



Alcohol: policies to h reduce alcohol- related harm in England



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Introduction

Nurses are faced with the consequences of alcohol misuse every day - from dealing with violent and aggressive patients in A&E to caring for people suffering from long term poor health as a result of sustained alcohol abuse. All nurses also have a role in health promotion to support the population to make healthier choices.

RCN Policy Position

individuals with the information they need to understand the impact of alcohol misuse and make healthier lifestyle choices.

However, we also believe that more can be done to change the wider environment so that the healthy choice is the easy choice. Sometimes this requires regulation from the government. We believe the government must:

- Reduce the availability of cheap alcohol with a meaningful minimum per unit price
- Legislate to prevent the alcohol industry from undertaking promotional activities which encourage excessive consumption or target children
- Legislate for the mandatory labelling of all alcoholic drinks with unit and health information in a consistent format
- Ensure public information and education about alcohol is based on independent scientific recommendations and provided by bodies wholly independent of the alcohol industry
- Introduce a reduced drink drive limit of 50mg per 100 millilitres of blood alcohol content

Alcohol consumption and its impact

Excessive alcohol consumption is a major source of morbidity and premature death in the UK. Examples illustrating the scale of alcohol-related harm in the UK include:

- The number of alcohol-related hospital admissions topped one million in 2009-



The coalition government has also placed strong emphasis on the Public Health Responsibility Deal^{vi} as a vehicle for the alcohol industry to sign up to a number of



Unit and health labelling: *Royal College of Nursing response to the joint consultation on options for improving information on the labels of alcoholic drinks to support consumers to make healthier choices* <http://goo.gl/q4nOE>

Alcohol promotions: *Consultation on product placement on television: Royal College of Nursing submission* <http://goo.gl/qZeVU>

References

ⁱ <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/alcohol11>

ⁱⁱ Department of Health (2008), *The Cost of Alcohol Harm to the NHS in England*

ⁱⁱⁱ Revised from 2003 estimates by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit in *Alcohol Misuse: how much does it cost*. See http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/reducing_alcohol_harm.aspx

^{iv} <http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2010/01/statement-new-code-of-practice-for-alcohol-retailers/>

^v <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/policereformandsocialresponsibility.html>

^{vi} <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Publichealthresponsibilitydeal/index.htm>

^{vii} <http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/policy/responding-nhs-reform/public-health-responsibility-deal>

^{viii} <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-press-20110321>

^{ix}

http://www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/news/article/uk/government_action_needed_to_reduce_harmful_drinking_say_public_sector_professionals

^x <http://www.shef.ac.uk/scharr/sections/ph/research/alpol/research/sapm>

^{xi} Mason C (2009) *Improving services for people with alcohol-related problems*, *Nursing Standard* May 27 June 2: 23(38) 35-40