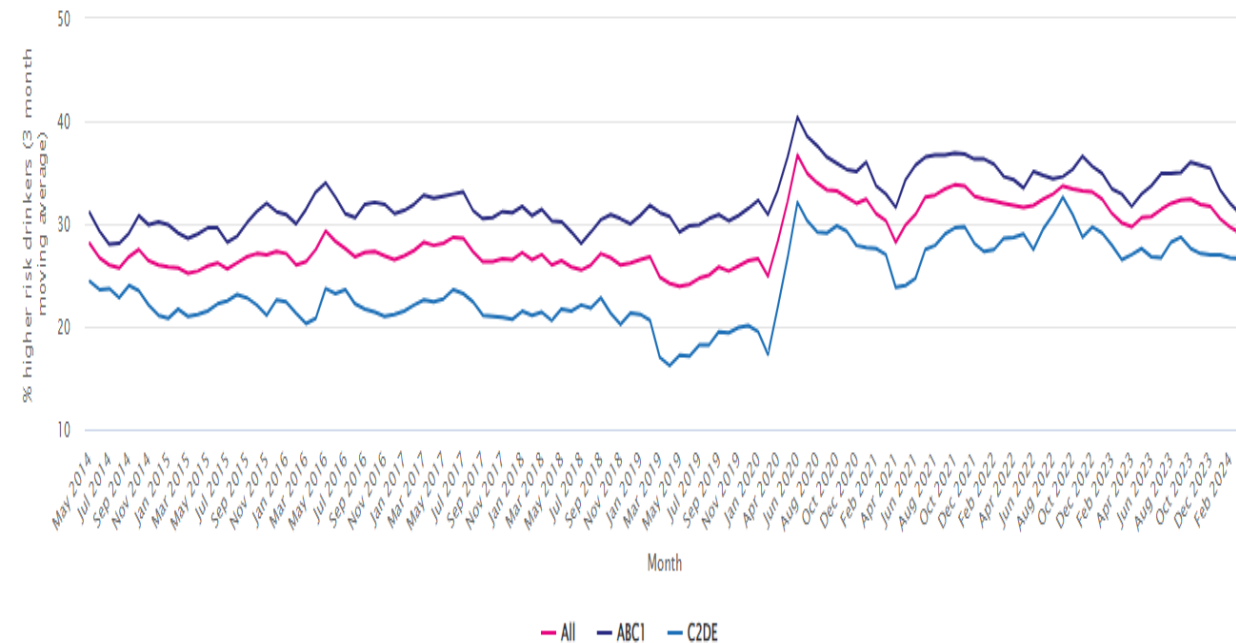
- Discharges from Gastroenterology/Liver Wards 8/9 Glasgow Royal Infirmary
 - October - December: 2015 - 2019 (MUP introduced May 2018)
- Alcohol-related liver disease (ArLD) admissions noted
 - No change in clinical presentations: similar proportions of patients with ascites, alcoholic hepatitis, encephalopathy and variceal haemorrhage
 - Reductions in weekly discharge numbers of patients with ArLD
 - Fewer individual patients with ArLD
 - Fewer patients actively drinking at time of admission (<8 weeks)



