

## Key Facts: Alcohol

### Headlines

Numbers of the population with alcohol use disorders:

- 26% of the adult population (8m people) have an alcohol use disorder (hazardous/harmful drinkers or alcohol dependent)
- 23% of the adult population (7m people) consume at hazardous or harmful levels (above recommended limits)
- 3.6% of the adult population, 6% of men & 2% of women, (1.1m people) are alcohol dependent

### Health Costs

There has been 100% increase in deaths caused by alcohol in the last 15 years

Alcohol causes around 1 in 5 deaths in young people

There are 18,000 annual deaths from chronic disease relating to alcohol, increasing at 8% per year

85% of liver deaths are alcohol related

The health costs of alcohol misuse are £2.7bn

### Economic Costs

Together, drunkenness and regular heavy drinking cost the economy £6.4bn in lost productivity

### Social Costs

Around half of all violence, sexual violence and domestic violence is alcohol related, costing £7.3bn per year

### Other

Government spending on alcohol services in 2007 was £150m; this compares to £2.3bn on drug services

Only 1 in 18 problem drinkers get the help they need

£1 spent on treatment saves £5 on health and crime costs

### Consumption trends

In the last 40 years, consumption of alcohol has doubled from 5.7L of pure alcohol per person per year to 11.3L

This places the UK 17th worst for per capita consumption of 21 EU countries, down from 11th 20 years ago

The relative price of alcohol has steadily decreased over this time

Between 1980 and 2005, alcohol prices increased by 22% more than prices generally but in the same period disposable income increased by 97% making alcohol, in effect, 62% more affordable

More recently, the upward trend in per capita consumption has been reversed with consumption falling 5.3% between 2004 and 2006 before a slight rise in 2007 (+1.9%) and return to decline in 2008

The number of people drinking over the recommended weekly guidelines fell between 2000 and 2006:

- Men down from 29% to 23%
- Women down from 17% to 12%

The number of people reporting binge drinking (over 8units) on at least one day in the previous week is also down between 2003 and 2006:

- Men down from 23% to 18% (highest in 16-24 year olds)
- Women down from 9% to 8% (highest in 16-24 year olds)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A change in the methodology for measuring binge-drinking was introduced in 2007, it gave the following results: 24% of Men, 15% of women reported binge drinking on at least one occasion in the previous week

Underage drinking is declining but those underage people who do drink are drinking more:

- Underage drinking was at 26% in 2001 and had fallen to 21% by 2006
- The number of 11-15 year olds who have never drunk is increasing – from 40% in 2000 to 46% in 2006
- Weekly consumption among 11-15 year olds who do drink is up from an average of 10 units per week in the last decade to 11.4 units per week in 2006

75% of alcohol sold in the UK is consumed by 25% of drinkers (hazardous and harmful drinkers)

### **Market dynamics**

The off-trade now accounts for almost 50% of alcohol sales

Supermarkets now account for 62% of off-trade volume, up from 53% in 1997

Total consumption decline over the last 4 years has been reflected across beer, wine and spirit volumes. Ciders are the only sub-sector bucking this trend

It is estimated that 3% of all alcohol sales in the UK are below cost; the value of alcohol sold below cost during the four weeks of the 2006 world cup was £38.6m

The beer market has been in a deflationary cycle (value declining faster than volume) for the past 5 years

Beer remains the nation's favourite drink but its share of throat has steadily declined since 1990 falling from 57% to just below 40%. Wine consumption and cider consumption have increased significantly over the same period and flavoured alcoholic beverages have become a mainstay of the market (although their popularity has been in decline since a peak in 2001)

The average strength of beer has increased from 3.65%abv in 1953 to 4.2%abv in 2008

The average strength of wine has increased from 11.7%abv in 1997 to 12.9%abv in 2008