



Annual Review 2020

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

Our vision

is a society free from alcohol harm.

Our mission

is to advocate to reduce alcohol harm.

Our values

We are committed to the following values:



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.

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.

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 Board of Eurocare — European Alcohol Policy Alliance, Brussels.



Foreword from the Chair

2020 has been a year like no other in the lifetime of Alcohol Action Ireland. The Covid-19 pandemic has dominated every aspect of the work of the organisation including the executive working completely remotely since March and all events moving online. However, despite this AAI has continued to meet and exceed all its targets for the year.

Unfortunately, the public health landscape continues to be highly impacted by alcohol harm and the pandemic has only magnified this. Despite pubs, restaurants and most hospitality outlets being closed for much of 2020, alcohol use has only fallen by just over 6%. Home drinking has increased to unprecedented levels with supermarket sales showing increases of over 50% compared to 2019. Of particular concern is the impact of this uncontrolled home drinking on the 200,000 plus children who live with the trauma of parental problem alcohol use and who have been cut off from other supports such as school, clubs, friends and family during the pandemic. AAI continuously raised this issue and worked extensively with other organisations to highlight the adverse impact on children.

Never has it been more important to have adequate controls on alcohol as provided for in the Public Health (Alcohol) Act. While we welcomed the introduction of Section 22 of the Act – alcohol product separation in mixed retail shops in November 2020, much remains to be done in relation to the implementation of some of the most important measures of the Act including minimum unit pricing, health warning labelling of alcohol products, the content of alcohol advertisements, broadcast watershed and notifications of grant or renewal of licence to the HSE. AAI continues to advocate strongly for these proven measures to be introduced.

A key element of the work of AAI is to develop the policy solutions for an Irish context. Significant work was done during the year on position papers and submissions to public consultations across multiple areas of public policy. We have established strong working relations with partners nationally and internationally which helped to inform this work. A particular highlight of the year was the Global Alcohol Policy Conference which was held in Dublin in March 2020. AAI was very pleased to assist both with the local organisation and as contributors to the event. It provided an outstanding opportunity to share our experiences and learn from other policy development and advocates across the world. Such collaboration is essential given the highly contested global space in which we work and highlighted the need for a strong ‘whole of government’ approach.

Throughout the year, AAI also worked to ensure it was fully compliant with the new Charities Governance Code and we were very pleased to have been shortlisted for a Good Governance Award for innovation in this area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the AAI executive. Despite having only three staff members in 2020 they have made a significant impact and continue to keep the AAI message of the need to address alcohol harm high on the public consciousness. I would also like to particularly thank my fellow Board members who have brought considerable expertise to all aspects of the work of AAI.

We very much appreciate the financial support of our funders – HSE, Mental Health Ireland and the many generous individuals who have made donations.

I would also like to thank the multiple individuals and organisations in the Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland who continue to campaign for the full implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act and the many members of the public who raise their voices, share their stories and join with us so that together we can move towards an Ireland and especially a childhood free from alcohol harm.

Carol Fawsitt
Chair, Alcohol Action Ireland

In late 2019, Alcohol Action Ireland published its five-year strategic plan *Leading Change, A Society Free From Alcohol Harm, 2020–2024*. Throughout 2020 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 implementation of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act will help to protect children from alcohol harm.

Notwithstanding the huge impact of Covid-19, progress has been made across all areas of the plan as outlined below.

Goal 1

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

It is now well beyond two years since the passage of the ground-breaking Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018, the first time that Ireland adopted a public health led approach to reducing alcohol harm.

AAI worked for many years advocating for the enactment of such legislative measures, which reflect the World Health Organisation's policy approach to reducing alcohol harm. However, key areas of the Act have yet to be implemented and AAI has kept up a sustained campaign, calling for a clear time-line on their introduction including Minimum Unit Pricing, (MUP) labelling of alcohol products with health information and the content of alcohol advertising. This was backed up with a social media campaign which encouraged members of the public to contact their elected representatives about the need for the introduction of MUP. We have been supported in this work by over 60 individuals and organisations who are members of the Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland.

Alcohol Manifesto

With a General Election in February 2020, AAI prepared its Alcohol Manifesto and worked successfully to ensure that the main political parties included commitments to addressing alcohol harm. This work was realised in the eventual 'Programme for Government' which contained a firm commitment by the parties to the implementation of the 2018 legislation. Activities included meetings with politicians, policy makers and organisations with a shared interest in this area.

AAI Annual Price Survey and Market Review

This survey was carried out in late July 2020 and provided evidence of the widespread availability of exceptionally low-priced alcohol and support our view for the need for MUP.

Pre-budget submission

This was prepared, submitted to the Department of Finance and circulated widely in September which advised the Minister on the affordability of alcohol, the ending of state aid to the alcohol industry and the introduction of a social responsibility levy to support the public funding of treatment and prevention programmes.

