

# SHAAP

SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS  
[www.shaap.org.uk](http://www.shaap.org.uk)

**Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 21 January – 28 January 2021**

## **English and Scottish get drunk most often, 25-nation survey finds**

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/25/english-and-scottish-get-drunk-most-often-25-nation-survey-finds>

The English and Scottish have topped an international league table of how often people get so drunk that they lose their balance and slur their speech. The Global Drugs Survey (GDS) for 2020 suggests the UK's drink problem is far more dangerous than use of any other drug. More than 5% of people under 25 in the UK reported having sought hospital treatment after getting drunk, compared with a global average of 2%. The GDS report noted: *"Seeking emergency medical treatment is a serious consequence of drinking, with a cost to the health service as well as the individual."* The UK rate of hospital admissions because of alcohol was higher than among users of any other drug cited in the report apart from heroin, and consumption of alcohol was much more widespread, with 94% of people in UK saying they had drunk alcohol in the last year, compared with 2.3% who had used heroin. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 25 January 2021

## **Call for major review of 'inadequate' drink-driving laws**

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/cars/call-major-review-inadequate-drink-driving-laws-3114091>

The UK's approach to drink-driving is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be significantly updated, according to a parliamentary advisory committee. A new report from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) says that drink-driving offences have plateaued in the last decade and clear weaknesses in enforcement and rehabilitation need to be tackled to end this. The report, funded by the Department for Transport (DfT), calls for a new approach including increased police enforcement, lower limits in England and Wales, harsher penalties and better support for people with alcohol problems. The latest data from the DfT shows that road deaths where at least one driver was over the drink-drive limit have remained at around 240 per year for the last 10 years and drink-drive crashes rose three per cent. Drink-driving remains a major cause of road deaths, cited as a factor in 13 per cent of all road fatalities. [...]

Source: The Scotsman, 27 January 2021

[PACTS Report: <https://www.pacts.org.uk/news-and-publications/pacts-report-drink-driving-taking-stock-moving-forward/>]

### **A million more are hitting the bottle: Huge swathe of drinkers have increased their alcohol intake to dangerous levels during Covid-19 pandemic, poll shows**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9186687/A-million-people-upped-alcohol-intake-dangerous-levels-Covid-19-pandemic-poll-shows.html>

More than one million drinkers in England have increased their consumption to severely dangerous levels during the pandemic, a poll suggests. Before lockdown last March, an estimated 3.4 per cent of adults were downing more than 50 units of alcohol a week, the equivalent of around 1,500,000 people. By December, this had risen to 5.7 per cent, or more than 2,520,000 people, according to analysis of a YouGov poll for Public Health England. The biggest jump was recorded in those aged 55-64 but a rise was seen across all groups. [...]

Source: MailOnline (Daily Mail), 26 January 2021

### **Amazon halts alcohol sales in Northern Ireland and prepares to de-list more products due to new Brexit customs rules**

<https://www.itv.com/news/2021-01-26/amazon-halts-alcohol-sales-in-northern-ireland-and-prepares-to-de-list-more-products-due-to-new-brexit-customs-rules>

Amazon has stopped selling wines, beers and spirits to its customers in Northern Ireland as it wrestles with new customs rules post-Brexit. The online retailer is concerned that excise duty - a tax - will now have to be paid twice on all shipments of alcohol which are sent from the British mainland across the Irish Sea. Amazon's suspended orders in Northern Ireland at the end of December, shortly after the UK/EU trade deal was published, and the decision is unlikely to be reversed until the company obtains clarity on the tax situation from HMRC. [...]

Source: ITV News, 26 January 2021

### **Tory Senedd leader Paul Davies quits over alcohol row**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-55767262>

The Conservative leader in the Welsh Parliament Paul Davies has quit after being seen drinking with other politicians in the Senedd, days into a pub alcohol ban. Tory MS Darren Millar also announced he was stepping down as chief whip. They were seen drinking in early December, four days after a ban on pubs serving alcohol on their premises. Mr Davies said he was stepping down "*for the sake of my party, my health and my own conscience*". "*I simply cannot continue in post*," he said, adding he would leave with "*immediate effect*". Both will remain as members of the Senedd. [...]

