



Alcohol Harm Reduction in Ireland: Research into Policy and Practice

**Dr. Sheila Gilheany, Alcohol Action Ireland
Ms Katie Dunphy, HSE**



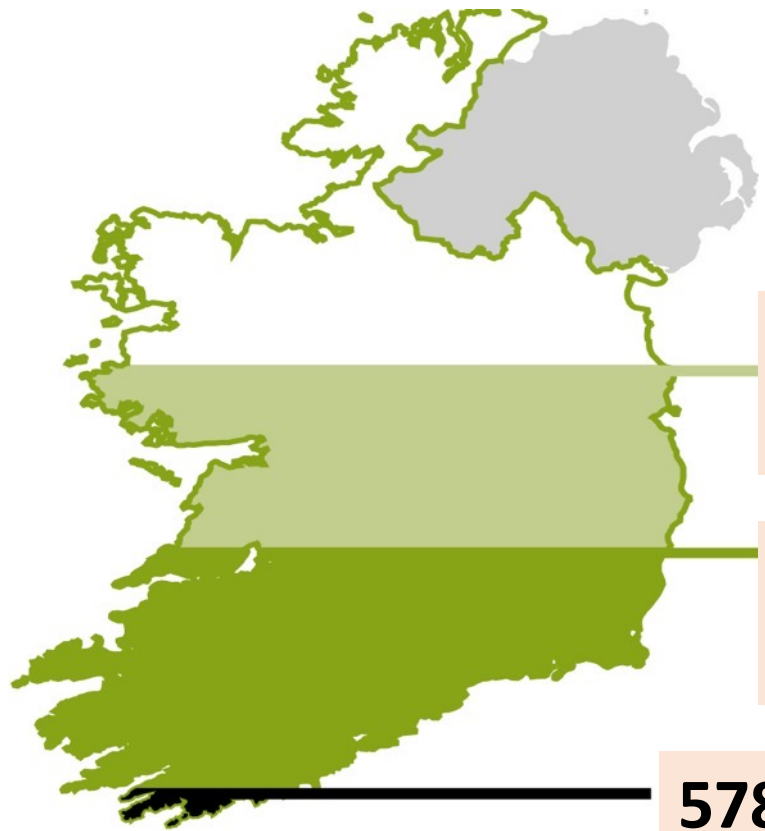


Alcohol Harm Reduction in Ireland: Research into Policy and Practice



Overview

- WHO focus area 1 - Alcohol pricing
- Focus Area 2 & 3- Alcohol availability and marketing
- Focus area 4 - Health information
- Focus Area 5 - Health Service Response
- Focus area 6 - Community action



2.9 million

people in Ireland drink alcohol

1.5 million

Or 51% of people who drink, drink harmfully

578,000

Or 1 in 7 people in Ireland are dependent drinkers



15% of Irish population have an Alcohol Use Disorder



4 deaths from alcohol per day, 1460 annually –



11% of health care budget



€3.7 billion in wider costs to society, likely twice that amount if including harm to others



OECD Report - €464 per person in tax

Irish Context - Alcohol Impact in Ireland

Alcohol-related hospitalisation



Two in three

people who die in Ireland of alcohol-related causes are aged

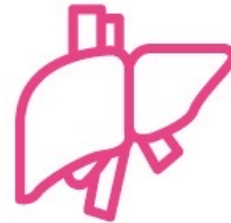
under 65 years

40,000+



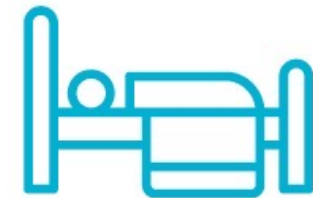
alcohol-related hospital discharges each year

3,496



alcoholic liver disease discharges in 2018

10 days



mean length of stay for alcohol-related conditions (6 days for non-alcohol-related conditions)



Central provisions within the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018

Prohibition on advertising in certain places

Restrictions on advertising during events

Children's clothing

Advertising in cinemas

Separation and visibility/licenced premises

Minimum Unit Pricing

Regulation: sale and supply of alcohol products

Grant or renewal of a licence

- Labelling alcohol products !
- Broadcast watershed ✗
- Content of advertising ✗
- Adverts in publications ✗



