

Alcohol Health Alliance UK
c/o Institute of Alcohol Studies
Arc House, 82 Tanner Street
London SE1 3GN

An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, TD
Dept of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings
Merrion Street Upper
Dublin 2

1 May 2025

Dear Taoiseach,

I am writing as Chair of the Alcohol Health Alliance UK (AHA) to urge you to maintain Ireland's pioneering position in public health and deliver on the alcohol labelling measures passed in the historic Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018. The AHA is a coalition of more than 60 organisations working together to reduce the harm caused by alcohol across the UK. Our members include alcohol treatment providers, medical royal colleges, research organisations and charities such as Cancer Research UK, and associate members Alcohol Action Ireland and Alcohol Forum Ireland.

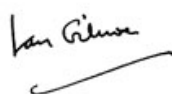
In my years as a physician, I have seen first-hand the damage alcohol can cause to an individual, their families, and the massive toll on wider communities. Not only is alcohol classified as a group one carcinogen, along with tobacco and asbestos, alcohol consumption during pregnancy can also increase the risk of miscarriage, premature birth, and lead to long-term harm to the baby. It is an outrage that the public remain largely unaware of these health risks – or even have access to basic nutritional information.

The measures set out in the Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018, including provisions to mandate health warning labels, passed unanimously because it was undoubtedly the right thing to do. Ireland has historically been a world leader in public health policy, becoming the first country to introduce comprehensive smoke-free legislation. The 2018 Act continued this reputation by setting pace in alcohol policy, and in the coming years, other nations will undoubtedly follow Ireland's example, just as has been the case with the smoke-free revolution. This legislation is trailblazing in upholding the Irish people's right to knowledge and better health, setting an example to the rest of the world.

These labelling regulations have not only been endorsed by international public health organisations, they have also been defended by the European Commission at the World Trade Organization. Complaints around global trading uncertainty are misleading and disingenuous: the measures would have no impact on alcohol exports, and compliance in Ireland can be achieved through simple stick-on labels.

Now is a crucial moment to defend the Irish legacy in putting public health before profits. Simply put, this is a matter of health and not of corporate interests, and I implore you to stand firm in rejecting unnecessary calls for any further examination or delay of implementing these regulations.

Kind regards,



Professor Sir Ian Gilmore
Chair, Alcohol Health Alliance UK