Source: BBC News, 24 January 2021

### **Analysis: Why many in the drinks industry are toasting an increasingly teetotal market**

<https://www.scotsman.com/business/analysis-why-many-drinks-industry-are-toasting-increasingly-teetotal-market-3108960>

[...] a growing section of consumers is giving up drinking – with Dry January providing an extra incentive – or cutting back, and turning to the rapidly increasing wealth of alternatives. The sector is in fact proving something of a magnet for investment. British premium low-alcohol spirits start-up CleanCo, whose founders include Spencer Matthews of TV series *Made in Chelsea*, has now raised funding of £9.1 million altogether [...] [...Incumbent] drinks giants are also getting in on the action – such as Heineken, Diageo, Tennent’s and BrewDog, with the latter going as far as to open a completely dry bar in London. [...]

Source: The Scotsman, 22 January 2021

### **Can you drink alcohol after getting the Covid vaccine?**

<https://metro.co.uk/2021/01/21/can-you-drink-alcohol-after-getting-the-covid-vaccine-13942247/>

Millions of people across the country will be getting their invitations to receive a coronavirus vaccine over the coming months. The UK has been successful in rolling out the vaccines, vaccinating over 200,000 per day, and has the goal of vaccinating all adults by September – with all over-50s expected to get the jab by March. After months of restrictions, three national lockdowns, home-schooling or home working and friends and family kept apart, this is most definitely a cause for celebration. But before you pop open the bubbly, should you drink alcohol after having the vaccine? Are there any side effects? [...]

Source: Metro, 21 January 2021

### **Residential rehabilitation: powering up in 2021**

<https://shaap.org.uk/blog/331-residential-rehabilitation-powering-up-in-2021.html>

*“Rehab? What’s the point of it? There’s no evidence that it works. I don’t refer anyone to rehab. Do you?”* The addiction worker was talking to a colleague – another practitioner working in the field. What he didn’t know was that his workmate was in long term recovery from addiction and felt he owed his recovery, at least in part, to his three months in rehab several years before. When I heard this, my initial response was a tight smile at the irony of the situation. But as the clinical lead of an NHS residential rehabilitation service (LEAP), I also felt frustration at our colleague’s contempt for the option of rehab as a treatment intervention. In practice, his own beliefs would be a barrier to his clients accessing rehab. Our own attitudes can profoundly affect those we have pledged to help. [...]

Source: Dr David McCartney (SHAAP Blog), 21 January 2021

### **Groundbreaking New Report Shows Lethal Interaction Between Alcohol and Coronavirus Pandemic**

<https://movendi.ngo/media-release/groundbreaking-new-report-shows-lethal-interaction-between-alcohol-and-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Alcohol fuels the coronavirus pandemic in different ways, the alcohol industry exploits the current public health crisis and many governments around the world have largely failed to protect their people by using evidence-based alcohol policy solutions as part of the response to COVID-19 – according to a brand new research report. The groundbreaking analysis provides for the first time a comprehensive picture of the individual, societal and policy dimensions of the interaction between alcohol and the coronavirus crisis. [...]

Source: Movendi International, 26 January 2021

### **Consumer and public health groups push for cancer warning on alcoholic beverages**

<https://sciencebasedmedicine.org/consumer-and-public-health-groups-push-for-cancer-warning-on-alcoholic-beverages/>

[...] Currently, federal law requires a “health statement” on the label of all alcoholic beverage containers warning that alcohol consumption “*may cause health problems*” [...] The law also directs the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (“TTB”, part of the Department of the Treasury), in consultation with the Surgeon General, to “promptly” notify Congress of the need to update the health statement if “*available scientific information would justify a change*” and to make “*specific recommendations*” TTB determines “*to be appropriate and in the public interest*”. According to the American Public Health Association, the American Society for Clinical Oncology, the Consumer Federation of America, a coalition of breast cancer organizations, and similarly-minded groups, the “*available scientific information, accrued over more than three decades, shows that alcohol causes cancer*”, yet the TTB has taken no action. Thus, the organizations (eight in all) filed a Citizen Petition [...] with the Department of the Treasury requesting that the TTB report this scientific consensus to Congress and recommend that Congress amend the current health disclosure [...]

