

## **Briefing Note**

### **UK Government Alcohol Strategy 2012**

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The Government's Alcohol Strategy sets out the policy direction for alcohol related harm with an express focus on changing the binge drinking culture in the UK. There is also a focus on working with the industry, cutting red tape, giving powers to local authorities reduce alcohol related violence and disorder and reducing the number of people drinking to harmful levels.

#### **1. Alcohol Strategy**

Key policies the strategy describes include:

- a minimum unit price for alcohol;
- consulting on the banning of multi-buy discount deals;
- introducing stronger powers for local areas to control the density of licensed premises
- zero tolerance of drunken behaviour in A&E departments;
- working with the industry to secure their support in changing drinking behaviour
- a late night levy to get pubs and clubs helping to pay for policing
- emphasis on powers to stop serving alcohol to intoxicated people
- Supporting individuals to make informed responsible choices about their drinking

Encouragingly, some of the key strategies endorsed through this document are being put into practice in East Sussex already. These include; A&E data sharing, A&E alcohol liaison nurses funded by clinical commissioning groups, Identification and Brief Advice and, locally, Community Alcohol Partnerships.

#### **2. Outcomes**

The national alcohol strategy describes the following outcomes:

- A change in behaviour so that people think it is not acceptable to drink in ways that could cause harm to themselves or others;
- A reduction in the amount of alcohol-fuelled violent crime;
- A reduction in the number of adults drinking above the NHS guidelines;
- A reduction in the number of people "binge drinking"
- A reduction in the number of alcohol-related deaths; and
- A sustained reduction in both the numbers of 11-15 year olds drinking alcohol and amounts consumed

#### **3. Reducing the availability of cheap alcohol**

Introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol will require a change in legislation and consultation will be launched in the coming months. The Strategy does not set out a proposed minimum price. A consultation on banning multi-buy price promotions in shops will also be launched. The intention is for the ban not to be applied to the on-trade (pubs, bars, restaurants etc.) as this is already a more controlled and regulated drinking environment.

#### **4. Advertising**

There is no intention to introduce a ban on TV advertising of alcohol products. Instead there is an intention to work with Ofcom, the Advertising Standards Authority and the Portman Group to make the public more aware of the controls that already exist as regards alcohol marketing and encourage public feedback. This will include the application of Advertising Standards Authority regulations to new media. A dedicated website called ParentPort will be

created to provide information and allow complaints to be made about product advertising towards children.

## **5. Emerging Issues**

The strategy recognises that there are emerging issues such as counterfeit alcohol and an increase in liver disease and reiterates the responsibility to address these issues. A consultation has been launched on anti fraud measures. The strategy directs us to the recently published Liver Disease Strategy.

## **6. Local Action**

The strategy describes reforms to the health and criminal justice system and how the government intends for those reforms to be used as a lever for local areas to tackle alcohol harm. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the role of the new Police and Crime Commissioners are cited as key drivers of local action.

The strategy mentions key initiatives available to local areas to improve alcohol related night time economy environments in partnership. Best Bar None, Purple Flag and Community Alcohol Partnerships are amongst those cited.

The strategy describes how, through the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 local areas will have stronger powers to control the density of licensed premises in one area, including making the impact on health a consideration for this. It will also become easier to refuse, revoke or impose conditions on a licence. The vicinity test will be removed so that anyone will be able to input into a licensing decision, and it does not matter where they live.

The introduction of Early Morning Restriction Orders will enable local areas to restrict late night sales.

The police.uk website will publish more information about incidences occurring in key public spaces and licensing authorities will be encouraged to make it easier for the public to report potential breaches of licence conditions.

## **7. Enforcement**

There is an endorsement of proactive visible policing to prevent night time economy crime. The strategy describes how the introduction of a late night levy, for businesses that sell alcohol late into the night, will locally fund the additional resource this requires.

There is an emphasis placed on making greater use of existing powers, such as prosecutions for those who knowingly serve alcohol to a drunk.

The fine for persistently selling alcohol to person under the age of 18 will double to £20,000.

## **8. Zero tolerance of violence and disorder in hospitals**

The strategy cites the Community Accreditation Scheme, which enables accredited staff to issue Penalty Notices for Disorder (£80 fines) in A&E. It supports the principle of using the late night levy to place police in A&E according to local needs.

## **9. Compulsory Sobriety**

The home office will launch pilots testing compulsory sobriety measures as part of existing conditional caution powers, for people convicted of low level, high-volume crime such as being drunk and disorderly, criminal damage and public disorder. Later this year the

government intends to pilot compulsory sobriety measures for community orders, which will aim to tackle more serious offences such as common assault and GBH without intent. This will involve the use of electronic alcohol monitoring equipment.

## **10. Information Sharing**

The strategy sets out the importance of hospitals sharing non confidential information with the police and the active use of intelligence to target policing and tackle problem premises.

## **11. Evidence-based Action to Tackle Health Harms**

The alcohol strategy endorses the placement of alcohol liaison nurses in A&E, co-funded by local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups

The strategy endorses partnership work for early intervention and secondary prevention.