Labelling of Alcohol Products

The PHAA legislates for the introduction of labelling of alcohol products with information provided on alcohol content, calories, ingredients and health warnings informing the public. The secondary legislation around these labelling regulations has not yet been published and AAI has consistently highlight the public’s right to know this vital information.

AAI worked closely with national and international bodies to highlight the well-established link between alcohol and cancer, giving presentations at an Irish Cancer Prevention Network webinar, a Eurocare event



and a WHO Europe event, all highlighting the need for health literacy in this area.

We were also pleased to actively support the long running and ultimately successful campaign in Australia and New Zealand to have pregnancy warnings added to alcohol products in 2020. Given Ireland is one of the top five countries in the world for alcohol use during pregnancy and the very sad statistic that this country has the third highest prevalence of the entirely preventable Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in the world, it is clear that Ireland’s ground-breaking legislation needs to be implemented urgently.

Product Separation

The very welcome PHAA measures around alcohol product separation in mixed retail shops came into force on 12 November 2020. AAI marked the occasion with a webinar, ‘No Ordinary Product’. Key note speaker, Prof Niamh Shortt, University of Edinburgh, panellists, Kathryn Reilly, Irish Heart Foundation and Olivia Freeman, Communications and Consumer Behaviour, Technological University highlighted issues around alcohol marketing.

AAI also launched a public awareness campaign on the specifics of adequate implementation and to assist citizen action on reporting breaches.

ALCOHOL ACTION IRELAND
PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION
BUDGET 2021

RETAIN EXCISE DUTIES
NO STIMULUS TO FUEL ALCOHOLIC DEMAND
Excise rates on alcohol have remained unchanged since 2013 and in the period since 2000, there have only been three alterations to the rates.

COST-OF-LIVING INDEX
EXCISE RATES MUST KEEP PACE WITH INFLATION
Since the introduction of the euro (2002), the price of an 80cl 5% beer has increased by €1.24 to reach the Consumer Price Index inflation figure for the same period starting at 25.48 (2002).

COMMENCEMENT OF MINIMUM UNIT PRICING
REMOVAL OF OPPOSITION
Government can no longer rely on a political-economic rationale to delay the introduction of a proven public health measure.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY LEVY
OFF-TRADE SALES AND LICENCE RENEWAL
A modest levy on the off-trade sales (2019 value: €3.78 billion) applied as a Social Responsibility Levy could yield annually: 14.2% (€54m).

ESTABLISH ANNUALISED PUBLIC FUNDING
Annualised fund of approximately €30m would fund expansion of alcohol prevention initiatives and adequate recovery and treatment programmes, particularly for those impacted by perinatal alcohol misuse.

Alcohol-related inpatient care currently costs the public health system €30.8m every week in Ireland – the equivalent of 345,000 COVID tests. €1.9bn annually at 1% of all public healthcare expenditure.

AlcoholAction Ireland



Goal 2

A childhood free from alcohol harm

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 on the streets 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. AAI is a member of the Children's Rights Alliance (CRA) and many of these issues are being raised in the CRA submission to Ireland's Fifth Periodic Review under the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

The ongoing high 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. This aspect of alcohol harm remains hidden yet the children affected are compromised from a neurobiological perspective, resulting in problems carried with them throughout their lives. One example of this is that such children are over-represented in the care and justice systems. Throughout 2020, AAI highlighted these issues in a number of public consultation submissions

Silent Voices

AAI launched its Silent Voices initiative to raise awareness and understanding of the specific issues for the 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. The documented evidence of an increase in home drinking and domestic abuse in 2020 gave rise to significant concerns for the safety and well-being of children across Ireland. AAI continuously raised this pattern in the media. AAI worked with a range of other children's organisations to highlight this specific element of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Throughout the year AAI developed policy positions across areas such as education, social care and therapeutic support, advocating strongly for their implementation. This work was informed by the many testimonies submitted to the Shared Voices platform on the website with contributors giving accounts of their personal experiences growing up with this trauma.

In a collaboration with researchers from the Department of Applied Psychology, University College Cork, these stories were analysed. The resulting paper highlights themes such as toxic stress and lifelong impact across the developmental stages and concludes that given the breadth of the impact that is experienced by Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOAs), a timely and appropriate response is warranted. A number of recommendations have been advanced.



In a further extension of this work a detailed education paper was produced with the Silent Voices academic adviser, Dr Sharon Lambert, UCC, giving recommendations about the type of supports which would be useful in schools. Early intervention is a key factor and for this reason AAI has strongly advocated for the introduction of 'Operation Encompass': an early information sharing partnership between police and education currently working successfully in the UK, enabling schools and teachers to offer immediate intervention and support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.