Source: Science-Based Medicine, 28 January 2021

### **Keir Starmer: Johnson's risky bet on Trump trade deal has backfired but Biden gives Scotch whisky a new hope**

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19025681.keir-starmer-johnsons-risky-bet-trump-trade-deal-backfired-biden-gives-scotch-whisky-new-hope/>

With Joe Biden now in the White House, the United Kingdom has the opportunity to re-set our relationship with the United States. It is a chance for both nations to work together to

reverse some of the economic damage done by Trump and his administration. This will take time and it will not be easy. One particularly harmful legacy Trump leaves behind is the punitive tariffs imposed on Scotch whisky and other vital Scottish exports. [...]

Source: The Herald, 21 January 2021

### **The children of alcoholics are too often the forgotten victims**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/body/children-alcoholics-often-forgotten-victims/>

Jonathan Ashworth, Shadow Health and Social Care Secretary: I grew up with a father who frequently drank himself into a stupor, but he was never violent – others aren't as fortunate... [...] The mobile rings at 6am, jolting me awake. I don't recognise the number but have become wearily familiar with the Thai dialling code flashing on the screen. It will be my dad, drunk again. I've been angry with him since he failed to show at my wedding, weeks earlier. I press decline.... [...]

Source: The Telegraph, 23 January 2021 [*Subscription / Free Trial*]

### **Alcohol-related harm and drinking behaviour**

<https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/alcohol-related-harm-and-drinking-behaviour-1>

This indicator explores whether alcohol-related harm and drinking behaviour has changed over time. Excessive alcohol consumption can have harmful health consequences in the short term but also in the long term, through conditions such as liver disease, stroke and some cancers. Alcohol-related hospital activity and deaths are potentially avoidable burdens to the health service. The latest data presented here are from 2019, before the onset of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. [...]

Source: Nuffield Trust, 27 January 2021

### **Health inequalities statistics released**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/health-inequalities-statistics-released-6/>

The relative index of inequality (RII) indicates the extent to which health outcomes are worse in the most deprived areas compared to the average throughout Scotland. It is possible for absolute inequalities to improve, but relative inequalities to worsen. There are three morbidity indicators for which the RII can reasonably be compared with one another: alcohol-related hospital admissions; heart attack hospital admissions; and cancer incidence. Amongst these, relative inequalities in alcohol-related hospital admissions have remained highest over the longer term. [...]

Source: Scottish Government, 26 January 2021

### **Scottish Health Survey – Telephone Survey 2020**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/scottish-health-survey-telephone-survey-2020/>

Scotland's Chief Statistician today released the results of the *Scottish Health Survey – Telephone Survey*, providing information on the health, and factors relating to health, of adults aged 16 and over in Scotland in August and September 2020. [...] This is the first time the Scottish Health Survey interviews have been conducted by telephone. [...] While 24% of adults reported that the number of days on which they drank alcohol per week had increased between the start of the March 2020 lockdown and the fieldwork period, 17% reported it had decreased. Younger adults were more likely to report an increase in the number of days on which they drank alcohol [...] Just over one in ten adults (12%) reported that the amount of alcohol they consumed on a typical day had increased between the start of the March 2020 lockdown and the fieldwork period while just under two in ten (18%) reported a decrease. [...]

Source: Scottish Government, 26 January 2021

### **UK government Drug Recovery Champion annual report**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-government-drug-recovery-champion-annual-report>

Dr Ed Day was appointed the UK government's Drug Recovery Champion in May 2019 to promote the best treatment and support for those recovering from drug misuse. Dr Day is a leading clinician and academic who provides nationwide leadership on key aspects of the recovery agenda. This includes drawing upon his existing experiences and knowledge to bring together a national perspective, holding both the government and local partners to account for doing what is needed to improve outcomes for those in recovery from substance misuse. His first annual report outlines the work he has undertaken since his appointment and sets out his future work programme. [...]

