

SHAAP

SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS
www.shaap.org.uk

Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 18 February – 25 February 2021

More drug rehab treatment to be made available in Scotland

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/more-drug-rehab-treatment-made-23532723>

A major new wave of rehab treatment is set for Scotland after the government accepted all major recommendations after a review. A survey sparked by a report by the Residential Rehabilitation Working Group identified 418 residential rehab beds in Scotland, many of which are not currently being used. Research has identified that far more needs to be done to bond detox treatment to rehab and to tailor services for women. The big changes are now viable after the Scottish Government announced a £250 million programme for drug policy reform - with £100 million going to rehab in the next five years. The new approach could lead to new infrastructure being built for more patients and stronger aftercare built around grassroots organisations that can help people avoid relapse. Report author Dr David McCartney said: *“Residential rehabilitation treatment has transformed the lives of thousands of Scots over the years, but has often been difficult to access. The Scottish Government’s commitment will create an even playing field and a full menu of treatment options for those with drug and alcohol problems.”* [...]

Source: Daily Record, 20 February 2021

[Scottish Government response to recommendations:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-response-residential-rehabilitation-working-group-recommendations-drug-alcohol-residential-treatment-services/>;

Status report on current levels of capacity:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/residential-rehab-scotland-status-report-current-levels-capacity/>]

‘Pub relief’ on alcohol duty could support hospitality and reduce harmful drinking

https://www.smf.co.uk/commentary_podcasts/pub-relief-on-alcohol-duty-could-support-hospitality-and-reduce-harmful-drinking/

This analysis sets out how reforms to alcohol duty could boost pub sales by 100 million pints a year, providing a lifeline to the hospitality industry and reducing harmful drinking. [...] The

SMF has contributed to the ongoing consultation, advocating the changes we set out in our 2019 Pour Decisions report: a system that taxes products of equal strength at the same rate and stronger products at a higher rate, eliminating the perverse incentives that support cheap, high strength products like 'white cider'. [...] In this blogpost, we want to focus on our other major recommendation: that alcoholic drinks sold in the off-trade (supermarkets and off-licences) should face a higher level of alcohol duty than drinks sold in the on-trade (pubs, bars and restaurants). [...]

Source: Social Market Foundation, 19 February 2021

Taking MDMA could help to treat alcoholism, study suggests

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/mdma-alcohol-addiction-treatment-bristol-b1805887.html>

Taking MDMA could help treat alcohol addiction, according to a new study. During an eight-week trial in Bristol, 14 people with alcohol problems were given a controlled amount of the party drug, also known as ecstasy, during two psychotherapy sessions. Psychological support was provided before, during and after each session and their alcohol use behaviour, mental wellbeing and functioning data were collected for nine months. The study, published in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, found participants on average consumed 18.7 units of alcohol per week in the months after the trial, compared to 130.6 units before. [...] The researchers said the next step would be to carry out another trial which would involve participants being split into two groups at random, with one given MDMA and the other a placebo, to measure how effective the treatment is.

Source: Independent, 23 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1177/0269881121991792](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/mdma-alcohol-addiction-treatment-bristol-b1805887.html)]

Study highlights jobs associated with higher rates of drinking

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/jobs-drinking-alcohol-study-b1806563.html>

Certain types of jobs are associated with higher levels of drinking, a new study suggests. Skilled workers in the manufacturing and construction industries tend to consume more alcohol, according to the research, which looked at people aged 40 to 69-years-old. Meanwhile, those employed in other occupations such as teaching and clergy are less likely to drink heavily. Researchers say the findings could be used by policy-makers to target public health or work-based interventions aimed at reducing heavy drinking. According to the study, pub owners and managers of licenced premises are almost three times more likely to be heavy drinkers, while cleaners and plasterers were twice as likely. [...]

Source: Independent, 24 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1186/s12889-021-10208-x](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/jobs-drinking-alcohol-study-b1806563.html)]

£133,000 of alcohol in Parliament during pandemic last year

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/02/19/mps-and-others-spent-133000-in-house-of-commons-bars-last-year-14108420>

MPs and fellow drinkers at the House of Commons bars knocked back more than £133,000 in alcohol last year despite the pandemic. The watering holes served up champagne, spirits and beer when national restrictions were eased, newly-released data shows. The total included £27,600 of sales in March, the month when the first lockdown took effect, before trade resumed again in the summer. [...]

