

Alcohol strategy consultation
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Personal information



4th February 2013.

Dear Minister,

Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke (NICHS) is a local medical charity, based in Northern Ireland. Our vision for Northern Ireland is one where everyone can live life to the full, free from chest, heart and stroke illnesses.

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the proposals set out in the government's alcohol strategy, these include; a minimum unit price (MPU) for alcohol, and a ban on multi-buy promotions. The latter proposals complement each other well in order to reduce the impact of alcohol related health illnesses and anti-social behaviour incidences, which occur as a consequence of alcohol misuse.

NICHS fully support the views expressed in the consultation responses submitted by the National Heart Forum and Alcohol Health Alliance. Based on empirical evidence¹ highlighted in these responses we support the proposal to set the MUP level at 50p, instead of the proposed 45p.

It is well documented consumption of alcohol greater than the recommended allowance can have harmful effects on people's health and well being. For instance, it can cause abnormal heart rhythms, high blood pressure, damage to the heart muscle and lead to other conditions such as stroke, and liver disease. The calorie content in alcohol is also high, which can lead to weight gain, an important point to consider when reviewing levels of obesity within the UK.

In conclusion, NICHS fully support the efforts of the government as they seek to combat the impact of alcohol consumption in the general population and we look forward to the implementation of such strategy in Northern Ireland. NICHS fully support any developments that can help people make better decisions about drinking. The impact of the proposals highlighted in the alcohol strategy should benefit society, and the local communities at large.

Sincerely,