

Article on Alcohol Advertising by Lisa Dowd, Midland's correspondent published on 2nd June.

A minimum price should be introduced for alcohol and the Government should consider a complete ban on alcohol advertising, say health experts. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Nice) has issued new guidance calling for a crackdown on cheap drink. "Price is probably the most important factor in the cocktail," said Professor Mike Kelly, from [Nice](#).

"Advertising to youngsters also needs better regulation and we need to look at the availability of alcohol in some parts of the country, there are too many outlets selling too much alcohol".

According to the independent organisation, one in four adults in England are drinking what is classed as a "dangerous amount" of alcohol, and excessive consumption costs the NHS around £2.7bn pounds a year. Heavy drinking leads to nearly 15,000 deaths every year and a possible 1.2 million violent incidents can be related to alcohol abuse. It is also estimated that 17 million working days are lost annually due to its influence.

"I'd like to be able to sit down and watch TV with my children and feel that what is a drug, which is also very legal, that it's not something they're bombarded with all the time", said Jayne Gosnall, who battled with a drink problem for nine months, binging on a bottle of wine every night. Ms Gosnall, who helped Nice develop their recommendations, explained: "Whenever the local paper arrives it is packed with cut price drinks offers - I don't want to see it - and I don't want my children to see it either."

Nice has stopped short of saying what they think a minimum price for alcohol should be - but some feel it should be no lower than 50 pence per unit.

"We're seeing alcohol abuse in all age groups but particularly now in young people," said Professor Ian Gilmore from the [Royal College of Physicians](#). "It's sad seeing people die in their twenties and thirties - they didn't make this lifestyle choice when they weren't exposed to advertising and heavily discounted offers."

The Government has said it will stop supermarkets from selling alcohol below cost price. But it has warned that no legislation or initiative will work without a better understanding of what drives people to risk their health for a drink.

[Health Secretary Andrew Lansley](#) said: "Regarding Nice's recommendations... it is not clear that the research examines specifically the regressive effect on low income families, or proves conclusively that it is the best way to impact price in order to impact demand." He went on: "The root causes of social problems lie not just in Government policies - although 24-hour drinking legislation has severely undermined clinician and police efforts to get to grips with this problem - but in social norms and peer influence. "We must work across Government, society, communities and families to challenge negative social norms and promote the positives."