Contact was made by the Chair, one of the founders of Silent Voices, with the UK initiators of the Operation Encompass programme in February 2020 with a

view to implementing this programme in schools in Ireland. Thereafter meetings were held with key members of a range of government departments and agencies including the Departments of Health, Children, Education, Justice and with Tusla to implement Operation Encompass in Ireland. This work is ongoing.

Barbara Whelan, one of the founders of Silent Voices also contributed to the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) Inservice Teacher Training module on Adverse Childhood Experiences.

AAI was very pleased to work with Addiction Counsellors of Ireland and the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy to provide an online training event in November around addiction and family related harms which was attended by over 800 therapists. This event included presentations by Marion Rackard, co-founder of Silent Voices and Austin Prior, clinical advisor to the initiative.

Throughout the year the issues were raised on Silent Voices dedicated social media platforms using creative techniques such as the animation of two Shared Voices stories, and specific campaigns such as *#One-Kind-Word* to encourage reaching out to children impacted by alcohol in the home during the pandemic.

The Silent Voices initiative has been very encouraged by support from organisations such as Children’s Rights Alliance, ISPCC, INTO, The Office of the Ombudsman for Children, Spunout and individuals such as author, Christine Dwyer Hickey and others, whose work has been used to illustrate many of the issues.



Youth Drinking

The early introduction of children to alcohol was highlighted by AAI using the findings from a range of studies such as Growing up in Ireland, My World Surveys and the Health Behaviour of School Aged Children 2018. While there have been some modest improvements in recent years, Ireland still has a significant problem with around 60,000 children starting to drink every year, 40% of 15 year olds using alcohol and so by early adulthood 93% are regular drinkers. A significant factor in this is the level of marketing capturing young people and in particular the use of techniques which harness youth interests such as sports, music and other cultural events. A related area of concern is the growth in unregulated online marketing to children. AAI highlighted many pernicious aspects of this during the year both in media releases and policy statements.

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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 and proportionate services for all affected by alcohol harm.

Mental health and alcohol

Alcohol has a significant impact on mental health and in recognition of this, AAI works closely with Mental Health Ireland. Throughout 2020, both organisations have worked together to highlight many aspects around alcohol and mental health as well as a series of messages and statements on mental health/well-being and alcohol in connection with the pandemic.

Another key piece of work was the co-production of a module for the workplace on alcohol and mental health which is due to come onstream in 2021.

AAI also contributed significantly to the work of the HSE Family Recovery Advisory Group and their virtual conference in May 2020, producing a short video around the concept of trauma and the importance of those working in mental health services and indeed all public services understanding this concept.

As a member of Mental Health Reform, AAI also contributed to member discussions around mental health and Covid-19 plus feedback on the Department of Health new mental health policy – Sharing the Vision.

Residential Alcohol Treatment Service Survey

In 2020 AAI began a course of work to look at issues around alcohol treatment services in Ireland. It is well documented that there is a high level of alcohol use in Ireland and a significant level of harmful and dependent drinking. Almost half of all drinkers do so in a hazardous and harmful way and there are an estimated 250,000 people with alcohol dependency problems. With such numbers it is important to consider the provision of alcohol treatment services particularly in the light of a changing landscape around treatment and the increased understanding of the nature of childhood trauma and its lifelong impact.

The first element of this programme of work was to conduct a snapshot survey of residential and community treatment services in Ireland. The survey asked questions around numbers treated, demographics, type of treatment, referral pathways, facilities such as detox, linkages with state agencies, follow on care, family support and perceived challenges.



Join Our Upcoming Webinar

Korsakoff's Syndrome in Ireland: Challenges and Opportunities for a Forgotten Population

Friday 6th November 2020: 11am to 12.30pm

Keynote Speaker: Professor Roy Kessels, Scientific Advisor, Centre of Excellence for Korsakoff and Alcohol-Related Disorders at Vincent Van Gogh Institute of Psychiatry, Netherlands.

Chaired by: Prof Cliona Ni Cheallaigh, Clinical Lead, Inclusion Health Service SJH and Assoc Prof, Dept of Clinical Medicine, TCD

Contact info.ks.conference@gmail.com for more details and to register for the webinar

Residential services are just one element of the continuum of alcohol treatment services which ranges from the provision of information and brief interventions, outpatient treatment provision in the community and detoxification services to residential facilities. The report from this survey will be published in 2021 and we intend to continue this work through the coming years examining other aspects of treatment services.

Korsakoff Syndrome

Korsakoff Syndrome is a chronic memory disorder caused by a severe deficit of thiamine (Vitamin B1). It is most commonly associated with a history of chronic alcohol use. It remains a largely hidden problem with many impacted placed in inappropriate health care settings.

