

# SHAAP

SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS  
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**Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 14 January – 21 January 2021**

**Wetherspoon moves to buy up smaller pubs on the cheap amid Covid crisis**

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/19/most-non-food-pubs-england-still-awaiting-1000-covid-grants>

Pubs driven to financial ruin by the impact of the pandemic could be bought up on the cheap under plans being drawn up by JD Wetherspoon as well as by a new venture fronted by the former boss of Greene King. In a statement to investors, Wetherspoon said it was raising up to £93.7m by placing new shares. It said the money would be used to strengthen a balance sheet damaged by the pandemic and offset the impact of an expected slow start once pubs reopen. But the 871-strong pub chain said the money would also *"facilitate the acquisition of new properties, which are likely to be available at favourable prices, as a result of the pandemic"*. It is targeting pubs in central London, which have been particularly hard-hit due to the loss of tourist traffic and office workers. Many have also been closed for longer than large, rural pubs because they cannot meet social distancing standards. [...] The chain announced its intentions on the same day that it emerged the former Greene King boss Rooney Anand is leading a new venture ready to spend £200m in a major gamble on recovery for the pubs sector. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 19 January 2021

**Scots 'should not be drinking alcohol in their gardens with others'**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19011121.scots-should-not-drinking-alcohol-gardens-others/>

Scots should not be drinking alcohol in their gardens with others, a senior SNP minister has said. Constitution Secretary Michael Russell said new rules banning the consumption of alcohol in outdoor public places were designed to stop people gathering together. [...] Mr Russell was quizzed on the change while giving evidence to Holyrood's Covid-19 Committee. Scottish Liberal Democrat MSP Alex Cole-Hamilton asked if it was a prohibition on all drinking outdoors, and referenced drinking in gardens. Mr Russell said: *"I don't think socialisation is to be encouraged, so if you were planning to have even a one-to-one party in*

*your garden I would strongly counsel you against it."* He said restrictions against alcohol in public places already exist in many areas. [...]

Source: The Herald, 14 January 2021

### **More than 500 drink and drug-drivers caught out over festive period**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19011367.500-drink-drug-drivers-caught-festive-period/>

More than 500 motorists in Scotland were reported for drink and drug-driving offences during the festive period. Officers carried out 4,013 roadside tests between December 1 and January 3, with 508 drivers detected for such crimes. Of those, 28 drivers were caught the morning after drinking. Assistant Chief Constable Mark Williams said *"It is extremely disappointing to see that people are still willing to take the risk and drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The current pandemic has seen a decrease in the number of vehicles on the road, however our campaign to improve road safety has been as important as ever and was focused and intelligence-led. Once again this year, a number of drivers were reported to us by colleagues, friends or family members and I wish to thank everyone who had the courage to report drink or drug-drivers and I ask that you continue to report concerning driving behaviour to us. [...]"*

Source: The Herald, 14 January 2021

### **The Sobering Truth: Incentivizing Alcohol Death and Disability**

<https://www.vitalstrategies.org/resources/the-sobering-truth-incentivizing-alcohol-death-and-disability/>

Harmful alcohol consumption leads to one death every 10 seconds globally, resulting in 3 million deaths per year. It is a leading risk factor for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) including cancers, cardiovascular diseases and liver diseases, and imposes an economic and social burden by straining health systems, harming people, and exerting an unnecessary cost on societies. But despite this global burden, billions of dollars are given to the alcohol industry every year through tax breaks, marketing subsidies and other incentives, particularly in low-and middle-income countries. A new report from Vital Strategies, *The Sobering Truth: Incentivizing Alcohol Death and Disability*, uncovers these *"perverse incentives,"* and also examines how the industry interferes in government policies that are aimed at reducing consumption of alcohol products. The report proposes key recommendations for countries to strengthen their health systems against the harmful use of alcohol. [...]