Source: Metro, 19 February 2021

3 in 5 pubs unlikely to reopen in April

<https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/article/2021/02/23/how-many-pubs-will-open-in-april>

Three in five pubs across the UK will remain closed when outdoor service only is permitted from 12 April, a trade body has said. [...]

Source: Morning Advertiser, 23 February 2021

Call for more access to community-based detox to prevent NI alcohol deaths

<https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2021-02-22/call-for-more-access-to-community-based-detox-to-prevent-ni-alcohol-deaths>

More community-based detox addiction services are needed now to combat Northern Ireland's dismal record on alcohol deaths, the Royal College of Psychiatrists NI has said. Currently, although there is access to inpatient addiction services for all Trusts, bed numbers have been reduced during the pandemic and not every Trust has access to community-based detoxes. These type of detoxes are recommended by NICE for people who drink more than 15 units of alcohol a day and are organised by a community addiction service and the person's GP. They can be used instead of an admission to hospital - reducing the demand on inpatient beds and waiting times – which is currently more than two months due to the pandemic. Latest statistics reveal the number of alcohol deaths reached a record high in 2019 with 336 alcohol related deaths. The figure is more than a third higher than ten years ago and an increase of 18% since 2018. The death rate is also considerably higher in deprived areas. [...]

Source: ITV News, 23 February 2021

Extended opening hours planned for pubs and nightclubs as part of alcohol licensing law reforms

<https://www.irishpost.com/news/extended-opening-hours-planned-for-pubs-and-nightclubs-as-part-of-alcohol-licensing-law-reforms-204348>

Pubs could be set to benefit from extended Sunday opening hours as part of major new reforms of Ireland's alcohol licensing laws. Under the changes, pubs would have free rein to continue serving until 12:30am on Sundays. Nightclubs could also be allowed to stay open beyond the 2:30am curfew previous in place. The changes are just one part of proposals being discussed by the Irish Government in an attempt to provide a much-needed boost to the ailing sector. Justice Minister Helen McEntee is putting together the new legislation as part of a long-awaited reform Ireland's restrictive licensing laws. [...]

Source: The Irish Post, 22 February 2021

Covid: Politician suspended in booze row back in Senedd Labour group

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-56170048>

Senedd member Alun Davies has re-joined Labour's group in the Welsh Parliament following his suspension for drinking on parliament premises during an alcohol ban. [...]

Source: BBC News, 23 February 2021

The EU must stop doing Big Alcohol's dirty work

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-02-22-the-eu-must-stop-doing-big-alcohols-dirty-work/>

A representation of the European Union to South Africa has invited major alcohol industry front groups and alcohol producers — from Europe — to jointly interfere in the development of alcohol policy solutions by the South African government. In response, community groups and civil society organisations — especially from Europe and Africa — stood up in solidarity with our South African sisters and brothers to denounce the EU's collusion with Big Alcohol. In an open letter to European and African leaders, we made three requests for change. [...]

Source: Maverick Citizen, 22 February 2021

Twice as many parents turn to alcohol than non-parents during lockdown

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19104586.twice-many-parents-turn-alcohol-non-parents-lockdown/>

Alcohol may be taking its toll on North-East families during the pandemic as new figures show parents are twice as likely as non-parents to be drinking more heavily since it began. Balance, the North-East alcohol office, has published the results of a survey of over 900 people during national Children of Alcoholics Week #COAWeek2021. [...] While health

campaigners and charities have warned that many drinkers are drinking more since Covid began, especially those who were already drinking heavily, the independent survey by Balance is one of the first in depth studies to point to a worrying trend among people with children under 18 living at home. Among those who drink alcohol, it found parents are around twice as likely (38 per cent) as non-parents (18 per cent) to be drinking more often since before the pandemic. Parents (31 per cent) were also more likely to be drinking more units on a typical drinking day, compared to non-parents (17 per cent). Among those who drink alcohol, it also found nearly half of parents (48%) are increasing or higher risk drinkers compared to 37% of non-parents. [...]

