



Friday 8 January 2010

COMMITTEE ATTACK ON SPIRIT DRINKS MISPLACED AND FLAWED

Responding to a Health Select Committee report on alcohol published today (8 January), Campbell Evans, Government & Consumer Affairs Director at The Scotch Whisky Association, said:

“It is disappointing but unsurprising that the Committee has simply re-hashed restrictive blanket policies that fail to target problem drinkers, whilst penalising moderate consumers. Ever higher excise duties on Scotch and minimum pricing would do little to target the minority of people who drink to excess. Yet they would seriously damage a major contributor to the economy and one of the country’s few manufacturing successes, representing 25% of UK food and drink exports.

“The Committee is unfairly singling out spirit drinks, such as Scotch Whisky. Spirit drinks represent less than 20% of the UK drinks market and alcohol sold as spirits is already taxed more heavily than other drinks. In calling for minimum pricing, the Committee is seeking to introduce a measure that we believe to be both illegal and ineffective.

“Distillers are committed to tackling alcohol misuse and support measures to tackle loss-leading alcohol sales, ensure strict licensing law enforcement, and uphold the highest standards of responsible marketing practice.

“The Health Committee is right to call for more efforts to tackle alcohol related harm. However, it would have been far better for the Committee to examine what effective measures to tackle alcohol harm could be brought forward in partnership between government, retailers, and producers.”

- ENDS -

Note to Editors:

1. For further information, please contact Campbell Evans (0131 222 9231 and 07768 002 262) or David Williamson (0131 222 9230 and 07730 496 151).