A Clear Way Forward

The Case for Better Alcohol Labelling

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ALCOHOL FOCUS SCOTLAND

ALCOHOL HEALTH ALLIANCE

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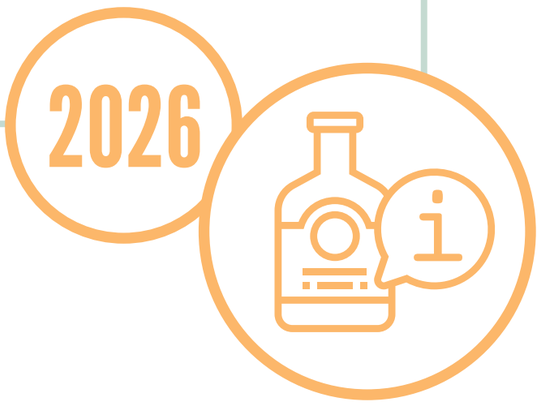


Executive Summary

In 2025, the UK government announced it would consult on introducing mandatory alcohol labelling requirements. This proposal marks a step change from decades of voluntary guidelines and was welcomed by public health campaigners as a significant shift. With many people unaware of what's in their drink, or alcohol's associated health risks, mandatory alcohol labelling would give consumers information they need to make informed choices about their health. Mandatory labelling could also serve to increase public awareness on how many units of alcohol are in our drinks, supporting additional proposals to reform drink driving limits.

Other countries are also shifting towards mandatory alcohol labels and adopting a health warning system. Progress in Ireland, which passed comprehensive measures adopting alcohol labelling and health warnings in 2018, offers an example of what can be achieved. However, the legal challenges to this legislation by the alcohol industry also demonstrate the conflict of interest between commercial sales and providing public health information to consumers.

A Clear Way Forward represents the most comprehensive audit to date of alcohol labels in the UK and demonstrates why mandatory alcohol labelling is so needed. Looking at over 530 products, this analysis shows what information the alcohol industry prioritises, what information is missing or inconsistent between products, and where improved alcohol labelling could benefit consumers and the public. It also shows the limits of the voluntary guidelines, and where a mandatory approach is essential if the public are going to get the information they need.

The UK government's proposals for mandatory alcohol labelling requirements are an opportunity to improve understanding of what's in our drinks. We can put consumers first by ensuring they know how much they're drinking, and what risks they're taking. Mandatory labelling is a proportionate step that paves the way for reducing alcohol harms –and it's time for the UK to join international progress in this important public health area.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

One in five products did not provide the minimum information set out by the Portman Group Alcohol Labelling Guidelines, the industry's self-regulatory framework

- **Consumers are ten times more likely to encounter alcohol industry responsible drinking messaging than a general health warning**
- **Specific warnings on cancer appeared on just 1.3% of products**
- **Full ingredient lists appeared on only 28% of products**

What's in your drink? Access to essential information

- **One in four multi serving products didn't include units per serving,** making it challenging for consumers to understand their alcohol intake
- 8% of alcohol products didn't include units per container, a minimum requirement
- Full ingredient lists appeared on only 28.0% of products, and full nutritional information appeared on only 13.4% of products.

Responsibility and risk - Industry messaging and health information

- **Consumers are ten times more likely to encounter alcohol industry responsible drinking messaging than a general health warning**
- Drinkaware (the industry-funded information source) appeared on 89.6% of products
- Only 6.7% of products carried any health warning
- Specific warnings on cancer appeared on just 1.3% of products.

Barely there – visibility of required information

- Across every category of text and pictogram, legal and health **information failed to meet minimum sizing** as recommended by scientific evidence and best practice in other countries, with pictograms as small as 2.5mm in diameter
- Pregnancy and health warnings were almost never visible on the front of packaging.

Executive Summary

Recommendations

The UK should adopt a mandatory alcohol labelling approach, setting out legal requirements for what can and must be included on labels. This should be a UK-wide approach ensuring consistent consumer protection across all four nations, achieved through coordination with devolved administrations.

An independent regulator should provide oversight on alcohol labelling and hold the sector to account.

All alcohol product labels should include:

- **Units per container, units per serving and number of servings per container**
- **Drinking guideline information based on the most recent Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines**
- **A clear and appropriately sized pregnancy warning**
- **Rotating health warnings** covering a range of conditions and injuries that are evidence-based, simple and specific, including a cancer warning
- **Nutritional information** and a full list of ingredients, displayed per 100ml and per serving
- **Removal of industry messaging, including signposts to** Drinkaware (an industry-funded body and not a trusted, independent source of health information) and non-mandated health information
- **Website signposting:** Details of a website, established and maintained by a trusted health voice and fully independent from the alcohol industry and its funding, that can provide consumers with public health information in relation to alcohol consumption. **This should be in addition to other recommended warnings**
- If space permits, warnings related to age of sale and the risks of drink driving.

Introduction

Alcohol permeates life in the UK. Despite this, many people are unaware of the health risks associated with drinking, and alcohol labels are yet to provide this information comprehensively and consistently to consumers. This has led to low levels of public awareness about the Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) low risk drinking guidelines, the specific contents of alcohol products, and wider health harms from alcohol.

In the UK, the only information currently required by law on alcohol packaging is the volume of the liquid, strength in alcohol by volume (ABV), and whether the product contains any of the 14 most common allergens. There is no requirement for alcoholic drinks to display the CMO low risk drinking guidelines, health warnings, or information that other food products must provide, such as ingredients and nutritional content.

Four in five don't know how many units are in their drinks

Information such as pregnancy warnings and the CMO drinking guidelines are provided voluntarily, in line with non-mandatory guidelines provided by the Portman Group, a self-regulatory body set up by the alcohol industry. These optional guidelines do not provide a strong incentive for businesses to overrule their commercial interests, or the interests of their shareholders, by providing clear, detailed health information that consumers have a right to know.

A Growing Change

In 2025, the UK government announced it would consult on introducing mandatory alcohol labelling requirements, including nutritional information and health warnings. This move was welcomed by public health campaigners across the country as a significant step forward in increasing public awareness about alcohol risks. Whilst the commitment was announced as part of the UK Government's 10 Year Heath Plan for England, *Fit for the Future,* discussions with all four UK nations are exploring whether these labelling requirements can and should be brought in UK-wide.

Some devolved administrations have already voiced their support, creating an opportunity for a joined up and consistent approach across the UK. A mandatory approach to alcohol labelling would give consumers access to the information that they need to make informed choices about their health. It would also acknowledge the very real conflict of interest that the drinks industry faces between commercial sales and providing useful, accurate health information to consumers.

Nearly thirty years since the alcohol industry first made voluntary commitments to improve information provided on alcohol labels, consumers are still not being given the information they have a right to. Information about alcohol units is provided inconsistently. Industry-funded websites are prioritised over effective health warnings, leaving consumers in the dark about how alcohol actually impacts their health. Health information is either out of sight on the back of bottles, or not provided at all. Voluntary guidelines on labelling are weak and poorly enforced, meaning there is neither incentive nor pressure for industry to do the right thing.

The Portman Group, the industry's self-regulatory body, is quick to claim the success of this model. Recently, they announced a 94% compliance rate with their regulations. However, this report only measured compliance with the Code of Practice, a limited code which reminds producers that their packaging must be indicate the product is alcoholic, should not appeal to children and should not reference sexual activity or drug use.[1] The Portman Group's audit did not consider health claims, warnings, ingredients, or any of the information reflected in this report. [2]

Public Awareness of Alcohol Harms

Recent surveys show that most people don't know how many units are considered low risk, with less than half of people in England believing the Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) weekly limit to be 14 units or fewer.[3] Four in five adults don't know how many units are in their drinks.[4] Alcohol is linked to over 200 health conditions, including seven cancers,[5] but the links between alcohol and disease are often assumed to be associated with heavy and dependent drinkers.[6] Awareness of the link between alcohol and cancer is low, with less than half of the public (46%) naming alcohol consumption as a risk factor.[7]

Increasing public awareness of all these factors is essential to reducing health harms. Consumers have a right to this information, and there is a clear need to provide it. Despite this, the current system of inadequate and inconsistent labelling of alcohol products, implemented on an entirely voluntary and self-regulated basis, means that the alcohol industry continues to keep the public in the dark about health risks associated with their products.

