

Analysis of off-trade alcohol sales in the year following minimum pricing

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Building on an earlier report on per adult off-trade sales, Public Health Scotland today published an analysis showing a decline in population alcohol consumption following the introduction of minimum unit pricing

(MUP). The work was done in collaboration with the University of Glasgow.

Public Health Scotland today published data showing a decline in population alcohol consumption following the introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing. Carried out in collaboration with the University of Glasgow, this study shows a net reduction, when compared to England & Wales, in per adult sales of alcohol from supermarkets and off-licences of between 4 and 5% in the 12 months following the implementation of MUP.

This work builds on an earlier report which described a fall in per adult off-trade sales in the year following MUP implementation. This new analysis strengthens these findings, by estimating the impact of MUP on off-trade alcohol sales, whilst controlling for underlying trends, seasonal fluctuations in consumption and other potentially [important factors](#).

The analyses compared and controlled for changes in alcohol sales in England and Wales—where MUP had not been implemented. It also controlled for underlying trends and factors such as [household income](#). As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the reductions in volume of alcohol sold were due to the introduction of MUP.

Jim Lewsey, Professor of Medical Statistics at the Institute of Health and Wellbeing, University of Glasgow, said:

"The methods used in this study allow us to be much more confident that the reduction we have seen in per adult off-trade sales is as a result of the introduction of MUP, rather than some other factor. Incorporating data from England & Wales into our analysis controls for any changes in sales in a neighbouring region where the legislation was not introduced. We've also been able to adjust for other factors, such as household income, sales of alcohol through pubs and clubs and of other drink types.

"This statistical method also allows us to take into consideration any existing trends and [seasonal variation](#) in the data, which may have existed independently of MUP, but which could have impacted on off-trade alcohol sales following its introduction. Alongside a range of additional analyses accounting for various other factors, we have demonstrated that the introduction of MUP was associated with a fall in population consumption of off-trade alcohol of between 4 and 5%."

Lucie Giles, Public Health Intelligence Principal at Public Health Scotland, said:

"The greatest relative net reductions were seen in sales of cider and perry, where the greatest increases in average price were also seen. There were smaller relative reductions in sales of spirits and beer—but as they account for a considerable share of the off-trade market, they make an important contribution to the reduction overall. These reductions were partly offset by off-trade sales of wine, fortified wine and ready-to-drink beverages, which this analysis found to have increased in the year post-MUP. Over the same period in England and Wales, per adult alcohol sales increased.

"This analysis of [alcohol sales](#) in the off-trade is one of several in our evaluation examining the impact of MUP on population [alcohol](#) consumption. A further statistical [analysis](#) considering sales in the three years following the implementation of MUP will be published in 2022".

Provided by University of Glasgow

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