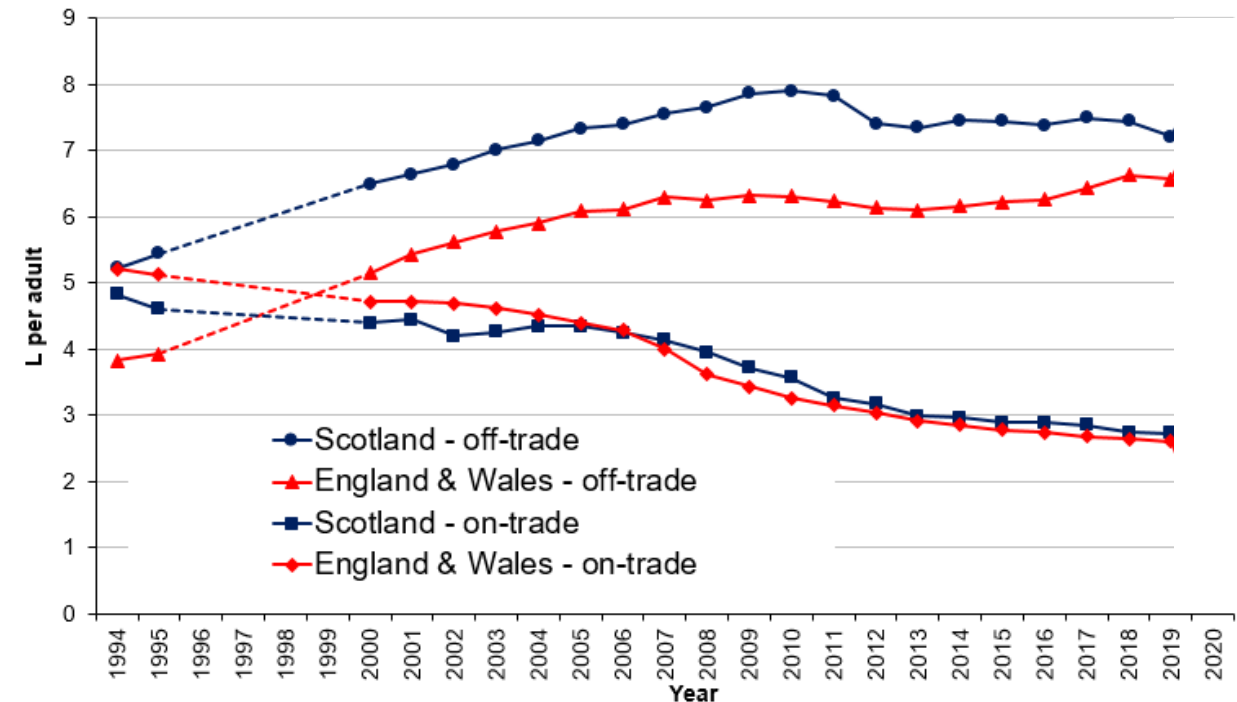
Impact of COVID-19: pandemic: drinking behaviour and deaths

- Increased drinking in those with higher pre-COVID AUDIT scores
- England and Wales: in 2020, there was a 20.0% increase in total alcohol specific deaths compared to 2019 (33.0% of deaths in the most deprived group).

Prevalence of increasing and higher risk drinking (AUDIT-C)