Source: Home Office, 26 January 2021

### **Alcohol-Specific Mortality in People With Epilepsy: Cohort Studies in Two Independent Population-Based Datasets**

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fneur.2020.623139>

[...] People with epilepsy are at increased risk of dying by an alcohol-specific cause than those without the disorder. It is plausible that serious alcohol misuse could either contribute to the development of epilepsy or it could commence subsequent to epilepsy being

diagnosed. Regardless of the direction of the association, it is important that the risk of dying as a consequence of alcohol misuse is accurately quantified in people affected by epilepsy. [...]

Source: *Frontiers in Neurology*, 21 January 2021

### **Alcohol policies reduce ICU admissions**

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-alcohol-policies-icu-admissions.html>

The introduction of alcohol harm limitation policies in Central Australia from 2018 have had a marked effect on critical health figures, with a 38% relative reduction in Hospital Intensive Care Unit admissions associated with alcohol misuse, as well as a marked reduction in trauma admissions. [...] Alcohol misuse is a disproportionately large contributor to morbidity and mortality in the Northern Territory, and the new study examines the effect of a raft of alcohol legislation reforms that came into effect in the NT in 2018, as part of the NT Government's Alcohol Harm Minimisation Action Plan. These reforms—which include a minimum unit price for alcohol, along with the introduction of Police Auxiliary Liquor Inspection Officers and a Banned Drinkers Register—were based on recommendations from the Riley Review for an integrated alcohol harm reduction framework. [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 27 January 2021

### **Alcohol, mental health and socio-economic status: Jo-Anne Puddephat talks to the SSA**

<https://www.addiction-ssa.org/alcohol-mental-health-and-socio-economic-status-jo-anne-puddephat-talks-to-the-ssa/>

Jo-Anne Puddephat is an SSA funded PhD student. Jo-Anne's paper on the associations between alcohol, mental health and socio-economic status was recently published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. We recently caught up with Jo-Anne to find out more [...]

Source: Society for the Study of Addiction, 25 January 2021

### **Loneliness in the pandemic: risky times**

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2021/01/24/loneliness-in-the-pandemic-risky-times/>

Loneliness and isolation are bedfellows of addiction. Anything that intensifies loneliness will come with increased risks in tow. Of course, it's not just those with substance use disorders who suffer from loneliness. In 2014, Professor John Cacioppo presented at a conference in Chicago, pointing out that that the impact of loneliness on premature death 'is nearly as strong as the impact of disadvantaged socioeconomic status'. Disadvantaged socioeconomic status alone increases risk by 19%. An Office for National Statistics report last year estimated that, during the coronavirus pandemic, more than 7M people in the UK felt lonely

to the point that it affected their wellbeing. It's a perfect storm for growth in substance use disorders in the population. Loneliness also holds risks for those in recovery. [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 24 January 2021

### **With lockdown drinking on the rise, now is the time for the government to act on alcohol harm**

<https://ahauk.org/with-lockdown-drinking-on-the-rise-now-is-the-time-for-the-government-to-act-on-alcohol-harm/>

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr Tony Rao has been tracking data on drinking patterns in lockdown. In this blog, he argues why now is the perfect moment for the government to introduce an alcohol strategy, with harm reduction at its core. [...]

Source: Alcohol Health Alliance, 27 January 2021

### **Three weeks alcohol-free - what's happening in your body?**

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2021/three-weeks-alcohol-free-whats-happening-in-your-body>

2020 was a tough year, and many of us have found ourselves drinking more than normal. One in four of us who drink alcohol want to cut down in 2021. That's where Dry January comes in: it's your chance for a total reset. In this blog, we'll give you an idea of what may be happening in your body after being alcohol-free for three weeks. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, January 2021

