

MPA 44

Bil Iechyd y Cyhoedd (Isafbris am Alcohol) (Cymru)
Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill
Ymateb gan Goleg Brenhinol yr Ymarferwyr Cyffredinol
Response from The Royal College of General Practitioners

RCGP Wales
Regus House
Falcon Drive
Cardiff Bay
CF10 4RU

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Chair of the Health, Social Care and Sports Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Friday 15th December

Dear Dr Lloyd,

Thank you for asking the RCGP Wales to comment on the proposals set out in the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill ("the Bill") which was laid before the National Assembly of Wales on 23 October 2017.

We endorse the comments we made to consultation in 2015. We welcome the fact that in Scotland the appeal against a similar bill has failed.

Generally we are supportive of all parts of the Bill. We do have some concern about allowing other goods and services to be parts of deals with alcohol, and feel that this may in some cases reduce the effect of the minimum alcohol price. We feel that multi-buys should either be only alcohol or non-alcoholic goods. There may need to be exemptions for alcohol provided as a deal with a meal and the total price of the meal and alcohol should not be less than the price of the sum of the separate components.

The outcomes we expect to see from the Bill are increased public awareness of the potential harmful effects of alcohol to their health, and in particular of high alcohol intake or binge drinking. Potentially this may be measured by a reduction in sales of alcohol in Wales but this could be accounted for by a variation in

alcohol bought from outside Wales. A better measure would be reductions in patients diagnosed with or dying from alcohol related disease, particularly cirrhosis of the liver. A better measure would also be a reduction in the incidence of patients attending Emergency units or being involved with the police under the influence of too much alcohol.

There are real concerns that minimum alcohol pricing may effect those who are dependent, and particularly those on lower incomes more adversely than those on higher incomes. There may also be an increase in the need for increased support for those who are dependent. GPs are managing these patients with support of the substance misuse units, some of which have waiting lists. It may be appropriate for Welsh Government to review substance misuse services and look at developing improved services in local communities, including consideration of enhanced alcohol abuse services for GPs to manage patients as part of improved shared care services.

We have some concern that increasing the price of alcohol may result in increased use of other illegal substances and there will need to be increased vigilance by health and law enforcement to ensure that this does not involve more dangerous substances.

Generally we feel we support the responses relate to health issues given by the Cabinet Secretary in his recent letter of 14 November following your questions in your letter dated 9 November 2017.

Yours sincerely,

RCGP Wales.

