Written Questions

Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has made an estimate of the likely costs to the NHS of treating alcohol-related health conditions in (a) 2015 and (b) 2020.

Anne Milton (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Public Health) Health)

No estimate has been made of the cost to the National Health Service of treating alcohol-related health conditions in 2015 and 2020. We plan to publish a White Paper on public health in the autumn, which will consider how to prevent future increases in ill health from alcohol misuse and associated costs.

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To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS of treating alcohol-related health conditions in each of the last 10 years.

Anne Milton

The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost. However in 2003 the annual cost of alcohol misuse to the NHS in England was quantified at Â£1.4 - Â£1.7 billion in 2001 prices Cabinet Office (2003). A more recent estimate of Â£2.7 billion per year for 2006-07 was published in Cost of Alcohol Harm to the NHS, Department of Health 2007. Available at:


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To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research he has evaluated on the effects on the level of alcohol consumption of (a) price and (b) availability of alcohol.

Anne Milton

The Coalition programme for Government includes a commitment to review alcohol taxation and pricing, to ensure it tackles binge drinking without unfairly penalising responsible drinkers, pubs and important local industries. Her Majesty's Treasury and the Home Office will jointly lead the review. It will report in the autumn and will take account of recent research.
The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence issued public health guidance, Alcohol-use disorders: preventing the development of hazardous and harmful drinking in June. This report, which is available at:

http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH24

was based on a series of effectiveness reviews, which summarise and assess the evidence from research, including research on the availability of alcohol. This will be considered by the Department over the coming months.

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