Alcohol Action Ireland Price Survey

AlcoholAction Ireland

Alcohol Market Review & Price Survey 2018



IRISH MEN
can drink weekly
low risk threshold*

FOR AS
little as **€8.49**

*11 Standard Drinks

AlcoholAction Ireland

Alcohol Market Review & Price Survey 2018



IRISH WOMEN
can drink weekly
low risk threshold*

FOR AS
little as **€5.49**

*17 Standard Drinks



Minimum Unit Pricing



10c per gram/€1 per Standard Drink

for example:

- a pint of Heineken (5% ABV) €2.25.
- a pint of Budweiser (4% ABV) €1.80.
- a measure of whiskey (40% ABV) €1.12.
- a measure of vodka (37.5% ABV) of €1.05.
- a 500ml can of Guinness (4.2% ABV) €1.68.
- a 700ml bottle of whiskey (40% ABV) €22.40.
- a 700ml bottle of Gin (37.5% ABV) €20.70.
- a 750ml bottle of wine (13.1% ABV) €7.86.
- a 1,000ml bottle of Smirnoff vodka (37.5% ABV) MUP of €30.



MUP Modelling



- Heaviest drinkers/high risk users there can be a 15.1% reduction of alcohol use,
- Whole-of-population a 8.8% reduction
- Annual alcohol-attributable deaths reduce by approximately 197 per year after 20 years, by which time the full effects of the measure will be seen.
- Alcohol-related hospital admissions, 5,878 fewer per year.
- The total societal value of reductions in health, crime and workplace harms is estimated at €1.7bn over the 20 year period modelled







Impact of Minimum Unit Pricing via hospital admissions

- An alcohol research post was established in Beaumont Hospital in July 2021.
- This post is currently co-funded by the Institute of Public Health.
- Data on alcohol-related admissions and chronic diseases will be collated and analysed and the work will inform data collection in other hospitals.
- This post will also explore the impact of Minimum Unit Pricing in Beaumont Hospital.

Health policy
Original research

Impact of minimum unit pricing on alcohol-related hospital outcomes: systematic review

 Tobias Maharaj^{1, 2},  Colin Angus³,  Niamh Fitzgerald⁴,
Kathryn Allen², Stephen Stewart⁵, Siobhan MacHale^{1, 6},  John
D Ryan^{1, 2}