Source: Vital Strategies, January 2021

### **Covid: Politicians drank at Senedd despite alcohol ban**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-55720106>

A group of politicians drank alcohol on Welsh Parliament premises, days after a ban on serving it in pubs took effect. Conservative Senedd leader Paul Davies, Darren Millar and Nick Ramsay were seen drinking together in early December. Senedd authorities said they were investigating an "incident" which "may have been contrary to public health regulations". Labour Member of the Senedd Alun Davies was also involved. He and two Tories deny breaking rules. [...]

Source: BBC News, 19 January 2021

### **Scotch whisky chiefs in call for tax cut to ease £7.5m a week hit from "punitive" US tariffs**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19020901.scotch-whisky-chiefs-call-tax-cut-ease-7-5m-week-hit-punitive-us-tariffs/>

The Scotch whisky industry says 5% cut in duty will help ease a £7.5m a week hit caused by "punitive tariffs" and actually provide a £250m a year boost to the nation's tax revenues because it will boost demand. The Scottish Whisky Association says a cut in the "significant tax burden" on Scotch whisky, which currently sees £3 in every £4 spent on the average-priced bottle of Scotch Whisky go directly to HM Treasury in taxes, would actually drive government revenues. [...]

Source: The Herald, 19 January 2021

### **How alcohol impacts you differently in your 20s and 30s**

<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/body/diet-nutrition/a35113011/alcohol-effects-ages-20s-30s/>

Whether you're fast-approaching 30 or are well into the decade, we'd bet that your hangovers are becoming worse and worse as you age. While waking up feeling fresh for a 9am lecture or work was par for the course at 19, unfortunately the effects of alcohol on your body only get worse as you age. But aside from general lack of tolerance, is there actually any difference between drinking at 25 vs. drinking at 35? Dr Giuseppe Aragona, GP and Online Doctor for PrescriptionDoctor.com, shared his expertise with *Cosmopolitan*: "Most people would believe that it's ok to drink excessively in your twenties because you are young, and your body is able to manage the amount of alcohol in your system," says Dr Aragona. "However this is not the case and in actual fact, drinking a large amount in your twenties can actually pose more risk to your future self." [...]

Source: Cosmopolitan, 18 January 2021

### **Cognitive impairment and alcohol/drug problems**

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2021/01/cognitive-impairment-and-alcohol-drug-problems/>

It's estimated that 20-80% of people seeking help for alcohol and other drug use will experience some level of cognitive impairment – people with cognitive impairment are less likely to complete treatment and cognitive deficits are a predictor of relapse, 360Edge warns. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 18 January 2021

### **You Me At Six: Why rock stars don't need to drink**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-55576197>

[...] *"I started drinking quite heavily during the first lockdown in March,"* Dan tells Radio 1 Newsbeat. *"But when lockdown carried on and festivals and all our shows started getting cancelled, it was quite a daunting thing. My mental health started to take a little turn and I realised then that actually drinking wasn't the solution, it was adding to the problem."* Since then (with the exception of "a day or so" over Christmas) Dan's been teetotal. [...]

Source: BBC Newsbeat, 15 January 2021

### **Naltrexone use decreases the risk of hospitalization in persons with alcohol use disorder**

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-naltrexone-decreases-hospitalization-persons-alcohol.html>

Naltrexone, used either alone or together with disulfiram or acamprostate, is associated with a decreased risk of hospitalization due to alcohol use disorder (AUD) when compared with non-use of AUD drugs, a new register-based study shows. The same associations were noticed for hospitalization due to any cause. Disulfiram use and polytherapy with two or more drugs indicated for AUD was associated with a decreased risk of hospitalization due to alcohol-related somatic causes. None of the studied medications were associated with mortality or work disability (sickness absence or disability pension). The study was published in *Addiction*. [...] Benzodiazepine use was associated with an increased risk of mortality and hospitalization due to AUD. These results on harmful effects of benzodiazepines in persons with AUD are in line with previous findings. [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 18 January 2021

[Research article doi: [10.1111/add.15384](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.15384)]