Source: The Northern Echo, 19 February 2021

Rise in people seeking help for alcohol issues during pandemic

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/rise-people-seeking-help-alcohol-23522943>

NHS services in Monklands are seeing an increase in the numbers seeking help for alcohol-related issues during the pandemic. A major focus of NHS Lanarkshire's work on these illnesses is prevention through its North Partnership Board and the South Alcohol and Drug Partnership. Alcohol-specific deaths in North Lanarkshire have decreased in the past four consecutive years. The latest figures released in November last year showed there were 91, the second lowest total in the past 10 years. That figure compared to 97 the previous year, and from 112 two years ago. And across the NHS Lanarkshire catchment area, the number of alcohol-related deaths last year was down to 137 from the previous year's total of 170. The national figure for Scotland showed a highly encouraging decrease of over 10 per cent for the year. The reduction follows on from the introduction of minimum unit pricing (MUP) for alcohol in Scotland in 2018. [...]

Source: Daily Record, 18 February 2021

Liquor companies flout own codes on targeting children and sexualised ads

<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/liquor-companies-flout-own-advert-rules>

There are new calls in the *NZ Medical Journal* for government regulation, as evidence shows the same alcohol companies breaching the same self-imposed rules again and again, with no repercussions [...]

Source: Newsroom, 22 February 2021

The New Offence of Combined Drink and Drug Driving in New South Wales

<https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/the-new-offence-of-combined-drink-and-drug-driving-in-new-south-wales/>

Driving under the combined influence of alcohol and other drugs has long been understood to compound the dangers of impaired driving. A drink and drug driving incident involving the roadside deaths of four young girls in the Sydney suburb of Oatlands last year highlighted this issue. And until recently, there was no specific offence covering driving under the influence of both alcohol and other drugs. So, sparked by last year's tragedy, the NSW government has just passed the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. [...]

Source: Sydney Criminal Lawyers, 23 February 2021

New Zealand police reveal student binge drinking strategy: more pubs

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/25/new-zealand-police-reveal-student-binge-drinking-strategy-more-pubs>

It's an unusual request from police: more pubs. But officers in a South Island city renowned for student recklessness and couch burning say they wish more drinking holes would open, as it helps them manage the revellers. Dunedin is known for its student lifestyle, cheap rents, wild street parties and hedonistic vibe, associated with the 20,000 students who attend the country's oldest university, Otago. With the new semester nearly underway students are descending on the city in their thousands, which usually spells disaster for police and emergency services. The season has become known for stampedes and riots, and spikes in hospital admissions for injuries and alcohol poisoning. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 25 February 2021

Call for Reconciliation Australia to pull Woolworths support over Darwin Dan Murphy's

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/feb/23/call-for-reconciliation-australia-to-pull-woolworths-support-over-darwin-dan-murphys>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and health leaders want Reconciliation Australia to revoke its support for Woolworths over the retail giant's plans to build one of Australia's largest alcohol stores in Darwin, near three dry Aboriginal communities. A letter signed by health, legal, domestic violence and community group leaders draws comparison to Rio Tinto, which was dumped by Reconciliation Australia over the destruction of a 46,000-year-old Aboriginal heritage site in the Pilbara, which said Rio's actions were a *"brehtaking breach of a respectful relationship"*. Signatories to the letter say the destruction of lives through the building of the Dan Murphy's alcohol megastore *"should be met with the same level of contempt"*. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 22 February 2021

Inside Britain's last temperance bar – the first of a new brand of boozier

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/inside-britains-last-temperance-bar-first-new-brand-boozer/>

An alcohol ban in pubs is under consideration, and young people are shunning drink. Is Mr Fitzpatrick's the future of our watering holes? During its 122-year history, Mr Fitzpatrick's bar in Rawtenstall has endured enough crises to turn many to drink – two world wars, the Spanish Flu pandemic, and now Covid, to name but a few. But with Britain's hospitality trade tanking and many pubs closing their doors for good, spirits are still high at Britain's last original temperance bar, which has stood on Bank Street in the Lancashire mill town since 1899 [...]

Source: The Telegraph, 20 February 2021 [*Subscription / Free Trial*]

Close To Home: Delivering a National Housing First Programme in England

<https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/library/close-to-home-delivering-a-national-housing-first-programme-in-england>

Housing First is an effective way of tackling and preventing rough sleeping for people whose homelessness is compounded by serious mental health issues, drug or alcohol dependency, or a history of trauma. It does this by providing ordinary settled housing alongside intensive, person-centered support. The Government has recognised the role Housing First can play in tackling rough sleeping, with £28 million invested in three city region Housing First pilots and a commitment to further roll out. Our report Close to Home makes the case for a national Housing First programme, and draws on recent learning to map out what this should entail. [...]