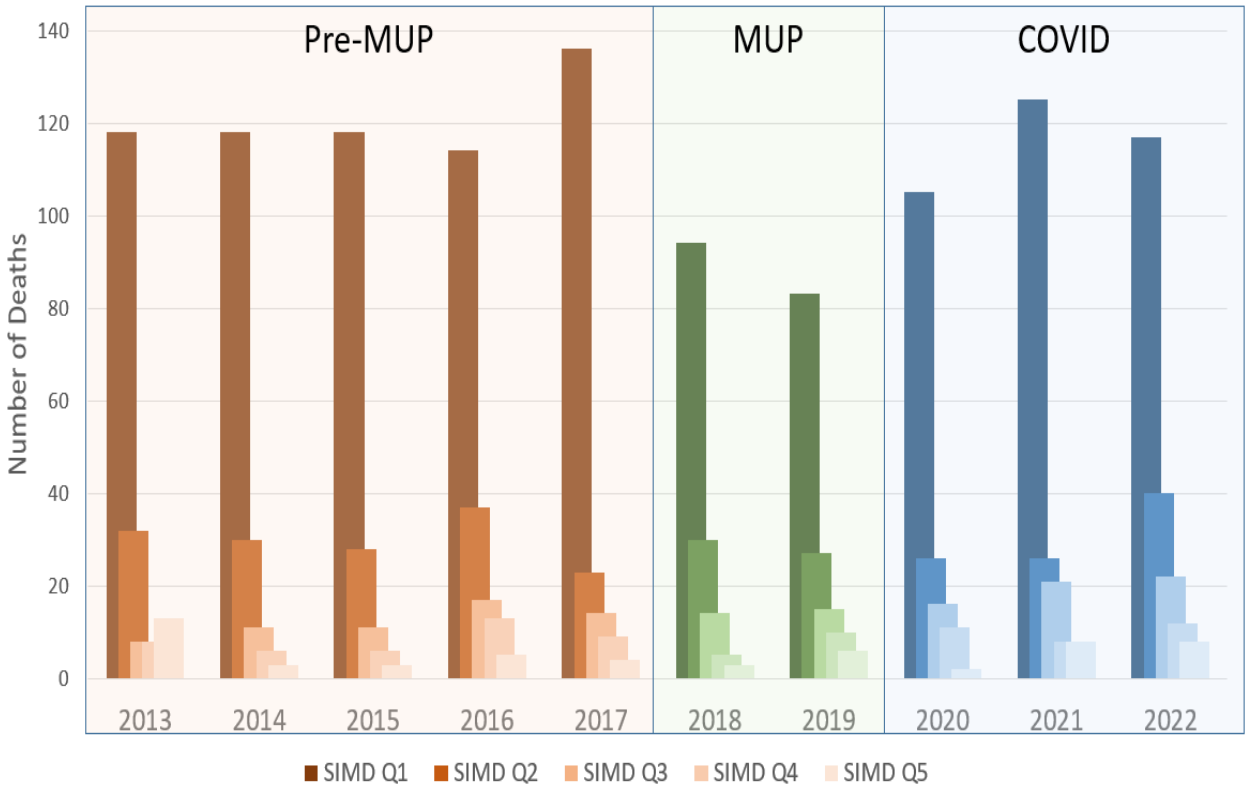
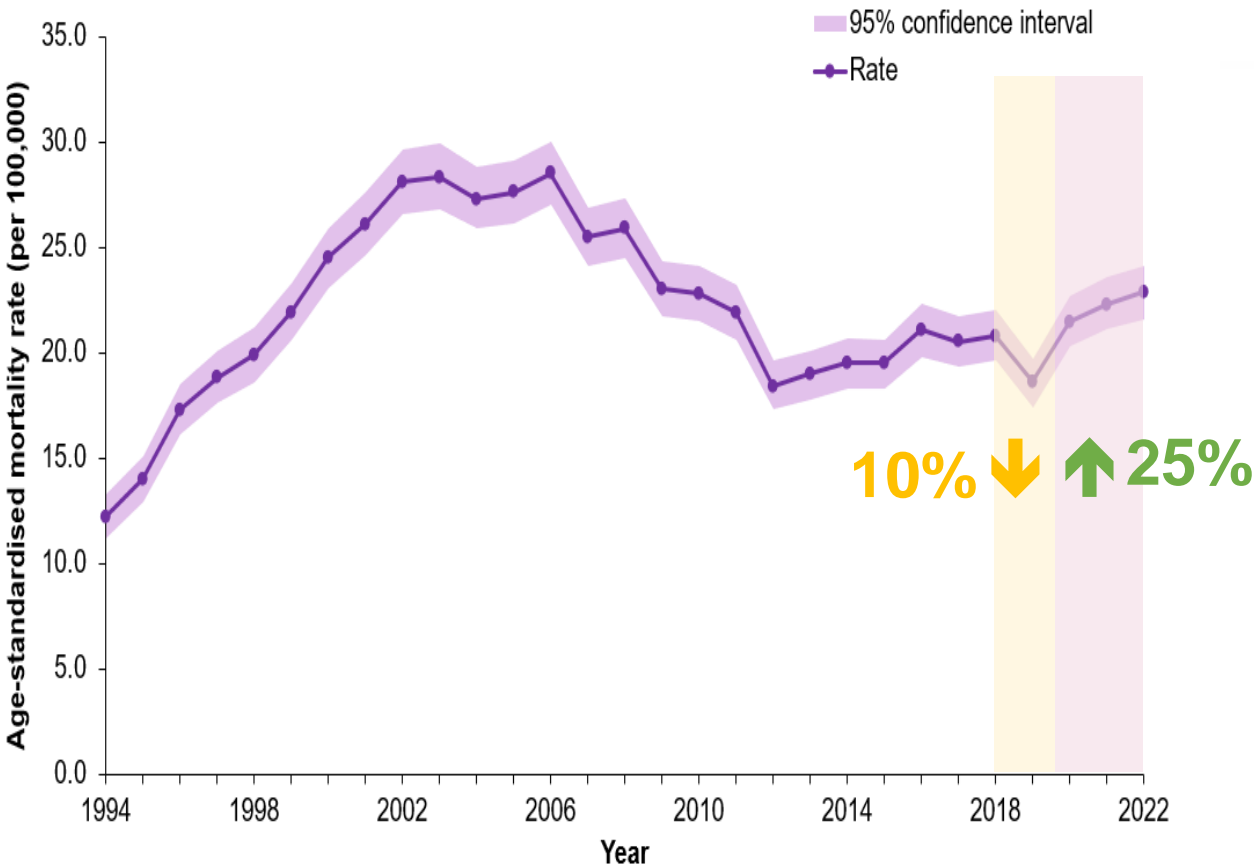
Volume of pure alcohol (litres) sold per adult (16+), by trade sector, 1994-2020