Correspondence to Prof. John D Ryan; johnryan2@beaumont.ie





Impact of Minimum Unit Pricing via hospital admissions

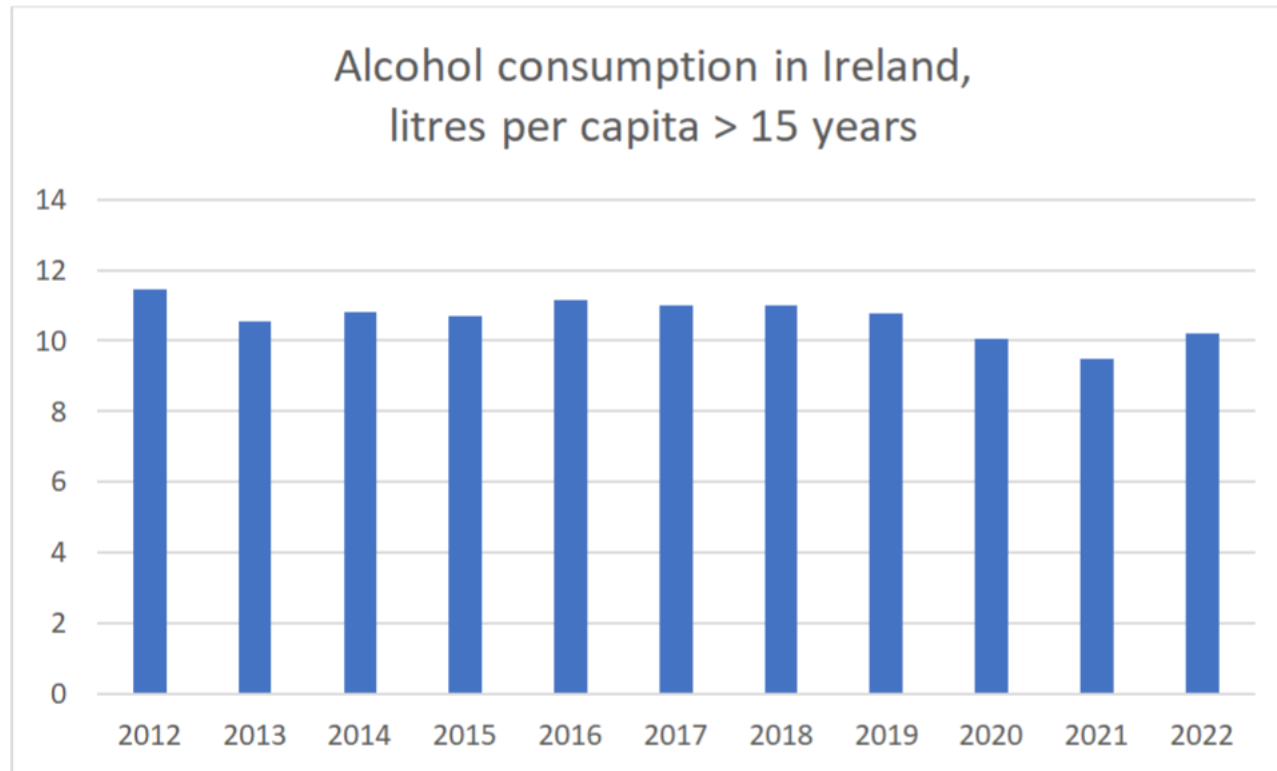


‘Data from Beaumont alcohol service, Maharaj et al., unpublished’

Emergency Department alcohol related presentations fell significantly after MUP (period 1 is pre-MUP, and period 2 is post-MUP).

Subgroups	Total <i>n</i> = 725 (%)	Period 1 (8th – 15th Nov 2021 & 28th Nov – 4th Dec 2021) <i>n</i> = 364 (%)	Period 2 (28 th Feb – 7 th Mar 2022 & 2 nd – 9 th Apr 2022) <i>n</i> = 361 (%)	Difference [95% CI]	P value
Alcohol-related presentations*	141 (19.4)	83 (22.8)	58 (16.1)	-6.7% [-12.5, -1.0]	0.02

5.3% decrease in alcohol consumption





Structural separation in shops





Advertising Restrictions



Public transport

Within 200m of schools, playgrounds, parks

On the field of play during sports



Zero alcohol product marketing



Recent research from the University of Stirling has found an alcohol brand reference being viewed on the sports area every 8 seconds during some high-profile rugby matches in Ireland

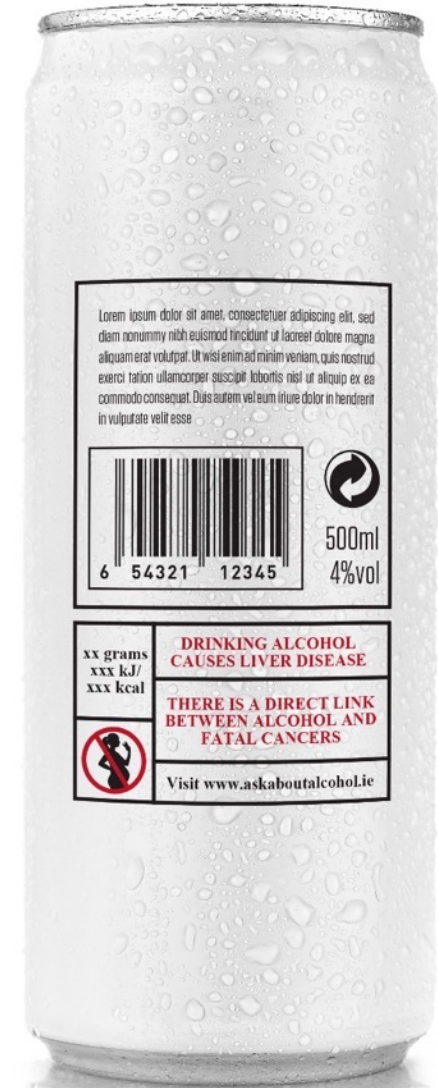




- Zero alcohol products
1.5% of the market
- Zero alcohol product advertising
25% of the Out-of-home alcohol advertising spend



