

# David v Goliath: Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol in Scotland

AP18

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As required by the Alcohol Policy 18 Conference,  
I have signed a disclosure statement and note  
the following conflict(s) of interest:

None



WEDNESDAY - FRIDAY  
APRIL 11-13, 2018

RENAISSANCE ARLINGTON CAPITAL VIEW HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, DC NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA - USA



## **Dr Evelyn Gillan**

4 August 1959 - 14 July 2015

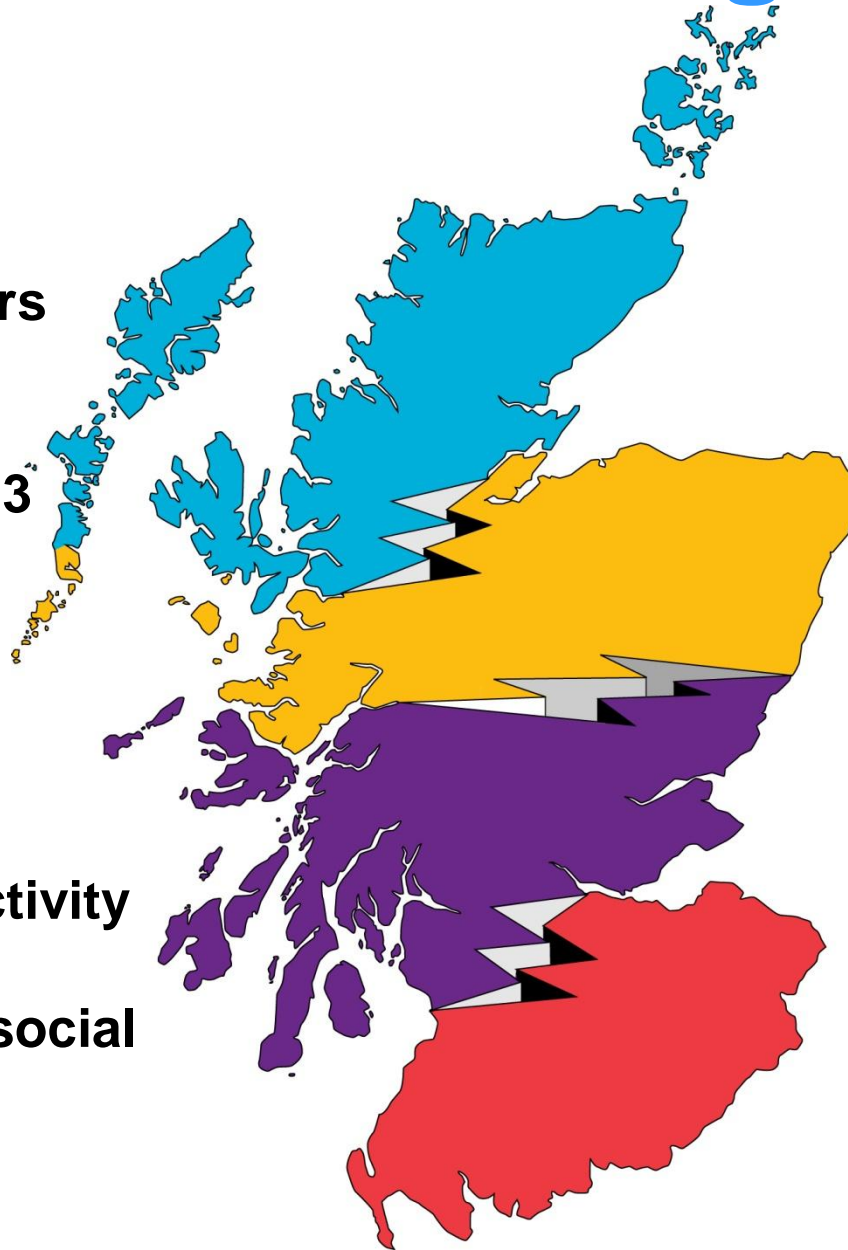
# The Case for Change in 2008

## Healthier

- CLD x3 in 10yrs
- 11% of Emergencies
- 1 death every 3 hours

## Wealthier & Fairer

- £820m productivity loss
- £3.56bn total social cost



## Safer & Stronger

- 49% of prisoners
- 63% of homicides

## Smarter

- >65,000 children
- 1 in 3 divorces
- 31% of 15yr olds & 11% of 13yr olds

# How does MUP work?

- It establishes a ‘floor’ price for a unit of alcohol (10ml or 8g)
- Applies to alcohol, not to products
- Applies to all premises
- Primary legislation is very simple: “Alcohol must not be sold at a price below its minimum price”
- Government has proposed 50p per unit (70 cents)
- Minimum price for a product =  
Price per unit x Strength of alcohol x Volume (litres)
- Actual price is set in secondary legislation