A Growing Consensus

Legislating for mandatory alcohol labelling would see the UK join the growing international consensus for better, more transparent alcohol labelling. Health warnings on alcohol labels have been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) since 2017 as a key step in raising awareness of health risks and reducing alcohol harms.[8]

In 2018, Ireland passed the world's most comprehensive alcohol labelling legislation as part of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act, requiring warnings on pregnancy, liver disease and cancer. However, pushback from commercial actors led to amendments and implementation delays. Concerns raised about the financial implications of changes to labels turned out to be inconsequential, with Irish business group Ibec admitting the cost of label changes could be as low as €0.03 per unit.[9] Alcohol products already change labels regularly for seasonal variants and events – a one-off change to requirements is unlikely to be a barrier. Some companies have added labels to products in advance of the legislation, meaning that these products have already made it onto shelves in the UK and Ireland.

The labelling parts of Ireland's public health legislation on alcohol are now due to come into effect in September 2028, with all Irish alcohol products (or those produced for multiple international retail markets that include Ireland) required to carry health warnings from this date. Given cross-border trade across the island of Ireland, as well as between Ireland and the wider UK, it is possible that the UK may begin to see some of these changes to labels in a number of products sold in UK retail outlets. A more consistent approach between the UK and Ireland could therefore actually reduce any implementation costs for producers retailing in both markets.

Ireland isn't alone in bringing forward changes to alcohol labelling. Health warnings are legally required for alcohol products in a wide range of countries, from France to Kyrgzstan.[10] South Korea adopted cancer warnings on alcohol in 2018, positioning itself as a leader in global alcohol health policy.[11] In 2025, the Norwegian government released their proposals for health warnings on alcohol product labels, with warnings linking alcohol to multiple health conditions, including references to mental health and breast cancer, and to be used on a rotating basis.[12] Cancer warnings were even recommended by the outgoing US Surgeon General in 2025.[13] The UK now has an opportunity to join a growing movement of states who are giving consumers the information they need to make positive decisions about their health.

Health warnings on alcohol labels have been recommended by the World Health Organization since 2017

Evidence for Effective Alcohol Labelling

Alcohol labelling is recognised by the WHO as a simple, effective tool to raise awareness of alcohol-related risks.[14] Presenting information on units and standard drinks alongside drinking guidelines can improve understanding of how much alcohol is in the product, and how much a consumer can drink while remaining within guidelines.[15] Nutrition labels can improve people's ability to estimate the calorie content of alcoholic drinks,[16] while a large number of heavy drinkers said they would reduce the amount they drank if alcohol contained calorie labels.[17] Health messaging and warnings have been shown to be effective in increasing awareness of alcohol harms, and reducing intention to drink.[18] There is already early evidence to suggest health warnings can also lead to a reduction in consumption, alongside public awareness benefits. Health warnings were shown to influence women in the USA to reduce their consumption during their first pregnancy.[19] Prominent cancer warning labels were also shown to increase knowledge of alcohol's role in causing cancer and were associated with a 6.3% reduction in consumption.[20] A 2026 Canadian study estimated that cancer warning labels in combination with minimum unit pricing could reduce alcohol-attributable cancer incidence by 7.1%.[21]

Public Support

Labelling is an important tool to give consumers the information they need about alcohol, empowering them to make choices about risk. Consumers have a right to this information – and they want it. Public polling consistently shows that the public believe alcohol should carry more information and health warnings. In recent surveys, **three quarters (75%) of the public supported including warning labels on health risks,** while 78% supported use of alcohol units, calories, low risk drinking guidelines and health information.[22] It is only right and fair to give the public the information they want to make choices about their own health.

The UK government's proposals for mandatory alcohol labelling requirements are an opportunity to make a change. The alcohol industry faces significant commercial pressure to prioritise profit over the consumers' right to information. By introducing mandatory requirements, we can put the consumer first.

Ensuring consumers have clear and consistent information about what's in alcoholic drinks, as well as health warnings, can help raise public awareness about risks and pave the way for action to reduce alcohol harms.

Three quarters (75%) of the public supported including warning labels on health risks on alcohol products

78% supported use of alcohol units, calories, low risk drinking guidelines and health information

The Story so Far – 30 Years of Alcohol Labelling

1998
First voluntary agreement to provide units, drinking guidelines and a pregnancy warning.[23]

2004 – 2005
Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England includes proposals on labelling, advertising and point of sale information.[24] [25]

2007
Industry commits to provide alcohol unit information as part of the UK Voluntary Labelling Agreement.

2008 – 2009
The first evaluation of labelling finds that 56% of products contained unit information, fewer than 1% of products contained guidelines, 10% of products were content compliant, and 9% clarity compliant.[26]

UK Government Consults on proposals in the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.[27]

2010
Second evaluation finds similar low compliance and preference among nonindustry representatives and devolved administrations for a regulatory approach.[28]

A second voluntary agreement is agreed for industry to provide units, drinking guidelines and pregnancy warning.

2011
Agreement on strengthened pan-UK voluntary approach; launch of the Public Health Responsibility Deal.

2014 – 2017
Campden Bri evaluation of Responsibility Deal pledges find that labelling targets were not met and calorie information provision was poor; pregnancy logos were often too small, particularly on wine.[29]

2016
UK Chief Medical Officers update low risk drinking guidelines.

Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland agree a transitional period for drinks to be labelled with the latest guidelines.

2017
Department of Health publishes guidance on communicating the new drinking guidelines.

British Retail Consortium commits to updating labels.

Portman Group removes drinking guidelines from minimum label requirements.

2018
AHA research finds only 7.5% of labels include current drinking guidelines.[30]

Brewers of Europe recommend breweries list ingredients and calories on prepackaged beer.

Irish Public Health (Alcohol) Act is passed, requiring alcohol labels to include a mandatory health warning.

2019
One month before the end of the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland transitional period (1 Sept 2019), Portman Group announces intention to include current guidelines on labels.

2020
WHO report reveals only 28% of European Member states require any health information or health warning on alcohol labels.[31]

Industry body International Alliance for Responsible Drinking agrees to put clear age limit labels on their products.

AHA report 'Drinking in the Dark' reveals systemic failures in voluntary alcohol labelling.[32]

2023
Ireland passes law to require alcohol labels to highlight link to liver disease and fatal cancers.[33]

Just two years later, industry pressure led the Irish Government to delay their implementation from 2026 to 2028.

2025
WHO report recommends mandatory labelling, prominent health warnings, cancer-specific warnings.

The UK Government includes a commitment to mandatory alcohol labels within its 10 Year Health Plan

2026
WHO report reveals alcohol to be third largest preventable cause of cancer worldwide.[34]

Methods

What we examined: the breadth of the problem

This analysis audited the product labels of over 530 products collected from Scotland and England. A concerning pattern emerges: consumers are systematically kept in the dark about the health risks of the products they purchase. While industry presents itself as responsible and able to self-regulate, the evidence on these labels tells a very different story.

Data collectors gathered 536 alcohol products for analysis between May and November 2025. The sample spans the full spectrum of what UK consumers buy by using data from the Grocer on the most popular products across England and Scotland, and includes beer, cider, wine, spirits, liqueurs and ready-to-drink (RTD) products.[35 36], More details are given in the Appendix (see Appendix 1, methodology section).

This analysis represents the most comprehensive examination of alcohol labels conducted to date in the United Kingdom

Key Findings

One in five products did not provide the minimum information set out by the Portman Group Alcohol Labelling Guidelines, the industry's self-regulatory framework

- **Consumers are ten times more likely to encounter alcohol industry responsible drinking messaging than a general health warning**
- **Specific warnings on cancer appeared on just 1.3% of products**
- **Full ingredient lists appeared on only 28% of products**

What's in your drink? Access to essential information

- **One in four multi serving products didn't include units per serving,** making it challenging for consumers to understand their alcohol intake
- 8% of alcohol products didn't include units per container, a minimum requirement
- Full ingredient lists appeared on only 28.0% of products, and full nutritional information appeared on only 13.4% of products.