AAI worked closely with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland and Bloomfield Health Services to hold the first dedicated seminar on Korsakoff Syndrome in Ireland in November 2020. The event brought together international expertise together with Irish clinicians and service providers and concluded that services for this condition in Ireland are largely underdeveloped. The three organisations are following up this event with further work to develop insight into current service provision/gaps and to make recommendations for meeting the needs of these patients in an Irish context.

Alcohol Care Teams

Alcohol Care Teams are clinician-led, multidisciplinary teams with integrated alcohol treatment pathways across primary, secondary and community care. With 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 they 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. Despite the pandemic, the group met regularly bringing together strands of evidence of the impact of alcohol on multiple areas of hospital services, culminating in a public webinar in November which highlighted the issues. Dr Ryan was also a guest in an episode of AAI's podcast series: The Alcohol Files - *What is alcohol doing for our health?*

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 — eg public safety, demand on hospital services, workplace productivity and the highly destructive but most hidden of all, impacts on family life. Addressing alcohol issues requires a co-ordinated 'whole of government' approach. The scale of the problem is such that it needs a dedicated focus. This is particularly important given the highly contested environment with a global alcohol industry actively working against the implementation of public health policy.

Hence the need 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 promotion, strategic development of treatment services, education/prevention programming, commissioning of relevant data, plus monitoring and evaluation of public alcohol policy.

During the year, AAI has researched possible models for such an Office and raised the issue at a senior government level.

Goal 5

Be the authority on alcohol advocacy and policy in Ireland

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, opinion, research and data but also the 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 numerous conferences, webinars and meetings with policy makers.

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.



International Networks and Events

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 have contributed to communications from this group to the WHO including their report on cross-border alcohol marketing emphasising the need for the Organisation's report to consider all aspects of marketing including price, promotion, placement and product. This is part of a wider mobilisation of civil society towards the World Health Assembly in May 2022 which will consider adopting a new global alcohol strategy.

Alcohol Policy Network (APN)

APN is a European platform for sharing knowledge, experiences and opinions on public health oriented alcohol policy issues.

DEEP SEAS and FAR SEAS Thematic Capacity Workshop, Regulating Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship in Tradition and Digital Media – Neuroscience Institute, Barcelona 14 Dec 2020

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's Head of Communications and Advocacy (Nov 2020) gave a presentation on labelling issues to this group and AAI executive attended multiple workshops around this area.

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 2020 as well as taking part in the Eurocare General Assembly on 8 June and making a presentation at the Eurocare event on 22 Sept 2020, Alcohol and Cancer, drawing attention to Ireland's legislation around alcohol control and the link to cancer prevention.

This theme of alcohol and cancer was carried through to the **8th European Alcohol Awareness Week** in November. The aim of the Week is to raise awareness among EU policymakers of the issues around alcohol harm. AAI took a leading role in a social media campaign highlighting messages on the value of accurate labelling of alcohol products with health warnings and producing a video featuring Dr Sinead Brennan, Consultant Radiation Oncologist, discussing the link between alcohol and cancer.

European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

AAI is a member of EPHA and throughout the year participated in meetings. AAI sit on its Health Marketing Policy group and contributed to a joint statement from EPHA – Prevention in Europe's beating cancer plan.

AAI also responded to the EPHA consultation on the World Health Organisation, European Region's proposed Work Programme 2020-2025.

European Covid-19 survey

AAI was a partner organisation for a Europe-wide survey on alcohol use during Covid-19. The principal investigator of the survey is Dr Jürgen Rehm and it is co-ordinated through the Institute of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy at Technische Universität Dresden. The survey has been widely disseminated through partner organisations with 540 participating from Ireland.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Australia

There was ongoing contact between FARE and AAI throughout 2020 particularly around the campaigns in both countries on labelling of alcohol products with health warnings.

Global Alcohol Policy Conference (GAPC) 9-11 March 2020

A highlight of the year was the Global Alcohol Policy Conference which was hosted by the Department of Health in Dublin in March 2020. The Global Alcohol Policy Alliance is a network of not-for-profit organisations and people working in public health agencies who share information on alcohol issues and advocate evidence-based alcohol policies, free from commercial interests. This major international conference brought together 340 participants including alcohol policy makers, advocates, researchers, civil society activists and practitioners from 47 countries.

AAI Chair, Carol Fawsitt speaking at the opening of the Global Alcohol Policy Conference in Dublin, March 2020



There was considerable AAI input to GAPC as a member of the National Organising Committee, providing input on exhibitors, sponsors, scholarship, communications and promotion of the event. AAI's Chair, spoke at the opening event, drawing attention to the need to put children at the centre of all public health policies devised to counter the harm caused by alcohol. AAI's Head of Communications and Advocacy acted as joint co-ordinator and rapporteur in two sessions of the conference, chaired a session on Labelling Awareness, gave an oral presentation: *Industry's capture of political leadership: how can advocacy for alcohol control breakthrough?*, provided support to follow up online discussions and AAI's CEO chaired a session on Alcohol Policy Effectiveness.

