



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE**            **Supreme Court judgment in the matter of *Scotch Whisky Association and others v The Lord Advocate and another***

**DATE**            **15 November 2017**

**BY**                **Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services**

The Welsh Government has been closely monitoring developments in the long-running legal case surrounding the Scottish minimum pricing legislation and is delighted that the Supreme Court has today issued its unanimous judgment dismissing the appeal brought by the Scotch Whisky Association and others and upholding the Scottish legislation.

The judgment by the Supreme Court unanimously upholds the Court of Session's finding that the introduction of a minimum price for alcohol in Scotland is compatible with EU law. It considers that minimum pricing is a proportionate means of addressing alcohol related harm. The judgment confirms the question of where the balance ought to be struck between protecting health and trade matters is a matter for the devolved, democratically-elected legislature to decide and states, in the clearest terms, that the courts should not second-guess the value which a domestic legislature puts on health.

Alcohol-related harm is a significant public health problem in Wales. Tackling excessive alcohol consumption is a priority for this Welsh Government. Figures recently published show that in 2016, there were 504 alcohol-related deaths in Wales, all of which were avoidable.

As part of our overall approach to tackling alcohol-related harm, we have long recognised that action to combat the availability of cheap and high-strength alcohol has been missing in our strategy, which is why we introduced the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill – a piece of legislation, which is specifically concerned with the protection of life and health.

The Welsh Government will now consider any detailed implications of the judgment for the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill, which was introduced to the National Assembly for Wales on 23 October. In the meantime, we welcome this clear, unanimous judgment that minimum pricing is an appropriate and proportionate means of tackling hazardous and harmful drinking.