

MPA 01

Bil Iechyd y Cyhoedd (Isafbris am Alcohol) (Cymru)

Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill

Ymateb gan Rob Bailey

Response from Rob Bailey

Dear Sir/Madam

Please direct this to the appropriate place.

I have a few concerns with some draft legislation that is coming out, as your constituent I was hoping you could raise them on my behalf.

I am writing to you with regard to the Welsh Government's latest plan to bring in minimum pricing for alcohol, which I believe to be a poorly designed plan. Whilst I appreciate that this legislation has the very noble aim of reducing alcohol related deaths it has a massive potential of backfiring and affecting people who enjoy a drink in moderation from poorer backgrounds. I've always felt that the Labour party has prided itself on looking after the working class but now it appears to be turning its back.

If you consider the perspective of someone taking home £1000 per month who spends roughly £500 on rent and bills therefore has £500 a month to live on leaving them with £115 a week to live on. Now if that person spends £20 a week on transport and £25 a week on food, £30 a week on social activities that person only has £40 a week left to save or buy miscellaneous items. If that person buys a crate of beer for £11 at Aldi out of their budget for social activities and consumes 14 units a week they would be spending £4.54 per week on beer with a 50p minimum pricing that would mean the beer now costs £7 per week. Which may not sound like much but when you look at how tight a budget for this person already is, you'd push them further into poverty or they'd have to give up what little luxuries they afford. On the other hand if someone who earns £60,000 buys 4 bottles of wine per week which they consume they'd have no impact whatsoever on their income.

Thus this becomes a regressive taxation on the poor, and what this draft legislation is essentially saying is that poor people drink too much and that drinking problems amongst the middle class are simply not an issue. I understand minimum pricing has worked in principle in other countries, but it is important to remember that we

are a very different country with very different social issues. Wales and the UK as a whole issues with binge drinking come from a deep cultural issue that can go back centuries. To solve the issue we need to look at ways to educate people about safe levels of alcohol consumption, invest more in rehabilitation and mental health I am not by any means against increasing taxes as a whole on alcohol if it is costing the NHS more money, but these taxes should be applied on all alcohol products, not just the products that only the working class can afford. Finally heroin addicts manage to buy a very expensive drug on a regular basis, an increase in crime in particular theft is highly likely if you impose this legislation on the people. I've always been a very loyal labour supporter but I fear this type of legislation will alienate the party from its working class roots.

Kind Regards

Rob Bailey