

# Reducing the availability of alcohol would help combat excessive drinking

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Reducing the availability of alcohol by increasing unit pricing is one of the measures that is being recommended in a new British Psychological Society report 'Changing behaviour: Responsible alcohol consumption'.

Professor Chris Armitage, the author of the report, said: 'Misuse of alcohol has been estimated to cost the UK approximately £20 billion per annum, due to its impact on health, the economy and society. The current approach to moderating the general public's [alcohol consumption](#) consists of legal restrictions on the availability of alcohol alongside high-profile public health campaigns designed to promote "responsible" drinking. This approach has failed.'

The key recommendation of the report suggests investment in a programme of behavioural sciences research dedicated to improving both policy-level (e.g., public health campaigns, unit pricing) and individual-level brief low cost psychological interventions that will bring about sustained reductions in alcohol consumption. Including but not limited to:

- Develop guidance for alcohol consumption beyond the concept of "responsible drinking" to increase the impact of public health campaigns;
- Reduce the availability of alcohol (e.g., increasing unit pricing, decreasing prominence in retail outlets) to reduce alcohol consumption;
- Improve the policing and scrutiny of advertisements for products

- containing alcohol; and
- Conduct further research into the potential impact of psychologically-informed strategies to improve the impact and the reach of [public health interventions](#).

Professor Armitage also said: 'Efforts to reduce alcohol consumption, like many areas of [behaviour](#) change, have been hampered by insufficient attention being paid to high quality evidence. This briefing starts to address this issue and sets an agenda for addressing gaps in knowledge.'

Effective and sustained [alcohol](#)-related behaviour change requires a multi-pronged approach that includes evidence-based [public health campaigns](#), minimum unit pricing and theory-based behaviour change interventions targeted at individuals.'

The Society's behaviour change briefings are aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the ways in which psychology can contribute towards achieving behaviour change and inform [behaviour change](#) interventions.

**More information:** Changing behaviour: responsible alcohol consumption: [beta.bps.org.uk/sites/beta.bps.org.uk/files/Policy%20-%20Files/Changing%20Behaviour.%20Responsible%20Alcohol%20Consumption.pdf](https://beta.bps.org.uk/sites/beta.bps.org.uk/files/Policy%20-%20Files/Changing%20Behaviour.%20Responsible%20Alcohol%20Consumption.pdf)

Provided by British Psychological Society

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