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**CONSUMERS WARNED NOT TO BE MISLED BY CLAIMS OF
“ALCOHOL FREE WHISKY”**

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has warned consumers not to be taken in by a product which claims to be “the world’s first alcohol free whisky”. The SWA said there can be no such product and such a description is illegal in the European Union and many other countries.

The SWA said it will monitor and investigate the sale and promotion of the product with a view to taking appropriate action.

A company called ArKay Beverages has announced that its “alcohol free whisky” will be available from 1 December. However, the SWA explained that, internationally, whisky is understood to be a distilled beverage made from cereals and aged in wooden barrels. It said that ArKay’s promotional claim that the product is a type of whisky is illegal under UK and European law and in many other jurisdictions.

There are strict laws in force in the European Union and many other countries defining what may be sold as whisky. Such laws are designed to maintain the reputation of whisky as a quality product and to protect consumers. European legislation prohibits - with very limited exceptions - the name “whisky” from being “used to describe or present in any way whatsoever” any drink other than whisky.

Glen Barclay, SWA Director of Legal Affairs, said: “Such promotion is taking advantage of the high quality reputation of the product that is whisky - which is a distilled spirit produced from natural ingredients - when it is in fact just a soft drink with artificial flavourings. Not only will consumers be confused but such a product unfairly trades on the reputation of genuine whisky.”

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