



Home Office

Victoria Atkins MP  
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Mr Ron Hogg  
Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham  
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CTS Reference: M2684/18

– 3 APR 2018

Dear Ron,

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 February about the negative impact of cheap alcohol on our society and prospective benefits of introducing Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP).

The Government recognises that alcohol continues to be one of four biggest lifestyle risk factors for disease and death and one of the six main drivers for crime in the United Kingdom. While I am pleased that overall alcohol consumption and alcohol-related violent crime in the UK has fallen in recent years, I share your concerns about ill effects of alcohol abuse, which continue to affect certain parts of our society disproportionately.

The Government is taking a wide range of actions to address problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption. Most recently, Her Majesty's Treasury announced committed to introduce a new, higher duty band on cider at 6.9% and 7.5% alcohol by volume from 2019, to tackle consumption of cheap high strength "white" ciders in order to reduce the harm associated with these drinks.

To prevent alcohol-related crime and disorder, we are delivering commitments in the Modern Crime Prevention Strategy to improve local intelligence, establish effective partnerships, and equip police and local authorities with the right powers to take effective action. The Government recognises that policing town centres is challenging and the pressure this places on police resources. This is why we have made changes to cumulative impact polices and the late night levy so that local licensing committees can make decisions that support police efforts to keep people safe. For example, local areas with the late night levy have used it to fund important initiatives such as additional police officers and community protection officers.

The Modern Crime Prevention Strategy also announced a second phase of the Local Alcohol Action Areas programme. This programme, which we launched in January 2017, has seen impressive action taken at a local level in 32 areas in England and Wales. The programme focuses on tackling alcohol related harms through local action and collaboration between industry, police, local authorities, public health and other partners and all participating areas are already delivering locally designed action plans. For example, Doncaster, Hastings, Nottingham and Swansea have all trialed safe spaces. Wrexham is taking part in a Drink Less Enjoy More initiative to reduce sales to drunks and is pioneering its extension to the off-trade. Derbyshire has rolled out an Intoxicated – No Sale scheme piloted in Buxton to other parts of the county to reduce the sale of alcohol to drunks. There remains a strong emphasis on areas learning from each other and from experts at Government led workshops on key programme themes.

The Government continues to take action to reduce alcohol-related health harms. The UK Chief Medical Officers have issued low risk drinking guidelines to provide the public with clear advice about alcohol and its health risks. These recommend that adults do not regularly drink more than 14 units per week. Public Health England's One You Campaign aims to motivate people to take steps to improve their health including reducing alcohol consumption and it continues to work with local authority public health commissioners to ensure that there is a range of effective and accessible alcohol treatment services for dependent drinkers in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance.

The Government has noted the ruling of the UK Supreme Court on MUP in favour of the Scottish Government and we continue to keep MUP under review.

Thank you once again for taking time to write to me and share your concerns and recommendations on this important issue.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria".

**Victoria Atkins MP**