



# HM Government

## Alcohol Strategy Group

Minutes of the Government and Partners Alcohol Working Group Meeting held at  
Somerset House, Strand on  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 13:30 (**Meeting 2**)

### PRESENT

Mandie Campbell, Director of Drugs, Alcohol and Partnerships Directorate (HO)

#### (In the chair)

Diana Luchford & [REDACTED] (HO), Liz Woodeson, [REDACTED], Ruth  
Hussey & Chris Heffer (DH), [REDACTED] (DEFRA), [REDACTED] (HMT),  
Bruce Ray (Bacardi), Jeremy Beadles (WSTA), Professor Jon Shepherd (Cardiff  
University), Brigid Simmonds (BBPA), Chris Sorek (Drinkaware Trust), Dr. Kieran  
Moriarty (British Society for Gastroenterology), [REDACTED] (Molson Coors), [ERROR?](#)  
Chief Inspector Sue Robinson (Durham Police)

### APOLOGIES

[REDACTED] (DCMS), [REDACTED] (DEFRA), Zoe Dayan (DBIS),  
[REDACTED] (Cabinet Office), [REDACTED] (DCSF), [REDACTED]  
(HMT), [REDACTED] (MoJ), [REDACTED] (CLG), [REDACTED] (DfT),  
Professor Ian Gilmore (Royal College of Physicians), Chief Constable Jon  
Stoddart, Dr. Nick Sheron (British Association for the Study of the Liver), Don  
Shenker (Alcohol Concern), Mark Hunter (Molson Coors), David Poley (The  
Portman Group), Stefan Orłowski (Heineken), Jacqui Kennedy (Birmingham City  
Council), Grant Eastwood (Morrisons), Kieran Richards (Heineken)

### SECRETARIAT

[REDACTED] (HO)

#### Item 1 Welcome and introduction of new head of ASU

**Mandie Campbell** welcomed all those present to the second meeting of the  
Government and Partners Alcohol Working Group and introduced Diana  
Luchford as the new head of the Alcohol Strategy Unit.

#### Item 2 Minutes of the last meeting

**Action point from last meeting** – New terms of reference to be circulated.  
These were sent out with the papers for the meeting.

### **Item 3 'Rebalancing the Licensing Act' Consultation Responses and Proposals**

█ gave a brief description of the consultation process conducted over the summer, followed by an outline of the Government's proposals in 'Rebalancing the Licensing Act – Responses to Consultation'. Her presentation was broken down into 3 sections – Licensing; Temporary Event Notices and protecting children from harm. █ also mentioned that the Minister will make an announcement on below cost sales shortly and suggested that this be added to the agenda for the next meeting. █ state that the Mandatory Code of Practice for alcohol retailers is not to be abolished at this time, Ministers have committed to reviewing it in 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> October.

#### **Action: Add 'Below Cost Sales to agenda for meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March**

In discussions, the following points were raised:

Jeremy Beadles asked if local authorities were to be given greater powers on saturation policies.

█ replied that the statutory guidance is to be amended for cumulative impact policies, to allow licensing authorities to have more control over outlet density – in effect lowering the evidential hurdle.

Jeremy Beadles asked if it is presumed that the late night levy would be applied by all licensing authorities

█ said there licensing authorities would have the discretion to implement the levy.

Mandie Campbell highlighted that the Government's model is to provide licensing authorities with more powers and discretion locally – set very much within the coalition's localism agenda.

Brigid Simmonds asked if the removal of the vicinity test will result in an increase of more vexatious complaints; she gave an example of someone in Newcastle complaining about a premise in Dover. Jeremy Beadles highlighted that the policy is similar in Scotland and they get complaints from one side of the country to another.

█ explained that 'vicinity' had been removed completely so that anyone can input into the licensing process, but all representations must be based on the licensing objectives. She explained that it was expected that there would be an increase in supporting representations as well as objections.