Virtual Expert Network Group on Alcohol Marketing

AAI's Head of Communications and Advocacy has been invited to join this group, organised by the Scottish body Alcohol Focus, to help provide evidence and recommendations for the Scottish Government.

World Health Organization (WHO)

Throughout the year AAI worked closely with the World Health Organization providing information on alcohol issues in Ireland. A key piece of work was the development of AAI's submission to the WHO's consultation on the development of their global alcohol strategy.

AAI's Head of Advocacy and Communications presented at the launch of the WHO report on alcohol labelling, — *What's in the Bottle*, and AAI executive attended the launches of the WHO Europe reports on alcohol pricing and alcohol marketing.

AAI provided information to personnel in the Dept of Health in Ireland prior to the WHO meeting at which the Statement from the WHO regarding a draft decision to replace the strategy to reduce harmful drinking from 2010 was agreed.

National Networks and Stakeholders

Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland

As part of the campaign for the full implementation of the PHAA, AAI renewed the Alcohol Health Alliance Ireland. The Alliance had been 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, Board member of AAI and former RCPI President, it provided a strong voice throughout the campaign to enact the PHAA and will now, under the guidance of AAI, work 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 with the CRA to prepare a submission to Ireland's Fifth Periodic Review under the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and worked to have points around an alcohol-free childhood included in the submission.

HSE Alcohol Programme

AAI's 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.

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.

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.

Men's Health Forum Planning Group — Men's Health Week 2020

AAI sits on the Men's Health Forum planning group that organises this annual All-Island awareness event. Men's Health Week ran from 15 to 21 June. One day of the week was dedicated to alcohol issues and AAI led a social media campaign 'Restoring the Balance.' exploring the impact of alcohol on men's health and well-being.

Mental Health Ireland

AAI formed a partnership with Mental Health Ireland to support the appointment of our policy research officer in 2019. Throughout 2020, both organisations have collaborated on a number of projects.

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.

North South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group

AAI is a constituted member of this All-Island forum and its team members attended its meeting in September 2020.

Prevention and Early Intervention Network

AAI joined this network of organisations which carry out research and advocate for policy salutation around early childhood interventions. This is in support of the Silent Voices initiative. AAI's Policy and Research Officer was appointed to the executive committee and acts as chair of their communications sub-committee.

Public Health Alcohol Research Group

AAI's CEO is a member of this group which met regularly throughout 2020 to consider issues around research and data on alcohol as it relates to the Public Health Alcohol Act.

Irish Cancer Prevention Network Webinar 8 Sept 2020

The Irish Cancer Prevention Network unites organisations with a role in cancer prevention.

AAI's CEO made a presentation at this event on alcohol and cancer drawing attention to the need to fully implement the Public Health Alcohol Act as part of a preventative approach to cancer.

National Events

Culture of Intoxication Conference, UCD 8 Feb 2020

AAI's Head of Communications and Advocacy gave a paper, *A Nation's Honour*, at this event.

Addressing Trauma across Systems in Ireland, Mental Health Reform, Conference 12-13 Feb 2020

AAI's Policy Research Officer and CEO presented on our Silent Voices initiative at this conference and also attended a masterclass at the same event. Following the masterclass, AAI worked with other participants including Barnardos, Simon, Mental Health Reform and Novas to develop joint language/key messages about trauma informed services.

Women's Health Task Force, Department of Health, 19 February 2020

AAI's Policy Research Officer made a presentation on alcohol and women to this group

Workshop for NGOs – Healthy Ireland new strategic plan 20 March 2020

The AAI CEO took part in this workshop and raised issues around alcohol, including the need for a whole of government approach to Healthy Ireland, revision of low-risk alcohol consumption guidelines, the need for clear goals around achieving whole of population consuming alcohol at low risk levels and the need for consistent data gathering to monitor this work.

UCD Academic Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Summer School 25 Sept 2020

AAI's CEO and Head of Communications and Advocacy, were panellists on a UCD Academic Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Summer School – Alcohol Self-Management During Covid-19 and Beyond, with Dr Peter Rice, SHAAP.

Road Safety Authority Stakeholder Workshop on Government Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030, 21 October 2020

AAI was invited to participate in this full day workshop and made contributions around the need for increased enforcement of drink driving legislation.

