



Wednesday 8 October 2008

## Alcohol Workplace Policy launched

A new initiative to help employers across Scotland develop responsible workplace alcohol policies has been unveiled. The aid for employers comes as Scotland's Alcohol Awareness Week (5-11 October 2008) challenges Scots to think about their drinking choices.

Developed by the Scottish Government & Alcohol Industry Partnership, in conjunction with the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, the 'model alcohol policy' provides employers with off the shelf best practice guidelines to deal with alcohol related problems at work.

The policy aims to create a working environment which underpins the health, safety and welfare of employees, as well as corporate responsibility and legislative requirements. The initiative is supported by the Scottish Government and a wide range of organisations, including The Scotch Whisky Association, the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and CBI Scotland.

**Ian Tasker, Assistant Secretary of the STUC, said:**

"The STUC welcomes the publication of this model policy to assist employers to educate and support workers with alcohol related workplace problems. Employers too often move quickly to disciplinary procedures without considering positive interventions that have benefits for the employee and the employer. Often this is as a result of absence of useful information on how to draw up policies so we see this as a very positive move by the Scottish Government & Alcohol Industry Partnership."

**Douglas Meikle, The Scotch Whisky Association's Alcohol Policy Manager, said:**

"As major employers in Scotland, distillers strongly support the new model workplace policy and have been instrumental in its development, building on existing best practice across the industry. Our aim is to support an environment where employers are able to respond to alcohol issues and employees feel able to seek help if facing alcohol problems."

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**David Lonsdale, Deputy Director of CBI Scotland, said:**

“CBI Scotland welcomes this important initiative. It is important that employers have access to appropriate guidelines for building responsible workplace alcohol policies. Ultimately, this will be to the benefit of both employers and employees.”

**Shona Robison MSP, the Scottish Minister for Public Health, said:**

“With people’s minds focused on sensible drinking this Alcohol Awareness Week, today is an excellent opportunity to launch a tool to help businesses plan their policies around alcohol.

“There is a very significant economic cost to Scotland from lost productivity at work and days off sick due to alcohol. It is therefore very important that businesses think about how alcohol consumption can have an impact on their employees, have the processes in place to support staff experiencing difficulties, and manage the effect alcohol can have on their ability to perform their duties effectively.”

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Note to Editors:

1. The model alcohol policy is available to download at [www.infoscotland.com/alcohol](http://www.infoscotland.com/alcohol).
2. The Scottish Government & Alcohol Industry Partnership, launched in 2007, brings together government, producers and retailers to deliver a range of activities promoting more responsible attitudes to alcohol.
3. The Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives acts as a catalyst and facilitator for the delivery of healthy working lives in Scotland. See [www.healthyworkinglives.com](http://www.healthyworkinglives.com) for more details.
4. A CD-based programme ‘Thinking about Drinking’, developed by Diageo, which aims to help organisations inform and educate employees about alcohol consumption is being made available to employers through the Scottish Government & Alcohol Industry Partnership.
5. For further information please contact:
  - Ian Tasker at the STUC on 0141 337 8112 or 07974 966 227.
  - David Lonsdale at CBI Scotland on 0141 222 2184.
  - James Trout at the Scottish Government on 0131 244 2968 or 07919 588 520.
  - David Williamson at the SWA on 0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151.