Responsibility and risk - Industry messaging and health information

- **Consumers are ten times more likely to encounter alcohol industry responsible drinking messaging than a general health warning**
- Drinkaware (the industry-funded information source) appeared on 89.6% of products
- Only 6.7% of products carried any health warning
- Specific warnings on cancer appeared on just 1.3% of products.

Barely there – visibility of required information

- Across every category of text and pictogram, legal and health **information failed to meet minimum sizing** as recommended by scientific evidence and best practice in other countries, with pictograms as small as 2.5mm in diameter
- Pregnancy and health warnings were almost never visible on the front of packaging.

1. What's in Your Drink? Access to Essential Information

Consumers should have essential information about the product they are buying. This could reasonably be assumed to include the amount of alcohol it contains, ingredients, and nutritional information. However, this information is not provided consistently across alcohol products.

The Portman Group's minimum recommended content for alcohol labelling is to include the number of units per container, a pregnancy warning, CMO guidelines and Drinkaware messaging. Despite this being framed as a minimum for alcohol labels, one in five products did not meet this standard.

Units

A unit of alcohol is a measure of pure alcohol in a drink, defined in the UK as 10 millilitres or 8 grams. The average adult liver processes roughly one unit of alcohol in an hour. The Portman Group stated that units per container should be provided on labels as a minimum requirement. However, **92% of alcohol products examined displayed number of units per container, meaning 8% still don't provide this basic piece of information.**

Servings

Alongside units per container, consumers also benefit from knowing how many units are in a serving. A wine bottle contains multiple glasses, but how many units are in each glass? This information is often not provided. For multi-serve containers, such as bottles of wine, spirits and multipacks, only three quarters (76.1%) displayed units per serving. 71.8% of wine products, 80.2% of spirits, and 83.8% of multipack outer packaging contained this information.

Less than half (only 49.1%) of products provided explicit serving size information. Where serving sizes were specified, there was a lot of variation even between products of the same kind: wine averaged 125ml (range 100-125ml), spirits 25ml (no variation), liqueurs 70ml (range 25-250ml), beer 126ml (range 125-568ml), cider 63ml (range 125-500ml). Despite UK legislation specifying what is considered a 'measure' of each drink, this is not reflected in what is specified on the label as a serving.[37]

Less than half (only 49.1%) of products provided explicit serving size information

Products that do not provide consistent serving sizes – or do not provide serving sizes at all – do not give consumers the information they need to manage their drinking, or their health.

Nutritional Information

Alcohol is exempt from many of the labelling requirements applied to other products. Products over 1.2% alcohol do not need to list ingredients on their labels,[38] though they are required to list major allergens. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that full ingredient lists appeared on only 28.0% of products. 13.1% of products provided ingredients solely via QR codes, without ingredients on the physical label itself.

Alcohol is exempt from many of the labelling requirements applied to other products.

Nutritional information labels are widely recognised in the UK, as these are a legal requirement on prepackaged foods. However, as alcohol products are exempt from this requirement, these are used less regularly. Comprehensive nutritional information (energy, protein, carbohydrates, sugar, fat, saturated fat, salt) appeared on the labels of only 13.4% of products. One in ten (10.3%) products directed consumers to nutritional information online via QR codes without providing nutritional information on the label.

While calories were presented more often than nutritional information or full ingredients on labels, they were often not presented clearly. 64.2 % of product labels contained calorie information, but on the majority (82% of products), calories were presented outside the main nutrition panel, making them less easy to find. Nearly half of consumers say they would make changes to their drinking habits if calorie information was introduced on alcohol labels.[39]

Finally, a total of 6.7% of products displayed health claims such as 'natural', 'vegan', and 'gluten-free' on front packaging. However, less than half of these (44.4%) also displayed full nutritional information to allow consumers to gain a fuller picture of what they were consuming.

Currently, alcohol producers are not giving consumers the information they need to make informed choices about their drinking, or their overall health. A lack of basic information, such as a full list of ingredients, would not be accepted in any other product. Minimum labelling standards are voluntary, and unenforced – and as a result, consumers are being kept in the dark.

Full ingredient lists appeared on only 28.0% of products

2. Responsibility & Risk - Industry Messaging & Health Information

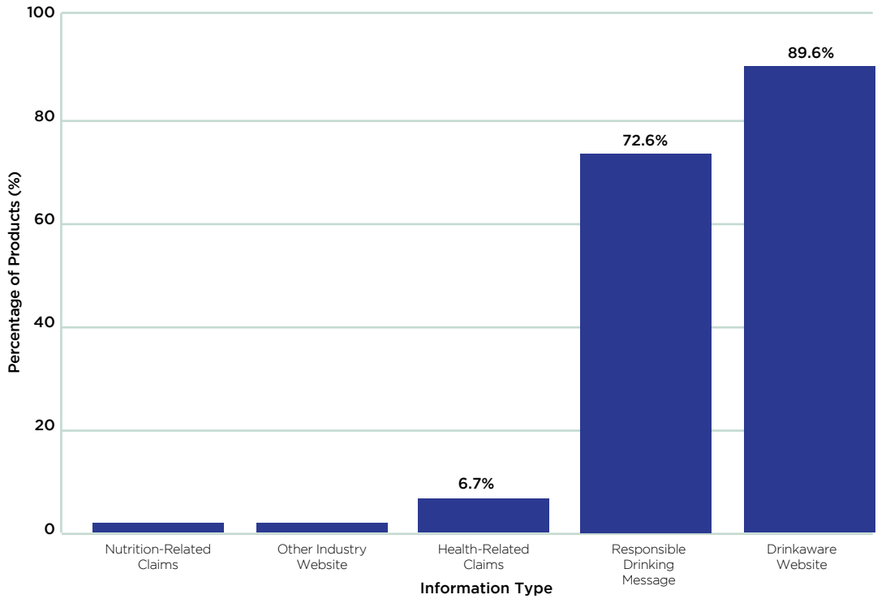


Figure 1. Summary of industry information and claims on alcohol products

Alcohol products contain messaging about personal responsibility but rarely have the health information or warnings that allow consumers to understand health risks. Consumers are far more likely to encounter industry-funded responsible drinking messaging (72.6% of products) than specific warnings about cancer, liver disease, or other serious health conditions (1.3% of products).

Responsibility Messaging

Responsibility messages are common slogans like "Drink Responsibly" which are placed on the labels of products, intended to promote safer consumption by focusing on individual behaviour. Research shows they are often vague, ineffective, and are used to deflect blame from the product itself onto a few "irresponsible" drinkers,.

The majority of products (72.6%) displayed at least one responsible drinking message, i.e., "Drink Responsibly" or "Know Your Limits". Drinkaware (the industry-funded information source) appeared on 89.6% of products.

Low Risk Drinking Guidelines

The CMO low risk drinking guidelines state that adults should not regularly exceed 14 units per week.[40] This guidance, released in 2016, appeared on 90.9% of products. Yet nearly one in ten products (9%) are still not including CMO guidelines on their labels. One product still used outdated, pre-2016 CMO guidance.

Only 6.7% of products carried any health warning at all

Health Warnings

Health warnings can inform consumers about the risks of drinking and highlight the increased risk of cancer and liver disease. However, these were extremely rare on products. Only 6.7% of products carried any health warning at all, and the vast majority of these were general health warnings (communicating broader alcohol-related health risks rather than specific diseases or conditions.) General health warnings appeared on just 5.4% of products, with all stating, "alcohol may cause health problems". Only 1.3% of products contained a cancer warning. These solely featured on the Irish health warning labels on Aldi products, in advance of Irish labelling requirements coming into effect. Specific warning text stated, "drinking alcohol causes liver disease; there is a direct link between alcohol and fatal cancers".

The high prevalence of industry-funded website information, combined with low prevalence of comprehensive health warnings, raises questions about the balance of messaging consumers receive on alcohol products. Consumers have a right to information about health risks, but this seems to be deprioritised over industry responsibility messaging.

Consumers are far more likely to encounter industry-funded responsible drinking messaging than specific warnings about cancer, liver disease, or other serious health conditions

3. 'Barely There' – Visibility of Required Information

Legal information and health information, including pregnancy warnings, was commonly far smaller than scientific evidence would recommend. Inconsistent sizes, colour and format makes it less likely that consumers will notice this essential information.

