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Whisky marketing passes responsibility audit

An in-depth audit of industry marketing practice has concluded that Scotch Whisky companies are meeting the highest standards of responsible brand marketing and promotion. Research by The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) - published today - found that distillers had successfully implemented tough industry rules into everyday marketing practices.

The SWA Code of Practice on Responsible Marketing and Promotion was launched in 2005. It is mandatory in the UK and sets best practice for SWA members worldwide.

Jack Law, Chairman of the Code's Independent Complaints Panel and Chief Executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, reviewed the SWA's audit process and findings. He said:

"The SWA's Code has taken on board the frequent criticism of self regulatory codes - that they are soft on enforcement - by introducing mechanisms to fine, name and shame, and ultimately expel a member continually breaching the Code. This is a welcome dimension and one that Alcohol Focus Scotland would like to see introduced into the codes of similar bodies.

"The Code is well used by SWA members seeking advice on its application and enjoys the benefit of having no official complaints lodged since its introduction. This is a measure of the positive value and effectiveness of the Code. The audit findings have also provided SWA members with some issues to consider which can only improve the Code's effectiveness in the future."

Following the audit, which involved face to face interviews and a review of marketing material, SWA members have agreed to revise the Code to introduce new sponsorship guidelines and to extend its mandatory scope EU-wide.

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1. The SWA Code of Practice on Responsible Marketing and Promotion of Scotch Whisky and the Implementation Audit Report can be accessed on the SWA website at www.scotch-whisky.org.uk.
2. For further information please contact David Williamson on 0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151.