NUI Galway, MA/PGDip in Health Promotion; practice module, 3 Nov 2020

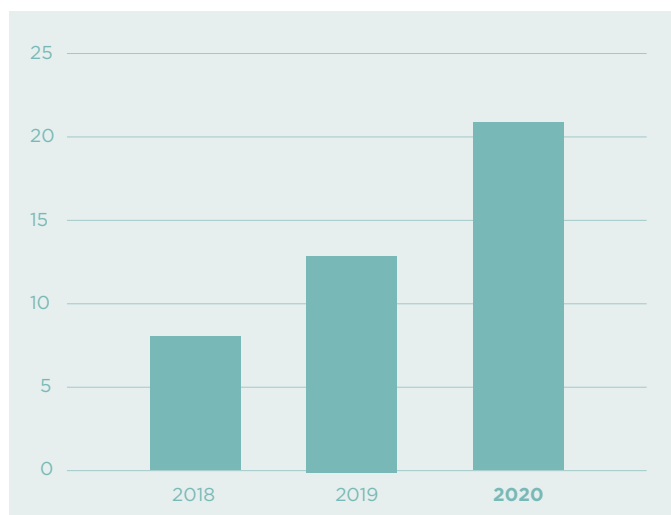
AAI's Head of Communications and Advocacy contributed a tutorial session to the Health Promotion Practice module in relation to Advocacy.



Public consultation submissions, policy statements and reports

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.

REPORTS AND SUBMISSIONS



- [AAI Annual Accounts 2019](#)
- [AAI Annual Review 2019](#)
- [Criminal Justice System Strategy Consultation](#)
- [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Statement of Strategy, 2021-2023, public consultation](#)
- [Draft Primary Curriculum Framework consultation](#)
- [EU Beating Cancer Plan consultation](#)
- [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child consultation](#)
- [General Election 2020 – manifesto for alcohol](#)
- [Industry capture of political leadership: how can advocacy for alcohol control break through. Paper presented at GAPC conference](#)
- [Just how widespread and pervasive is alcohol in children’s lives?](#)
- [Night-time economy consultation](#)
- [Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill](#)
- [Parental problem alcohol use and education](#)
- [Pre-budget submission 2021](#)
- [Price survey and market review 2020](#)
- [Review of the Child Care Act 1992 consultation](#)
- [Trauma informed frontline services – joint statement Alcohol Action Ireland and Mental Health Ireland](#)
- [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – General comments on the rights of the child in the digital environment consultation](#)
- [We have to talk about the trauma to our children](#)
- [World Health Organization Global Alcohol Strategy consultation](#)
- [Youth Justice consultation](#)

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 2020 we began work on our new communications strategy and have developed innovative ways to enhance our central themes including the animation of stories from our Silent Voices initiative and enhancing our social media graphics.



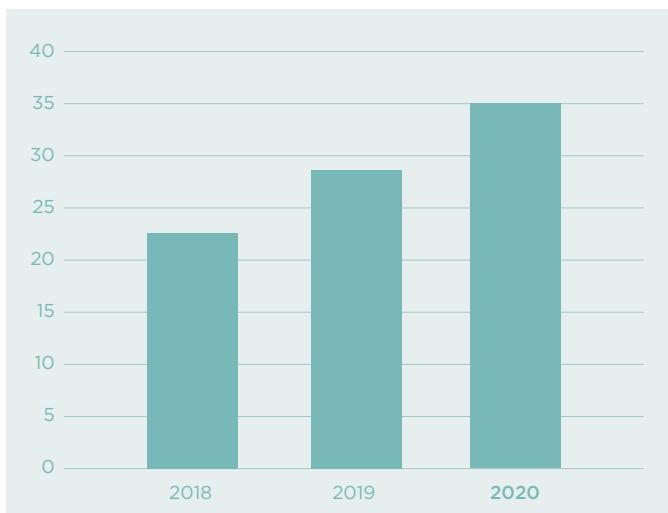
In 2020, AAI launched our first podcast series 'The Alcohol File' with four 30-minute episodes widely available wherever podcasts are available. The Alcohol File shares with the listener a comprehensive, independent analysis, both national and international, of the many complex issues related to alcohol use.

- ✗ What is alcohol doing for our health?
- ✗ What is alcohol doing to our children?
- ✗ The bad economics of alcohol.
- ✗ The importance of global alcohol policy in tackling alcohol use.

