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Annex A

Correspondence between RASG and ministers since last ministerial-RASG meeting

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Retail of Alcohol Standards Group
c/o Wine & Spirit Trade Association
39-45 Bermondsey Street
London, SE1 3XF

Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP
The Home Secretary
Home Office
Peel Building
2 Marsham Street
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SW1P 4DF

2 December 2005

SALES OF ALCOHOL TO UNDER-18s

Our most recent meeting (Tuesday 22 November) involved a frank discussion on the issue of sales of alcohol to under 18s and how best retailers could tackle it. It was a useful and constructive meeting. You welcomed our Action Plan which sets out how we intend to address this problem and we agreed that we would work in partnership over the next year with the common aim of eliminating sales of alcohol to minors.

This aspiration has been welcomed in all sectors of the industry and has been widely covered in the press. By joining the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group (RASG), members have acknowledged their duties and obligations in regards to the responsible sale of alcohol, and are totally committed to this aspiration. We very much welcome your commitment to support us.

The problems that we are facing are common to the whole licensed trade. We believe we have been successful in taking a leadership role in tackling these matters, and we hope that the Government will encourage other sectors of the industry to work with us going forward, starting with their participation in rolling out the universal signage. We also want, over time, to look at further ways in which we can combat underage sales together.

Members of RASG thought it timely to update you on some of the more immediate actions we have taken since you welcomed our Action Plan at the joint Government and Industry meetings chaired by yourself.

I hope this letter and the enclosed paper will reaffirm the proactive stance we have taken on this issue. We will continue to monitor the effect this work has on sales to minors, particularly in terms of rates of challenges. We hope to continue this productive relationship with the Home Office and DCMS.

We look forward to receiving a copy of the minutes of our last meeting as a record of the progress we have made and the constructive dialogue we continue to have with your office.

NICK GRANT
Interim Chair
Retail of Alcohol Standards Group

on behalf of ASDA, Bargain Booze, Co-op, Marks & Spencers, Morrisons, Oddbins, Sainsbury's, Somerfield, Tesco, Thresher, United Co-op, Waitrose, WSTA, BRC and the ACS.

CC Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP
Paul Goggins MP
James Purnell MP

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Nick Grant
Interim Chair
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22nd December 2005

SALES OF ALCOHOL TO UNDER-18s

Thank you for your letter of 2nd December to the Home Secretary updating us on progress you have made in implementing your Action Plan to eliminate under-age sales of alcohol from your stores. The Home Secretary asked me to reply, as the Minister responsible for alcohol.

I very much welcome the progress the RASG has made in focussing on under-age sales, and I enjoyed being present at the launch of the universal signage on December 6th. I notice that these signs have already been distributed around many supermarkets and other off-licences, and it is to the credit of everyone involved that this has happened so quickly. It has set an impressive precedent for prompt action and shows what can be done when there is the right level of commitment to progress.

You requested that we promote the signage through our contacts in the on-licensed trade. We intend to meet representatives from the on-trade in January to discuss their implementation plan for the Principles and Standards document (representatives from the off-trade will also be present) which was published on 18 November. We have already said that we want the universal signage to have as impact as possible, and we will raise this with the on-trade at that meeting.

The right kind of training is clearly vital to reducing under-age sales. I welcome your review and evaluation of training, and production of a best-practice document. It is important that individual companies implement best practice identified by the RASG, and that the Group continues to monitor innovative work in this area and update its recommendations regularly. I think it may also be important that training to reduce under-age sales is incorporated into the standard till-training package, rather than being 'tacked on' at the end as a separate section.

I was pleased to note the co-operation you have been receiving from ACPO, the Trading Standards Institute and LACORS, and I hope that your discussions with them will enable news of positive test-purchase results to be released to stores. As you know, the Home Office does not collect such data outside of AMEC, and so I welcome negotiations aimed at getting this information available to your stores at a local level. Your negotiations with

these bodies should also pay dividends in achieving better relationships and understanding between stores and police, again at local level.

I was impressed by your commitment to the ambitious target of eliminating under-age sales by the end of November next year, and we will be monitoring test-purchase results from the current AMEC very closely to see the extent to which the decisions and actions of the RASG and individual companies translate into changed behaviour within stores. Data from the campaign has been slow in coming in to the centre, and we are not yet able to provide any details on how those figures compare to those of the Summer campaign. The Home Secretary has made it clear that he intends to release the test-purchase data when it has been analysed, but we would welcome the opportunity for a further meeting at the end of January to discuss the results and how they ought to be published.

This meeting will also present a useful occasion to review progress so far, and to see how the impetus which has been created can continue. I can assure you of the Government's full commitment to this issue, and that we will follow your progress towards elimination of under-age sales with keen interest. Reducing the availability of alcohol to children in this way will be an important contribution to the wider work which the Government and its many partners are carrying out to reduce the harm caused by the misuse of alcohol.