The strategy reiterates the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance regarding alcohol screening in NHS settings and cites Identification and Brief Advice (IBA) as the key delivery mechanism to do this focusing on groups at increased risk. It supports the inclusion of alcohol identification and brief advice in the Health Check for 40-75 year old adults and states the government's intention to explore further opportunities for GP action through the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF).

The strategy cross references the Government's Ending Violence against Women and Girls Action Plan, and highlights that the use of drugs and alcohol can potentially increase the frequency and severity of violence. There is an expectation that the recent NICE guidance is implemented and a quality standard on the management of drinking and alcohol dependence is created.

## **12. Responsibility Deal**

The responsibility deal alcohol pledge aims to cut a billion units from the nation's alcohol intake by 2015. The deal involves key industry commitment to provide a greater choice of lower strength alcohol products and smaller measures by 2015 and responsible marketing. It also aims to ensure that labelling contains NHS guidelines, drinking while pregnant and calorie content. Industry harm reduction initiatives such as Drinkaware, Challenge 21, Challenge 25 and Community Alcohol Partnerships are also part of the pledge.

## **13. Age Related Strategy**

The strategy describes how the government will ensure that young people know the risks associated with alcohol by making it a key feature of a new £2.6 million youth social marketing programme aimed to drive further reductions in regular smoking, drinking, drug use and risky sexual behaviour during the teenage years. There is also a commitment to making sure information is available to parents. The alcohol strategy cross references the Troubled Families agenda, its review of PSHE and Positive for Youth, the cross government youth policy plan. The alcohol strategy places an emphasis on maximising the 'treatable moment' by ensuring there are follow up arrangements in place when a young person attends A&E due to alcohol. It highlights the opportunities that sexual health services have to help address alcohol misuse in young people.

Adults under age 25 are a key focus of the strategy. The strategy endorses the creation of new campaigns such as Drinkaware's 'Why let good Times go Bad?' and asserts an expectation on colleges and universities not to unduly promote drinking.

For 25-64 year old adults, many of whom are parents, the government aims to challenge the use of alcohol as a stress reliever through its Change4Life campaign. The Chief Medical

Officer will conduct a review of the current alcohol guidelines for adults and this will consider whether separate guidance should be issued for the over 65s, as is currently done for pregnant women.

#### **14. Treatment and Recovery**

The alcohol strategy cross references the National Drugs Strategy with a focus on increasing effective treatment for dependent drinkers.

The Alcohol Strategy cites Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) as good practice in tackling families' entrenched problems, including drug and alcohol problems.

The strategy cross references the No Health Without Mental Health strategy that will be published soon as this will provide further information on wellbeing and co-existing mental health and substance use issues.

The strategy places an emphasis on alcohol related violence in relation to offending. The strategy states the intention to increase the flexibility of Alcohol Treatment Requirements to be tailored to more serious alcohol-related offending.

There is an endorsement to use Home Office Drug Intervention monies for both drug and alcohol arrest referral, on the basis of local priorities.

#### **15. The government's alcohol strategy can be found at:**

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/alcohol-drugs/alcohol/alcohol-strategy>

#### **16. Links to documents, initiatives and Consultations Cross-referenced in the Strategy**

1. Anti Fraud Alcohol Consultation can be viewed at [http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=pageLibrary\\_ConsultationDocuments&propertyType=document&columns=1&id=HMCE\\_PROD\\_1\\_031982](http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageLibrary_ConsultationDocuments&propertyType=document&columns=1&id=HMCE_PROD_1_031982)
2. Community Alcohol Partnerships can be viewed at <http://www.communityalcoholpartnerships.co.uk/>
3. Best Bar None can be viewed at <http://bbnuk.com/>
4. Purple Flag can be viewed at <http://purpleflag.org.uk/>
5. Police UK website can be viewed at <http://www.police.uk/>
6. NICE Guidelines on alcohol can be accessed at <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=bypublichealth&PUBLICHEALTH=Alcohol#/search/?reload>
7. Community Safety Accreditation Scheme information can be viewed at <http://www.sussex.police.uk/about-us/policies-and-procedures/current-force-policies/community-safety-accreditation-scheme-sussex-police>
8. Sobriety Orders can be viewed at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/features/new-sobriety-order-to-tackle-alcohol-related-crime>
9. Responsibility Deal can be viewed at <http://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/>
10. GP Quality and Outcomes Framework can be viewed at <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/audits-and-performance/the-quality-and-outcomes-framework>
11. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan can be viewed at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/call-end-violence-women-girls/vawg-action-plan>
12. Positive for Youth Action Plan can be viewed at <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/Positive%20for%20Youth>
13. National Drugs Strategy can be viewed at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/drugs/drug-strategy-2010/>
14. Drink Aware's Why Let Good times go Bad can be viewed at <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/campaigns/2011/why-let-good-times-go-bad-2011/keeping-your-good-times-good>
15. Change4Life Alcohol Campaign can be viewed at <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/change-for-life-adults.aspx>