



22 February 2007

Landmark partnership promotes alcohol responsibility

A landmark partnership to tackle alcohol misuse bringing together Scotch Whisky distillers, the Scottish Executive and a wide range of other alcohol producers and retailers was launched today.

The unique partnership, supported by The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA), details a range of joint commitments to action aimed at promoting responsible attitudes to alcohol. The agreement embodies a long term commitment by all stakeholders to work to change cultural attitudes to excessive drinking in Scotland, whilst recognising that most people enjoy alcohol in moderation in line with a healthy lifestyle.

Developed by an expert group that included SWA representatives, concrete actions set out in the partnership include a tough approach to the illegal purchase and sale of alcohol, development of responsible drinking messages and best practice standards across the alcohol industry, and promotion of improved alcohol education, training and workplace policies.

Welcoming today's launch of the partnership by Andy Kerr MSP, the Health Minister, Gavin Hewitt, SWA Chief Executive, said:

"Today's partnership - bringing together government, producers and retailers for the first time - demonstrates that Scotland is serious about tackling alcohol misuse. Changing cultural attitudes to the misuse of alcohol is a major challenge and will require a sustained effort by all parties. The range of actions already agreed is, however, significant and SWA members are determined to take a lead in ensuring that this partnership is effective and that excessive drinking becomes as socially unacceptable as drink driving."

"Building on industry best practice, we are already developing responsible drinking messages and sponsorship guidelines, as well as supporting improved education and training resources and early interventions to prevent alcohol problems arising. A tough approach to the illegal purchase or sale of alcohol will be an important step forward. Individuals must also take more responsibility for their drinking choices. "

- ENDS -



Note to Editors:

1. The Partnership has been signed by The Scottish Executive, The Scotch Whisky Association, and eight other trade associations (representing alcohol producers and retailers), as well as by Diageo, Scottish & Newcastle, and Tennent's. Fourteen areas for action by stakeholders have been prioritised. A copy of the document is attached below at Appendix One.
2. Launched in 2005, the SWA Code of Practice on Responsible Marketing and Promotion of Scotch Whisky is internationally recognised as a model of self regulation. Distillers have also adopted unit labelling and responsibility messages on labels and in adverts to encourage sensible drinking choices. Education resources such as www.drinkaware.co.uk also receive support and funding.
3. For further information, please contact Campbell Evans (0131 222 9231 or 07768 002 262) or David Williamson (0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151) at the SWA.



Appendix One

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE AND THE SCOTTISH ALCOHOL INDUSTRY, FEBRUARY 2007

Initial signatories:

- Scottish Executive**
- Scotch Whisky Association**
- Tennents**
- Diageo**
- Scottish & Newcastle**
- Scottish Retail Consortium**
- Scottish Licensed Trade Association**
- BII**
- Scottish Beer & Pub Association**
- Scottish Grocers' Federation**
- Wine & Spirits Trade Association**
- Gin & Vodka Association**
- National Association of Cider Makers**

In recognition of our shared aim to reduce alcohol misuse in Scotland, the Scottish Executive and the alcoholic drinks industry have agreed a number of actions as a first step in what we hope will be a long term collaborative approach to fostering a culture which recognises that responsible, moderate consumption can be part of a healthy society.

This agreement covers both alcohol producers and retailers (covering both on and off sales) and the initiatives agreed are designed to harness the knowledge and expertise of representatives from across the alcohol industry.

All parties are bringing resources and commitment to the furthering of the aims of the partnership - with an emphasis on delivering tangible action and outcomes. The Drinkaware Trust will promote responsible drinking messages and provide education and campaigning resources across the UK. This partnership aims to deliver added value in Scotland and will work with the Drinkaware Trust to ensure that our activities are aligned and mutually supportive to achieve greatest impact.

The partnership also jointly recognises the need for enforcement of current licensing legislation to ensure a zero tolerance approach to the illegal purchase of alcohol and the resultant alcohol related disorder. The Executive commits to taking further action in this respect, including the roll out of the test purchasing arrangements currently being piloted in Fife to prevent under age sales.

The Executive recognises that tackling alcohol misuse is not only a health issue, and, as referred to in the Updated Plan for Action on Alcohol Problems, commits to delivering resources from across the Executive to address this.



There are no quick fixes to what is a long term problem requiring a long term cultural change programme. Neither do the actions amount to the complete solution, but we believe that by working in partnership long term cultural change can be effected. We may continue to broaden this partnership to include others. Participation in this arrangement will not prevent parties also continuing their own work in this area

The agreement is not legally binding. It is complementary to the Updated Plan for Action on Alcohol Problems and as with the Plan will be reviewed in due course.

The initiatives outlined below are the first in an ongoing programme. Others will be added and this list will be continuously updated and refined.

SPECIFIC INITIATIVES ALREADY AGREED, INVOLVING INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS AS APPROPRIATE:

We will:

- Build on best practice to develop and promote common core sensible drinking messages, and information about the incompatibility of alcohol consumption with certain activities;
- In pursuit of the above, share media and marketing expertise to promote those messages;
- Share consumer research on promoting sensible drinking and responsible retailing;
- Consider the scope for joint events to focus public and media attention on the dangers of alcohol misuse, alongside wider messages of personal responsibility.
- Work with the media and other stakeholders to discourage inappropriate endorsement or legitimisation of inappropriate alcohol consumption;
- Develop a set of shared Scottish specific Standards, underpinning and strengthening in Scotland the approach already adopted at UK level;
- Work with retailers and the National Licensing Forum to support a comprehensive server training programme in responsible drinking ahead of the 2009 Licensing Act implementation deadline;
- Develop and implement exemplar alcohol policies in our own workplaces, which we will also share and promote more widely within the public and private sectors, including to Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs);
- Where appropriate, individual companies will pilot low-alcohol alternatives in the Scottish market and use their joint creative energies to market the principle of consuming low alcohol alternatives, within the context of making informed choices and unit awareness.



- Investigate the promotion of no alcohol alternatives in the retail sector;
- Develop and produce guidelines to establish best practice on the promotion of alcohol via sponsorship;
- Work together to develop and implement an intensive series of interventions, including community support, within geographically focused pilots to establish the cumulative effect of a multi faceted and targeted approach to reducing alcohol harm;
- Produce educational materials for parents to use with their children outside the school setting, also encouraging parents to consider their own drinking habits in discussing the issue with their children;
- Hold a National Awareness Week with support from other partners such as the voluntary sector.

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