



Key Messages on Liver Disease

The British Liver Trust have provided some key messages on liver disease to share with politicians. This document should be circulated with all personnel who will meet with the politician during the visit to ensure consistency in messaging.

- **We are facing a liver disease crisis across the UK.** Liver disease deaths have doubled in 2 decades. Hospital admissions due to liver disease have increased by almost 47% compared to 10 years ago.
- **90% of liver disease is preventable** and the increase in prevalence, hospital admissions and deaths are driven by alcohol consumption, obesity and viral hepatitis.
- **If caught at an early stage, liver damage can often be reversed.** It is therefore vital that we improve prevention and embed early detection pathways to save lives and reduce huge pressures facing the NHS and Treasury.
- **Liver disease usually has no symptoms in the early stages** and sadly three-quarters of people diagnosed with cirrhosis are found when it is too late for effective intervention or treatment. We therefore need to test people who are at high risk.
- **Liver disease is a barometer for health inequalities.** Liver disease deaths are 4x higher in the most deprived areas.
- New figures from the Office for National Statistics show the number of people dying from alcohol-related problems reached a new high in 2021 - **up 27% from 2019 and 7% since 2020**. 78% (7,518) of these deaths were due from alcohol-related liver disease[1].
- **Liver disease is the biggest risk factor for liver cancer**, which is the fastest growing cause of cancer death in the UK. Liver cancer is one of the six less survivable cancers (liver, lung, stomach, pancreatic, oesophageal and brain cancers), which account for over 40% of common cancer deaths in the UK[2].
- The British Liver Trust is calling for:
 - A prompt and comprehensive review of adult liver services to address the huge variation and inequalities in liver disease treatment outcomes and care.
 - A joined up, comprehensive evidence-based alcohol strategy which must include population-level measures to limit the affordability, availability, and promotion of alcohol.
 - The government to urgently tackle the accessibility and abundance of unhealthy food which is often significantly cheaper than healthy alternatives. This must start with restricting advertising and multibuys of unhealthy foods and looking at regulation to address foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

Ask your visiting politician if they would be willing to get involved by contacting the British Liver Trust (publicaffairs@britishlivertrust.org.uk), who can provide written and oral questions, opinion pieces and tailored briefings to support them in raising the profile of this overlooked issue in Parliament, with constituents or for debates or events on liver disease and topics such as alcohol, obesity, cancer, and health inequalities.

[1] [New data reveals deadly impact of 'pandemic drinking culture' with record rise in alcohol-related liver disease deaths - British Liver Trust](#)

[2] CRUK statistics: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type>