Impact of MUP... followed by the Impact of COVID-19

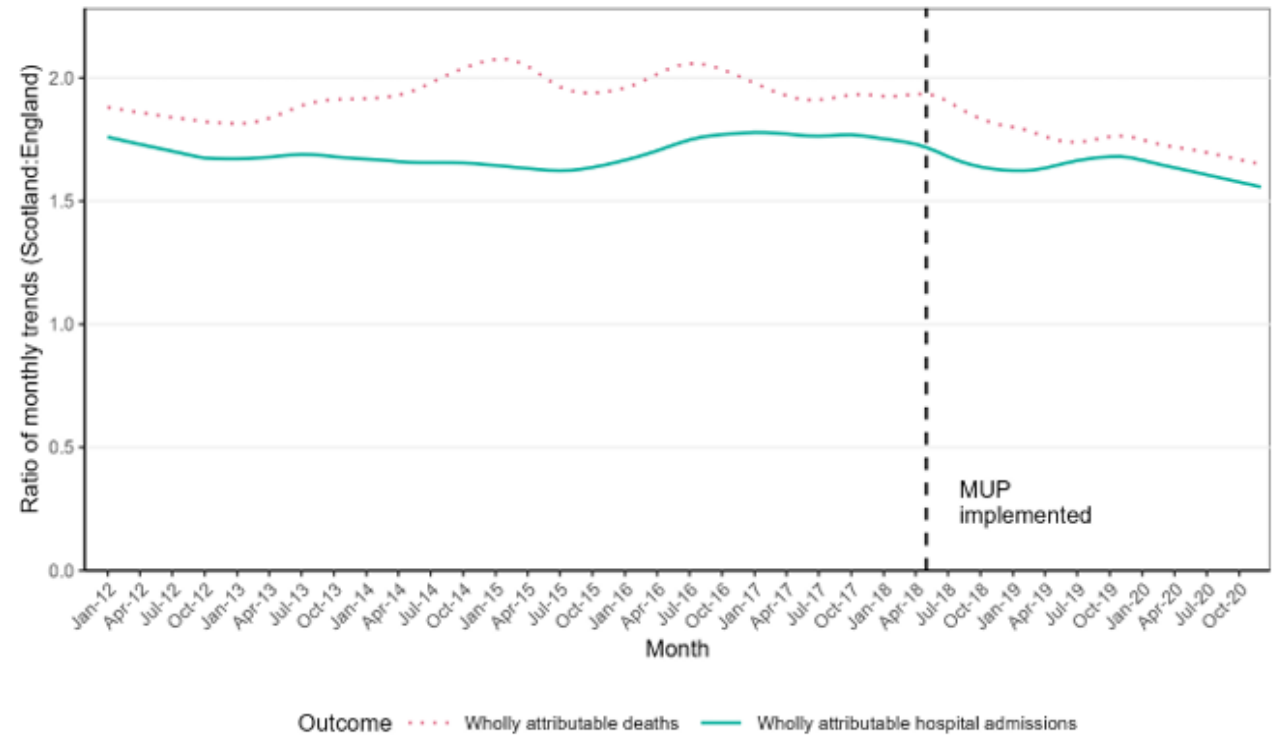
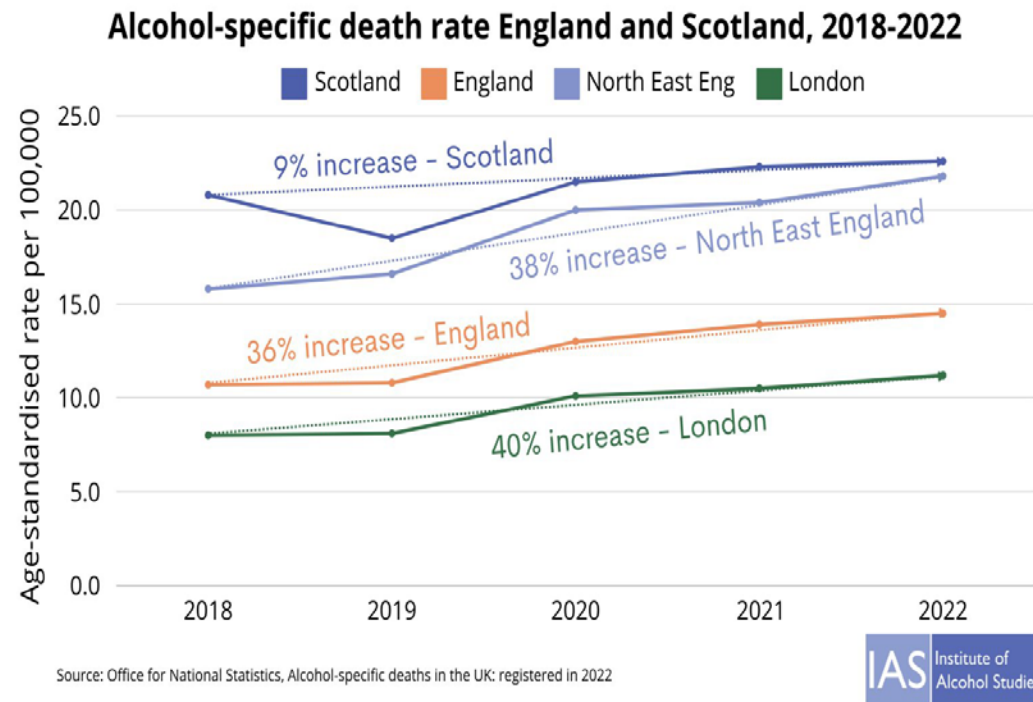
- Initial fall in alcohol-specific deaths after introduction of MUP