In the UK, there is no guidance or standards for alcohol producers on how to ensure information is visible and legible. Previous research suggests that packaging inserts for medicine may provide a helpful reference point.[41] This suggests a font size between 9-12, or a minimum of 1.81mm & 1.99mm lower case, or 2.50mm & 2.75mm upper case. For health warning text specifically, the literature suggests that warning information should be in a larger font compared to guidelines and responsibility messaging.

Warning Text

Across every category of text examined (health warnings, CMO guidelines, pregnancy advisories, and legal information), **products failed to meet even the minimum sizing recommended by the literature.** More significantly, the enormous variation within each category **reveals an absence of any consistent approach to ensuring consumer access to vital health information.**

Warning Pictograms

Pregnancy warnings, age restrictions and driving warnings were commonly communicated via pictograms. However, there was **substantial inconsistency in pictogram sizing, with the smallest pictograms potentially invisible** to many consumers.

Pregnancy warnings appeared on 98.1% of products, the highest prevalence of any health information. 84.7% of these warnings used pictograms only, with the others using text only (8.4%) or both pictogram and text (5.0%).

Age-restriction warnings appeared on fewer than half of products (40.5%), and 80% of these were solely as pictograms. Driving warnings appeared on just 39.2% of products, and 95% of these warnings were solely as pictograms.

Despite pictograms being widely used to convey warning information, size was limited and variable. Australian regulations state that pictograms should be a minimum of 6mm in diameter, or 9mm if the container is greater than 800ml.[42] We would consider this best practice, and have used this as our comparison point.

Just over half of products met the size recommended for driving warning pictograms (55.2%) and age warning pictograms (55.1%). Driving and age warning pictograms were slightly larger on average (both 5.9mm, range 1-9mm) compared to pregnancy pictograms (5.6mm, range 1-14mm).

Pregnancy and health warnings are almost never visible on the front of packaging (placed on the front 0.6% and 0.0% of the time respectively).

Health information and warnings were deprioritised for visibility, with minimal use of bold formatting, low contrast, or red colours to draw attention. In comparison, responsible drinking messages were the most likely content to be highlighted in bold, demonstrating how information can be prioritised for visibility.

Information that is vital for consumers health is often only communicated through pictograms, with no explanatory text. Introducing mandatory requirements for placement, sizing and colour of text and pictograms would ensure that information is legible and accessible. Importantly, it could make consumers more aware of this information.

4. Additional Commitments

The alcohol industry has long been responsible for setting its own standards on alcohol labelling. As this report shows, one in five products don't meet minimum labelling requirements that the industry has set for itself. Instead, we see significant variation, health information that is small and hard to read, and consumer health warnings deprioritised.

Brand Enhanced Commitments

Some brands and trade bodies have also made 'enhanced' commitments to include additional information in addition to industry guidelines set by the Portman Group. Diageo committed to including health warnings, nutritional information, calories, and pictogram warnings for driving and age restrictions. However, of 35 Diageo products examined, only 1 met the company's own enhanced labelling commitments, meaning 97% of its own products did not meet its own standards. (See Appendix)

Supermarket own brand products provided more information for consumers than branded alternatives.

AB InBev, which committed to enhanced pictogram warnings for age, driving, and pregnancy, achieved only 33.3% full adherence, meaning two-thirds of their products failed to display all the pictograms they publicly committed to provide. (See Appendix)

Supermarkets - Own Brand and Branded Products

However, there were some areas of better practice. Supermarket own brand products provided more information for consumers than branded alternatives.

Supermarket products were much more likely to include units per container (99%) compared to 84% of branded products . They were also far more likely to tell you how much is in one drink compared to big brand names. For spirits, every single supermarket product (100%) provided per-serving information, but only about 6 out of 10 branded spirits (61.5%) did the same.

They were also more likely to include low risk drinking CMO Guidelines . These were present on 96.7% of supermarket products compared to 84.7% of branded products, representing a 12.0 percentage point difference.

Discussion

The findings from this comprehensive analysis of 536 alcohol products reveal three consistent and interconnected issues in UK alcohol labelling;

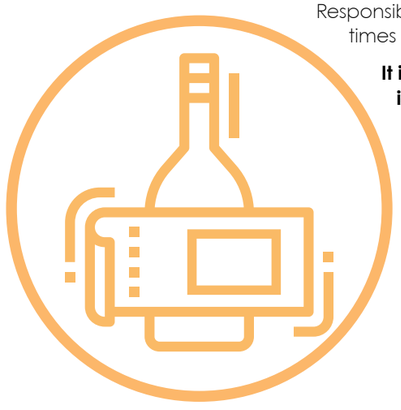
1. Consumers aren't provided with essential information they are entitled to about the product they are purchasing;
2. industry messaging dominates labels at the expense of public health information;
3. and meaningful health warnings are almost entirely absent.

The commercial pressures of the industry, in which full transparency risks sales or brand reputation, incentivises minimising, obscuring or withholding important health information. As a result, consumers are being kept in the dark.

These findings make an unambiguous case for mandatory, evidence-based labelling requirements to level the playing field for producers and deliver on consumers' right to know. This demonstrate the importance of having standards set and enforced from independent, trusted bodies outside the alcohol industry (and with expertise in public health rather than commerce). Supermarkets are much more likely to include information such as units per container compared to brands, showing that better provision of health information is possible.

Commercial Choices

The choices the alcohol industry makes about what to include and what to prioritise tell a compelling story. In this analysis, we saw near-universal coverage of industry messaging (such as Drinkaware) while products provide virtually no coverage of evidence-based health warnings. The industry-funded Drinkaware website appears on 89.6% of products, appearing across every single cider, liqueur, RTD alcopop and hard seltzer in this study. Yet only 6.7% of products carry any health warning at all. Specific health warnings mentioning cancer or liver disease appeared on just 1.3% of products, exclusively on products which displayed mandated Irish warning labels ahead of the previous implementation deadline in Ireland(May 2026). This represents a more than 13-fold difference between Drinkaware and health warnings. The pattern extends to 'Drink Responsibly' messages, which appear on 72.6% of products - more than ten times the rate of general health warnings.



It is not that labelling space does not permit health information; rather, it is not a priority for producers.

Public Uninformed of Health Risks

The most serious gap relates to health warnings, the information consumers most need, and the information they are least likely to find on a UK alcohol label. There is a misperception that health issues arising from alcohol, such as liver disease, only affect a minority of heavy and dependent drinkers[43, 44], Anyone who drinks alcohol can experience alcohol-related harms and health conditions, from poor sleep and anxiety, to cardiovascular disease and cancer.[45, 46] Health warnings are essential in increasing awareness of risks, and multiple systematic reviews confirm that health warning labels can significantly increase consumer knowledge of alcohol-related harms, including cancer.[47, 48, 49, 50]

One Canadian study found prominent cancer warning labels reduced alcohol sales by 6.3% and increased consumer awareness of the cancer link.[51] A European survey found cancer messages had the greatest impact of all warning types, suggesting their role in starting conversations and raising further awareness.[52] The World Health Organization now specifically recommends cancer warnings on alcohol labels.[53]

As well as not informing consumers of risks, health claims (i.e. low sugar, vegan) can produce a 'health halo' effect – leading consumers to perceive the product as more healthy.[54] This creates a significant imbalance, where consumers may believe they are making a healthier choice and are unaware of risks.

Consumers have a right to know what risks are associated with alcohol. Currently there is no incentive or pressure for industry to provide this information. Directing consumers, often via QR code, to the alcohol industry's own harm reduction websites is not sufficient. Mandating health warnings would allow consumers to make more informed choices about their own health.