Source: The Centre for Social Justice, February 2021

New government report warns UK nightlife could face 'extinction' without urgent action

<https://ra.co/news/74691>

The inquiry, led by Jeff Smith MP and backed by dozens more, surveyed 20,000 stakeholders across the industry. [...]

Source: Resident Advisor (RA), 18 February 2021

Most disadvantaged disproportionately at risk of alcohol-related violence

<https://news.liverpool.ac.uk/2021/02/22/most-disadvantaged-disproportionately-at-risk-of-alcohol-related-violence/>

New findings show that alcohol-related violence affects the poorest in society to the greatest degree, with the most deprived groups experiencing as much as 14 times as many incidents of alcohol-related domestic violence every year, compared with the least

deprived. These findings from Lucy Bryant at the Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) and Dr Carly Lightowlers in the University of Liverpool's Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology, published in PLOS ONE, depict the stark differences between socioeconomic groups experiencing alcohol-related violence in England and Wales. Using Crime Survey data over a five-year period (2013/14 to 2017/18), the study calculated incidence and prevalence rates specific to different socio-economic groups for several forms of alcohol-related violence. This revealed alcohol-related violence victimisation – particularly alcohol-related domestic and acquaintance violence – to be disproportionately clustered in the lowest socioeconomic groups. [...]

Source: University of Liverpool, 22 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1371/journal.pone.0243206](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0243206); this research will form part of the [Alcohol Occasionals event on 30 March](#)]

The link between England football victories and the recorded increase in alcohol-related domestic abuse is likely to be causal

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/england-football-alcohol-domestic-violence/>

Anna Trendl writes that, while the exact mechanism by which national football victories lead to an increase in the number of domestic abuse cases is complex, the evidence shows that alcohol plays a key role in this relationship.

Source: LSE British Politics and Policy, 23 February 2021

What can we learn from repeat drink drivers' attitudes and beliefs about drink-driving?

<https://www.ias.org.uk/2021/02/23/what-can-we-learn-from-repeat-drink-drivers-attitudes-and-beliefs-about-drink-driving/>

Dr Andrea Mohan discusses some of the findings from the PACTS study into drink-driving published earlier this year [...]

Source: Institute of Alcohol Studies, 23 February 2021

Wrist-worn alcohol biosensors: Applications and usability in behavioral research

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcohol.2021.01.007>

Wrist-worn alcohol biosensor technology has developed rapidly in recent years. These devices are light, easy to wear, relatively inexpensive, and resemble commercial fitness trackers. As a result, they may be more suitable for a wide range of clinical and research applications. In this paper, we describe three pilot projects examining the associations between reported drinking behavior and transdermal alcohol concentration (TAC) derived from a new, wrist-worn alcohol biosensor (BACtrack Skyn) in diverse participant groups and settings. [...]

Source: *Alcohol*, 18 February 2021

Alcohol-Involved Motor Vehicle Crashes and the Size and Duration of Random Breath Testing Checkpoints

<https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.14583>

[...] Sobriety checkpoints are associated with fewer alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes for around 1 week. Checkpoint size and duration do not appear to affect this relationship. [...]

Source: *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 22 February 2021

The protein with the potential to rewire the alcohol-addicted brain

<https://lens.monash.edu/@medicine-health/2021/02/22/1382862/the-protein-with-the-potential-to-rewire-the-alcohol-addicted-brain>

Misuse of alcohol costs the country more than \$14 billion a year. It's a huge public health problem, yet for those addicted, apart from counselling, there are only three medications available – Campral, Naltrexone, and Antabuse. Experts consider these medicines only partly effective, because they don't fix the neurological causes of addiction and relapse. [...] A new discovery by Monash's Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MIPS), with The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, has the potential to change all that. The team is deep into a ground-breaking scientific journey to eventually make a drug that stops habitual drinking, and decreases the chance of relapse by reprogramming a tiny part of the brain. [...] Late last year, the team published its findings in the journal *Biological Psychiatry*, identifying a particular protein in the brain – the M4 muscarinic receptor, which is activated by a neurotransmitter called acetylcholine – as a new therapeutic target for modulating problem drinking and relapse behaviours. [...]

