# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Welsh Government Consultation: Minimum Unit Pricing of Alcohol** |
| **DATE** | **28 September 2018** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services** |

Alcohol is a major cause of death and illness in Wales; it leads to a number of health and social harms, particularly for the significant minority of people who drink to excess. In 2016, there were 504 alcohol-related deaths in Wales and in 2016-17, there were nearly 55,000 alcohol-related hospital admissions. All alcohol-related deaths and alcohol-related hospital admissions are preventable.

We have long been clear that a pricing intervention must be a key component of our comprehensive strategy to tackle alcohol misuse, not least because the affordability of alcohol has increased significantly over the past two decades. The National Assembly supported minimum pricing in June when the Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill was passed. It received Royal Assent on 9 August 2018.

The Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Act 2018 is targeted at protecting the health of hazardous and harmful drinkers who tend to consume greater amounts of low-cost and high-strength alcohol. It provides a formula for calculating the applicable minimum price for alcohol by multiplying the percentage strength of the alcohol, its volume and the minimum unit price. This allows us to target the sale and supply of low-cost and high-strength alcohol.

The Act provides that the minimum unit price will be specified in regulations. Ahead of laying these regulations before the National Assembly for Wales, I am today launching a consultation about the preferred level for the minimum unit price.

Taking into account a range of factors, we believe a **50p minimum unit price** is a proportionate response to tackling the health risks of excessive alcohol consumption.

We consider that a 50p minimum unit price will strike a reasonable balance between the anticipated public health and social benefits and intervention in the market.

This consultation is not about the principle of minimum pricing. We have twice consulted about the principle of introducing a minimum price for alcohol in Wales – in 2014 as part of the Public Health White Paper[[1]](#footnote-1) and in 2015 on a draft Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill.[[2]](#footnote-2)

This consultation is about the preferred minimum unit price – it will run for 12 weeks. We will then carefully consider and publish a summary of any consultation responses we receive. Having taken account of the responses to its questions, draft regulations specifying the minimum unit price for the purposes of the Act will then be laid before the National Assembly for its consideration.

The consultation document – which includes the draft regulations specifying the preferred level of the minimum unit price and an accompanying draft Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment – is available here: <https://beta.gov.wales/setting-minimum-unit-price-alcohol>

1. 2014 Consultation on the Public Health White Paper *Listening to you: Your health matters*.

   <https://gov.wales/betaconsultations/healthsocialcare/white-paper/?lang=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2015 Consultation on the Draft Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill.

   <https://gov.wales/betaconsultations/healthsocialcare/alcohol/?lang=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)