

Terry Simpson

From: Christine Smith on behalf of Town Council
Sent: 30 January 2012 13:59
To: Councillors; Angela Wiseman; Neville Chard; Office Staff
Subject: FW: Act Now!

For info

From: British Liver Trust [mailto:fundraising@britishlivertrust.org.uk]
Sent: 30 January 2012 13:17
Subject: Act Now!

Dear Supporter,

Thank you so much for being part of our work and continuing to support our campaigns and appeals, we could not do it without you. As you know, we represent every type of liver condition, ignoring and fighting against any stigma. As a valued supporter you understand the importance of the liver community to stand together on a specific issue. When we unite our actions make a large impact. We all agree that this silent, uncomplaining organ needs our help to be pushed into the spotlight, to climb higher on the public and political agendas to ensure it is remembered, not forgotten and becomes a priority.

Today we urgently need your help once again, this time it is to ensure we get an effective Government policy on alcohol. The window of opportunity to influence the alcohol strategy is closing; this is our last chance to have our voice, counteracting the extreme lobbying power of the supermarkets and alcohol industry.

We support a strategy that should include a minimum price for alcohol; a minimum price of 50p per unit would reduce premature alcohol related deaths by 3,400, and hospital admissions by 97,000 each year. David Cameron has publicly stated his support for an effective minimum price, but the Secretary of State for Health has not.

The voluntary measures of the drinks industry to reduce alcohol consumption until now have steered the UK Governments position on the matter. However this approach is a direct conflict of interest given that the drinks industry's turnover and profitability is dependent on maintaining or increasing alcohol consumption.

Today you can make a difference! MPs take more interest when issues are raised directly by their own constituents.

We are asking all of our supporters to write a letter to their local MP (A4 single sheet advised), to ensure that we have an alcohol strategy that works. Below we have listed some factual bullet points and questions. Ensure that you combine your own personal opinions or experiences at the start of the letter with a few of these bullet points and questions included. This combination will have the most impact.

These kinds of letters are very persuasive and will call for the Minister or MP to back minimum pricing in the Alcohol Strategy. Please could you write this letter today, your MPs address can be found on www.writetothem.com please see below for the key facts, misconceptions about minimum pricing and possible questions to your MP.

Thank you

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Langford

Chief Executive

Key facts and misconceptions about minimum pricing

- Some people are concerned that a minimum price of 50p per unit could be unfair to moderate drinkers on a low income, but ultra-low price alcohol is currently disproportionately affecting those from disadvantaged communities. A recent report for the Department of Health from September 2011, "Narrowing the Health gap", stated that were it not for alcohol related deaths, the objective to narrow the overall life expectancy gaps for the most deprived local authorities would almost certainly have been achieved.
- Minimum pricing would not increase the price of alcohol sold in pubs and nor would it increase the price of most off licence alcohol. It seeks to prevent the sale of the damagingly cheap alcohol which is targeted by harmful and binge drinkers.
- A minimum price of 45p per unit would mean only that a standard sized bottle of whisky could not be sold for less than £12.60 and a 10unit bottle of wine for less than £4.50. A pint of beer with 2 units would have to cost at least 90p.
- Harmful drinkers buy fifteen times more alcohol than moderate drinkers yet they pay on average 40% less per unit. Minimum pricing has recently been shown from a study in Canada to significantly lower the consumption of alcohol.
- Minimum pricing would help to protect our local pubs and reduce the trend to people drinking cheap alcohol at home or on the streets. Alcohol remains 40% more affordable than it was in 1980
- With a 50p per unit minimum price, a harmful drinker will spend on average an extra £163 per year whilst a moderate drinker will spend an extra £12 per year.
- Alcohol harm costs our economy at least £20 billion per year and is likely to be much higher if the full range of costs are included.
- In 3 years' time this Government will be judged not just on the economy but on a range of markers such as waiting times in A&E, antisocial behaviour, violent crime and our prison population. Health inequality and even teenage pregnancy rates...It is hard to think of many that would not be improved by an effective alcohol strategy and I believe that has to include an effective minimum price for alcohol

Possible further questions for your MP:

- Can you tell me how many alcohol-related deaths occurred in this constituency in the last year for which figures are available?
- Have you spoken to your local consultant in A&E, liver specialist or Director of Public Health to find out what impact alcohol has on local NHS resources?
- Have you spoken to your Chief Constable to find out what impact alcohol is having on local police resources?
- Have you been on patrol with your local police force to discuss the impact that alcohol is having on police resources locally?

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