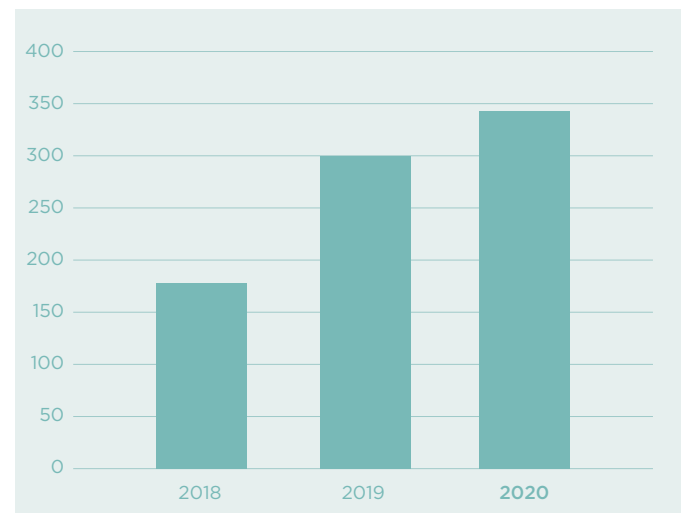
Media Releases

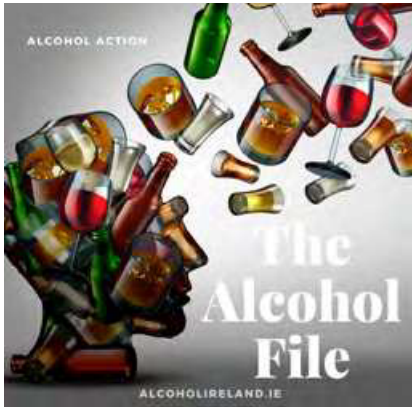
Throughout the year AAI has issued media releases on a variety of topics from the necessity for minimum unit pricing, health warning labelling of alcohol products and a ban on sports sponsorship to the trauma of children growing up in homes impacted by alcohol harm and the need for trauma informed systems across public services.

MEDIA RELEASES



TRADITIONAL MEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS – BROADCAST AND PRESS





Traditional Media Profile

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

Broadcast

248

contributions to local and national radio and television programmes;

Press

93

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

Online

166

contributions.

The earned media value of all press and online features was

€887,385

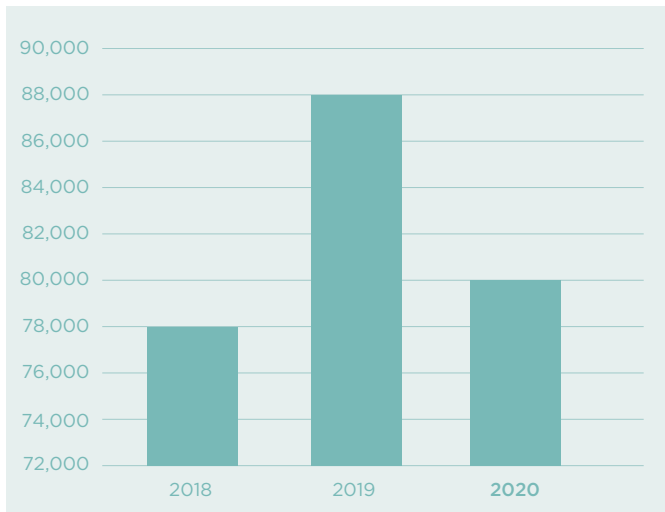
and estimated audience reach of

32.2 million

AAI Newsletter

Regular newsletters were introduced in 2020 and were sent to stakeholders on a quarterly basis. A new function was added to the website to allow sign-ups for updates from AAI.

WWW.ALCOHOLIRELAND SITE VISITS 2018-2020



AAI Website

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.

In 2020 the site had 79,728 users who in turn had 168,169 page views, with 'Alcohol and Driving' proving the most popular.

The number of site visits, was reduced from 2019 which had drawn a particularly large number of visits on the very high profile launch of the Silent Voices initiative.

Social Media Profile

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

Total Twitter activity overview

950,750

impressions,

3995

Total followers,

29,877

engagements,

388

Follower gain in 2020,

4071

link clicks.

593

Tweets issued.

Our 'Silent Voices' initiative has a separate twitter handle;

Its total Fan/Followers is

555

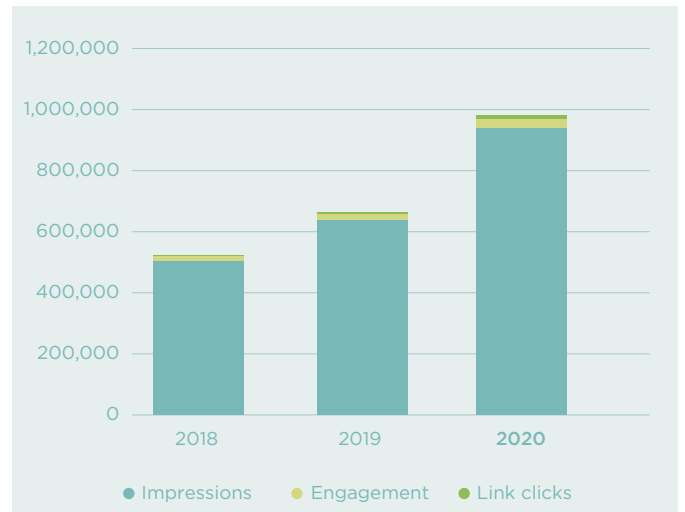
And it issued

265

tweets in 2020.

