

Alcohol Factsheet: Knowsley

June 2016



What is the issue?

10.8 million people in England drink at levels which pose a risk to their health. Overall, alcohol costs the UK £21 billion every year, effecting millions of lives and placing a huge burden upon public services.

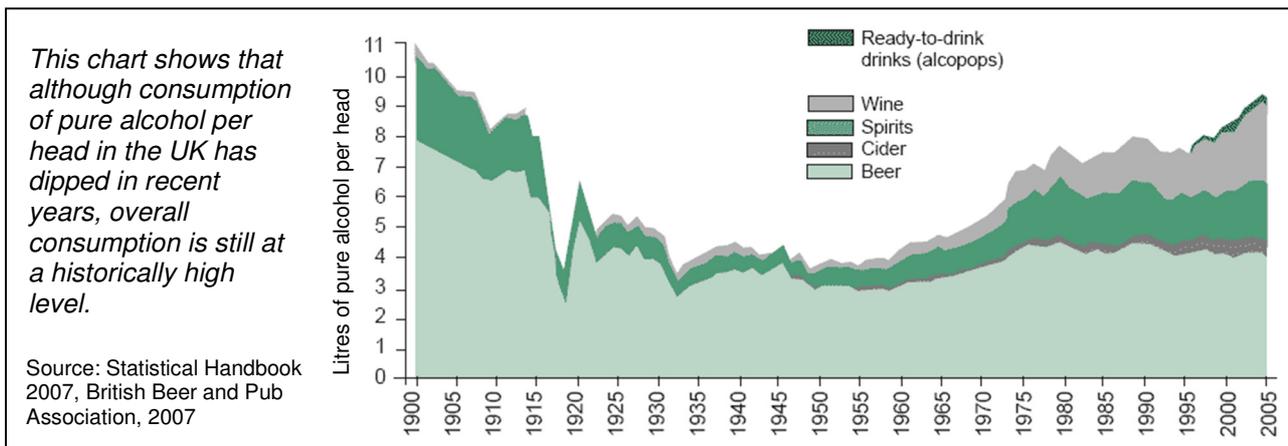
Availability, affordability and the heavy marketing of alcohol have fuelled the rise of excessive alcohol consumption and normalised a drinking culture within society.

Problems associated with alcohol include liver disease, late-night violence, a cause of several cancers, triggering mental health issues, a driver of domestic violence and a leading risk factor for premature death.

Alcohol is 54% more affordable than in 1980, help drive historically high levels of alcohol consumption.

Supermarkets often use heavy discounts, frequently selling alcohol cheaper than a bottle of water.

Whilst figures over recent years have suggested a modest drop in overall consumption, we are still drinking at historically high levels.



What does alcohol cost Knowsley?

Alcohol costs to Knowsley, including to the local NHS, police, social services and local employers, is estimated at more than £52m, or £357 for every man woman and child living in Knowsley. The annual cost of alcohol in England is estimated at more than £21bn, including £3.5bn to the NHS, crime costs of £7bn, costs to work places of £8.9bn and £1.7bn costs to social services.

A breakdown of the annual costs due to alcohol in Knowsley includes:

- NHS costs: £14.2m, that is £98/person living in Knowsley
- Crime costs: £13.9m, that is £96/person living in Knowsley
- Work place costs: £18.5m, that is £127/person living in Knowsley
- Social services costs: £5.6m, that is £38/person living in Knowsley

Key alcohol facts - Knowsley

- Alcohol-related hospital admissions were 4190 in 2014/15
- Between 2012/13 and 2014/15 there were 43 under-18s admitted to hospital due to alcohol
- 1% of babies are estimated to be born in Knowsley each year with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, caused by drinking during pregnancy, which could number 19 babies annually
- There were 590 alcohol-related crimes in Knowsley in 2012/13
- The binge drinking rate amongst 16yr olds is 24% (2015 survey)
- There were 75 alcohol-related deaths in Knowsley in 2013
- A recent survey found that 72% of people in Merseyside believe that the Government has a responsibility to reduce alcohol-related harms