Labelling of alcohol products



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse

6 54321 12345

500ml
4%vol

xx grams
xxx kJ/
xxx kcal

**DRINKING ALCOHOL
CAUSES LIVER DISEASE**

**THERE IS A DIRECT LINK
BETWEEN ALCOHOL AND
FATAL CANCERS**

Visit www.askaboutalcohol.ie



Labelling



June 2022	Irish government notified EU
Dec 2022	No objections from the Commission Measures are proportionate to the scale of the problem
7 Feb-7 May 2023	Irish government notification period to World Trade Organisation
22 May 2023	Regulations signed into law, operational May 2026



Sale of Alcohol Bill



1. The general extension of licensing hours of all bars/restaurants from 11.30pm to 12.30am
2. The facilitating of late-night opening of bars to 2.30am
3. The extension of nightclub hours to 6am
4. The introduction of cultural amenity licenses to venues not usually having a license – eg museums, galleries, theatres etc.
5. The revoking of the requirement to extinguish a license before opening a new premises. This will increase the number and density of alcohol outlets.



Government of Ireland

18 Departments

Health

Justice

Education

Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Environment, Climate and Communications

Finance

Foreign Affairs

Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Public Expenditure and Reform

Rural and Community Development

Social Protection

Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Transport

Defense

Taoiseach



12 Divisions that cover these areas of work:

- Policy
- Resourcing/Finance/Funding
- Health Promotion and Health Protection
- Primary Healthcare
- Specialist Care
- Hospitals/Acute care



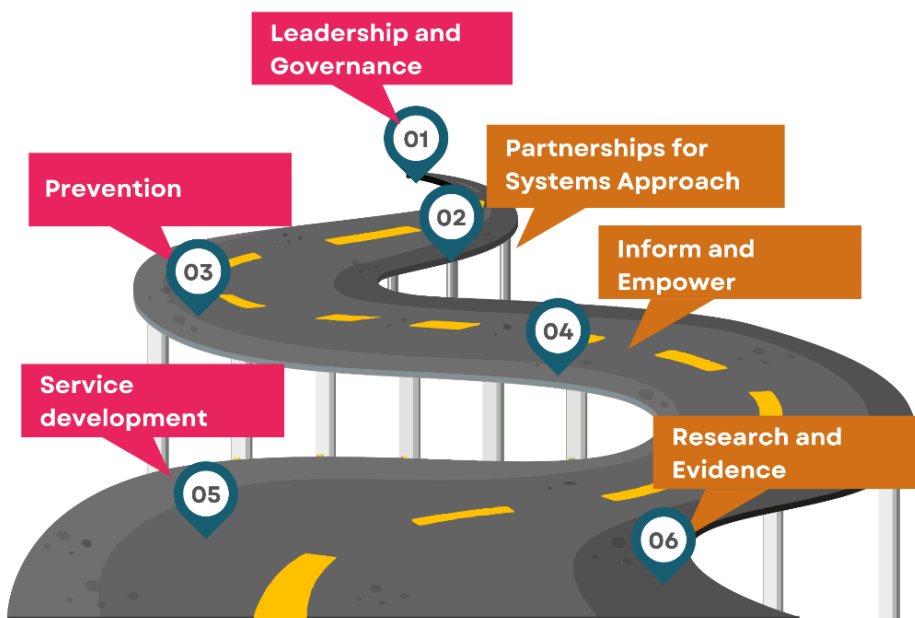
Healthy Ireland Framework

The Healthy Ireland Framework was launched in 2013 and articulates four central goals for improved health and wellbeing:

- increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
- reduce health inequalities
- protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing
- create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland



Healthy Ireland – Health and Wellbeing – HSE Alcohol Programme



- The HSE Alcohol Programme seeks to reduce alcohol related harms in the Irish population through a range of preventative measures to empower individuals and communities to reduce alcohol consumption.
- For the period 2023-2025, the HSE Alcohol Programme Implementation Plan will achieve its vision by focusing on six priority areas. The six priority areas are further broken down into actions and milestones.



