



Department
of Health

From the Lord Prior of Brampton
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for NHS Productivity (Lords)

Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe
House of Lords
Westminster
London
SW1A 0PW

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 4850

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I very much welcomed the debate on Thursday 12 May on alcohol.

During your question regarding what steps the Government are taking to alert the public to the dangers of alcohol and its causal links with hypertension, depression, Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, a number of issues were raised.

As I promised, I would respond to these issues in writing to clarify our position.

Baroness Finlay asked whether the cost of accidents through alcohol-related driving and road accidents were available and if there is consideration being given to lowering the drink-driving limit.

The Department for Transport estimates the cost to the economy from reported road collisions where at least one driver was over the drink drive limit and where somebody was either killed or injured to be £754 million per year, based on figures for 2014, the latest year where numbers are available.

This figure does not include the costs of damage only accidents or unreported accidents.

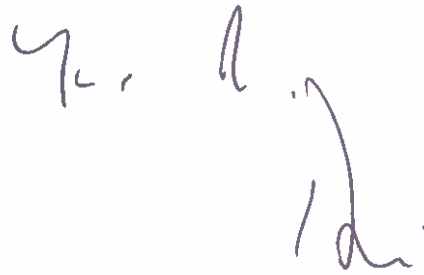
The Government is not considering lowering the drink drive limit in England and Wales. We believe rigorous enforcement and serious penalties for drink drivers are the most effective deterrent.

Lord Watts asked whether the Government has considered using the tax system to encourage people to drink lower-alcohol drinks.

The UK Government believes alcohol duties should be directly proportional to alcohol content, as is the case with beer. This provides stronger incentives for individuals to consume and manufacturers to produce lower strength products.

In 2011, a lower duty rate on low strength beer and a higher duty rate on high strength beer were introduced to encourage the consumption and production of lower strength beer.

Thank you again for tabling this question and raising awareness of such an important issue. I hope this letter provides the clarification and information desired. I am copying this letter to all noble Lords who participated in the debate and will place it in the library.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Prior', written in a cursive style.

DAVID PRIOR