

**AlcoholAction**  
Ireland



Annual Review **2022**

**Alcohol Action Ireland (AAI) is the national independent advocate working to reduce harm from alcohol.**

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**Our vision is a society free from alcohol harm.**

We campaign for the burden of alcohol harm to be lifted from the individual, community and State, and have a strong track record in effective advocacy, campaigning and policy research.

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**Our mission is to advocate to reduce alcohol harm.**

Our work involves providing information on alcohol-related issues, creating awareness of alcohol-related harm and offering public policy solutions with the potential to reduce that harm, with an emphasis on the implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018.

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**We are committed to the following values:**

Compassion – avoiding any judgements on the individual

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Evidenced-based approach

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Integrity

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Transparency and honesty

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Commitment to long-term well-being and public health

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Working in partnership

AAI support the work of the HSE Alcohol Programme, informing strategic alcohol initiatives as an instrument of public health planning. We act as the secretariat to the Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland, as its co-founding member, and serve on the HSE Alcohol Programme Implementation Group and on the Board of the European Alcohol Policy Alliance, (Eurocare), Brussels.



## Foreword from the Chair

**2022 marked the introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) for alcohol in January, following a decade of campaigning to reduce alcohol harms by Alcohol Action Ireland and others. MUP is a lifesaving measure and a critical component of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018. It will substantially reduce alcohol harms. For the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 to achieve its objective of a 20% reduction in alcohol use in Ireland, all sections of the Act must be implemented as an urgent priority.**

The urgency for implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 has been emphasised as a result of the publication of results of research with colleagues in the School of Public Health in University College Cork in 2022. This research revealed that at least four people die every day as a result of alcohol. There are 1000 alcohol related cancer diagnoses every year and an alarming increase in the level of liver disease in Ireland. Younger people are disproportionately affected by alcohol with 13.5% of all deaths among those aged 20-39 years attributed to alcohol.

The progress on health information labelling of alcohol products is encouraging. After a sustained campaign by AAI, the government published regulations on this measure, as legislated for in the Public Health Alcohol Act. This measure has been met with ferocious opposition from vested interests and will require ongoing determined advocacy to ensure its implementation. Ireland is showing global leadership in this area, and is being closely observed internationally.

Much remains though to be done in relation to alcohol marketing, which is one of the principal drivers of alcohol use. The broadcast watershed for alcohol advertisements and content control of such advertising are key features of the Alcohol Act. However, there is no timeline or indication from Government as to when these controls will be implemented. AAI continues to advocate strongly for these proven measures to be introduced urgently.

The overall intent of the Public Health Alcohol Act is being hugely undermined by recently announced plans to amend alcohol licensing regulations in the Sale of Alcohol Bill. These amendments would allow for longer licensing hours and greater availability of alcohol through relaxation of a number of licensing measures. The international evidence is clear, indicating that such an approach will lead to greater alcohol use and with it an increase in alcohol harms.

A particular tragedy of alcohol consumption is the impact on the 200,000 children experiencing parental problem alcohol use, and the 400,000 adults living with the legacy of this trauma. In 2022, AAI developed its second awareness week, highlighting the issue under the banner: 'End the Silence'. This series of events in October 2022 examined multiple concerns for such children and adults. AAI continued to advocate for the introduction of early intervention measure such as Operation Encompass to provide immediate support for children impacted by domestic violence, which is often fuelled by alcohol consumption.

The current low-risk alcohol consumption guidelines in Ireland are outdated and at variance with the evidence-informed guidelines developed in the UK and other OECD countries. In particular, they fail to recognise adequately the harmful effect of binge drinking in men and the effects of alcohol in causing seven cancers. Current Irish guidelines also reflect outdated, discredited views regarding potential health benefits of alcohol. These guidelines need to be updated urgently.

AAI also continued its work advocating for improved services for those affected by alcohol harms. In 2022 AAI brought together colleagues in academia, treatment services and with lived experience to highlight barriers to accessing services at an event in June and also in supporting research in this area. The stigma around alcohol problems is of particular concern. AAI has developed a media guide around language for use in this area.

An essential part of the work of AAI is to develop policy solutions for an Irish context. In 2022, AAI produced 32 position papers and submissions to public consultations across many areas of public policy, including taxation, the WHO Global Alcohol Strategy and Government Policy Framework For Children And Young People In Ireland Consultation.

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In September, AAI published the Alcohol Market Review, which draws attention to the scale of alcohol revenues in Ireland, the scope of marketing activities and the level of government support for an industry, whose product costs Ireland's taxpayers at least €3.7 billion per year. This report and a major review of the Public Health Alcohol Act published by AAI both pointed to the need for a dedicated state Office for Alcohol Harm Reduction which would drive policy in this area.

AAI has established strong working relations with partners nationally and internationally which helps to inform this work. Such collaboration is essential given the highly contested global space in which we work, and underscores the need for a strong 'whole of government' approach.

I want to take this opportunity to recognise the expertise, professionalism and commitment of the AAI Executive, especially our CEO Sheila Gilheany. I wish to thank them for all they have done and continue to do. They have made a significant impact and continue to maintain alcohol harm high on the public consciousness.

I acknowledge and commend our volunteer Board members and especially thank two retiring members, Prof Joe Barry who served on the Board since 2007 and James Dooley who served from 2019. They have made an immense contribution to reducing alcohol harm in Ireland. I also wish to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of Eunan McKinney, who made enormous contributions to reducing alcohol harms in his time in AAI.

We acknowledge the financial support of our funders in 2022 - HSE, Hospital Saturday Fund, Irish Research Council, JP McManus Foundation, Mental Health Grant Scheme for Community and Voluntary Groups, and the many generous individuals who have made donations.

Finally, we want to thank the many organisations in the Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland who continue to support the campaign for the full implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act. I am also very appreciative of the many individuals who work with us through social media, contacting their elected representatives and often sharing their painful but powerful stories of the devastation caused by alcohol on individuals, families and the wider community.

We can take heart in progress made during 2022, and in working together we know we are moving closer to our vision of a society free from alcohol harm.

**Prof Frank Murray MD FRCPI**  
Chair, Alcohol Action Ireland

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**2022 was the third year of Alcohol Action Ireland's five-year strategic plan Leading Change: A Society Free from Alcohol Harm, 2020-2024. Throughout the year, AAI worked across the five strategic goals laid out in the strategy.**

- 1 Coherent and urgent implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act**
- 2 A childhood free from alcohol harm**
- 3 Services for all affected by alcohol harm**
- 4 Establishment of a state sponsored Office to lead on alcohol policy**
- 5 Be the authority on alcohol advocacy and policy in Ireland**

These goals are cross-cutting, for example full implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act will help to protect children from alcohol harm, while the establishment of a state Alcohol Office has the potential to drive innovative alcohol policy development across all areas of alcohol harm.

Our approach is to research the policy solutions, publish the evidence and bring our proposals to the public and policy makers. We arrange direct meetings with stakeholders, seek parliamentary questions, organise awareness events, generate media coverage and create innovative social media campaigns with tools such as videos, graphics and podcasts. We work closely with national and international partners, who share common public health goals, to advance our vision and contribute to global action.

Using these methods, we have made significant progress across all areas of the plan in 2022 as outlined below.

# Goal 1

## Coherent and urgent implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act

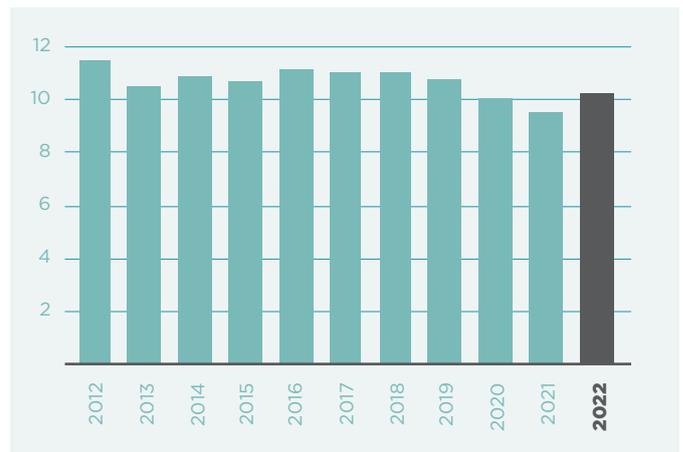
The Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018 (PHAA) is a suite of measures designed, when fully implemented, to reduce alcohol use in Ireland by 20% over a period of seven years. The legislation reflects the World Health Organisation’s ‘best buys’ on alcohol policy – i.e. controls on price, marketing and availability.