Young people and alcohol

- 2.1m children in England are negatively affected by other people's drinking every year
- Young people in the UK tend to drink more and start drinking earlier than in European countries
- Children exposed to a lot of alcohol advertising are more likely to drink heavily and to start drinking at an earlier age
- 10-15 year olds in the UK view more alcohol ads on TV than adults over the age of 25
- By the age of 15, 44% of girls and 39% of boys in the UK have been drunk at least twice
- In England 100 children end up in hospital each week due to alcohol
- Around a quarter of both drink drive fatalities and seriously injured drink drive casualties in England arise from accidents in which a young driver was over the limit

Health and alcohol

- There were 6,592 alcohol-related deaths in England in 2013 a 10% increase from 2003 (5,984)
- Alcohol-related hospital admissions in England have risen by 219% between 2003/04 and 2014/15, from 494,000 to 1,085,000
- Alcohol causes 80% of liver disease deaths
- Alcohol causes at least 7 types of cancer, including liver, bowel and breast cancer
- 27% of homeless people in England have or are recovering from an alcohol problem
- 2,900 people go to hospital each day in England with alcohol-related conditions
- Up to 12 million adults in the UK drink to help them relax or overcome feelings of depression. Drinking can cause mental ill health; mental ill health can also lead to problem drinking

Crime and alcohol

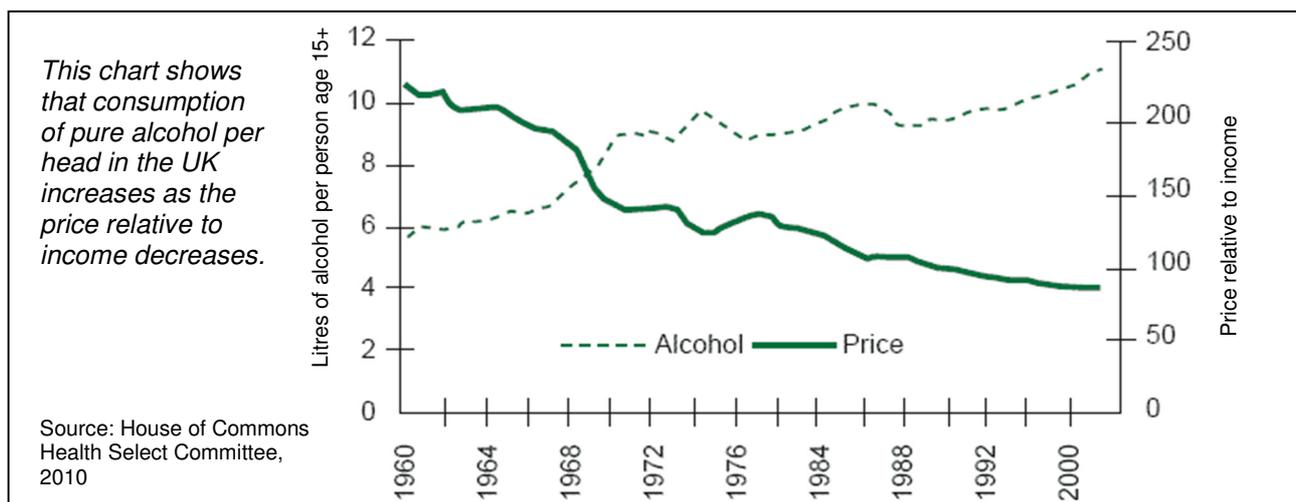
- Research typically finds between 25% and 50% of those who perpetrate domestic abuse have been drinking at the time of assault, although in some studies the figure is as high as 73%
- 70% of violent incidents at the weekend, and 70% of violent incidents occurring in the evening or night, are alcohol-related
- 43% of assaults on police officers are alcohol-related
- 70% of people in Merseyside are put off going for a night out their local town centre because of the drink-related behaviour of others
- Illegal alcohol costs the Government up to £1.2 billion in lost duties and taxes

How can Knowsley develop a healthier relationship with alcohol?