Alcohol-specific Deaths in:
Scotland
Glasgow City by SIMD (provisional)



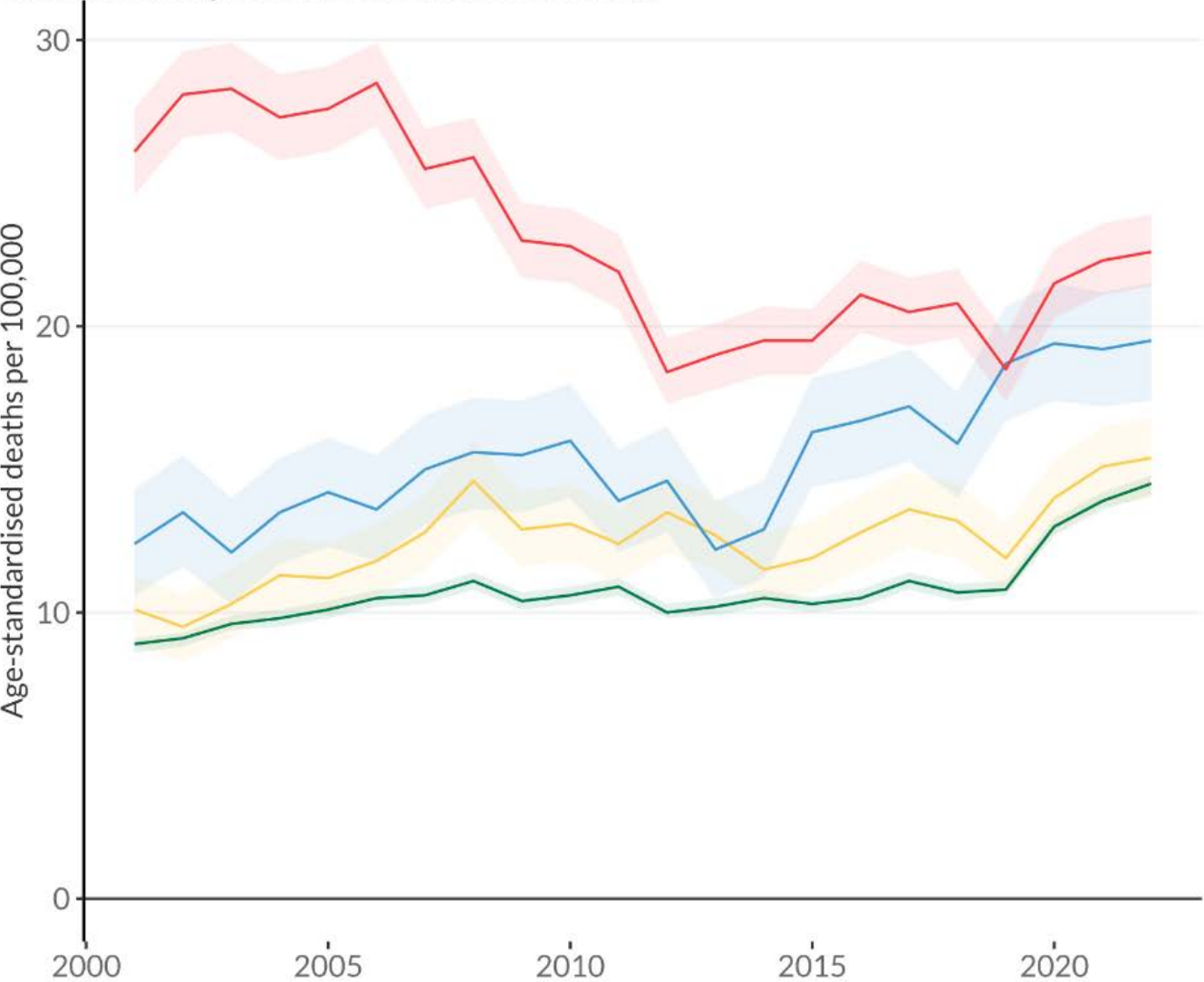
MUP: blunting the COVID driven increase in alcohol harm

