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Scotland’s alcohol sales fell to 10.7 liters per adult drinker in 2025

Public Health Scotland’s updated dashboard shows stores captured 76% of sales as drinking patterns kept shifting away from pubs and bars

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Public Health Scotland has updated its alcohol consumption and harms dashboard with a new set of retail sales and pricing estimates covering 2017 through 2025, adding a clearer view of how alcohol is being bought in Scotland and how those patterns have

shifted over time.

The update, released on June 30, also adds new figures on alcohol-related crime and justice and homelessness for the 2024/25 financial year, and refreshes consumption measures using responses from the 2024 Scottish Health Survey.

The new retail data show that 10.7 liters of pure alcohol were sold per adult drinker in Scotland in 2025. Public Health Scotland said that was equal to 20.7 units per adult drinker per week. Over the full 2017-2025 period, the amount sold per adult drinker fell steadily from 12.7 liters to 10.7 liters.

Even with that decline, most alcohol sold in Scotland still moved through stores rather than bars, restaurants or pubs. In 2025, 76% of alcohol sales were made through the off-trade, including supermarkets and other licensed retailers. That share was up from 73% in 2017.

Public Health Scotland said total off-trade sales have fallen since 2017, but the off-trade has taken a larger share of the market as on-trade sales also declined. In Scotland, on-trade sales fell from 2.9 liters of pure alcohol per adult in 2017 to 2.1 liters in 2025. Off-trade sales fell from 7.7 liters to 6.5 liters over the same period.

The dashboard also compares Scotland with England and Wales. It shows that off-trade sales in Scotland were consistently higher across the period than in England and Wales, while on-trade sales were broadly similar. In England and Wales, on-trade sales fell from 2.7 liters per adult in 2017 to 2.1 liters in 2024, while off-trade sales dropped from 6.6 liters to 5.7 liters.

One notable shift in drinking behavior appears in survey responses rather than retail data. The share of adults in the Scottish Health Survey who said they do not drink alcohol rose steadily from 12% in 2008 to 20% in 2024.

For drinks producers, retailers and hospitality operators, the update offers a more direct signal about demand, pricing and where purchases are happening. The stronger weight of supermarket and other take-home sales may shape decisions on product mix, packaging, pricing strategy and compliance planning in Scotland, though the

commercial effect will vary by category and channel.

Public Health Scotland said this release is accompanied by a short report that gives context for the retail sales and pricing estimates as well as the latest wholly alcohol-attributable hospital admissions and mortality statistics.

The agency also made several technical changes to the dashboard. It removed the “Mean weekly units consumed” and “AUDIT score” pages from the main consumption section because small sample sizes no longer allow those measures to be broken down by sex at the same time as age group, deprivation quintile or income quintile. Those measures remain available elsewhere in the dashboard under a renamed tab, now called “Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) Metrics,” where they can still be viewed by age group, deprivation quintile, income quintile or sex separately.

The retail sales figures are estimates based on market data supplied by Nielsen IQ for the on-trade and Circana for the off-trade. Public Health Scotland noted that copyright remains with those providers. It also cautioned that the off-trade figures in this dashboard are not comparable with data published in earlier MESAS monitoring reports because those earlier reports used a different source.

The agency disclosed a correction to last year’s release as well. It said the June 2025 retail indicators had slightly understated off-trade alcohol sales because an analysis error excluded the final week of off-trade data for 2024. After correction, total off-trade liters sold in Scotland for that year would have been 0.6% higher, at 32.1 million liters instead of 31.9 million liters. Off-trade liters sold per adult would have been 0.7% higher, at 6.9 liters rather than 6.8 liters.

In combined figures, Public Health Scotland said total estimated liters sold would have been 0.4% higher, at 42.1 million liters instead of 41.9 million liters, while per-adult sales would have been 0.6% higher, at 9.1 liters rather than 9.0 liters. The agency said those revisions do not materially change the underlying trends or earlier conclusions.

The next release of the dashboard is scheduled for autumn 2026.