My officials will be in touch with you shortly to arrange the details of a meeting in January, and I look forward to seeing you there. In the meantime, please accept my best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

I have attached here a copy of the note of our meeting on the 22nd November, as you requested.

PAUL GOGGINS

Annex A

Attendees

Nick Grant
Jonathan Lloyd
Adrian Hill
David Brackwell
Pam Nicholl
Gordon Madden
John Spurs
Jo Brierley
Andrew Opie
Jeremy Beadles
Kate Coleman

Sainsburys
Tesco
CO-OP
United CO-OP
Waitrose
ASDA
Morrisons
Marks and Spencer
British Retail Consortium
Wine & Sprints Trade Association
Wine & Sprints Trade Association

Paul Evans
Margaret O'Mara

*withheld under
S.40 of foI*

Director, Police Standards Unit
Director, Crime Reduction Directorate
Police Standards Unit
Police Standards Unit
Police Standards Unit
Violent Crime Unit
Press Office
DCMS
DCMS

Annex B

**MEETING BETWEEN MINISTERS AND RETAIL OF ALCOHOL
STANDARDS GROUP (RASG)**

Home Office
31st January 2006
10h00

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Test-purchase results from the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign
3. Update from RASG
4. RASG concerns over test-purchasing
5. Publication of results
6. Next steps

Annex C - Annotated agenda

1. Welcome and introductions (Paul Goggins)

- Welcome attendees back to Home Office, and in particular welcome **Jeremy Beadles**, the new Chief Executive of the Wine and Spirits Trade Association.

2. Test-purchase results from Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign

- Congratulate the group and the individual companies involved on the reductions achieved in test-purchase failures. Overall, the supermarkets achieved a 66% reduction from the figures from the Summer 2005 campaign. This is a clear indication not only that the hard work everyone has put in has paid off, but also that the overall approach of enforcement and focus from the supermarkets is effective.
- Attendees have the figures in front of them, but you may want to ask S. 40 to run through them briefly:

	AMEC 1	AMEC 2	Mini-AMEC (Summer 2005 – 25 BCUs)	AMEC 3
Test-purchases carried out	1,864	989	909	6697
On-licence / off-licence split	391 / 1,473	334 / 655	239 / 670	1,674 / 5,023
On-licence failure rate	45%	32%	51%	29%
Off-licence failure rate (incl. supermarkets)	31%	32%	36%	20%
Supermarkets failure rate	-	-	50%	17% (of 1,564)

- Results for the major stores are as follows (**please note that companies do not yet have each others' results**):

Company	Total number test-purchases	Alcohol sold	Percentage failure rate (mini-AMEC rate in brackets)
Asda	103	7	7% (42%)
Co-op (all companies)	53	318	17% (47%)
Morrisons	184	14	17% (46%)
Sainsbury's	132	22	17% (30%)
Somerfield (incl Kwiksaver)	196	38	19% (44%)
Tesco	333	56	17% (53%)
Waitrose	21	6	29% (-)

- Company representatives will be given the dates and addresses of all test-purchase operations carried out in their stores.
- Remind the group that they have committed to eliminating underage sales by the end of November. These results show that they have come a long way, and in fact are so successful that we propose bringing the November deadline back to the end of June.
- In the three months from October to December, supermarkets reduced their failure rate by 66%. If each company reduced its rate by a further 50% in the three months to the end of March, and then another 50% in the three months to the end of June, then all companies would have a rate under 5%, which would be an enormous achievement. These results show that this is possible if we are all committed to maintaining the focus.

3. Update from RASG

- Invite **Nick Grant** (RASG interim chair) to update you on progress since the last meeting

4. RASG concerns over test-purchasing

- This item has been placed on the agenda at the request of the RASG, so invite **Nick Grant** to elaborate on what concerns the group may have
- LACORS review: The Home Office has not yet considered its position in regards to the LACORS review of test-purchase procedures, but we know that there are some trading standards authorities who feel the current guidance to be too restrictive. In principle I think that
 - The Home Office has not encouraged trading standards authorities to ignore the current guidance, but we have publicised Liverpool TS as an example of innovative practice which has the backing of the local CPS.
- Targeted test-purchasing: The Home Office encourages an intelligence-led approach to test-purchases, but individual operations are the responsibility of local TS authorities and police.
- Industry co-operation with TS / police: We welcome any initiatives for co-operation between TS / police and stores, as an extra to the normal test-purchase regime. A sub-group to the RASG (chaired by Alan Sparks from Violent Crime Unit) will soon meet to discuss greater co-operation on local release of results.