The original target when the legislation was first proposed in 2013 was for alcohol consumption to be reduced to a level of 9.1 litres per capita by 2020. Due to a combination of significant obstruction in the legislation being passed and indeed watered down from its original format and ongoing delays in it being implemented, this was not achieved.

The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on alcohol use in Ireland given the restrictions on hospitality in both 2020, when licensed premises were largely closed for 40 weeks, and continued into 2021. Alongside this there was a significant increase in home drinking which had been fuelled by hyper-discounting of alcohol. In 2021 the overall level of consumption was 9.49 litres per capita.



### Alcohol use litres per capita >15 years



In 2022 with the reopening of hospitality this level increased to 10.21. However, this is below the pre-pandemic level of 10.78 in 2019.

This still translates into a significant level of alcohol use per drinker annually – 12 litres of gin/vodka +277 cans of beer +39 bottles of wine +36 cans of cider.

### Slow pace of implementation

- There has been some progress in the implementation of the PHAA though the pace is slow. At this stage the following measures are now in operation:
- Restrictions on placement of outdoor advertising, on children’s clothing and in cinemas, operational from November 2019
- Structural separation of alcohol products in shops and supermarkets, operational from November 2020
- Ending of promotions to incentivise alcohol use, operational from January 2021
- Restrictions on alcohol advertising related to sporting activities, operational from November 2021
- Minimum Unit Pricing of Alcohol, operational from January 2022
- Notice to Health Service Executive in relation to applications for grant or renewal of license to sell alcohol, operational from November 2022

However, other measures which remain outstanding include:

- Health information labelling of alcohol products
- Broadcast watershed for alcohol advertising
- Restrictions on content of alcohol advertisements

During the year, AAI worked closely with Dr Zubair Kabir in the School of Public Health, University College Cork on a study monitoring compliance with the structural separation of alcohol products in mixed retail environments and was pleased to note a high level of compliance in this area. This study was funded by the Irish Research Council (IRC).



Dr Zubair Kabir, speaking at the AAI event, Out of balance

In December 2022, AAI published a comprehensive review of progress on PHAA implementation – Where is the Urgency? Results from the IRC study were included in this report along with detailed recommendations for alcohol policy development in Ireland.

The Review was accompanied by a webinar discussing the issues and highlighting other upcoming threats to the intent of the PHAA such as the recently announced Sale of Alcohol Bill which proposes to increase licensing hours with the likely result of increased alcohol sales and so increased alcohol harms.

### Minimum Unit Pricing

2022 saw the introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) of alcohol – a key measure for which AAI had strongly advocated for over 10 years and which was fiercely resisted by vested interests. The regulation means that a standard drink (a small glass of wine, a half pint of beer or a pub measure of spirits) must cost at least €1. From January 2022 it now costs at least €17 for a man to purchase 17 standard drinks and €11 for a woman to purchase 11 standard drinks – the current HSE low-risk weekly drinking guidelines.

Its introduction has significantly reduced the hyper discounting of alcohol in supermarkets with slabs of 24 cans of beer which had been widely available at prices around €15 now a thing of the past as these would now cost €40.

This has been widely welcomed nationally and internationally by the public health community though it continues to be met by a barrage of attacks much of which stems from the same sources who opposed its introduction.

AAI is also supporting the introduction of MUP to Northern Ireland and made a detailed submission on this to the NI Department of Health consultation on this issue as well as engaging with a range of other organisations such as NI Alcohol and Drugs Alliance, Inspire, Royal College of Psychiatrists Faculty of Addictions, Alcohol Change UK, NI Chest, Heart and Stroke, British Heart Foundation Northern Ireland, Cancer NI, SHAAP and Alcohol Focus to ensure submissions to the consultation.

As yet there is no detailed evidence available of the specific impact of the measure on drinking patterns in Ireland. However, the alcohol consumption data for 2022 suggests that MUP may have contributed to a 5% reduction in alcohol use compared with pre-pandemic levels. Alcohol use is now 12% above the government target of 9.1 litres per capita.

### Labelling

The PHAA includes measures which will ensure that no alcohol product can be sold without bearing a warning that informs the public that:

- i. “Drinking alcohol causes liver disease”
- ii. displays a health symbol intended to inform the public of the danger of alcohol consumption when pregnant, and
- iii. “There is a direct link between alcohol and fatal cancers”

In addition, the regulations make it mandatory that the alcohol and calorie content within the product is stated, and that the public health alcohol information website ‘askaboutalcohol.ie’ is displayed.

These measures are ground-breaking particularly the requirement for a cancer warning. Throughout the year AAI advocated strongly for the publication of the regulations, which would give effect to the PHAA measures.

AAI commissioned polling data which showed strong public support for the measures.

- 72% believe consumers have a right to be informed on the product, and in advertising, of the health risk from alcohol use; only 11% oppose such a move.
- 62% believe alcohol products must display health warnings that clearly identifies the risk to pregnancy, of liver disease and fatal cancers from alcohol use; only 15% oppose such a move.
- 61% believe alcohol products must display calorie information on all alcohol products; only 11% oppose such a move.

AAI also worked with the Tomar Foundation and its Drink is A Drug campaign with a high-profile media advertising campaign on this issue.

AAI was very heartened with the publication in June 2022 of the detailed regulations around labelling including specific details on size, colour and font of the labels.

Under EU Single Market rules, Ireland had to notify the European Commission about its intention to introduce these regulations. This triggers a standstill period that allows the Commission and the Member States of the EU to examine the technical regulations Member States intend to introduce before their adoption, as well as allowing all stakeholders an opportunity to make their voices heard.

AAI led a campaign to encourage public health advocates to make supportive submissions to the process. 60 such submissions were made representing almost 70% of all submissions. 13 Member States issued detailed opinions or comments. The European Commission considered its position until 22 December 2022. No comment was issued by the Commission. This is entirely consistent with the EU's 2011 regulation on the provision of food information to consumers which provides that Member States can also adopt national labelling measures provided they notify the European Commission and other member states in advance. This is a recognition of a Member State's competency to adopt measures requiring mandatory particulars to on-product alcohol labelling on grounds of the protection of public health. In early 2023 the government then notified the World Trade Organisation about the labelling regulations.

The regulations have been met with ferocious opposition from the global alcohol industry. AAI is continuing to strongly advocate for the rapid introduction of the measure and is working closely with international partners to support the Irish government's progress in this regard.

AAI also welcomed moves in the EU to revise the Regulation on Food Information to Consumers to provide for nutritional information on alcohol products and contributed to a number of consultations on this. We also strongly endorsed the EU Beating Cancer plan with its proposal to have health warning labels before the end of 2023.

Ireland's PHAA labelling regulations are in keeping with both these proposals. It was notable, though, that in the European Parliament debate and vote on the Report of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer Plan that there was considerable watering down of the labelling plan.

This provides further evidence of the need for Ireland to move forward rapidly on its regulations rather than waiting for an EU wide label. We are also encouraged by moves in Norway to introduce cancer warning labelling. Like Ireland's public health legislation on second hand smoking, Ireland has the opportunity to lead the way in Europe and across the world in implementing cancer warning labelling on alcohol products.