Wyper et al, 2023		Effect estimate, % (95% CI)	Effect estimate, N per year (95% CI)	p value
Deaths	All deaths	-13.4% (-18.4 to -8.3)	-156 (-243 to -69)	0.0004
	Alcoholic liver disease	-11.7% (-16.7 to -6.4)	Not estimated	<0.0001
Hospitalisations	All hospitalisations	-4.1% (-8.3 to 0.3)	-411 (-908 to 86)	0.064
	Alcoholic liver disease	-9.8% (-17.5 to -1.3)	Not estimated	0.023



Scotland: a world apart?

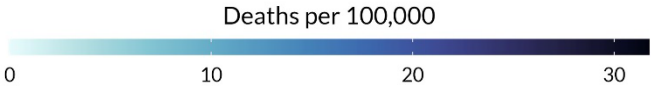
Age-standardised mortality rates from conditions caused only by alcohol.
Shaded areas represent 95% Confidence Intervals.



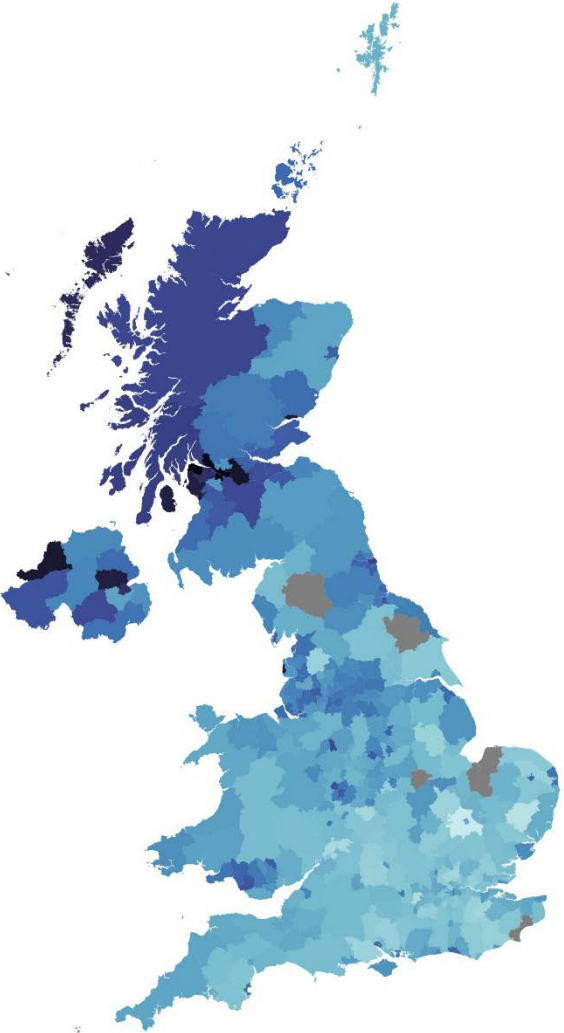
Data from ONS | Plot by @VictimOfMaths

Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK

Age-standardised mortality rates for causes that are 100% attributable to alcohol.
Grey areas have too few deaths to robustly calculate these rates.
Data reflects latest available figures for each country



- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Wales
- England



Data from ONS, OHID, DHC Wales, NRS & NISRA
Plot by @VictimOfMaths

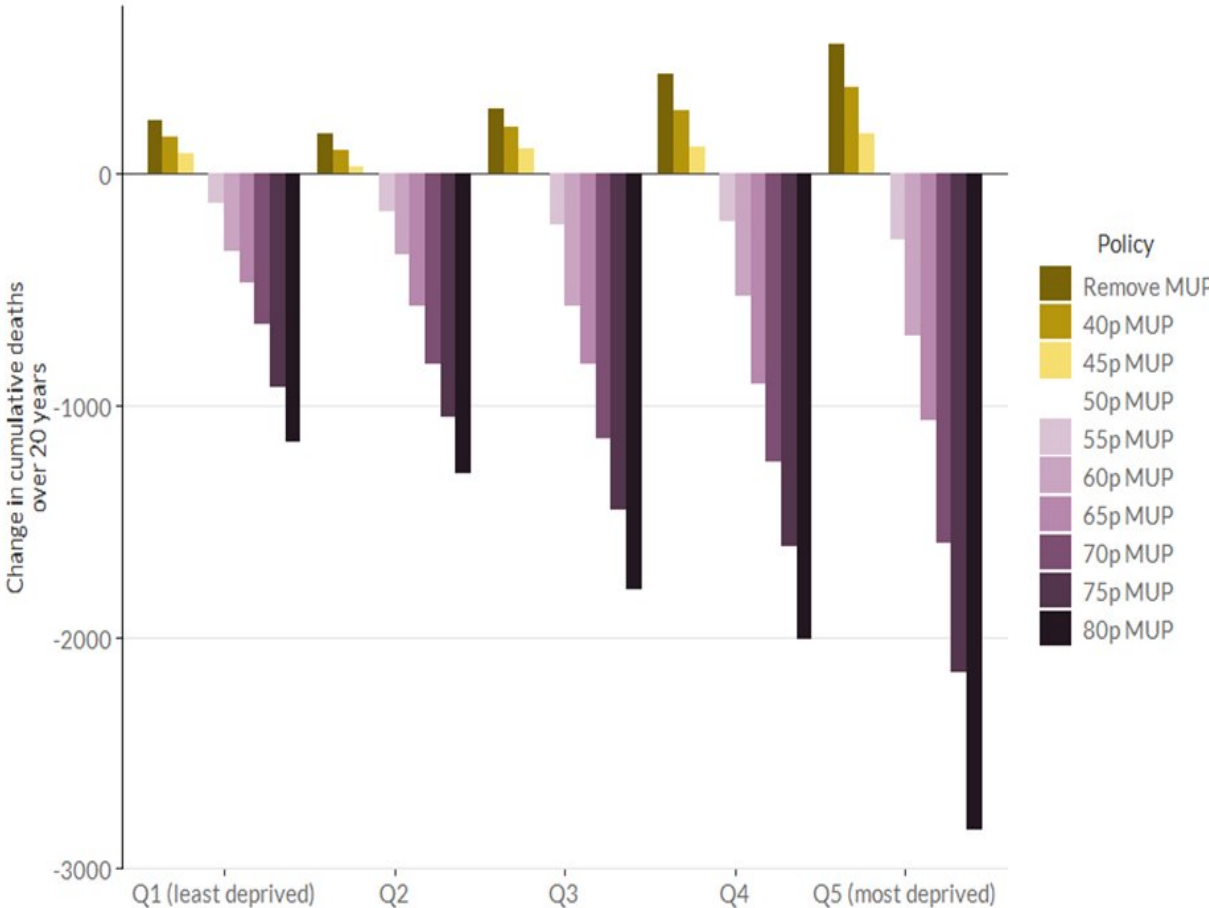
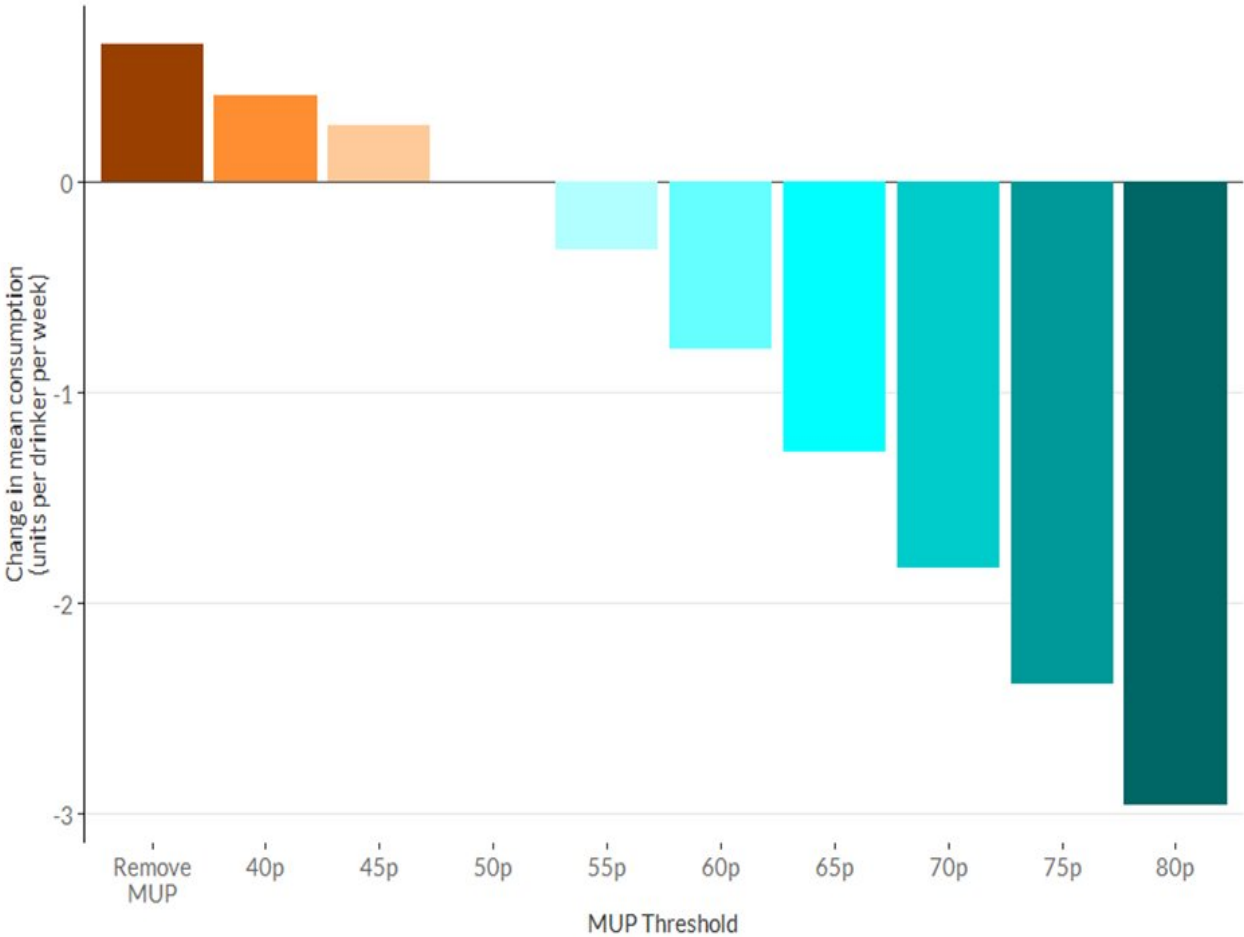
There maybe trouble ahead...

Age-standardised mortality rates from conditions that are only caused by alcohol by English region.
Grey shaded areas represent the pandemic period and the percentage change 2019-2022.



Impacts of Different Thresholds of MUP

- Change in drinking behaviour
- Change in alcohol deaths



MUP must be uprated to at least 65p

- The effect of MUP has also been eroded by inflation

- 50p in 2018 = 61p in 2023.
- Keeping at 50p would lead to an increase, over 20 years, of 200 deaths, >14,500 hospital admissions, ~£17.5m

- Anything less than 60p = increase

17th April 2024

- MUP increase to 65p would result in a 2.7% reduction in alcohol consumption by an estimated 2.7%, around ~14,000 fewer hospital admissions, and hospital costs of £16.4m over 20 years (vs. 60p).

- As well as the call to at least 65p now, AFS, SHAAP + over 30 other organisations calling for a automatic measure for price review in the future with indexing to a measure of inflation or affordability

Sheffield
Alcohol
Research
Group