5. Publication of results

- Remind the meeting that the Home Secretary had committed to releasing the results of the test-purchases on a named-basis (at least for the 6 supermarkets who were original members of RASG).
- RASG would be welcome to add a quote to the press release

6. Next steps

- You may want to suggest another meeting in 3 months' time – or sooner – to review progress
- There will be further test-purchase campaigns, not necessarily announced beforehand, and we will be looking to these results to make sure the reduction to 0% continues.
- Under-age sales need to be close to elimination by the time of the World Cup, when the issue is likely to come under particular scrutiny

Annex D

Home Secretary meeting with Supermarkets – 22 November 2005

The Home Secretary, Tessa Jowell, James Purnell and Paul Goggins met representatives of the major supermarkets on 22nd November to discuss tackling sale of alcohol to under 18s. This note records the key points raised in discussion.

The Home Secretary began by thanking the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group (RASG) for producing the action plan. The rates of test purchase failure were far too high and the real question to be answered at this meeting was whether the proposals contained in the plan would reduce the failure rate. Tessa Jowell added that this work had been brought into sharper focus by the implementation of the new Licensing Act this week, with a range of new sanctions for licensees and for disorderly behaviour. One of the key principles of the Act was the protection of children; evidence suggested that the majority of under 18 sales were from supermarkets. Tackling the supply at source could only be achieved through partnership – with government, the police, industry and parents.

Paul Goggins welcomed the work that the supermarkets had done since the last meeting; the corporate approach they had taken was helpful and it was clear that their priorities were in line with those of Government. The re-drafted action plan with clear timescales was a significant improvement – it was now important to add a further column to this identifying clear outcomes. He also noted that there was no reference to a ‘landmark announcement’.

In discussion the following points were made:

- Although supermarkets were accustomed to working independently of one another, the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group (RASG) had demonstrated that they could cooperate effectively. Each company had made a significant contribution in terms of creative thinking around in-store processes and there was an appetite to share learning. There was a real sense of immediacy to the action plan.
- The RASG has already begun to assume a leadership role outside of the supermarket sector, with increasing engagement for example with the off license trade. Tessa Jowell said that there was a potential benefit to stores in terms of marketing themselves as responsible retailers, and we should seek to exploit this when encouraging other retailers to participate.
- The Group had also been engaging with LACORS and the Trading Standards Institute. An ACPO representative would attend the next meeting of the group.
- A key element of the action plan was agreement to universal signage in stores. This would be rolled out as soon as possible, with a launch event planned for 6th December - the RASG hoped there would be a Ministerial presence at the event. Signage was important in two respects: in changing public perceptions and raising staff awareness. The Home Secretary welcomed the work that had been done in this area, and agreed to consider Government

representation at the launch event. **(Action: Paul Goggins to attend launch event on 6th December)** It would be helpful, however, for Home Office/DCMS officials to have an opportunity to comment on the signage design (although he understood that timing would be tight). **(Action: signage shared with Home Office/DCMS and comments incorporated.)**

- The action plan also focused on training. The RASG had agreed a best practice model and stores intended to align their programmes with this. ACPO expressed concern that training would only deliver in the longer term, whereas what was needed was immediate rigour. However, the supermarkets were clear that it was important to give staff the tools to enable them to deliver; focus groups had, for example, identified the role intimidation sometimes played in under-age sales. They were looking at how training could be sharpened, perhaps by including a role for external partners – eg police/law enforcement.
- A third element of the action plan was incentives. RASG wanted to work with the police and the Home Office to reward those who performed well. It would be important to know where they were succeeding, and to this end would welcome more feedback on performance.
- The supermarkets welcomed the intensive police activity which had taken place over the weekend in disorder hotspots. Their strong view was that tackling under-age sales of alcohol ought to form part of a wider agenda including family responsibility, behaviour and enforcement. Chief Constable Craik cautioned however that the level of activity over the weekend – 24 visits in 48 hours – was not sustainable. While the police were keen to support and assist, for example with training, they could not carry out such intensive enforcement activity on a regular basis.
- There was some discussion around measurement of performance. The Home Secretary said that while he welcomed the commitment demonstrated by the supermarkets to resolving this problem, it was important to have a specific target which could be added to the range of supermarkets' key performance indicators (KPIs) by which we could measure success. Tessa Jowell added that while the Government could support and endorse this target, it should be owned by the supermarkets. On reflection, the supermarkets agreed that signing up to a percentage target – eg 10% - was not desirable as it implied that supermarkets thought that one under age sale in ten was acceptable. They agreed instead to commit publicly to “seeking to eliminate” under-age sales in the course of the next year – on the private understanding that they might not realistically achieve 0% but would aim for consistent reduction and a very significant overall decrease..
- The Home Secretary made clear that the Government intended to make public the comparative performance of supermarkets against the target throughout the year. Officials would discuss with RASG the most appropriate method/timing for publication. Supermarkets were keen that these figures highlighted the good performers as well as the bad.

- The Home Secretary and Tessa Jowell planned to speak to the media immediately after the meeting to communicate outcomes. The RASG would speak to the media separately.
- Further regular meetings of this group would be scheduled in order to review progress towards the milestones set out in the action plan. **(Action: RASG to liaise with S. 40 in the Police Standards Unit)**