### Advertising Controls

Despite the good progress highlighted above there are critical elements of the PHAA in relation to advertising controls which have not been implemented – namely the broadcast watershed for alcohol advertising and controls on the content of advertising. AAI continued to raise the need for these measures to be progressed. There is strong public support for such controls with polling data indicating 70% back stopping alcohol adverts being shown on TV before 9pm.

There is also a serious issue about the current restrictions being circumvented by the use of zero alcohol product advertising. These products have identical branding to their alcoholic versions and are being widely advertised in areas which have been restricted under the PHAA e.g. on public transport and on the field of play during sporting events.

AAI has raised this issue with both the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive which has responsibility for monitoring and enforcing this element of the PHAA. To date there has not been a satisfactory response and AAI will continue to advocate for comprehensive controls on advertising these products which can be considered a trojan horse.

### Sale of Alcohol Bill

During the year a major threat to the intent of the Public Health Alcohol Act arose from moves to change licensing regulations. Consultations on changes were held to which AAI made detailed submissions and also presented on this topic.

On 25 October 2022, the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee, brought forward plans to Cabinet for a General Scheme of a Sale of Alcohol Bill. The Bill will be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by the Oireachtas Committee on Justice prior to being introduced into the Oireachtas. The expectation is that this will complete all stages in 2023.

Alcohol Action Ireland supports the modernisation and streamlining of the alcohol licensing process. We also welcome opportunities to enhance the night-life

in Ireland. However, there is an underlying assumption in the Bill that in order to have a vibrant nightlife there must be additional provision for alcohol sales and there is very minimal consideration given to public health matters.

There are significant concerns about a number of aspects of the Bill as proposed which are likely to lead to increased alcohol use and consequent increased alcohol harms. These include:

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.

AAI wrote to the Oireachtas Committee on Justice with a detailed examination of the issues of concern and were invited to present evidence to the Committee in person in 2023.

It is clear that the intent of the Sale of Alcohol Bill is to increase the availability of alcohol which will lead to increased use and with that increased harms. This is completely against stated government policy which aims to reduce alcohol use by 20%. AAI is now working closely with other public health advocates to press for changes to the Bill and in particular calling for a public health assessment of the Bill.



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## Goal 2

# A childhood free from alcohol harm

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The impact of alcohol on children can have life-long implications. Children in Ireland are currently experiencing harm from alcohol in multiple ways including:

- Exposure to alcohol during pregnancy
- Brought up in families where there is parental problem alcohol use
- Exposure to risk in their community from others who are engaged in high-risk alcohol consumption
- Introduced to alcohol at an early age

Throughout the year, AAI has worked on policy initiatives and advocacy across these areas. We highlighted these issues in a number of public consultation submissions such as the Department of Children consultation on a government policy framework for children and young people in Ireland and the World Health Organisation consultation on the framework to strengthen implementation of the WHO European Action Plan to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol.

AAI is a member of the Children's Rights Alliance (CRA) and the Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN) and has worked to ensure consideration of such issues in these groups.

### Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

The use of alcohol in pregnancy in Ireland has led to a corresponding high level of the conditions of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FAS/FASD) among children in Ireland – found to be the third highest rate in the world. This aspect of alcohol harm remains very hidden, yet the children affected are compromised from a neurobiological perspective, resulting in problems carried with them throughout their lives. One example of this outcome is that such children are over-represented in the care and justice systems.

We have highlighted this throughout the year and, in particular, have advocated for the labelling of alcohol products with a pregnancy warning.

### Silent Voices

AAI's 'Silent Voices' initiative aims to raise awareness and understanding of the specific issues for the estimated 200,000 + children and 400,000 adult children who have grown up with parental problem alcohol use in Ireland and the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) caused to their lives. It is informed by the lived experience and expertise of the members of its Advisory Group and the personal testimonies which are shared anonymously on its online platform, Shared Voices. It has worked closely with national and international partners including Drug and Alcohol Taskforces, ISPC and in the UK, National Association of Children of Alcoholics, NACOA, to develop policies and raise awareness.

As part of the Silent Voices initiative, in 2022 AAI worked closely with researchers in the School of Applied Psychology in University College Cork on a study of professionals' views of problem alcohol use in the home which found that 70% of mental health professionals receive no training on this area despite its known serious psychological impacts.

A review of government plans and strategy documents in relation to the issue of growing up was carried out and has been sent to the Children's Ombudsman.

There were a number of meetings with policy makers and colleagues in the Department of Education around the need for trauma informed education. As part of this work, AAI worked closely with the School of Education, Maynooth, to produce a website of resources in this area.



A particular highlight this year was an event in November with our Silent Voices Patron, BBC journalist and war correspondent, Fergal Keane, on the launch of his new book, examining the impact of trauma.

### National Awareness Week: End the Silence

AAI built on our first End the Silence week in 2021 with a very significant set of events and activities in October 2022 which included:

- **Through the Eyes of the Child** webinar with contributions from AAI Patron, Prof Geoffrey Shannon, Andrew Jackson ISPC, Josh Connolly, NACOA, Philp Maree Alcohol Forum
- **Silent no More** - in person event with Ray D'Arcy (RTE) Christine Dwyer Hickey (author) Senator Frances Black, Stephen Lynch, (Head of Public Affairs, Channel 4) Marion Rackard, co-founder Silent Voices.
- **Research to Action** webinar with Children's Ombudsman, Dr Niall Muldoon, Dr Eoghan Scott, Dublin City University, Gerry Diamond, School Mindfulness Lead, Dr Catriona O'Toole, Maynooth University, Caroline Jordan and Anne Goodwin, Tusla, Mary Maginn, Intervention Services Manager, ASCERT
- **Interactive toolkit of resources** produced for children, adults and professionals. This has been widely distributed to a range of professional organisations and has been very well received.
- **Launch of website** of resources for trauma informed schools produced with Maynooth University
- **Animation video of story from ISPC**
- **Podcast for therapists**
- **Publication of recent research** carried out with Dr Sharon Lambert, UCC, on knowledge of parental problem alcohol use in mental health professionals.

Silent Voices Patron, Fergal Keane with Sheila Gilheany, AAI, at the launch of his most recent book, Madness: A memoir of war, fear and PTSD. Photo credit Ger Holland Photography



Prof Geoffrey Shannon, AAI Patron, speaking at the 'Through the Eyes of the Child' event in October 2022

There were significant contacts with a range of organisations including, ISPC, Drug and Alcohol Taskforces, HSE, Tusla, third level colleges and professional therapists groups including IACP, ACI, IAHIP.

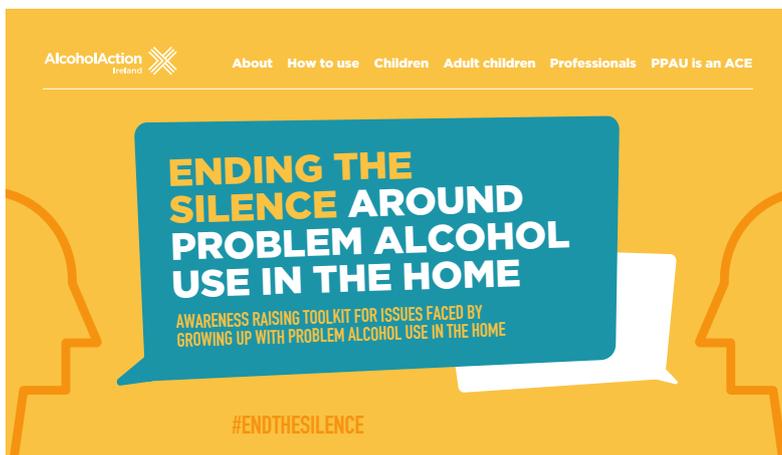
330 attended the events while the specific webpage with the toolkit has been viewed 1500 times.

There was also good media coverage with 7 items in national media with an audience reach of 683721 and an earned value of €29,325.

This work was supported by funding from the Mental Health Grant Scheme for Community and Voluntary Groups.

