

Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: The Strategy

Excessive alcohol consumption causes harm across Scottish society, impacting on:



Communities



Families



Public services



The economy



Individual health

Scotland's alcohol strategy aimed to address these harms. It was comprehensive, evidence based, and included four key components.

Licensing (Scotland) Act (2005)

Includes reform of licensing process and restrictions on licence-holders, for example:



Restrictions on displays in the off-trade



Reducing underage selling



Restrictions on happy hour in the on-trade

Implemented 2009

Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol: The Framework for Action (2009)

Includes 41 actions aimed at:



Reducing consumption



Supporting families and communities



Promoting positive attitudes and positive choices



Improved treatment and support services

Implemented 2009

Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Act (2010)

Contains a number of measures designed to reduce alcohol consumption, including:



Challenge 25 age verification



Multi-buy discount ban (e.g. 3 for 10) in off-trade

Implemented 2011

Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act (2012)

Establishes a price per unit of alcohol below which alcohol cannot be sold. This Act has not yet been implemented.



Currently set at 50 pence per unit

This Act has not yet been implemented

Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: Key trends

Consumption

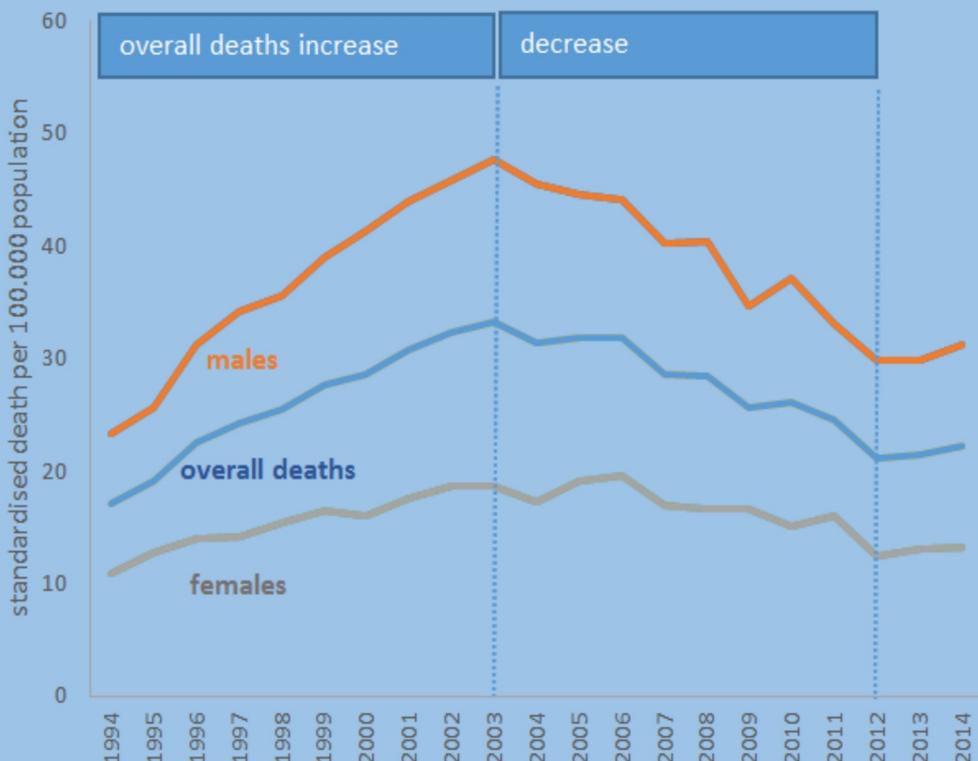
Sales of pure alcohol, Scotland, 1994-2014