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

SOCIAL MEDIA @ALCOHOLIRELAND TWITTER PROFILE



Governance

Charities Governance Code

AAI carried out extensive work in 2020 to ensure full compliance with the new Charities Governance Code. We very much appreciated the support of the Carmichael Centre through their training programmes and also the very welcome input from the UCD School of Law 'Adopt a Charity' Programme. We were very pleased to have been shortlisted for a Good Governance Award in the innovation section for our work in this area.

The Board of AAI draws expertise from across the fields of health, education, youth, finance and legal. It met regularly throughout 2020 providing oversight and specialist input to the work of AAI. The Board was very pleased to appoint Michael Foy, Head of Finance, Commission for Communications Regulation, as a Director in 2020.



The way ahead

2020 was the first year of implementing our five-year plan and much has been achieved across its five goals. In 2021 we will continue to work through the schedule building on the progress of 2020.

We will maintain a strong focus on the imperative for the full implementation of the Public Health Alcohol Act, 2018. We will seek political support for these and other issues around alcohol harm. With our Silent Voices initiative, we aim to have a National Awareness Day, working with a range of partners to highlight the issues for both children and adult children.

We will publish our report on residential treatment services and begin work on hearing the voices of service users; highlight the need for a statutory Alcohol Office and continue to develop policy positions across areas such as mental health and alcohol, regulation of alcohol advertising as harmful online content and sports sponsorship. We will develop our relationships with our national and international partners and in particular seek to enhance our research linkages with third level institutes to help inform our evidence base.

We are also keen to encourage the voice of citizen activism. Alcohol harm stretches into every city, town and village across Ireland with families, workplaces and communities significantly impacted by the outcomes of alcohol use. The scale of the impact is such that we need to activate both an individual and institutional response. To do this we will recast our communication platforms to amplify those voices and help to bring the constructive messages of public health measures.

Our work is specialised and needs financial support. We are very appreciative of the funding received from the HSE, Mental Health Ireland and individual donors. In 2021, 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 online fundraising.

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 2020

	Unrestricted 2020 €	Restricted 2020 €	TOTAL 2020 €	Unrestricted 2019 €	Restricted 2019 €	TOTAL 2019 €
Income from Charitable Activities GRANTS	280,141	0	280,141	276,807	0	276,807
Donations & Legacies DONATIONS	2,832	0	2,832	1,472	0	1,472
Other Income	99	0	99	321	11,232	11,553
Total Income	283,072	0	283,072	278,600	11,232	289,832
Expenditure on charitable activities	(268,033)	(1,884)	(269,917)	(261,975)	(21,591)	(283,566)
NET (Expenditure) / Income	15,039	(1,884)	13,155	16,625	(10,359)	6,266
Fund balances at beginning of year	136,282	15,470	151,752	119,657	25,829	145,486
Transfer of Funds	(5,384)	5,384	0	0	0	0
Fund balances at end of year	145,937	18,970	164,907	136,282	15,470	151,752

The 2020 figures are unaudited, The full audited 2020 accounts will be available at a later date on the AAI website.

Other information

Alcohol Action Ireland is a limited liability company registered in Ireland. It is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

Alcohol Action Ireland is a registered charity with the Charities Regulator. It is registered under the Charities Act 2009 with the Charities Regulator. Its registration number is 20052713.

Alcohol Action Ireland is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. It is registered in Ireland with the Companies Registration Office. Its registration number is 378738.

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Alcohol Action Ireland Team in 2020

Dr Sheila Gilheany	CEO
Eunan McKinney	Head of Communications and Advocacy
Jennifer Hough	Policy Research Officer

Board members of Alcohol Action Ireland

Carol Fawsitt (Chair)	Solicitor
Prof Joe Barry	MSc, MD, FRCPI, FFPHM, Public Health Specialist
Dr Declan Bedford	Specialist in Public Health Medicine and former Acting Director of Public Health, HSE
Catherine Brogan	Deputy CEO, Mental Health Ireland
Pat Cahill	(Company Secretary), former President Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland
James Doorley	Deputy Director, National Youth Council of Ireland
Michael Foy	Head of Finance, Commission for Communications Regulation
Prof Frank Murray	Consultant in Hepatology & Gastroenterology. M.B., B.Ch. B.A.O., M.D., F.R.C.P.I., F.R.C.P. (Ed)
Dr Colin O'Driscoll	Clinical Lead, HSE Mid-West Addiction Services
Dr Mary O'Mahony	Specialist in Public Health Medicine and Medical Officer of Health, HSE South
Dr Bobby Smyth	Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist
Tadhg Young	Senior Vice President, Chief Operations Officer, State Street Global Services

Silent Voices Advisory Group Members

Carol Fawsitt	Founding Voice
Marion Rackard	Founding Voice
Barbara Whelan	Founding Voice
Dr Sharon Lambert	Academic Adviser
Austin Prior	Clinical Adviser

Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7, D07 E8XF.

www.alcoholireland.ie

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