### Alcohol and domestic violence

Much of the evidence suggests that when alcohol is involved in domestic abuse it is a compounding factor rather than the root cause, with evidence showing that alcohol use increases the occurrence and severity of domestic violence.





Children's Ombudsman, Dr Niall Muldoon chairing Research to Action webinar.



Senator Frances Black, author Christine Dwyer Hickey, Ray D'Arcy RTE, Marion Rackard, co-founder Silent Voices and Stephen Lynch, Head of Public Affairs Channel 4 at the Silent No More event.

AAI continued to draw attention to this issue producing a detailed submission to the consultation on the Third National Strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence which particularly highlighted the impact on the development of children who experience such abuse. We were disappointed, though, that when the strategy was published in July 2022 there was no mention of the role of alcohol in this area. We are continuing to work with other organisations in this area to highlight this issue.

### Operation Encompass

Work continued throughout the year to advocate for the introduction of Operation Encompass which is an initiative deployed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is designed to support children and young people experiencing domestic abuse by facilitating an early information sharing partnership between police and education services to offer immediate intervention and support. We were encouraged that it was included in the new Domestic Violence Strategy mentioned above for consideration by the Children First Interdepartmental

Group which has representation from the Departments of Children, Education and Justice. There is a lack of urgency though, in progressing this straightforward, low-cost measure which has the potential to make a significant difference to the lives of traumatised children.

We have been very encouraged by support from organisations such as the Children's Rights Alliance, ISPC, INTO, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection in relation to the need for Operation Encompass.

### Marketing to children

The early introduction of children to alcohol continued to be highlighted by AAI using the findings from a range of studies such as Growing up in Ireland, My World Survey and the Health Behaviour of School Aged Children. While there have been some modest improvements in recent years, Ireland still has a significant problem with at least 50,000 children starting to drink every year, 40% of 15-year-olds using alcohol and by early



adulthood 93% of Ireland's youth are regular drinkers. A significant factor in this is the marketing of alcohol in such a way that captures young people and in particular its linkage to youth interests such as sports, music and other cultural events.

Throughout 2022 AAI worked closely with the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland and the Irish Heart Foundation to protect children from online alcohol, gambling advertisements and junk food advertisements. AAI advocated strongly with legislators for such curbs incorporated in the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill as it progressed through the Oireachtas. This Bill was enacted in December 2022. Within the legislation there is provision for a Commission to be established which will produce codes which may prohibit or restrict commercial communications relation to foods or beverages considered by the Commission to be the subject of public concern in respect of the general public health interests of children. During the Seanad Eireann debate on this issue on 11 July 2022 Minister Catherine Martin clarified that 'alcohol would probably be considered a matter of public concern in respect of the general public health interests of children.' AAI will continue to pursue this issue with the Commission when it is established in 2023.



Carol Fawsitt, co-founder Silent Voices with Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee.

## Goal 3:

### Services for all affected by alcohol harm

Alcohol has serious implications on many aspects of our health and across all stages of life. A major goal for AAI is to advocate for appropriate services for all affected by alcohol harm.

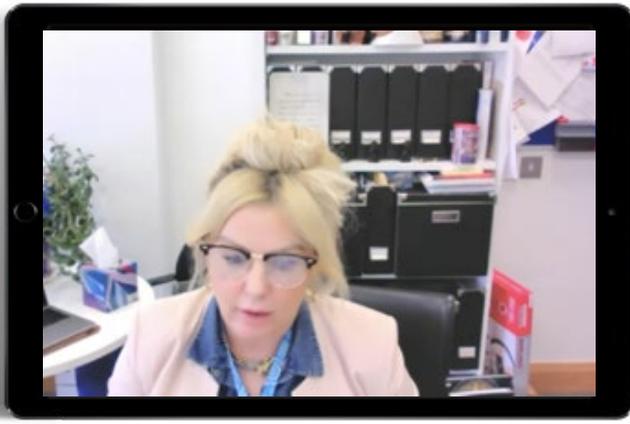
Of significant concern is the lack of services compared with the scale of alcohol problems in Ireland. For example, Health Research Board data indicates that nearly 15% of the population have an alcohol use disorder (AUD). This corresponds to approximately 578,000 people with 90,000 having a severe AUD problem. However, in 2021, only 3017 new cases were treated and the total number of cases receiving treatment was 6859. Throughout the year, AAI has brought attention to the need for widespread timely availability of appropriate, trauma-informed services.

#### Access to services

AAI worked with Dr Sharon Lambert, UCC School of Applied Psychology, on a project surveying professionals experiences in supporting individuals who require treatment for alcohol dependence. Interviews with professionals working in addiction were carried out. Issues highlighted included long waiting lists, a lack of structured treatment pathways and the lack of trauma informed services to properly assist people.

In June 2022 AAI convened a panel of experts to discuss the barriers to accessing treatment with contributions from those with lived experience and service providers including:

- Prof Jo-Hannah Ivers, Trinity College Dublin
- Anita Harris, Residential Service Manager, Coolmine Therapeutic Community
- Amy Roche and Andy Robertson Finglas Addiction Support Team
- Event chair, Paddy Creedon, Board member of Alcohol Action Ireland



Prof Jo-Hannah Ivers speaking at the Access to Alcohol Treatment event.

## Reducing Stigma

As highlighted in the June event, a major barrier to accessing treatment is the level of stigma attached to alcohol problems. To mark Recovery Month in September, AAI launched a language guide for media noting that stigmatising language such as ‘user’, ‘addict’ and ‘alcoholic’ are outdated and damaging and should no longer be used to describe people who have problems with alcohol and other substances. The guide aims to help media and the public use more compassionate language and to understand the impact certain words can have.

## Mental Health and Alcohol

AAI has attended a number of meetings with Mental Health Reform including a planning meeting in advance of a meeting with the HSE Chief Executive. AAI raised issues around children traumatised by alcohol issues in the home having timely access to therapeutic services. AAI has also welcomed the publication of the Sharing the Vision action plan and in particular the implementation of a new model of care and services for people with a dual diagnosis of mental health and problem substance use.

## Korsakoff’s Syndrome Working Group

Korsakoff’s Syndrome is a neurological condition which is a profound impairment in making new memories. It arises

from low levels of thiamine in the diet which is itself often a direct consequence of high levels of alcohol use. AAI’s CEO is a member of a working group with representatives from the Neurological Alliance of Ireland and Bloomfield Mental Health Services.

This group produced a discussion document at the end of 2021, to highlight the specific needs of patients and throughout 2022, AAI has been following up with the HSE to raise issues, in particular the lack of specific services for this group.

## Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery. A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025

Following a mid-term review of the government’s main strategy in relation to alcohol there was a proposal to establish a number of strategic implementation groups. AAI’s CEO was invited to join Group 6 whose aim is to ‘Strengthen evidence-informed and outcomes focussed practice, services, policies and strategy implementation.’ The Group is setting out a programme of work in this area to be carried out over the remainder of the term of the strategy.

## Alcohol Care Teams

Alcohol Care Teams are clinician-led, multidisciplinary teams with integrated alcohol treatment pathways across primary, secondary and community care. They have co-ordinated alcohol policies for emergency departments and acute medical units, a 7-day alcohol specific nurse service, addiction and liaison psychiatry services, an alcohol assertive outreach team and consultant hepatologists and gastroenterologists with liver disease expertise. Alcohol Care Teams facilitate collaborative, person-centred care. They reduce acute hospital admissions, readmission and mortality, improve the quality and efficiency of alcohol and have multiple evidence-bases, cost-effective and aspirational components

AAI’s CEO is a member of the Beaumont Hospital Alcohol Care Initiative, under the chairmanship of Dr John Ryan, consultant hepatologist, which is seeking to introduce Alcohol Care Teams into the hospital system in Ireland. The group met regularly bringing together strands of evidence of the impact of alcohol on multiple areas of hospital services.