# Benefits of 50p MUP

## **Year 1:**

60 fewer deaths

1,500 fewer hospital admissions

## **Year 20:**

**Reduction in consumption of 3.5%**

121 fewer deaths (-7.4%)

2,042 fewer hospital admissions

**Equivalent to 28% tax rise (but more targeted on heavy, low income drinkers who suffer most harm)**

# Different Industry Voices

We are committed to tackling alcohol misuse through legal and effective measures, for example through our new Scotch Whisky Action Fund. However, we believe minimum unit pricing is illegal, would not target harmful and hazardous drinkers and would damage the Scotch Whisky industry. Minimum unit pricing is based on modelling, not concrete evidence.

*SWA CEO (former)*

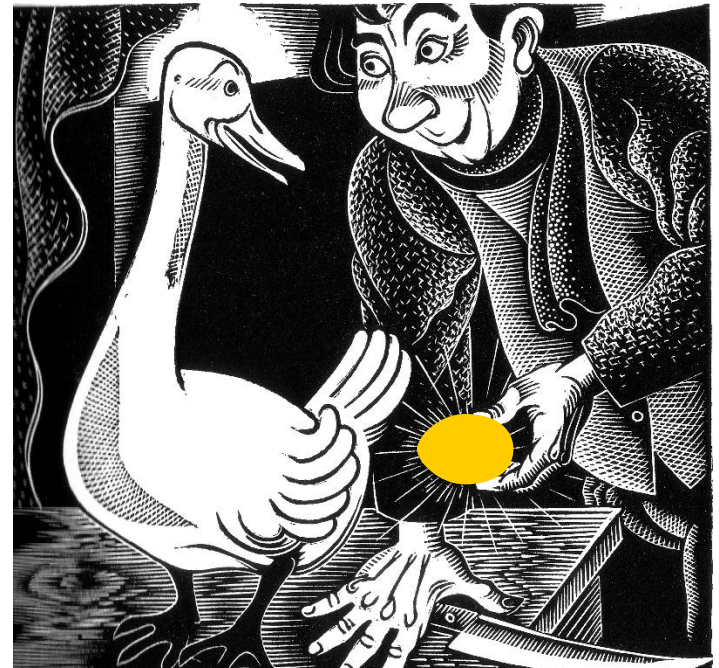


...alcohol is being sold like any other product, at below-cost prices...an intervention on price is so important to bring all the work together and doing something about the problems we have in Scotland.

*Chair of Licensed Trade Association (former)*

# Industry arguments

- **Individual choice:** nanny state/interfering health ‘facists’
- **Minority problem:** majority drink responsibly
- **MUP won’t work:** it’s just modelling
- **Regressive measure:** poor will suffer (& their children)
- **Illegal under EU law:** tax would be more effective/less intrusive
- **Damaging to Scottish exports:** encourages ‘health-based’ restrictions by other countries
- **Industry will increase profits**





# Industry Tactics

- Deter



- Deflect



- Distract



- Delay



# Advocacy Actions

- Briefing papers
- Core script
- Briefing meetings with Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs)
- MSP visits to Doctors' surgeries
- Speaking at events
- Opinion polling
- Full page advert of supporters
- Letters to media
- Written intervention in the court case



# Learning

- Be ready with ideas: seize opportunities
- International evidence base plus national evidence
- Political leadership
- Understand legal issues
- Using sales data
- Economic case: costs and benefits
- Broaden coalition beyond public health (eg. police, children's orgs)
- Conflict of interest
- Winning the war; not just the battle



# Next Steps

## MUP

- Implementation: 1 May 2018
- Extensive monitoring and evaluation programme
- Report to Parliament by year 5
- Sunset clause: legislation expires after 6 years unless extended

## ‘Refreshed’ Government Alcohol Prevention and Treatment & Care Strategies

- Summer 2018?



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