

Tackling Harmful Alcohol Use

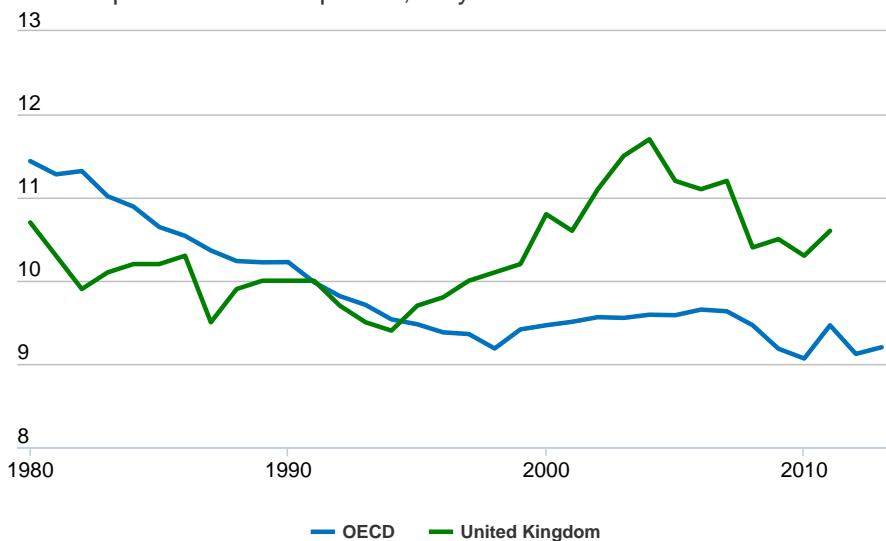
Country note - United Kingdom

Consumption Trends

Levels of alcohol consumption in the United Kingdom are above the OECD average and increased during the last 30 years. In 2011, an average of 10.6 litres of pure alcohol per capita was consumed in the United Kingdom, compared with an estimate of 9.5 litres in the OECD.

Annual alcohol consumption per capita

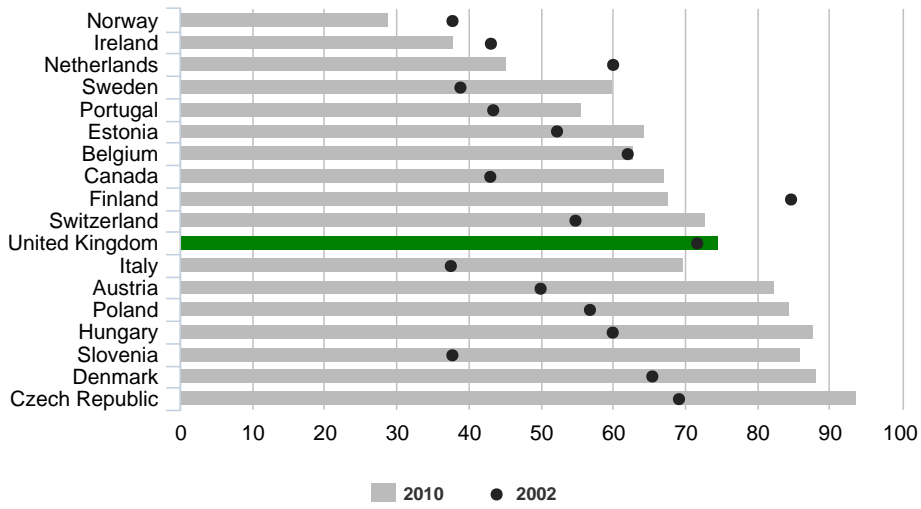
litres of pure alcohol component, 15-year-olds and older



Youth Drinking

Initiation into alcohol drinking happens at increasingly early ages. In the United Kingdom, the proportion of 15 year olds who have experienced alcohol increased from 71% in 2002 to 75% in 2010. However, other data (from the Survey of Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England) show that English pupils (aged 11-15) who had ever had a drink fell from 61% to 51% between 2001 and 2009.

Share of 15-year-olds who have drunk alcohol boys and girls, 2002 vs 2010



Drinking and Social Disparities

Large socio-economic disparities in hazardous drinking rates exist in both men and women. The probabilities of an average individual aged 40 to engage in hazardous drinking (i.e. having a weekly amount of pure alcohol of 140 grams or more for women, and 210 grams or more for men) are depicted below by level of education. In England, both men and women with high education are more likely to be hazardous drinkers than their less educated counterparts.

Share of hazardous drinkers by education level and gender

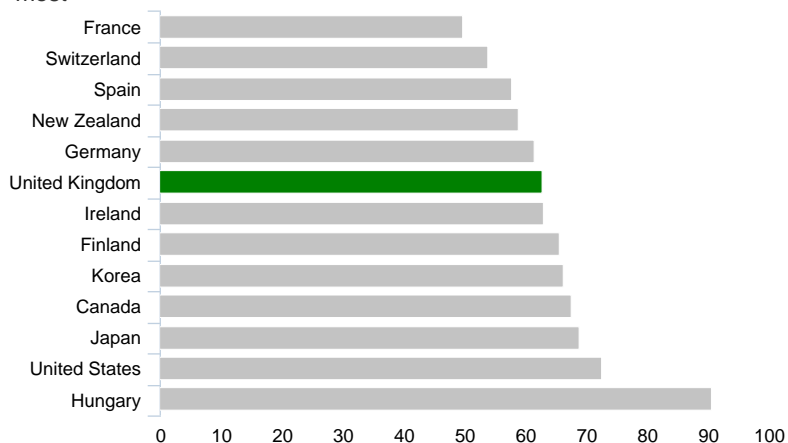
	United Kingdom		[Country 2]	
	men	women	men	women
Low education	18.3	8.9		
Medium education	21.3	15.0		
High education	23.4	20.0		

Heavy Drinkers

The distribution of alcohol drinking is heavily concentrated. In England, the heaviest-drinking 20% of the population drink almost 63% of all alcohol. However, other data (from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey) show that, in England, there has been a reduction in the proportion of men and women who drank over twice the NHS guidelines ('binge drinking') – 15% of men and women in 2013 compared with 19% in 2006.

Concentration of alcohol consumption

share of total alcohol consumed by the 20% of the population who drink the most



Taxes & Legal Framework

Compared with other countries in the OECD area, the United Kingdom has relatively high levels of taxation for all types of alcoholic beverages. The blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for drivers is 0.08%, the highest in OECD countries, although Scotland lowered the limit to 0.05% in 2014 (the majority of OECD countries enforce a BAC limit of 0.05%). The countries of the United Kingdom have adopted a wide-range of policies to regulate on- and off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages and promotion of alcohol products, but other legally binding regulations (e.g. on sponsorships, sales promotions and health warnings on alcohol containers) are not applied at the national level.

	United Kingdom	[Country 2]
National legal minimum age for off-premise sales		
beer	18	
wine	18	
spirits	18	
National legal minimum age for on-premise sales		
beer	18	
wine	18	
spirits	18	
Restrictions for on-/off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages		
time (hours/day)	Y/N	
location (place/density)	N/Y	
specific events	Y	
intoxicated persons	Y	
petrol stations	Y	
National maximum legal blood alcohol concentration (%)		
all drivers	0.08	
young drivers	0.08	
professional drivers	0.08	
Legally binding regulations of		
advertisement	Y	
product placement	Y	
sponsorship	N	
sales promotion	N	
health warnings (advert/containers)	N/N	

Related Publication

Tackling Harmful Alcohol Use

<http://www.oecd.org/health/tackling-harmful-alcohol-use-9789264181069-en.htm>



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