A Canadian study found prominent cancer warning labels reduced alcohol sales by 6.3%

Pregnancy Warnings Versus Health Warnings

We know that when there is sufficient pressure on industry, health warnings are possible. Pregnancy warnings appeared on 98.1% of products, a sign of what can be accomplished. However, there is still room to improve the information provided and the visibility of this information. 84.7% of pregnancy warnings consisting of a pictogram only, without any accompanying text. Considering the limited number of countries with mandatory guidance around warning label content and design, it is vital that we learn from the experiences of early adopter countries. Australia and New Zealand require both pictogram and text stating 'Alcohol can cause lifelong harm to your baby',[55] a standard which finally came into place after more a than two-decade delay following industry lobbying.[56] Such recommendations were developed to ensure that women could make informed decisions, as it was evident that some women were unaware of the risks of drinking when pregnant.[57] **Adding explanatory text is likely to increase the visibility of pregnancy warnings, leading to increased awareness, as would increasing the size of pictograms.**

Important Information Largely Invisible

When health information does appear, it is often too small to be easily visible. The Portman Group guidance states information should be 'clear and legible'[58], yet provides no minimum standards for text size, colour, or placement. This gives a lot of flexibility to producers, who as highlighted above, are more likely to prioritise industry information. CMO guidelines, health warnings and pregnancy warnings were all smaller than best practice, as defined by Australian regulations. Not a single product placed health warnings on the front of packaging. Pictograms were too small to be easily visible, where only 39% of individual bottles and cans met the Australian and New Zealand 6mm minimum for pregnancy pictograms, and zero multipack outer packaging met any size recommendation.

When mandatory regulations apply, as with the forthcoming labelling restrictions in Ireland,[59] industry has shown they can deliver. **UK labels show that when industry has no external pressure, health information becomes functionally invisible.**

Not a single product placed health warnings on the front of packaging

Nutrition and Ingredients

The most basic starting point for an informed consumer is knowing what they are drinking, and how much. Yet this report reveals that even this fundamental information is not provided consistently and in a way that consumers understand. Less than half of products provided explicit serving size information, and 8% didn't provide the number of units in a container. There was also significant variation in how a serving was defined, even within the same category of drink. Providing units and serving sizes in a clear and consistent way is essential for consumers to understand how much they're drinking. Any further decision about their drinking, including whether they drink within recommended guidelines, simply cannot be made without this information.

Alcohol products are exempt from nutritional labelling requirements (such as amounts of sugar, carbohydrates and salt) that apply to virtually every other food and drink product. As a result, only 13.4% of products provide full nutritional information. A mere 0.7% provide it both per 100ml and per serving, and not a single spirit or liqueur provided comprehensive nutritional details. This is information that consumers are entitled to, and that should be provided on every consumable product. Furthermore, only 28% of products included complete ingredients lists. While listing the 14 most common allergens is a legal requirement, this still represents a significant gap for the approximately 2.4 million people in the UK with clinically confirmed food allergies, particularly those with less common allergies.[60]

Supermarkets

It is right to address where alcohol labels are successfully providing more information for consumers. Across virtually every measure, supermarket own-brand products substantially outperformed branded products. Supermarket spirits achieved 100% units-per-serving provision compared to 61.5% for branded spirits; supermarket wines 97% compared to roughly a third for branded wines. Similar gaps emerged for CMO guidelines, nutritional information and ingredients lists. Branded products were also more likely to place information behind QR codes (17.2% versus 9.1% for supermarkets), and none of these provided ingredients on the physical label.

The variation across same product categories produced by different manufacturers demonstrates the choices that producers make. Branded and own brand products have the same size label, and the same amount of space to convey information – yet supermarkets have made significantly different choices in the information they provide to consumers. **Simply put, it is possible to provide consumers with the information they need and have a right to.**

The Limitations of Self Regulation

Decades of the alcohol industry self-regulating have sadly left consumers in the dark. The findings of this report demonstrate a clear conflict of interest between commercial pressures and consumers getting the information they need. One in five products don't comply with the minimum standards recommended by the Portman Group – but when these standards are voluntary and not enforced, this cannot be surprising.

The Portman Group's 'minimum' guidance[61] states products should display units per container, yet some Portman Group members failed to meet this most basic requirement. Their guidance says information should be 'clear and legible', but provides no minimum text sizes, no colour requirements, no placement standards. With no guidance around sizing, colour or placement, warning text becomes too small to read, in colours that don't contrast, placed where consumers won't look. Research suggests that unit information should be presented alongside other health information in order to discourage riskier drinking, but this is not reflected in their guidance.[62]

To date, we have seen no attempt to enforce guidelines on labelling, which are clearly labelled as voluntary, and described as 'best practice'. The Portman Group's first audit of alcohol labels did not publish any information on compliance with its Alcohol Labelling Guidelines, only the marketing contained on the label.[63, 64] Clear, detailed requirements that are enforced would be more useful to the consumer, ensuring that the information they have a right to is presented consistently and visibly.

An Opportunity to Join World Leaders in Public Health

Ireland's Public Health (Alcohol) Act provides a compelling case study in what mandatory regulation can achieve. It requires specific warning text ('drinking alcohol causes liver disease' and 'there is a direct link between alcohol and fatal cancers'), mandated format (Times New Roman, capitalised, bold, red on white), and independent enforcement, with no industry input on design. The gap between these approaches illustrates precisely why the voluntary system fails to give consumers the information they are entitled to.

Momentum is building behind alcohol labelling. Ireland has mandated cancer warnings from September 2028. Norway has proposed nine rotating warnings covering cancer, liver disease, dementia and other harms. The former US Surgeon General issued an advisory explicitly linking alcohol to cancer risk. A systematic review of 77 studies confirmed that the most effective warnings combine large text with pictorial images, use specific health messages (such as 'alcohol causes cancer'), and are positioned prominently on the front of packaging.

The UK Government's commitment to consult on mandatory alcohol labelling is a significant opportunity. Mandatory labelling requirements would raise public awareness of alcohol harms, and give consumers the information they have a right to. It is impossible to ask people to make informed decisions about their drinking or their health without access to essential information. But it is possible to make a change in how we label alcohol, and join other countries in putting consumers health first.

Recommendations

The UK should adopt a mandatory alcohol labelling approach, setting out legal requirements for what can and must be included on labels.

This should be a UK-wide approach ensuring consistent consumer protection across all four nations, achieved through coordination with devolved administrations.

An independent regulator should provide oversight on alcohol labelling and hold the sector to account. This regulator should be free from both industry influence and from alcohol industry funding.

All product labels should include the following information:

UNITS: Labels should include total units per container, units per serving and number of servings per container, with serving size clearly marked on containers (e.g., line showing 125ml for wine bottle). Serving size should be clearly defined

LABELS: Should include drinking guideline information based on the most recent Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines

PREGNANCY ADVISORY: A clear and appropriately sized warning that informs of the danger of alcohol consumption when pregnant, including risks to the developing baby.

HEALTH WARNINGS: Evenly-rotating health warnings covering a range of conditions and injuries that are evidence-based, simple and specific, including a cancer warning

WEBSITE SIGNPOSTING: Details of a website, established and maintained by a trusted health voice and fully independent from the alcohol industry and its funding, that can provide consumers with public health information in relation to alcohol consumption. This should be in addition to other recommended warnings

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION: A full list of ingredients, as well as nutritional information displayed per 100ml and per serving. Multi-serve containers should also include the number of servings per container

MANDATORY HEALTH INFORMATION on alcohol labels should be the only health information on labels, with no additional health advice permitted on labels to avoid conflicting information or industry misinformation

REMOVAL OF INDUSTRY MESSAGING including signposts to Drinkaware (an industry-funded body and not a trusted, independent source of health information) and non-mandated health information.

Optional on labels (space permitting)

AGE OF SALE: A warning that the product should not be sold to those under the legal age is advised, although we emphasise that there is already widespread knowledge of this

ALCOHOL AND DRIVING: A simple warning of risks around consuming alcohol and driving. As limits differ across the UK, this messaging would need to be applicable UK-wide.

About Alcohol Focus Scotland

Alcohol Focus Scotland is Scotland's national alcohol charity working to reduce harm caused by alcohol. We do this by promoting evidence-based, cost-effective policy measures.

We research and develop policies informed by academic research and the real-life experiences of people affected by alcohol and campaign for change.

www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Alcohol Focus Scotland is a Registered Scottish Charity (SC009538) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (Scottish Company No SC094096).

About The Alcohol Health Alliance UK

The Alcohol Health Alliance UK (AHA) is a coalition of 64 organisations working together to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. Our members include medical royal colleges, charities and treatment providers.