Information provision – Ask About Alcohol



- The HSE launched the [Askaboutalcohol.ie](https://www.askaboutalcohol.ie) website and campaign in 2017. The goal is to help improve people's knowledge and understanding of alcohol, our own drinking, and how it can affect our health and mental wellbeing.
- The website is a comprehensive resource, providing evidence-based and easy to read information from clinical experts, with advice and easy-to-use tools and a self-assessment calculator.
- It works in tandem with public health legislation and regulatory changes on alcohol labelling, availability and pricing and ensures there is a source of trusted, evidence-based public information and health advice about alcohol in Ireland.





Alcohol

How alcohol affects your health and wellbeing. Freephone the HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline on [1800 459 459](tel:1800459459) for confidential information and support.

[Drinks calculator](#)

[Self assessment tool](#)

[Alcohol services](#)

[Alcohol and health](#)

How alcohol affects your physical and mental health and how to reduce the risks >

[Information for parents](#)

How to talk to your child about alcohol >

[Self-help for problem alcohol or drug use](#)

How to give up or cut down if alcohol or drugs are causing problems in your life >

[Alcohol dependence](#)

Signs and patterns of alcohol dependence and what can increase your risk >

[Difficult situations](#)

How to manage alcohol-related problems >



HSE Live - We're here to help.

Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday and Sunday: 9am to 5pm

Freephone: 1800 700 700

From outside Ireland: +353 1 240 8787

[HSE Facebook](#)

[HSE Instagram](#)

[HSE Tiktok](#)

[HSE Youtube](#)

[Complaints and feedback](#)

[Emergencies](#)

[Cookies Settings](#)



Information provision – Drug and Alcohol Helpline



HSE National Drug and Alcohol Helpline

- The HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline provides support, information, guidance and referral to anyone with a question or concern related to drug and alcohol use and/ or HIV and sexual health.
- The service is non-judgemental and offers space to talk about your situation, to explore some options and to consider your needs.
- During calls/ emails, staff refer to a database of over 400 services nationwide.
- Opening hours are Monday to Friday, 9.30am and 5.30pm. Call 1800 459 459 or Email helpline@hse.ie



