**Scottish Directors of Public Health Media Release:**

**Publication of Public Health England’s *Evidence review on the public health impact of alcohol and the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of policies for reducing alcohol-related harm***

Scottish Directors of Public Health welcome the review of evidence that **Public Health England** (PHE) has published today. It endorses the position taken in Scotland on measures to reduce alcohol-related harm and the strength of evidence that backs the implementation of minimum unit pricing for alcohol.

The review supports enforcement of law and regulations which are measures already in place in Scotland, and recommends new areas for action including licensing restrictions to curb availability of alcohol, especially late at night.

**Commenting on the announcement, Dr Andrew Fraser, Chair of the Scottish Group of Directors of Public Health said:**

“This review of evidence augments the measures that we have taken in Scotland to reduce alcohol-related harm. It shows that education alone is not effective –a measure often promoted by the alcohol industry – and that pricing legislation is necessary to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. In Scotland, the introduction of minimum unit pricing, along with the effective measures set out in the review, will save a higher proportion of lives in our more disadvantaged communities, and help to reduce Scotland’s damaging levels of health inequalities.”

Around 22 people in Scotland die every week as a direct result of drinking too much alcohol, with people living in the most deprived communities eight times more likely to die from an alcohol-related death. Last year enough alcohol was sold in Scotland for every adult to consume 1.5 times more than the weekly guidelines every week of the year. Although alcohol harm in Scotland has been falling over the last decade, the extent of harm is still higher than in most other Western countries.

**Dr Drew Walker, Director of Public Health in NHS Tayside said:**

“Targeting price is one of the most effective and cost-effective alcohol control policies, but the report highlights that a range of other progressive and effective measures are still necessary to sustain any reduction. Measures already introduced, including the national Alcohol Brief Intervention programme, are commendable, but they are clearly not sufficient. Further measures on marketing and availability are necessary. This includes more effective licensing, and its enforcement, at national and local level. Our continuing concern is shared by colleagues who work at the front line in the NHS, social services, the justice system, and local authorities, who cope with and clean up the consequences of people who drink too much. These effects are not desirable or affordable.”

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