### **Report shows alcohol consumption linked to portion of cancer incidence and mortality**

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-alcohol-consumption-linked-portion-cancer.html>

A new study finds that alcohol consumption accounts for a considerable portion of cancer incidence and mortality in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The article, which appears in *Cancer Epidemiology*, states that the proportion of cancer cases attributable to alcohol consumption ranged from a high of 6.7% in Delaware to a low of 2.9% in Utah. Similarly, Delaware had the highest proportion of alcohol-related cancer deaths (4.5%) and Utah had the lowest (1.9%). [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 19 January 2021

[Research article doi: [10.1016/j.canep.2021.101893](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.canep.2021.101893)]

### **The Black Review – a once in a generation opportunity to level up our treatment and recovery system**

<https://www.collectivevoice.org.uk/blog/the-black-review-a-once-in-a-generation-opportunity-to-level-up-our-treatment-and-recovery-system/>

[...] The second part of the Black review is truly a once in a generation opportunity to reform and renew a once world-class system impoverished by a decade of austerity and fragmented by localism. Despite heroic efforts from health and social care services Covid-19 has degraded support for some of the most vulnerable, leaving those with drug and alcohol problems in desperate need of our help. In the face of these impacts and an escalating drug-related death crisis (including worrying spikes during the pandemic) the case for change – and for investment – could not be clearer. Our workforce is talented and passionate, adept at working with people who feel that the system has forgotten them, that society places little value on their health or happiness. There is a lot of good still to be celebrated; but given the scale of the challenge Collective Voice believes the Review must be published as soon as possible, and that as a field we must be open, honest and willing to change in responding to its recommendations. [...]

Source: Collective Voice, January 2021

### **Is the winter over for rehab in Scotland?**

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2021/01/16/is-the-winter-over-for-rehab-in-scotland/>

In the midst of winter here in Scotland when days are short, snow is on the ground and we're in lockdown, it's easy to get low. I've been thinking a lot recently about residential rehabilitation and where it fits into treatment options. I think it's true to say that rehab has felt a bit stuck in a kind of permafrost of neglect or obscurity. Rehab seems irrelevant to some and dangerous to others, yet those who have benefitted have often reported a transformative experience. Then there is the difficult fact that relatively little public funding supports the hundreds of people who go through rehab every year. The majority pay for their own treatment or are funded by insurance or charity. [...] But there are glimmers of

light, or, some might even say, beams of light, playing out now on our wintry shores and mountains. [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 16 January 2021

### **Your stories of Dry January in lockdown**

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2021/your-stories-of-dry-january-in-lockdown>

Read stories of people who are taking on Dry January in lockdown - how lockdown has affected them, what's helped them with their month, and what they're planning to do next. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, January 2021

### **The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Harm relaunches with new Chair**

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2021/the-all-party-parliamentary-group-on-alcohol-harm-relaunches-with-new-chair>

“We’ve been supporting the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Alcohol Harm since its inception in 2006. The group provides a forum for Parliamentarians to discuss issues related to alcohol harm, learn about the latest evidence, and make recommendations to policy-makers.” [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, January 2021

### **Freestar launches petition asking for a ‘Not Drinking’ emoji**

<https://www.foodanddrinktechnology.com/news/36818/freestar-launches-petition-asking-for-a-not-drinking-emoji/>

Alcohol-free beer brand Freestar has launched a campaign to call time on the drunk emoji this Dry January. If you type ‘drunk’ into your phone, you’ll be prompted to use the 🍷 emoji. If you type sober, you’ll get ‘no results’. This Dry January Freestar is asking why, if we can have a ‘Drunk Face’ emoji can’t we have a ‘Not Drinking’ emoji too? The brand has launched a petition asking for Apple and Unicode Consortium to introduce a ‘Not Drinking’ emoji which it hopes will get the attention of the emoji makers. [...]

Source: Food & Drink Technology, 20 January 2021

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