## Goal 4:

# Establishment of a state sponsored Office to lead on alcohol policy

There are multiple areas where alcohol has harmful effects across Irish society – e.g. public safety, demand on hospital services, workplace productivity and the highly destructive but most hidden of all, the impact on family life. Addressing alcohol issues requires a co-ordinated ‘whole of government’ approach. The scale of the problem and the challenges presenting, is such that it needs a dedicated focus.



Dr Sheila Gilheany with An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin at the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, Oct 2022.

This is particularly important given the highly contested environment with the global alcohol industry actively agitating against the development and implementation of public health alcohol policy.

AAI seeks to establish a statutory office, which can take a strategic lead on co-ordinating all aspects of alcohol in Ireland viewed through a public health lens including licensing, marketing and controls, strategic development of treatment services, education/prevention programming, commissioning of relevant data, with capacity to monitor and evaluate public alcohol policy.

During the year AAI raised the issue of an Alcohol Office at a senior government level and highlighted the need for this in media contributions, reports and submissions. AAI developed a number of discussion papers for use in this area.

A promotional poster for a webinar. At the top, logos for the Irish Research Council, UCC School of Public Health, and AlcoholAction Ireland are displayed. The main title is 'HARNESSING OUR HEALTH DATA' in large, bold, white letters. Below the title is the tagline 'If we don't measure it, we can't manage it.' in a blue, italicized font. The poster lists three speakers: Dr Zubair Kabir (School of Public Health, University College Cork), Ms Anne Doyle (Health Research Board, Ireland), and Dr Lesley Graham and Elinor Jayne (Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP)). On the right side, it says 'SAVE THE DATE: Webinar: 12 -13.00, February 23.' The background features a person in a white lab coat holding a tablet, with a glowing brain and molecular structures overlaid.

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## Goal 5:

# Be the authority on alcohol advocacy and policy in Ireland

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AAI is an independent national advocate for reducing alcohol harm. We seek to reinforce our position not only as the source of trusted information, analysis, data, opinion and research but also as a leader in communication – dissemination, innovation and distribution.

An essential element of Alcohol Action Ireland’s work is to research the issues around alcohol, develop the policies to address the harms caused by alcohol to individuals, families and society and advocate for their implementation.

Throughout the year, AAI developed a series of themes and policy positions on alcohol harm and also contributed to a range of events and public consultations as indicated below as well as multiple conferences, webinars and meetings with policy makers.

We also acted to highlight areas of attempted alcohol industry influence on public health matters for example in the provision of alcohol education programmes in schools and raised this issue with health care organisations and research bodies.

AAI worked with a range of organisations to advance these issues. We are pleased to have such collaborative opportunities to bring our expertise to a range of issues and welcome the support of others for our objectives.

### Global Burden of Disease Study

In a significant piece of research, AAI worked with colleagues in the School of Public Health in UCC carried out an analysis of data from the Global Burden of Disease Study to investigate the impact of alcohol on health in Ireland. The project, led by Dr Zubair Kabir and funded by the Irish Research Council, found that previous measures of alcohol related deaths and



illnesses in Ireland are underestimates and that 5% of all deaths in Ireland in 2019 are attributable to alcohol.

Translating this data means that there are four deaths every day from alcohol in Ireland. In a related policy paper, the authors pointed to the need for the establishment of a state sponsored Alcohol Office.

### Pre-budget submission

This was prepared, submitted to the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform and circulated widely in September. Advice provided included:

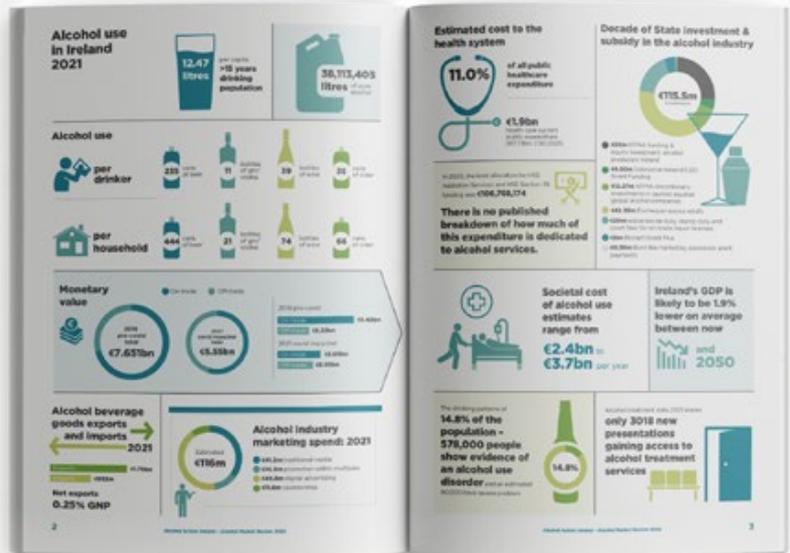
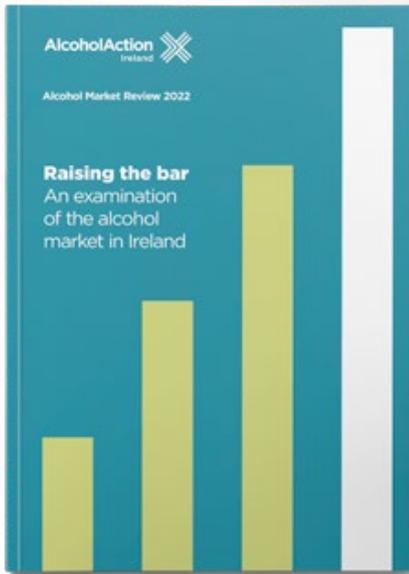
- Retention of existing excise duties on alcohol products and the introduction of a Consumer Price Index for these duties in recognition of the erosion by inflation of their value
- Extension of treatment intervention services
- Introduction of a social responsibility levy to adequately fund the cost to society from alcohol harm including resourcing a dedicated policy office on preventing such harm

The concept of ‘polluter pays’ has precedent in other parts of the economy and must be at the heart of any consideration of alcohol policy in Ireland yet decisions on such matters appear to be made without full consideration of the public health burden on alcohol.

Similar points were also made by AAI in its submission to the EU Commission’s consultation on the excise duty on alcohol.

### Commission on Taxation and Welfare

AAI made a detailed submission to this consultation. We were pleased to note that the final report of the Commission noted that ‘It is appropriate to use Excise Duties to discourage consumption of alcohol and tobacco and to support public health. The link between the public health rationale and design of these taxes should be strengthened.’



### Alcohol Market Review 2022

AAI issued a major report in September – Raising the bar. An examination of the alcohol market in Ireland. The Review highlighted the market revenues – €5.555bn in 2021, demonstrating who benefits and how, only a handful of companies are monopolising the Off-Trade receipts of €2.505bn.

Ireland’s alcohol industry – producers, merchants and retailers, spent an estimated €116m last year advertising alcohol products that cost our society: citizens and taxpayers alike, an estimated €1.9 billion alone in health-related alcohol costs – 11% of the overall health budget.

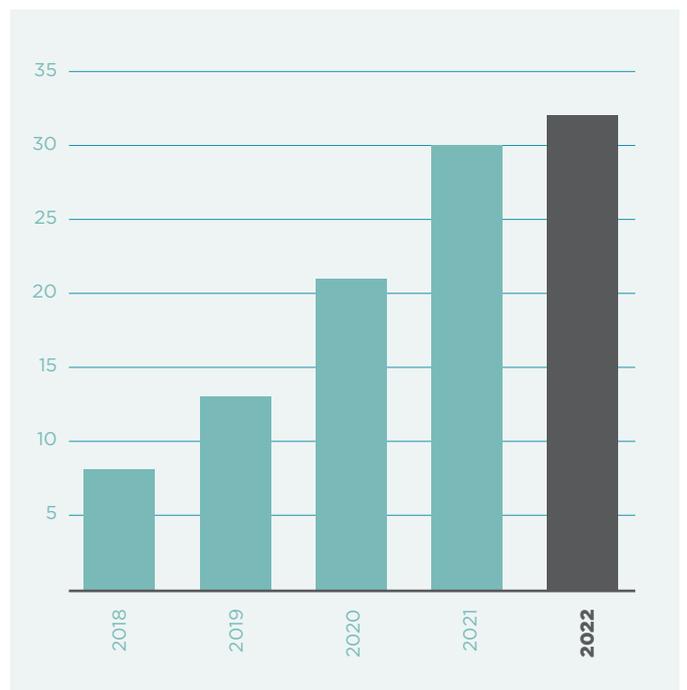
AAI forensically tracked the flow of State welfare, exposing an unhealthy relationship between the alcohol industry and the State, and its agencies, who through subsidy and preferential aid, contributed €115m in support over the last decade.

