# Minimum pricing on alcohol – Transcript

***Why is the Scottish Government committed to minimum pricing on alcohol?***

**Kenny MacAskill:** Why is the Scottish Government committed to minimum pricing on alcohol?

Scotland's relationship with alcohol, we think, is out of kilter. Alcohol is there to be enjoyed, it is not there to be abused. We also are proud in Scotland of the fine malts and brews that we make and I, and others, enjoy them.

But sadly too many people have been abusing them and that has caused great problems here in Scotland.

If we could reduce the abuse of alcohol then the crime rate would plummet even more. It would make life easier for those who have to work in hospitals dealing with accident and emergency. It would help our economy because it's costing us a lot of money and sadly sometimes people aren't even able to turn up for work on Monday or hold down a job.

So we can't go on as we are. We have a problem but we can sort it and action is being taken. We've made sure that it's got to be sold responsibly. Selling it in a manner that encourages people to over-consume isn't acceptable – whether that's in the on-sale or off-sale trade, whether in pubs or in supermarkets.

Equally, there's been something wrong in Scotland that you could buy a bottle of high-strength alcohol for lower than it would cost you to, or less than it would cost you to buy a bottle of water. That isn't right and that's why, as a government, we are committed to bringing in minimum pricing.

We passed it in legislation here in the Parliament and we are proud of that. It is being challenged in the courts at the present moment but we are confident those challenges will be overcome and we'll make sure that alcohol is there, it's not to be sold in a manner and at a cost that is entirely unacceptable. We are not trying to price it out of the hands of ordinary people but, as I say, when you have a situation when a bottle of water costs more than some high-strength, low-cost alcohol, there is something manifestly wrong.

 [End of transcript]