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News Release

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ALCOHOL INDUSTRY SIGNS UP TO NEW SPONSORSHIP GUIDELINES

Promoting responsible drinking and ensuring young people are not targeted will be at the heart of sponsorship by drinks firms under new guidelines.

The guidelines have been drawn up by the Scottish Government and Alcohol Industry Partnership, which brings together representatives from government and the major drinks firms.

Recognising the important contribution of drinks companies to the Scottish economy and civic life through local and national sponsorship activities, the new guidelines identify best practice for alcohol brand sponsorships in Scotland.

Distillers, brewers, and alcohol retailers in Scotland have agreed to:

- Include activities or events to promote responsible drinking in any new commercial sponsorship
- Ensure alcohol brands are not used to sponsor teams, brands, celebrities or events with particular appeal to under 18s, nor sponsor individuals under 18
- Carry responsible drinking messages on all point of sale communications
- Conduct sampling activities at sponsored events in a responsible manner

Ms Robison said:

“I welcome the development of these guidelines, an initiative from the Scottish Government & Alcohol Industry Partnership.

“The Scottish Government has always recognised that the alcohol industry has an important role to play in the drive to

create a culture where responsible consumption of alcohol is the norm.

"We also appreciate that the industry makes a significant contribution to the promotion of sports and the arts in Scotland, but this comes with responsibilities. I look forward to the rollout and implementation of these guidelines and will monitor their progress with interest.

"Of course, the Scottish Government believes that self-regulation by the industry alone will not be enough to get to grips with the spiralling problem of alcohol misuse in Scotland.

"That's why we have proposed radical measures which we believe will help rebalance Scotland's relationship with alcohol and defuse the health timebomb we are storing up for the future. We have consulted widely on our ideas and will shortly outline the way forward.

"It's only by tackling this country's drink problem head-on that we can stop alcohol misuse blighting families and communities and reduce the 2.25-billion-pound strain it's putting on our economy."

George Kyle, Head of Sponsorship, Inbev UK said:

"Tennent's has maintained a role at the heart of Scottish football and music for the past 30 years and we are committed to promoting responsible drinking across the country in all of our activities.

"As a founding member of the Scottish Government and Alcohol Industry Partnership, Tennent's recognises its responsibilities and welcomes the new commercial sponsorship guidelines which reflect our own high standards as Scotland's number one alcohol brand.

"The launch of the new guidelines will further enhance Tennent's promotion of responsible alcohol consumption in all of our commitments including T in the Park and the Scotland National side."

Scottish FA Chief Executive Gordon Smith said:

"The Scottish FA has worked with Scotland's alcohol industry for many years. Their input - both financial and in terms of schemes designed to promote health and activity among young people - has had a significant impact on our national sport.

"These new guidelines demonstrate the industry's commitment to Scottish society and sends out a clear message that they understand their role in helping to develop healthier, happier Scots."

Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of The Scotch Whisky Association, said:

“Scotch Whisky distillers are proud to make an important contribution to Scottish life through support of a wide range of local and national cultural and sporting events, including major initiatives such as Homecoming Scotland.

“We believe such activities can be used to extend the industry’s commitment to tackling alcohol misuse. We welcome the new guidelines, which are in line with the commitment of distillers to uphold the highest standards of social and corporate responsibility in all their activities.”

NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

1. Alcohol misuse is estimated to cost Scotland at least 2.25 billion pounds every year in costs to the NHS, police, courts, social services and impact on the wider economy.

2. According to the most recent survey on adolescent drinking habits in Scotland, over a third of 15-year-old girls and boys drank alcohol in the previous week, often consuming above weekly adult sensible drinking guidelines.

3. A recent series of audits by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland found that nearly 650 children, including 15 children under twelve and one as young as eight years old, were treated at hospital A&E departments for alcohol-related health problems during the audit period. The report also found that an average of 13 units of alcohol was consumed by the children in the 24 hours before attendance at hospital.

4. The Scottish Government & Alcohol Industry Partnership was formed in February 2007 and brings together representatives from government and the major drinks firms to tackle alcohol related harm and promote responsible drinking, retailing, advertising and promotion.

Building on current self-regulatory mechanisms, the new guidelines go beyond The Portman Group Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging, and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks. The Scottish Government and industry partners are developing a joint mechanism to monitor and enforce the implementation of the sponsorship principles.

Contact: James Tout, Scottish Government Communications:
0131 244 2968/07917 588 520

Contact: David Williamson, The Scotch Whisky Association:
0131 222 9230/07730 496 151