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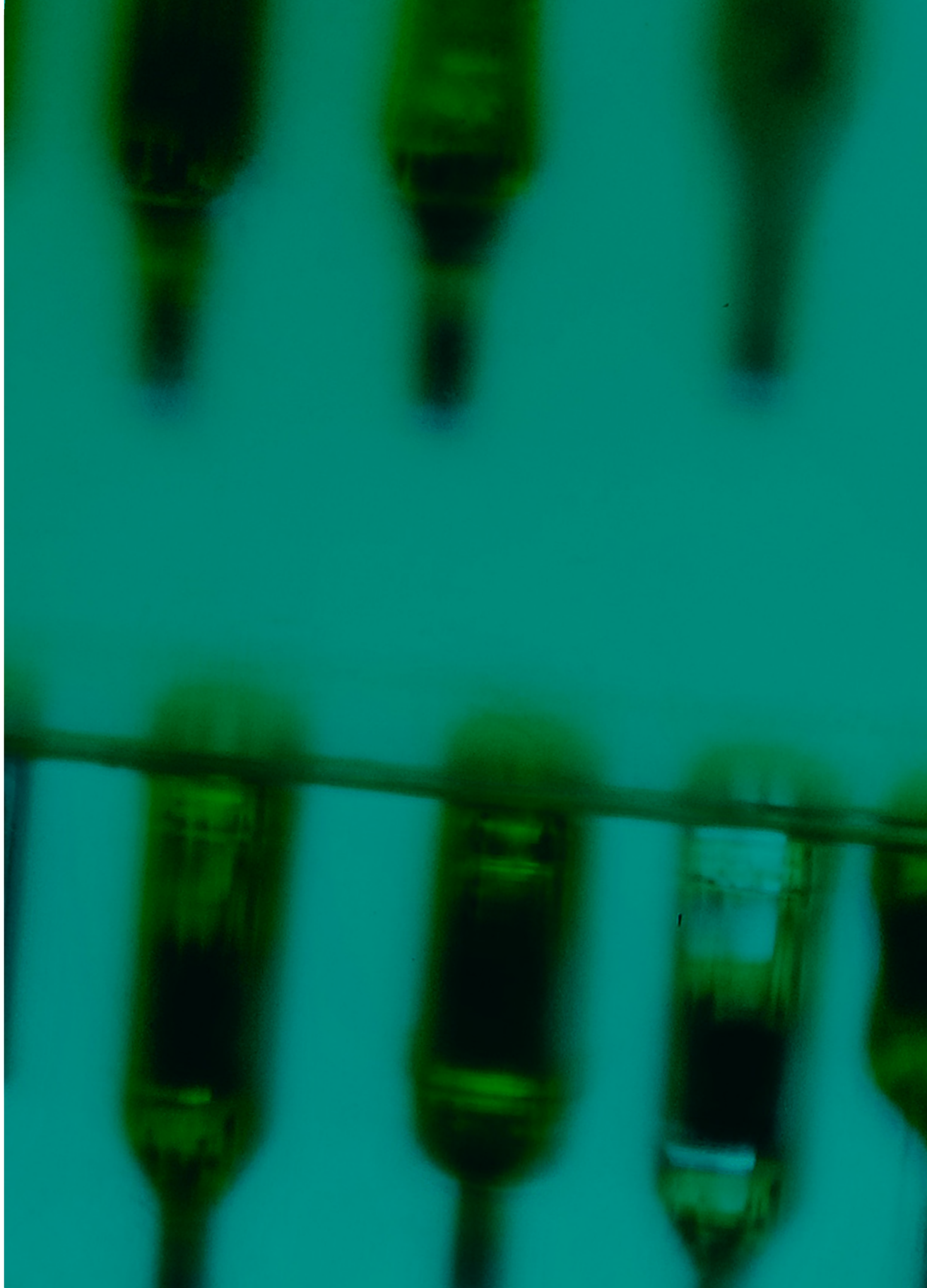

A Clear Way Forward

The Case for Better Alcohol Labelling

June 2026

APPENDICES

ALCOHOL FOCUS SCOTLAND

ALCOHOL HEALTH ALLIANCE

Appendix 1. Methodology

A Clear Way Forward is a comprehensive review of health-related information on current labels on the alcohol products of the best-selling brands in the UK, including the presentation and placement of this information.

The key focus of this report is on health warning labels, including cancer warnings specifically, considering the recent developments in this area. Additionally, this research also reviews alcohol product labels for the presence of health and nutrition-related claims. The question we sought to answer was:

To what extent is health-related information displayed on the alcohol product labels of the best-selling alcohol brands across the United Kingdom?

This research examined real products that consumers encounter in supermarkets. The sampling strategy focused on the top-selling UK alcohol brands as identified by industry trade publications (The Grocer, 2024;[1] Scottish Grocer, 2024[2]), ensuring the analysis captured products that dominate actual consumer purchases. Twenty-three data collectors systematically photographed and recorded label information from products spanning the full spectrum of what UK consumers buy: beer, cider, wine, spirits, liqueurs, and ready-to-drink products. The sample included both supermarket own-brands and major branded products to capture how both sectors approach consumer information.

For each brand, multiple product variations were examined where possible including different sizes, containers (bottles versus cans), types (such as red, white, and rosé wines), and flavours to capture the full range of labelling practices within brands. This approach revealed not just what individual products display, but patterns in how companies approach health information across their product portfolios.

Each product label was examined for both content and presentation. Data collectors (DCs) photographed labels with rulers or measuring tape placed alongside to enable precise measurement of text sizes in millimetres. Researchers recorded what health information appeared, how it was formatted, where it was placed, what colours were used, and how visibly it was displayed within a spreadsheet. This dual analysis reveals not just gaps in information provision but also reveals choices made around prominence and visibility. The lead researcher collated all individual spreadsheets into a master spreadsheet, and data was quality checked by comparing the inputted information against the photographs of products. Measurements, placement and colour details were then taken of the various text elements (i.e., CMO guidelines, responsibility messaging, industry websites) and pictograms (i.e., pregnancy, driving, age) to allow for analysis.

The analysis compared actual labelling practices against multiple standards: the Portman Group's voluntary guidance[3] (which industry developed and committed to follow), the Department of Health's 2017 guidance on communicating drinking guidelines[4] and international best practice from countries including Ireland [Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018],[5] Australia and New Zealand,[6] and Norway.[7] Text sizes were assessed against research-based legibility standards[8, 9] and requirements from other jurisdictions.[10] Results were compared by drink type and whether products were branded or unbranded (supermarket owned). This approach allowed for analysis of the gap between industry promises and reality, between minimum standards and actual practice, and between UK labelling and international expectations.

Products were also analysed by industry membership. The research identified which products came from companies that are members of the Portman Group, signatories to Portman Group guidance, or members of other trade associations that have made labelling commitments. This enabled direct assessment of whether industry members comply with their own voluntary standards; a key test of the voluntary self-regulation model.

A key focus throughout this analysis was health information, a deliberate choice given that alcohol is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, causing approximately 11,900 cancer cases in the UK annually.[11] When a product causes tens of thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of hospitalisations each year, consumers have a fundamental right to clear, prominent information about its risks. This research examines whether that right is being honoured.

Sampling Approach

The following information sets out in detail how we reached this target, across the **top-selling alcohol brands**; **boosted samples** of cider, liqueurs and RTDs; and **supermarket own brands**.

Sample – Top Selling Brands

Data was collected from the 100 top-selling UK alcohol brands as stated by The Grocer, to ensure that we covered the majority of products sold in the UK, and in the right proportion according to market share. This approach was confirmed as the most robust and pragmatic (short of purchasing market research data) by Nathan Critchlow. DCs were asked to collect information on three products from each brand, where possible (e.g. bottle, can; white, red, rose).