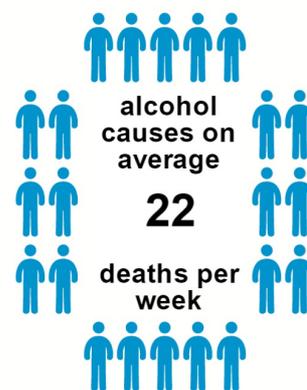
In 2014, of alcohol consumed



Harm



In 2014 in Scotland

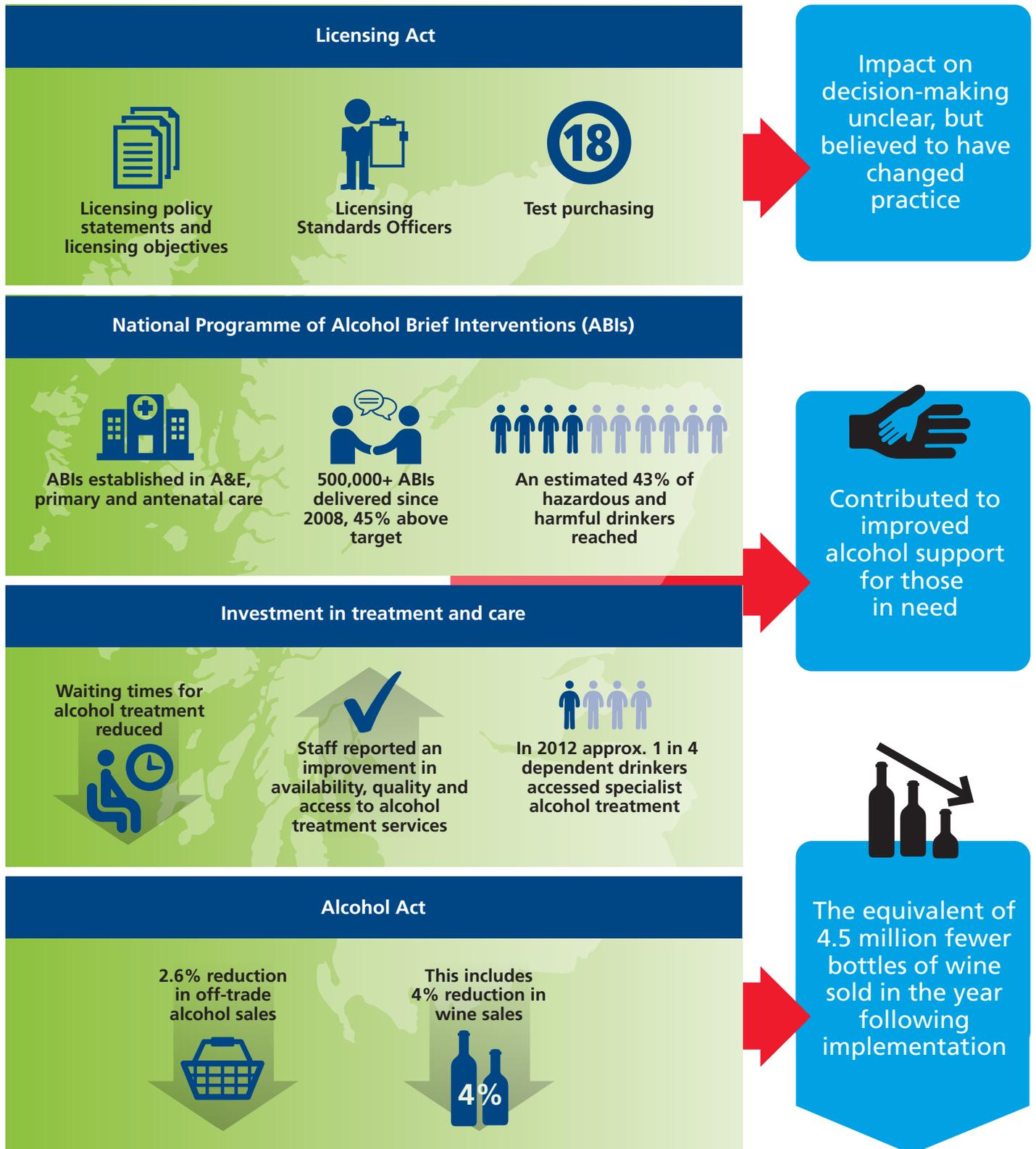


Since 2003 alcohol-related harm has declined by

- 35% for men
- 29% for women

Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: Impact of the strategy

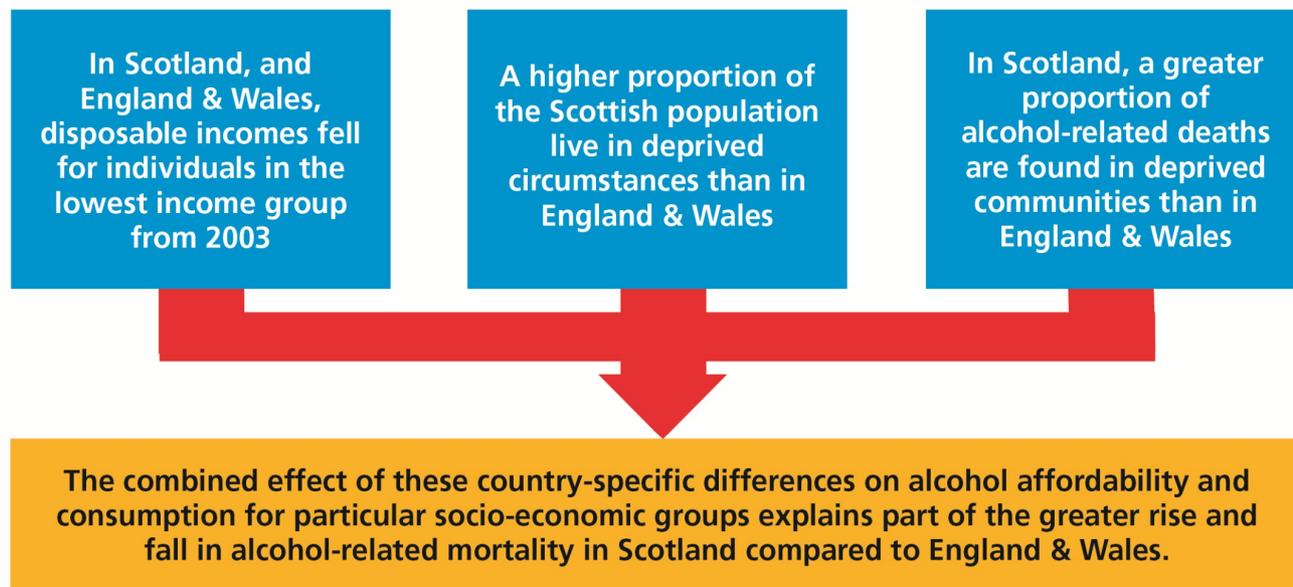
The evaluation found that some elements of the strategy have been successfully implemented and are likely to have had a positive impact.



Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: External Factors

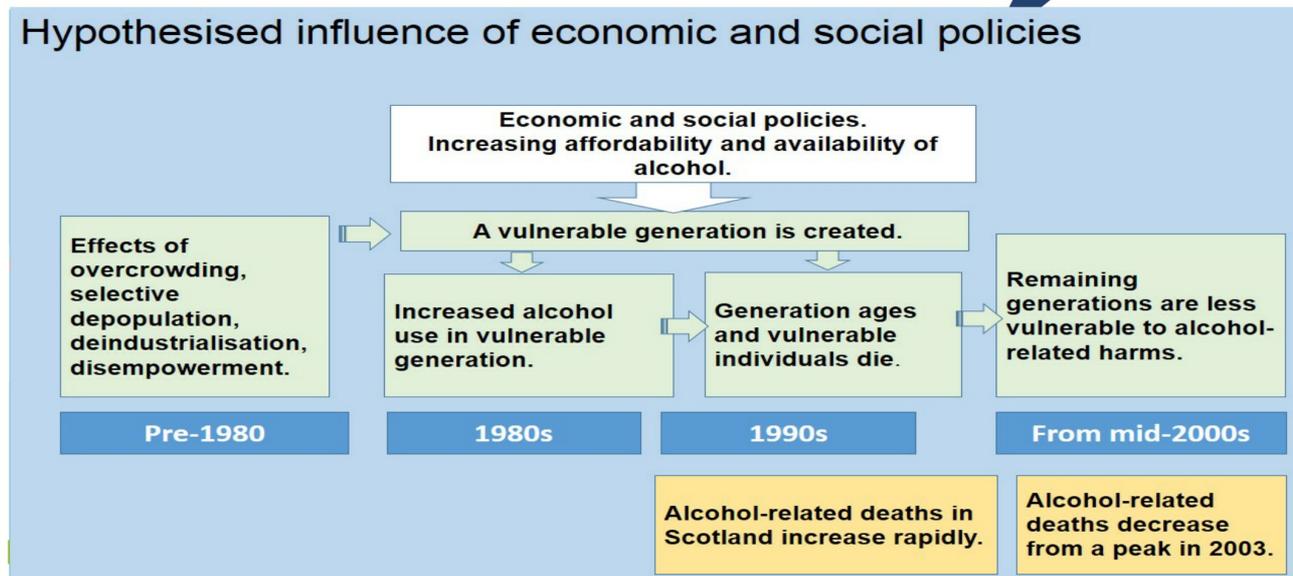
Trends in mortality in Scotland are different to our nearest neighbours, England & Wales. These differences occurred before Scotland's alcohol strategy. Two plausible explanations were identified. There may be others.

1. Combined effect of deprivation and changing income



2. A vulnerable generation

A vulnerable generation, mostly of working-class men living in the most deprived areas, emerged from the 1980s. This vulnerable generation experienced high levels of alcohol-related harms. Peak levels of alcohol-related deaths tailed off after this generation aged and died.



Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: Recommendations

1

Review and refresh the alcohol strategy



The Scottish Government has already announced a refresh of the alcohol strategy. This should continue to be informed by evidence of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness as well as evidence of gaps in policy to determine the priority for further action. Consideration should be given to how alcohol consumption and related harm can be addressed within the context of the wider socio-economic determinants of health.

2

Improve implementation

Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) has not yet been implemented, constraining the impact of the strategy. MUP should be implemented. Implementation difficulties and local variation means that impact of interventions may vary. Improved consistency and completeness of local data would help identify areas for improved implementation.

3

Future monitoring and evaluation



Monitoring of alcohol price, affordability, consumption and alcohol-related deaths and hospital admissions should continue. Bringing these together in an annual overview will facilitate early identification and exploration of emerging issues.

4

Research

For example:

Understanding the mechanisms underpinning a 'vulnerable generation' and why their risk of alcohol-related harm appears elevated.

The factors that facilitate initiation and continued engagement with specialist alcohol treatment and care services in Scotland, including early identification of those with alcohol problems.

In conclusion

The strategy has had a positive impact on alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm to date. However, on average 22 Scots die of an alcohol-related illness every week. There is a need for continued action to reduce alcohol-related harm.