The Review demonstrates how an inflated and self-promoting reputation obscures the alcohol industry’s negative contribution to extraordinary levels of alcohol harm in Irish society and disallows strategic action to cohesively address Ireland’s biggest drug problem.

### Policy statements

Alcohol issues arise in a multitude of environments including the home, education, health care, online media, social affairs, justice system and the economy. AAI has made submissions and policy statements throughout the year on these issues, drawing on expertise from within the organisation and from our multiple partners, nationally and internationally. This policy research is essential to the mission of Alcohol Action Ireland and is the basis of all our advocacy work.

### Reports and submissions



## Reports and submissions in 2022

- Alcohol Action Ireland Annual Review 2021
- Alcohol Action Ireland Audited Accounts 2021
- Alcohol Market Review 2022
- Behavioural science mantra of ‘acting responsibly’
- Commission on Taxation and Welfare Public consultation: Your Vision, Our Future
- Consultation on the Framework to strengthen implementation of the Department of Justice Open Consultation on the Review of Alcohol Licensing AAI submission
- Department of Justice’s consultation webinar on Reform of Alcohol Licensing Law, AAI presentation
- EU Commission’s consultation on the Excise duty on alcohol and alcoholic beverages – evaluation of excise duty rates and tax structures.
- EU TRIS Notification Process on Ireland’s regulations on labelling of alcohol products, AAI submission
- FSANZ Alcohol Labelling Feedback on the application to amend the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code: Printing requirements for corrugated cardboard outer packaging
- Global Burden of Disease: Estimates of alcohol use and attributable burden in Ireland.
- Government Policy Framework for Children and Young People In Ireland Consultation
- Hidden Harm Policy Analysis
- Joint submission from Irish Heart Foundation, College of Psychiatrists of Ireland and Alcohol Action Ireland to members of Seanad Eireann re the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill re online marketing of junk food, gambling and alcohol

- Ireland Thinks poll on behalf of Alcohol Action Ireland re support for health information labelling of alcohol products
- Language and stigma
- Language Guide
- Mind the gap: Barriers to alcohol treatment services in Ireland
- Northern Ireland Department of Health Consultation on Minimum Unit Pricing of Alcohol
- Oireachtas Justice Committee Sale Of Alcohol Bill AAI submission
- Pre-budget Budget Submission 2023
- Professionals’ views of problem alcohol use in the home
- Reform of alcohol licensing laws must ensure equal purpose to the objective of public health alcohol policy
- Stakeholders’ Targeted Consultation on EU4Health priorities, strategic orientations and needs.
- The slow creep of ‘alibi marketing’
- The use of negative language dehumanises people with dependency problems
- Third national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence ignore alcohol harm
- Where’s the urgency? Public Health Alcohol Act Progress Review
- Why aren’t we willing to protect children from profiling and targeting by corporate forces
- Women are targeted by alcohol industry’s insidious marketing tactics
- World Health Organisation’s European Action Plan to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol

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## International – Networks and events

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### **AFINET – Addiction and the Family International Network**

AAI's CEO was invited to make a presentation about the Silent Voices initiative at AFINET's annual meeting.

### **Alcohol Health Alliance UK**

AAI is a member of the Alcohol Health Alliance UK. This is an alliance of more than 40 non-governmental organisations who work together to promote evidence-based policies to reduce the damage caused by alcohol misuse. AAI contributed to discussions between members and to their regular news bulletins on alcohol policy.

### **Alcohol Policy Futures**

AAI's CEO participated in a series of meetings organised by the Institute of Alcohol Studies, Movendi and FARE which are focussed on influencing the World Health Organisation (WHO) processes by co-ordinating input from civil society to the WHO. This is an international grouping termed, Alcohol Policy Futures.

AAI has contributed to communications from this group to the WHO. This was part of a wider mobilisation of civil society towards the World Health Assembly in May 2022 which then adopted a new global alcohol strategy.

### **Alcohol Research Network (ACORN)**

AAI is a member of this network of researchers in UK and Ireland and staff have contributed to a number of seminars organised by the network.

### **DEEP SEAS and FAR SEAS Thematic Capacity Workshops**

DEEP SEAS (Developing and Extending Evidence and Practice from the Standard European Alcohol Survey) is a tendered service contract awarded by the European Commission to a coordinated group of institutions lead by the CLÍNIC Foundation for Biomedical Research (FCRB, Barcelona).

AAI executive participated in a number of workshops around this area including,

Working Together to Prevent Harm due to Alcohol in the Workplace

Application of e-Health tools to reduce alcohol related harm

### **DIS Study Aboard Programme, Public Health**

This is a programme organised by the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. AAI has provided input on public health alcohol policy to the DIS Study Aboard Programme which included a week-long visit to Dublin for USA students in July.

### **European Alcohol Policy Alliance - Eurocare**

AAI is a member of Eurocare which is an alliance of non-governmental and public health organisations across Europe advocating for the prevention and reduction of alcohol-related harm.

AAI's CEO is a Board Member of the organisation and participated in all Board meetings throughout 2022 as well as taking part in the Eurocare conference in Oslo in June. A key element of the work plan of Eurocare is around advocating for health information labelling of alcohol products and AAI has worked closely with its European partners to advocate in this area.

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Through our membership of Eurocare, AAI's Head of Communications was appointed to the DG SANTE thematic group 'Prevention' of the Stakeholder Contact Group on the Europe Beating Cancer Plan. This group will provide input to the Commission on the implementation of the Plan.

AAI also contributed to the European Alcohol Awareness Week, 28 November-2 December which is co-ordinated by Eurocare, providing input to its information campaign.

#### **European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)**

AAI is a member of EPHA and throughout the year participated in meetings and contributed to policy development.

#### **EU Directive on Minimum Rates pricing and taxation of alcohol**

AAI's CEO was interviewed as part of an evaluation of the EU Directive on Minimum Rates pricing and taxation of alcohol which included a case study on Ireland.

#### **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Australia**

There was ongoing contact between FARE and AAI throughout 2022 particularly around the campaigns in both countries on labelling of alcohol products with health warnings.

#### **Scotland - Holyrood's Health and Care Festival 7 Sept 2022**

AAI's Head of Communications was invited to speak about Ireland's alcohol policy developments at an event at Holyrood, Edinburgh.

#### **Virtual Expert Network Group on Alcohol Marketing**

AAI's Head of Communications and Advocacy was a member of this group, organised by the Scottish body Alcohol Focus, to help provide evidence and recommendations for the Scottish Government. The Group published a significant report on alcohol marketing in 2022 which has informed the Scottish Government consultation on marketing.

#### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

Throughout the year AAI worked closely with the World Health Organization providing information on alcohol issues in Ireland.

AAI executive attended the WHO Alcohol and Taxation event on 23 Feb 2022 and the launch of new WHO report on alcohol digital marketing 10 May 2022

AAI were also invited to contribute to the regional consultation with civil society organisations on the draft implementations framework to reduce alcohol consumption in the WHO European Region, 2022-2025 on 15-16 March 2022 and to make a submission.

