

SUNDERLAND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

13 December 2019

ALCOHOL HARMS PRIORITY UPDATE

Report of the Sunderland Alcohol Partnership

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide the Board with a progress update on:

- addressing alcohol harms, one of the Board's seven priorities
- research on the positive impact of minimum unit price (MUP) on reducing alcohol related deaths, alcohol related crimes and reducing health inequalities
- the draft alcohol action plan.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Alcohol remains one of the key drivers of health inequalities and one of the key causes of premature death. Alcohol use has health and social consequences borne by individuals, their families, and the wider community. Alcohol impacts upon a raft of frontline services from the Council, NHS, Police, Ambulance, Licensing and Social Services. It impacts upon the workplace, through lost productivity and absenteeism and on education, through truancy and disruption.
- 2.2 Addressing alcohol harms is a complex issue and no single approach will be successful in isolation, therefore it requires commitment and contributions from a range of partners across the city.
- 2.3 The Board signed the Alcohol Declaration in 2015. The declaration gave clear commitment to address alcohol harms in Sunderland. Building on this commitment, our draft alcohol action plan, attached at Appendix 1, details what the Sunderland Alcohol Partnership has committed to and will work together on to tackle this challenge.

3.0 Using the evidence to address alcohol harms

- 3.1 In December 2016, Public Health England (PHE) published a report that examined the health, social and economic impact of alcohol, and the effectiveness of actions in reducing its harms. The review provides national and local policy makers with the latest evidence to identify those policies which will best prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm. It details policies that impact directly on the environment in which alcohol is sold and marketed, including its price, availability and advertising, along with policies directed at people most at risk.
- 3.2 The report stated that in England, the harm caused by alcohol is determined by levels of consumption at both the individual and population-level. Levels are heavily influenced by:

- a. **how easy it is to purchase or consume alcohol (availability).** This can be addressed through policies such as Statement of Licensing Policy (SOLP), if we sufficiently reduce the hours during which alcohol is available for sale, particularly late night on-trade sale.
- b. **social norms surrounding its consumption (acceptability).** This can be addressed through regulating the marketing and reduce the exposure of alcohol to children. Also delivering brief interventions at drinkers who are already at risk and specialist treatment for people with harmful drinking patterns and dependence are effective approaches to reducing consumption.
- c. **how cheap alcohol is (affordability).** Most effective, and cost-effective, approaches to prevention can be addressed through policies that reduce the affordability. One of the measures within the evidence review is price regulation through the implementation minimum unit price (MUP). This is a highly targeted measure which ensures tax increases are passed on to the consumer and improves the health of the heaviest drinkers.

4.0 Developing the Sunderland Alcohol Action Plan

- 4.1 In May 2019, the Sunderland Alcohol Partnership held a CLear workshop, and the Public Health England (PHE) CLear self-assessment tool was completed. Good practice as well as some areas of improvement were identified. Using the PHE evidence review, the findings from the CLear self assessment and local data from both the Adult Lifestyle Survey and the Health-Related Behaviour Survey, a draft alcohol action plan was developed. This provides a local framework to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harms among individuals, families and communities. The draft alcohol action plan has six key themes:
 1. Developing an infrastructure and providing leadership and advocacy for addressing alcohol harms.
 2. Increase knowledge and understanding of alcohol and its related harms, to enable individuals to make informed choices about their alcohol consumption.
 3. Promote responsible alcohol retailing and support a safe, vibrant and diverse night time economy, working in partnership with local businesses to address alcohol harm.
 4. Provision of brief intervention, early help and effective alcohol recovery services for those that need them.
 5. Protect children, young people and families from alcohol related harm.
 6. Reduce alcohol related crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour by tackling alcohol related offending by individuals and irresponsible alcohol retailing.
- 4.2 The draft alcohol action plan was discussed at the October Alcohol Partnership and then circulated to key partners for consultation.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Board is recommended to:

- receive the update report on the priority addressing alcohol harms;
- support the introduction of minimum unit price in England and write to Westminster urging that minimum unit price is introduced without delay;
- ask the Sunderland Alcohol Partnership to finalise the alcohol action plan, with associated outcome and process KPIs, and bring the final action plan to the March meeting of the Board for approval.