Health First, the evidence-based alcohol strategy for the UK, recommends that action needs to be taken on the **Pricing of alcohol**, the **Licensing of alcohol**, the **Marketing of alcohol**, **Drinking and pregnancy** and **Drink driving** as these five issues are strong drivers of alcohol-related harm.

Pricing of alcohol

As alcohol becomes cheaper consumption rises and the greater the risk of harm. Alcohol in the UK is 54% more affordable than in 1980.



○ Key policy option: Minimum unit pricing of alcohol

50% of people in Merseyside support the introduction of a minimum unit price for alcohol (MUP) which would reduce overall consumption in the UK. Several provinces in Canada set a minimum price and see a dramatic reduction in alcohol-related health harms and crimes when the minimum price is raised, showing that MUP is an effective tool.

University of Sheffield researchers estimate that a 50 pence minimum unit price in England would target the youngest and heaviest drinkers. In addition they also predict that an MUP of 50p per unit of alcohol would:

- Save the economy £5.1 billion, mostly due to fewer crimes, lower health harms and improved productivity in the workforce
- Reduce hospital admissions by 35,000
- Cut 50,700 crimes
- Save almost 1,000 lives each year

Licensing of alcohol

Council Licensing Committees cannot take into account health effects when considering alcohol license applications as Health is not an 'Objective' of alcohol licensing, despite 54% public support in Merseyside that the health of local people should be considered.

○ Key policy option: Introduce a new 'Health' objective in the alcohol licensing process

The introduction of health as a licensing objective would give local communities greater power to object to unwanted alcohol applications helping protect those communities where alcohol is easily available and health harms high.

Marketing of alcohol

Children who are exposed to a lot of alcohol advertising are more likely to drink heavily and to start drinking at an earlier age. Alcohol companies spend at least £800m in the UK on marketing, advertising and sponsoring sporting events.

- **Key policy options: Restrict alcohol marketing to protect children**
- Banning TV adverts before the 9pm watershed is supported by 75% of residents in Merseyside
- Only allowing alcohol adverts in cinemas if a film has an 18 certificate is supported by 85% in Merseyside
- Restricting alcohol companies sponsoring sporting events is supported by 63% in Merseyside

Drinking and pregnancy, including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

The majority of pregnant women (59%) either don't drink alcohol or stop drinking during pregnancy. Many of those who continue to drink alcohol cut down their intake. However, drinking in pregnancy leads to increased risks to the unborn child including the development of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD is a spectrum of lifelong behavioural, emotional, physical, and neurological issues. Research suggests that 1% of babies in the UK are born with FASD.

- **Key policy options: National policy asks on FASD**

Campaigners and medical professionals have developed five key policy asks to address FASD (the first policy ask, calling for clear guidelines, has partially been achieved with the publication in January 2016 of updated Chief Medical Officer's alcohol guidelines):

1. Clear official guidance highlighting the risks of drinking during pregnancy, and advising that pregnant women abstain from alcohol
2. Evidence-based labelling warning of the risks of drinking during pregnancy
3. Improved understanding of the prevalence and impact of FASD
4. Professional training for all healthcare, social, and educational professionals
5. Patient and parent focused care pathway and increased specialist support

Drink Driving

Research suggests that 10 million UK adults drink drive annually. Each year around 240 people die, and 1,200 are seriously injured due to drink driving. Set in 1967, the limit in England and Wales is 80mg alcohol/100ml blood. Scotland recently (December 2014) lowered the limit to nearly half that, at 50mg/100ml blood in line with Western Europe (except for Malta). The estimated annual savings to Scotland's economy from the new lower limit is between £7.4m and £44.4m.

- **Key policy option: Reduce drink drive limit to 50mg alcohol/100ml blood**

A 50mg limit would save about 25 lives and result in 95 fewer serious accidents annually in England. There would be an added benefit in reducing overall consumption as drinkers would have to consider residual 'morning after' blood alcohol levels – currently 20% of drink drive convictions are a result of 'morning after' breath tests. 81% of people in Merseyside support lowering the drink drive limit.