AAI also contributed to the consultation around the WHO consultation on the development of its new global alcohol policy which was agreed at the World Health Assembly in May 2022. In December, AAI was pleased to work closely with the WHO Europe Alcohol Programme who held a meeting in Dublin in partnership with the Department of Health to highlight ongoing work around health information labelling of alcohol products. AAI's CEO also contributed to a WHO meeting in Copenhagen on the launch of its Evidence into Action Alcohol Programme.

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## National – Networks and stakeholders

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### **Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland**

The Alliance was established in 2015 by Alcohol Action Ireland and the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) and brought together over 50 NGOs, charities and public health advocates. Chaired by Prof Frank Murray, a liver specialist at Beaumont Hospital, Chair of Board of AAI and former RCPI President, it provided a strong voice throughout the campaign to enact the PHAA and now, under the guidance of AAI, works to ensure its implementation.

### **Beaumont Hospital Alcohol Care Initiative**

AAI is a member of the Beaumont Hospital Alcohol Care Initiative which was set up to audit the burden of alcohol on the Hospital and to secure support for the development of an Alcohol Care Team (ACT). AAI attended meetings throughout the year and provided input to the initiative's strategic goals.

### **Children's Rights Alliance**

AAI is a member of the Children's Rights Alliance (CRA). Throughout the year AAI worked with the CRA to raise issues around alcohol and children, particularly in the context of children living in homes impacted by alcohol harm and the significant increase in home drinking during the pandemic. AAI also worked closely with CRA around the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill.

### **Galway City Alcohol Forum**

AAI worked closely with this group developing ideas on strategic communications to enhance community engagement including an event on underage drinking in May 2022 and another on alcohol and older people in Sept 2022.

### **HSE Alcohol Programme**

AAI received welcome funding from the HSE Alcohol & Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme and from the National Social Inclusion Office.

AAI has provided expert policy and communications advice to the HSE Alcohol Programme and 'Ask About Alcohol' website on a range of alcohol and mental health issues. Throughout the year we have contributed to, and reviewed, multiple reports, research and media campaigns sharing our expert knowledge, skills and an international network of policy advice with the Programme. In 2022 AAI was invited to join the HSE Alcohol Programme Implementation Group.

### **HSE Mental Health Engagement and Recovery**

AAI has contributed to the HSE Mental Health Engagement and Recovery initiative as members of its Family Recovery Advisory Group and NGO Advisory Group

This initiative is aimed at developing more recovery-orientated mental health services.

### **Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH): North South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group**

AAI is a constituted member of this All-Island forum and its team members attended its meetings in May and November 2022.

### **Irish Cancer Society's Cancer Prevention Committee**

AAI sits on this Advisory Committee of the Society which provides advice and oversight on services, policy and research for improving cancer prevention and early detection in Ireland.

### **Local and Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Forces**

Throughout the year, AAI has provided expert alcohol policy advice and support to a number of the Local and Regional Task Forces throughout Ireland.

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### **Maynooth University**

AAI, through its Silent Voices initiative, has worked closely with colleagues in the School of Education in developing a website of resources for trauma informed education.

### **Men's Health Forum Planning Group – Men's Health Week 2022**

AAI sits on the Men's Health Forum planning group that organises this annual All-Island awareness event. Men's Health Week ran from 13-17 June. One day of the week was dedicated to alcohol issues and AAI led a social media campaign exploring the impact of alcohol on men's health and well-being.

### **Mental Health Ireland**

In 2022, AAI received funding from the Department of Health which was administered by Mental Health Ireland. This grant supported our work on mental health issues around parental problem alcohol use.

### **Mental Health Reform**

AAI is a member of Mental Health Reform, a coalition of organisations working to drive reform of mental health services. AAI has contributed to activities and statements particularly around the need for trauma informed services and action on the issue of dual diagnosis to ensure that those who have both a mental health concern and an alcohol problem receive appropriate care. In 2022, AAI's CEO was appointed to the Board of Mental Health Reform.

### **Mouth, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Ireland**

AAI worked with this group and highlighted the role of alcohol in these cancers through a social media campaign in September 2022.

### **NUI Galway, MA/PGDip in Health Promotion; practice module, Nov 2022**

AAI's Head of Communications and Advocacy contributed an afternoon session to this course on advocacy.

### **Prevention and Early Intervention Network**

AAI joined this network of organisations which carries out research and advocate for policy solutions around early childhood interventions. This is in support of the Silent Voices initiative and the AAI goal of a childhood free from alcohol harm. AAI's Policy and Research Officer was appointed to the executive committee and acts as chair of their communications sub-committee. AAI is supporting PEIN towards a national 2-day conference bringing national and international expertise together to explore the issues of child and family adversities and prevention and early intervention

### **Public Health Alcohol Research Group**

AAI's CEO is a member of this group which considers issues around research and data on alcohol as it relates to the Public Health Alcohol Act.

### **University College Cork**

AAI partnered with the School of Public Health at University College Cork on two projects funded by the Irish Research Council. The first of these examined the epidemiology of alcohol-related illness in Ireland using data from the Global Burden of Disease Study. The results of the research were highlighted in a policy paper was published and launched in March 2022.

The second project examined compliance with the Public Health (Alcohol) Act regulations on structural separation of alcohol products in mixed retail environments. The findings from this research were highlighted in a webinar in December 2022 and in a major review of the Act published by AAI.

# Communications

An essential element of AAI's work is to bring our messages to a wide variety of audiences from the general public to policy makers and to our stakeholders. During 2022 we developed our new communications strategy which includes an emphasis on the production of podcasts, short videos and graphics for use on social media alongside our detailed reports on alcohol issues and press releases on multiple alcohol issues.

AAI has a podcast series 'The Alcohol File', 30-minute episodes which gives the listener a comprehensive, independent analysis, both national and international, of the many complex issues related to alcohol use. In 2022 the series was extended to include episodes on:

- Growing Up with Parental Problem Alcohol Use
- Reform of alcohol licensing laws: a problem needing a solution or an opportunity to create different drinking occasions and further normalise alcohol use?
- The lure of alcohol marketing: is it nurturing a lifetime alcohol use?
- Harnessing our health data. If we don't measure it, we can't manage it.



## Media Releases

Throughout the year AAI issued 19 media releases on a variety of topics including the Sale of Alcohol Bill, broadcast watershed for alcohol advertising, health warning labelling of alcohol products, treatment services, domestic violence and alcohol and the issues of children growing up in homes impacted by alcohol harm and the need for trauma informed systems across public services.

## Traditional Media Presence

AAI has a strong media presence. As well as issuing press releases, we are regularly approached to provide information and comment on alcohol issues.

*In 2022 we had:*

### Broadcast

**261**

contributions to local and national radio and television programmes;

### Press

**71**

contributions, quotes and/or commentary to both local and national press titles.

### Online

**149**

contributions

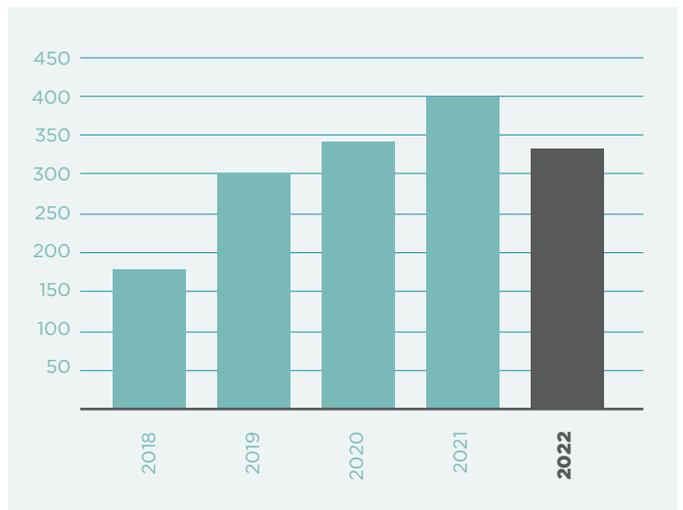
The earned media value of all press and online features was

**€1.7 million**

and estimated audience reach of

**36.2 million**

## Traditional media items-broadcast and press



### AAI Newsletter

Regular newsletters were sent to our stakeholders throughout the year. Signups for updates grew by 30% in 2022.