	Brand	Type		Brand	Type
1	Stella Artois	Beer	51	Bombay	Spirit
2	Smirnoff	Spirit	52	Wairau Cover	Wine
3	Budweiser	Beer	53	Echo Falls	Wine
4	Gordon's	Spirit	54	Plaza Centro	Wine
5	Hardy's	Wine	55	JJ Vodka	Spirit
6	Carling	Beer	56	Gallow Family Vineyards	Wine
7	Jack Daniel's	Spirit	57	Malibu	Spirit
8	Foster's	Beer	58	Estrella Damm	Beer
9	San Miguel	Beer	59	Three Barrels	Spirit
10	Yellow Tail	Wine	60	Caparelli	Wine
11	Corona	Beer	61	John Smith's	Beer
12	Strongbow	Cider	62	Courvoisier	Spirit
13	Barefoot	Wine	63	Buckfast	Wine
14	Peroni	Beer	64	Canti	Wine
15	The Famous Grouse	Spirit	65	Wolf Blass	Wine
16	Birra Moretti	Beer	66	Johnnie Walker	Spirit
17	Casillero del Diablo	Wine	67	WKD	RTD
18	Heineken	Beer	68	Grant's	Spirit
19	Baileys	Liqueur	69	Moet and Chandon	Wine
20	Guinness	Beer	70	Jim Beam	Spirit
21	Carlsberg	Beer	71	Magners	Cider
22	Brewdog	Beer	72	Mud House	Wine
23	Captain Morgan	Spirit	73	Au	Spirit
24	McGuigan	Wine	74	Brancott Estate	wine
25	Thatchers	Cider	75	Whitney Neill	Spirit
26	Glen's	Spirit	76	The Kraken	Spirit
27	Kopparberg	Cider	77	Disaronno	Spirit
28	Kronenbourg	Beer	78	The Ned	Wine
29	Bacardi	Spirit	79	Nice Drop	Wine
30	I Heart	Wine	80	Staropramen	Beer
31	19 Crimes	Wine	81	Martini	Liqueur
32	Trivento	Wine	82	Inch's	Cider
33	Campo Viejo	Wine	83	Southern Comfort	Liqueur
34	Madrí Excepcional	Beer	84	Hen	Cider
35	Isla Negra	Wine	85	Asahi Super Dry	Beer
36	Jam Shed	Wine	86	Tyskie	Beer
37	Whyte & Mackay	Spirit	87	Lanson	Wine
38	Freixenet	Wine	88	Calvet	Wine
39	Villa Maria	Wine	89	Hobgoblin	Beer
40	Oyster Bay	Wine	90	Chekov	Spirit
41	Absolut	Spirit	91	Refined and Elegant	Wine
42	Bell's	Spirit	92	Beavertown	Beer
43	Blossom Hill	Wine	93	Sharp's	Beer
44	Henry Westons	Cider	94	Pimm's	Liqueur
45	La Veille Ferme	Wine	95	Dino	Wine
46	Tanqueray	Spirit	96	Kylie Minogue	Wine
47	Desperados	Beer	97	Cruzcampo	Beer
48	Coors	Beer	98	Porta 6	Wine
49	Tennent's	Beer	99	Camden	Beer
50	Jameson	Spirit	100	Old Mout	Cider

Table 1: Top 100 Best-Selling Alcohol Products (The Grocer, 2024).

To ensure differences in the top-selling brands in Scotland were not excluded, products from the Scottish Grocer and Convenience Retailer's top 10 Scottish take-home alcoholic drinks brands not already captured by the UK top 100 were also recorded by Scottish DCs, as follows:

	Brand	Type
1	Tamnavulin	Spirit
2	McEwan's	Beer
3	The Glenlivet	Spirit
4	Innis & Gunn	Beer

Table 2: Scottish top 10 brands not included in UK top 100 (The Grocer)

Boosting Samples of Product Types with Low Numbers

We boosted the samples of cider, liqueur and RTD products due to low numbers within the top 100 top-selling brands (8, 4 and 1 respectively) to ensure we were able to compare findings across product types.

Product numbers were multiplied by up to three (as we asked DCs to collect information on several products of each brand). For the products with multiple product type, we used a repeated measures design, treating products from the same manufacturer as related observations rather than independent samples. This increased statistical power by reducing unexplained variance. This means that, for categories with a smaller number of brands (such as cider), we increased the number three-fold (from 8 to 24 items).

To boost the samples of cider, liqueur and RTD products we added brands from published lists of top-selling products as can be acquired.

For ciders: **the following brands were also sampled** (taken from a list of the top ranked cider brands in the UK, based on sales revenue (in millions GBP) from Nielsen data (as reported in Independent Retail News) covering the 52 weeks to end March 2023:

	Brand		Brand
1	Strongbow	6	Omega
2	Thatchers	7	K
3	Kopparberg	8	Magners
4	Henry Westons	9	Lambrini
5	Frosty Jacks	10	Scrumpy Jack

Table 3: Top 10 cider products in Great Britain (Statista Link)

For liqueurs: **the following brands were also sampled** (taken from a list of the leading brands of liqueurs, ranked by number of consumers (in 1,000s) in Kantar data from 2023):

	Brand		Brand
1	Bailey's Irish Cream	7	Drambuie
2	Disaronno	8	Chambord
3	Tia Maria	9	Grand Marnier
4	Cointreau	10	Amarula Cream Liqueur
5	Kahlua	11	Luxardo Sambuca
6	Jack Daniel's Honey		

Table 4: Top 11 liqueur products in Great Britain (Statista Link)

A stratified random sampling technique was used for the liqueur brands (n = 13). With stratified random sampling, we divide the population into distinct subgroups (strata) before sampling, ensuring representation from all important segments. In order to achieve statistical significance with a confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 5%, we require a minimum of 5-7 items per strata. We stratified by subtype using the ABV of the main product of each brand in tables 2 & 6: ≤19% (5), 20% - 29% (6), and ≥30% (6). To ensure we maintained a high number of products to allow comparisons to be made with the other product types, rather than selecting a sample of products within each strata, we attempted to analyse the entire population (with this becoming a census rather than sample). This ensured representation across important variables and enabled us to complete within-strata and between-strata differences in compliance. This ensured maximum statistical power.

For RTDs, we used the top brands of 'pre-mixed spirits, cocktails (ready made) and alcoholic carbonates' in Great Britain, ranked by number of consumers (in 1,000s) in Kantar data from 2021. This was supplemented with data from The Grocer to ensure we included the top-selling brands from across the different categories of RTD.

A stratified random sampling technique was used for the RTD brands (n = 30). We stratified by subtype using the brands in tables 2 & 6: pre-mixed spirits (8), cocktails (5), alcopops (8), and alcoholic carbonates (9). This ensured representation across important variables and enabled us to complete within-strata and between-strata differences in compliance. To ensure we maintain a high number of products to allow comparisons to be made with the other product types, rather than selecting a sample of products within each strata, we attempted to analyse the entire population (with this becoming a full census rather than sample). This ensured maximum statistical power.

	RTD Brands		
1	Others*	11	VK
2	Gordon's Gin & Schweppes Tonic	12	Bacardi & Cola
3	Smirnoff Ice	13	Smirnoff Vodka & Cola
4	Supermarkets own brand	14	Morgan's Spiced Rum & Cola
5	WKD	15	Bacardi Breezer
6	Jack Daniel's and Cola	16	Hoooooch
7	Archers	17	Authentic Cocktail
8	Pimm's & Lemonade	18	Southern Comfort Lemonade & Lime
9	Caribbean Twist	19	Parrot bay
10	Malibu Rum and Cola	20	Crabbie's Fruits

Table 5. Top-selling RTD brands in Great Britain (Kantar)

*Others was classified as a "catch all for everything else which is not included on the list". For the purposes of this research, we therefore also included the following additional top-selling brands as identified by The Grocer: Au RTD (A), Captain Morgan RTD (S), Dragon Soop (A), Corona Tropical (AC), White Claw (AC), Served (AC), Pure Pirana (AC), Mike's Hard Seltzer (AC), Three Fold (AC), Bud Light Seltzer (AC), Kopparberg Hard Seltzer (AC), Topo Chico (AC).

For both liqueurs and RTDs, we applied stratum weights to ensure proper representation prior to comparison with multi-product categories (e.g., beer, spirits, wine). We analysed compliance differences between strata first, then compare this to multi-product categories.

Sample – Supermarket Own Brands

We sampled the supermarket own brand products across each product category (beer, wine, cider, spirits, RTDs, liqueurs) for the following nine supermarkets:

- Sainsbury's (wine, cider, spirits, liqueurs)
- Asda (beer, wine, cider, spirits, liqueurs)
- Tesco (wine, cider, spirits, liqueurs)
- Waitrose (wine, spirits, liqueurs)
- Morrisons (beer, wine, cider, spirits, liqueurs)
- Co-op (wine, spirits, liqueurs)
- M&S (wine, spirits, liqueurs)
- Aldi (beer, wine, cider, spirits, liqueurs)
- Lidl (beer, wine, cider, spirits, liqueurs).