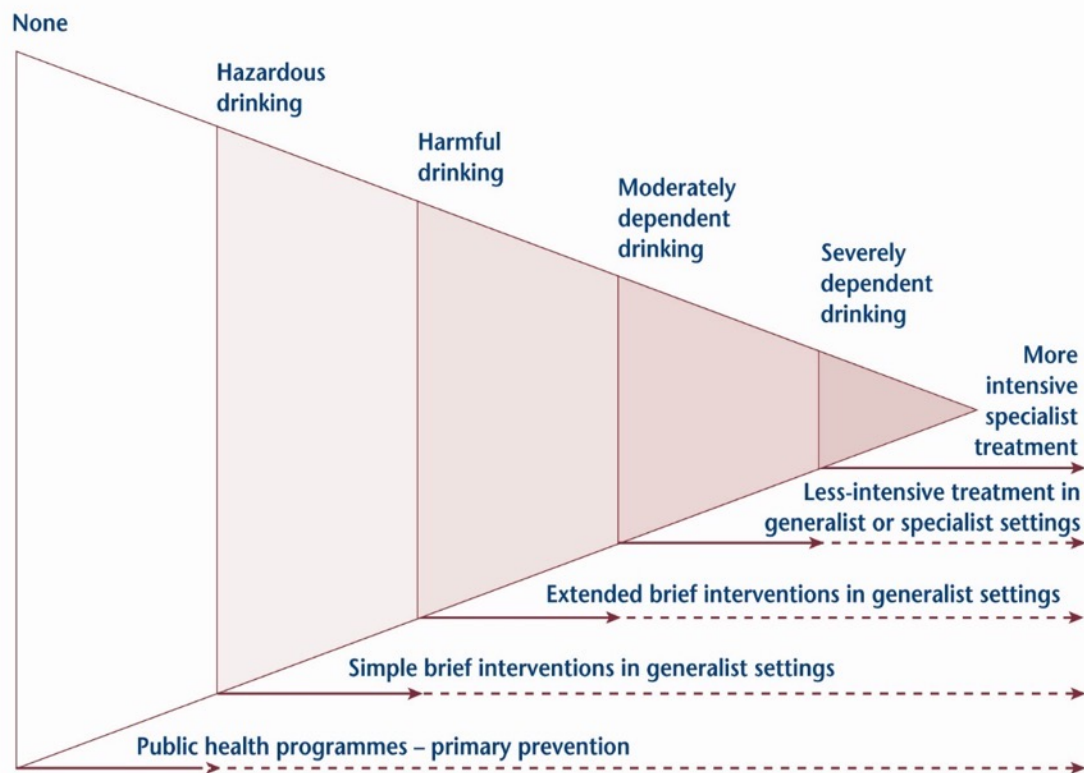


Figure 1 A spectrum of responses to alcohol problems

Source: Rastrick et al. (2006),¹ adapted from Institute of Medicine (1990).²

SAFER

Facilitating Access to Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment

Using both the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) and the SAOR (Support, Ask and assess, Offer assistance, Refer) screening and brief intervention models in place in Ireland (Tier 1), primary care, MECC and SAOR practitioners can refer individuals who need additional supports or increased time to an extended brief intervention model of support (Tier 2) or , where more appropriate, to less intensive treatment in generalist or specialist settings (Tier 3), and more intensive specialist treatment services (Tier 4).



Health Service Response - IAS



- Integrated Alcohol Services are specialist alcohol services in community settings providing psychosocial and therapeutic interventions.
- They develop integrated care pathways between acute, primary care and addiction services.
- The community-based team deliver evidence-based psychosocial interventions and family support, and develop integrated care pathways.
- The team are integrated with an Acute Liaison Nurse based in an acute hospital, who will liaise between the hospital and the community-based team and enhance the integrative aspect of the service.



SláinteCare.
Right Care. Right Place. Right Time.





The overall aim of the Government's drugs policy, Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery, is to provide an effective, integrated response to the problems posed by drug and alcohol misuse.



- To create a safer society through the reduction of the supply and availability of drugs for illicit use;
- To minimise problem drug and alcohol use throughout society;
- To provide appropriate and timely substance treatment and rehabilitation services tailored to individual needs;
- To ensure the availability of accurate, timely, relevant and comparable data on the extent and nature of problem drug and alcohol use in Ireland; and
- To have in place an efficient and effective framework for implementing the National Substance Misuse Strategy.



Focus Area 6

Community Action - **Drug and Alcohol Taskforces (DATF)**



**14 local DATFs—
Operational from 1997**

**10 regional DATFs -
Operational from 2005**

**Remit of the Drug Task
Forces was expanded in
2014 to include alcohol**



Alcohol Forum Ireland

Provides support, information and services to individuals, families and communities impacted by alcohol harm, while working at the wider level to change Ireland's problematic relationship with alcohol.

- The Irish Community Action on Alcohol Network (ICAAN) was launched in 2017 to support the continued development of community action on alcohol in Ireland
- While community action on alcohol is an effective community based approach to preventing and reducing alcohol harm, many of the issues that lead to increasing alcohol consumption and harm in communities require collective action at a higher policy level.





Community Focus - example



Ireland 2022-2023 – “The Irish Community Action on Alcohol Network (ICAAN), which is part of Alcohol Forum Ireland, said schools must be advised that education programmes funded by the alcohol industry are inappropriate and should not be allowed.”

Alcohol Industry Funded Initiatives - The HSE and the Department of Health recommend that you do not involve DrinkAware in health education initiatives in your school. This policy is also supported by the Department of Education and Skills. Visit www.askaboutalcohol.ie for the HSE information on alcohol.

Taoiseach Mr Martin said "the partnership should be between education, the HSE and the Department of Health".





Conclusion

Alcohol Harm Reduction in Ireland:

Research

WHO best buys/ WHO Europe 6 focus areas)

Policy

Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018

Sale of Alcohol Bill

Government strategies

Practice





Thank You

Dr. Sheila Gilheany, Alcohol Action Ireland
Ms Katie Dunphy, HSE

Sheila.gilheany@alcoholactionireland.ie
Katherine.Dunphy@hse.ie

