**Alcohol Policy and its implementation in Scotland within an historical perspective.**

In recent years the Scottish Government has pursued an alcohol policy framework that has accepted the need for a national strategy to reduce unacceptably high levels of alcohol consumption. Many of these measures have been introduced on the premise that society needs to adopt a population approach to reducing the level of alcohol related harm rather than one that focuses exclusively on a minority of “problem” or bout drinkers. The evidence base for this is well known but the political will to take this approach has been lacking in UK.

Scotland has been in the forefront of introducing a public health component in its Licensing Laws, innovative controls on the availability and pricing of alcohol, culminating in the adoption of Minimum pricing Legislation in 2012. This paper will briefly consider an historical perspective on alcohol use and misuse in Scotland and examine whether Scotland’s problem with alcohol is significantly different from other parts of UK. What then are the drivers of recent policy decisions including the influence of evidence based advocacy and the role of the alcohol industry? These developments also need to be set against a background of increasing political independence and the distinctive characteristics of Scottish society and its Legal and Health services.

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