Appendix 2. Product Brands

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of products across alcohol types and brand status. Wine represented the largest category at 32.5%, followed by spirits (20.7%) and beer (11.2%). Supermarket products dominated the wine category, whilst branded products were more prevalent in beer. RTD products consisted of cocktails (33 supermarket, 7 branded), alcopops (2 supermarket, 16 branded), hard seltzers (3 supermarket, 6 branded), and spirit & mixers (14 supermarket, 14 branded).

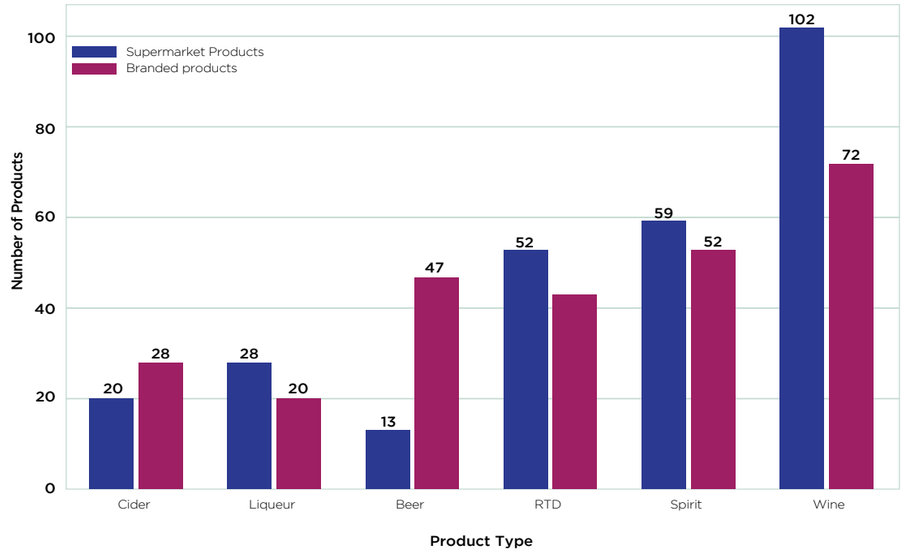

Figure 1. Distribution of alcohol products by type and brand status (n=536)

Products came packaged in bottles (n=373, 69.6%), cans (n=89, 16.6%), boxes (n=10, 1.9%), other containers (n=3, 0.6%), and multipacks (n=59, 11.0%). Industry membership was distributed as follows: 403 products (75.2%) came from Portman Group signatories, 384 (71.6%) from WSTA members, 112 (20.9%) from Portman Group members, and 91 (17.0%) from BBPA members. The smaller bodies of SWA (19 products), NACM (7 products), and SIBA (2 products) were excluded from statistical analysis due to limited representation.

The Corporate Control Behind the Bottles

Our examination of 536 products across UK retailers identifies the parent brands behind included products. There was an almost equal split between supermarket own-brand products and branded products. While supermarket products represented 51% of our sample, the majority of branded products were represented by five major multinational alcohol corporations which together account for 95 products and nearly one-fifth of the market (18%):

- **Diageo (35 products):** The world's largest spirits producer, owning Johnnie Walker, Smirnoff, Baileys, and Guinness
- **Pernod Ricard (20 products):** Global spirits and wine giant with brands including Absolut, Chivas Regal, Jameson, and Jacob's Creek
- **Heineken (16 products):** Major brewing multinational behind Heineken, Foster's, Strongbow, and Bulmers
- **AB InBev (12 products):** The world's largest brewer, producing Budweiser, Stella Artois, Corona, and Beck's
- **Vinarchy (12 products):** Wine distributor with significant UK market presence

While 32 parent brands appeared in our sample (Figure 2), the 'long tail' of smaller producers comprises only 65 products (12%). Another 102 products (19%) were distributed among 27 other corporate brands, from major players like Molson Coors (8 products) and Bacardi (7 products) down to smaller operations.

This concentration matters because these corporations make the decisions about what health information consumers see (or don't see).

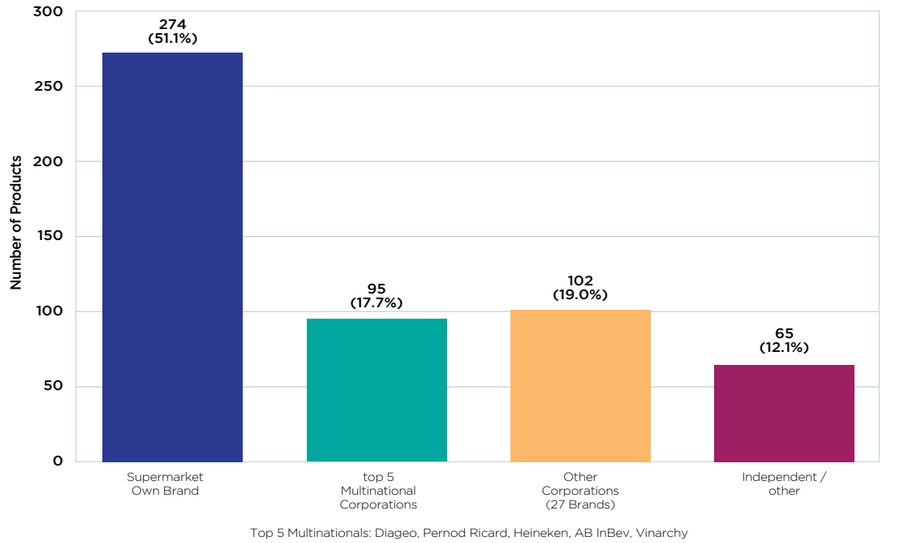

Figure 2. Market concentration reveals that supermarket own brands and five multinational corporations control over two-thirds of products analysed

Appendix 3. Inclusion of Chief Medical Officer Low Risk Drinking Guidelines (2016)

Table 6. Inclusion of Chief Medical Officers Low Risk Drinking Guideline wording on products

Product:	Beer	Cider	Wine	Spirit	Liqueur	RTDs	TOTAL
Number:	55	46	153	103	40	90	487
%	91.7	95.8	87.9	92.8	83.3	94.7	90.9
Supermarket Products:	Beer	Cider	Wine	Spirit	Liqueur	RTDs	Products
Number:	13	19	99	57	25	52	265
%	100.0	95.0	97.1	96.6	89.3	100	96.7
Branded Products:	Beer	Cider	Wine	Spirit	Liqueur	RTDs	Products
Number:	42	27	54	46	15	38	222
%	89.4	96.4	75.0	88.5	75.0	88.4	84.7

Appendix 4. Brand Enhanced Commitments

Table 7. Diageo's Adherence to their Enhanced Commitments

Label Component	**Provision Rate**
Units per container	94% provision (n=33)
Units per serving	51.4% provision (n=18), not significantly associated with membership
CMO guidelines	94.3% provision (n=33), significantly associated with membership (p<0.01)
Pregnancy warnings	100% provision
General health warnings	82.9% (n=29), significantly higher than non-Diageo products (p<0.01)
Age pictogram warnings	91.4% (n=32) pictogram only, 0% with both pictogram and text. Diageo members significantly more likely to include (p<0.01)
Driving pictogram warnings	91.4% (n=32) pictogram only, 0% with both pictogram and text. Diageo members significantly more likely to include (p<0.01)
Nutritional information	0% per 100ml only, 8.6% (n=3) both per 100ml and per serving. Significantly less likely to provide per 100ml only (p=0.02), but significantly more likely to provide both (p<0.01)
Calories	5.7% (n=2) per 100ml only, 77.1% (n=27) both per 100ml and per serving. Significantly more likely to provide both (p<0.01), but not for 100ml only (p=0.22)
Drinkaware website	94.3% (n=33), not significantly associated with membership (p=0.94)

Table 8: AB InBev's Enhanced Commitments

Full adherence	33.3% (n=4)
Pregnancy warnings:	100% provision
Age pictogram warnings:	33.3% (n=4) pictogram only, 0% with both pictogram and text
Driving pictogram warnings:	83.3% (n=10) pictogram only, 16.7% with both pictogram and text

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