Source: Lens – Monash University, 22 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1016/j.biopsych.2020.02.019](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2020.02.019)]

End of life care for people using substances: research challenges in lockdown

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2021/end-of-life-care-for-people-using-substances-research-challenges-in-lockdown>

In this blog, Professor Sarah Galvani explains some of the research challenges posed by lockdown for research into end-of-life care for people using substances. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, February 2021

NIAAA Guest Blog—The Behavioral and Biological Effects of Alcohol and COVID-19

<https://www.cadca.org/blog/niaaa-guest-blog-behavioral-and-biological-effects-alcohol-and-covid-19>

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers and scientists from across the biomedical spectrum have focused on the diverse health impacts of the novel coronavirus. For their part, alcohol researchers are investigating numerous ways that alcohol might affect COVID-19 risk and severity, as well as how the pandemic may influence alcohol consumption patterns and problems. These new studies will complement what scientists already know about alcohol's behavioral and biological effects. [...]

Source: CADCA, 24 February 2021

British people are really missing the pub – here's why

<https://theconversation.com/british-people-are-really-missing-the-pub-heres-why-154585>

The events of the past year have had a devastating impact on the hospitality sector in the UK. At the forefront of lockdown's sacrifices for many is the closure of an institution that is a cornerstone of British culture – the pub. An estimated 2500 pubs closed during 2020, accelerating an already existing trend prior to COVID-19. [...] What people miss most about pubs right now has little to do with buying and drinking alcohol – after all, those habits have continued largely unhindered in the form of home drinking. Instead, it's the opportunity to be around and interact with other people. [...]

Source: The Conversation, 19 February 2021

Addiction Audio: Online search behaviour and minimum unit pricing

<https://www.addiction-ssa.org/addiction-audio-online-search-behaviour-and-minimum-unit-pricing/>

In this episode of *Addiction Audio* Rob Calder speaks to Professor David Leon about his research into on-line search behaviour as minimum unit pricing of alcohol was introduced in Scotland, and what it told him about how people responded to minimum unit pricing policies. [...]

Source: Society for the Study of Addiction, 24 February 2021

[Research article: [10.1111/add.15388](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.15388)]

'Which came first, the booze or the boys?': untangling a love affair with alcohol

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/feb/20/which-came-first-the-booze-or-the-boys-untangling-a-love-affair-with-alcohol>

For better and for worse, drinking has been a constant thread running through writer Megan Nolan's relationships. She reflects on the dual thrills of alcohol and romance [...]

Source: The Guardian, 20 February 2021

'Lockdown Has Amped Up My Drinking Into A Full Blown Addiction – Just Like My Mother's'

<https://www.elle.com/uk/life-and-culture/a35549814/alcohol-addiction-lockdown/>

My worst fear in life has always been ending up like my mum. Sure, plenty of women feel the same, but it's not premature greying I've been worried about, it's inheriting her alcohol addiction – an addiction that has cut fractures so deep in my family, I don't think they can ever be bridged. Today, the nightmare has been realised. I'm in my late twenties, with my very own addiction. [...]

Source: Elle, 18 February 2021

Recovery: What Is It Good For?

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2021/02/20/recovery-what-is-it-good-for/>

Beyond one's personal recovery, what could the general idea of recovery be good for? To explore what the idea of recovery could be good for, I would like to separate the word "recovery" from its normal use (about people making personal changes in the face of addiction illness), and highlight some other benefits that could be found in the idea of what recovery is. In this article I would like to turn from recovery as a personal matter and look at some other uses of the word and of the idea of recovery. [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 20 February 2021

Street Drug Discussions - Deep Dive into Alcohol

<https://www.drugscience.org.uk/street-drug-discussions-alcohol-david-nutt/>

Alcohol is among the most harmful of all recreational drugs, and yet it is the most widely used in the UK. But how much do you really know about what alcohol does to the body and brain? In this video, Professor David Nutt, founder of Drug Science and chair of the Scientific Committee, discusses the effects of alcohol on brain and body, as well as how to reduce the harms of alcohol consumption.

Source: Drug Science, 23 February 2021