### AAI Website Data

The Alcohol Action Ireland website continues to be a trusted source of independent analysis and information for a variety of stakeholders both from a media and public policy research perspective. Throughout the year the site was updated frequently and blog posts on topical areas developed.

### Social Media Profile

Social media is an important element in our communications, particularly for political advocacy.

#### Total Twitter activity overview

**587,662**

impressions

**5,600**

Total followers

**24,482**

engagements

**682**

Follower gain in 2022

**3,425**

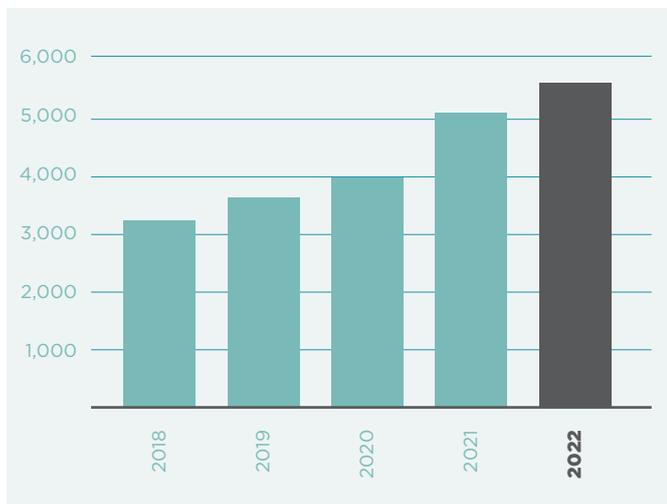
link clicks

**911**

Tweets issued

AAI also maintain Facebook, Instagram and Tik-Tok social media platforms.

#### Twitter followers



## Governance

### Charities Governance Code

The Board of AAI draws expertise from across the fields of health, education, youth, finance and legal. It met regularly throughout 2022 providing oversight and specialist input to the work of AAI. Full details of its activities are outlined in AAI's Audited Accounts.

AAI is fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code.

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## The way ahead

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**2022 was the third year of implementing our five-year plan and much has been achieved across its five goals. During the year the AAI Board carried out a mid-term review of the plan and noted particular threats to alcohol policy from the upcoming Sale of Alcohol Bill which has proposed significant changes to alcohol licensing regulations. In 2023 we will have a particular focus on advocating for a public health focus in the Bill as well as continuing the schedule of work in our plan.**

We will maintain a strong focus on the imperative for the full implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol Act), 2018. Ireland is being closely watched in relation to its ground-breaking regulations on health information labelling. However, this progress must be maintained against a backdrop of ferocious opposition from vested interests, and this will require determined advocacy both in Ireland and globally.

There are also threats to the intent of the Act by the slow progress in relation to advertising restrictions implementation and the marketing of zero-alcohol products using shared branding with alcohol products. We will continue to press for legislation to address this.

With our Silent Voices initiative, we will build on our End the Silence Week, working with a range of partners to highlight the issues for both children and adult children. We will have a particular focus on the development of training for professionals working with those impacted by alcohol harm in the home and the need for early intervention approaches.

There are major gaps in services for all impacted by alcohol harm, in particular the thousands of children and adults living with FASD. There is also a need to ensure that the lived experience of children in relation to alcohol is included in policy development and we will seek opportunities to develop research work in this area. We will also work on issues around access to alcohol services and seek to include the voice of those in recovery in our work.

We will continue to advocate for a revision of the current low-risk drinking guidelines. We will seek political support for these and other issues round alcohol harm. All of this work will also inform and highlight the need for a statutory Alcohol Office. This will be a key area to develop in the run up to the next General Election.

We will develop our information base through a series of webinars which will explore alcohol issues and continue with our podcast series bringing national and international expertise to alcohol policy development in Ireland.

Our work is specialised and needs financial support. We are very appreciative of the funding received in 2022 from the HSE, Hospital Saturday Fund, Irish Research Council, JP McManus Foundation, Mental Health Grant Scheme for Community and Voluntary Groups and individual donors. In 2023, we will work with our funders to secure support. We also aim to seek funding for research work as well as increasing the level of donations through philanthropy.

We look forward to a year bringing our vision of a society free from alcohol harm a step closer.

# Statement of Financial Activities at 31 December 2022

	DRAFT			AUDITED		
	Unrestricted 2022 €	Restricted 2022 €	TOTAL 2022 €	Unrestricted 2021 €	Restricted 2021 €	TOTAL 2021 €
Income from Charitable Activities	<b>240,140</b>	<b>20,446</b>	<b>260,586</b>	285,140	7,033	292,173
GRANTS						
Donations & Legacies						
DONATIONS	<b>13,476</b>	-	<b>13,476</b>	4,863	-	4,863
Other Income	<b>6,291</b>	-	<b>6,291</b>	1,397	-	1,397
Total Income	<b>259,907</b>	<b>20,446</b>	<b>280,353</b>	291,400	7,033	298,433
Expenditure						
On charitable activities	<b>(267,260)</b>	<b>(22,150)</b>	<b>(289,409)</b>	(285,585)	(3,811)	(289,396)
NET (Expenditure)/Income	<b>(7,353)</b>	<b>(1,704)</b>	<b>(9,057)</b>	5,815	3,222	9,037
Fund balances at beginning of year	<b>151,752</b>	<b>22,192</b>	<b>173,944</b>	145,937	18,970	164,907
Transfer of Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund balances at end of year	<b>144,399</b>	<b>20,488</b>	<b>164,887</b>	151,752	22,192	173,944

The 2022 figures are unaudited. The full audited 2022 accounts will be available at a later date on the AAI website.

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## Other information

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Company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

Company No: 378738. CHY: 15342.

Registered Charity Number: 20052713.

### Alcohol Action Ireland

Registered Office:

Coleraine House  
Coleraine Street  
Dublin 7, D07 E8XF

T: +353 1 878 0610.

E: [admin@alcoholactionireland.ie](mailto:admin@alcoholactionireland.ie)

U: [alcoholireland.ie](http://alcoholireland.ie)

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### Alcohol Action Ireland Team in 2022

<b>Dr Sheila Gilheany</b>	CEO
<b>Eunan McKinney</b> (resigned Oct 2022)	Head of Communications and Advocacy
<b>Jennifer Hough</b>	Policy and Research Lead
<b>Hannah-Alice Loughlin</b> (appointed Oct 2022)	Communications and Advocacy Lead

### Board members of Alcohol Action Ireland

<b>Prof Frank Murray</b> (Current Chair)	Consultant in Hepatology & Gastroenterology. M.B., B.Ch. B.A.O., M.D., F.R.C.P.I., F.R.C.P. (Ed)
<b>Prof Joe Barry</b>	MSc, MD, FRCPI, FFPHM, Public Health Specialist (resigned Sept 2022)
<b>Catherine Brogan</b>	Deputy CEO, Mental Health Ireland
<b>Pat Cahill</b> (Company Secretary)	Former President Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland
<b>Paddy Creedon</b>	Recovery Advocate
<b>James Doorley</b>	Deputy Director, National Youth Council of Ireland (resigned March 2022)
<b>Michael Foy</b>	Head of Finance, Commission for Communications Regulation
<b>Prof Jo-Hanna Ivers</b>	Professor of Addiction, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin
<b>Marie-Claire McAleer</b>	Senior Manager, Policy and Research, Merchants Quay Ireland
<b>Dr Colin O'Driscoll</b>	Clinical Lead, HSE Mid-West Addiction Services
<b>Dr Mary O'Mahony</b>	Specialist in Public Health Medicine and Medical Officer of Health, HSE South
<b>Dr Bobby Smyth</b>	Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist
<b>Tadhg Young</b>	Financial Services Executive

### Silent Voices Advisory Group Members

Carol Fawsitt

Marion Rackard

Barbara Whelan





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