



press release

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Families could end up paying price for real cost of cheap Christmas and New Year booze, say campaigners

North West wellbeing and health campaign group Our Life today warned that families across the region could end up paying the price for cheap Christmas and New Year booze, as some stores continue to sell alcohol for the same price as cans of coke.

Our Life chief executive Alison Giles said: "Supermarkets are already selling alcohol at pocket-money prices, but Christmas and New Year has seen retailers falling over themselves to offer the cheapest promotions to attract customers through their doors. Everyone loves a bargain and on the face of it such offers look attractive, but what is the real cost of these savings?" asked Dr Giles.

That real cost, according to Our Life, is a 64% rise in hospital admissions due to alcohol harm in the North West over the past five years. "Added to that, last year more than 73,000 crimes were recorded across the region, of which 50,000 were violent offences and the financial cost of alcohol-related harm to the NHS in the North West alone is already estimated to be in excess of £400 million per year," said Dr Giles.

In October, Our Life published a report on its investigations into how alcohol is promoted and sold by supermarkets in the North West. The results revealed just

how low the supermarkets would go to get customers through the door with alcohol routinely being sold for as little as 14p per unit of alcohol. Our Life found that in many stores the cheapest 330ml can of Coca-Cola is available for a cost of 32.7p and a 440ml can of 5.3% ABV Strongbow cider could be purchased at almost exactly the same price (33.3p).

"The supermarkets' Christmas and New Year offers highlight once again that cheap alcohol is a key component in the retailers' strategies to win market share," said Dr Giles. "These super-cheap deals are making it too easy for people to drink at harmful levels and it has to stop.

"If supermarkets can't be trusted to show responsibility to their local communities when it comes to alcohol pricing, then those communities will start asking serious questions about the irresponsible behaviour of companies who often say that they have their customers' interests at heart," said Dr Giles.

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For further information contact Andy Walker, Head of Corporate Affairs, Our Life, on 0161 237 2031 or 07818 568573 or email andy.walker@ourlife.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. Our Life is a campaigning organisation working with individuals and organisations who want to achieve the real and lasting changes that will make the North West a healthier place to live.
2. Established as a social enterprise, Our Life offers creative ways for the NHS, local government, the public, business and voluntary organisations to work in partnership to make sure that the North West becomes one of the healthiest regions in the country.
3. The North West has one the worst drinking levels in the country for people drinking at hazardous or harmful levels (1.33 million adults). In the North West, one person is admitted to hospital every seven minutes for an alcohol-related condition. The financial cost of alcohol-related harm to NHS North West is estimated to be in excess of £400 million per year.
4. The North West has almost seven million inhabitants and 230,000 companies. Its economy is worth a remarkable £106 billion. Despite this, the North West has one of the worst health records in the country. A boy born in the region might expect to live ten years younger than one born in the South East of the country.