Brigid Simmonds asked if the late night levy would apply to an entire area.

█ said licensing authorities would be given the discretion to apply the levy in their area, and that this would apply to the licensing authority as a whole rather than individual premises. However licensing authorities would be given the authority to give discretion to initiatives such as purple flag, community alcohol partnerships and pubwatch.

Brigid Simmonds highlighted that Business Improvement Districts hadn't been mentioned and that they were a useful tool.

██████████ confirmed that Business Improvement Districts would also be included.

Dr Kieran Moriarty stated that new evidence had recently been announced highlight brain damaged caused by alcohol at a young age. He felt that this was a key health message which should be used in tackling underage drinking. He felt it would have an impact on people selling to children.

Sue Robinson highlighted that the maximum fine of £10,000 for persistent sales to underage has never been given and asked if there would be education for magistrates.

██████████ highlighted that this is a coalition commitment which shows that the Government is serious about tackling persistent underage sales. The Government have committed to amending the Statutory Guidance to ensure that licensing authorities treat the offence seriously and on review the presumption will be that licence holders are given the maximum sentence of licence revocation. Additionally ASU has committed to working with the Sentencing Council and the CPS to encourage greater use of existing powers. Jeremy Beadles highlighted that the maximum fine hasn't been used as it would have a massive impact on small business, possibly leading to the loss of business and homes

Jeremy Beadles asked for information on how licensing fees will be worked out.

██████████ said Home Office are working with HMT at the moment and cannot comment at this stage. An official announcement will be made on this shortly.

Jeremy Beadles asked if licensing authorities will be forced to publish costs relating to licensing. Jeremy noted that some licensing authorities cannot account for the income from licensing separately from other income.

██████████ said that Ministers have not decided this yet and committed to working with WSTA on this point.

**Action: ASU to work with the on and off trade in developing fee policy.**

██████████ asked if the increase costs cover other authorities such as the police.

██████████ said that any fee increase would relate to costs incurred by local authorities only and Mandie Campbell offered for technical points to be discussed later at individual meetings.

**Item 4          Public Health White Paper**

Liz Woodeson informed the group that the Public Health White Paper was published last week and outlined a new framework for the delivery of public health. It establishes a new body called 'Public Health England' which will be part of DH rather than an agency. Local authorities will be given more control over funding and be responsible for health improvement at a local level. A ring-fenced budget of around £4 billion has been identified from the NHS budget. A set of health indicators is to be consulted on but there will be an alcohol indicator. WSTA and BBPA have been involved in the responsibility deal. A series of supplementary documents are to be published with more detail on specific areas.

In discussions, the following points were raised:

Ruth Hussey was asked how the white paper had been received in the regions and Ruth commented that it had been warmly welcomed and local Government were excited about it. Ruth stated that they are waiting on the supplementary documents for more detail.

Professor Jon Shepherd said that the white paper was very welcome and he was happy with the engagement with Community Safety Partnerships.

Chris Sorek asked how it will interface with devolved administrations.

Liz Woodeson stated that the white paper was for England only. Liz stated that DH would work closely with devolved administrations on common issues.

Dr Kieran Moriarty said the white paper was an excellent document and raised concerns about the ring-fence being limited and not used where it needs to be. He was interested in more prevention work, particularly the introduction of specialist alcohol nurses and more outreach services.

Liz Woodeson acknowledged that there are always risks when drawing lines with funding and highlighted potential issues with the NHS avoiding areas that 'Public Health England' deal with. DH will work to close this gap on national and local levels. Dr Moriarty raised issues with liver disease mortality. Chris Heffer offered to meet with Dr Moriarty once decisions have been made on this area.

Liz Woodeson said that the documents will go through consultation and they need more people to talk about what they would like to see, rather than what they do not like.

## **Item 5      Departmental Updates**

Chris Heffer gave an overview of developments in DH and outlined the strands of the 'Responsibility Deal'. Chris noted that the new drug strategy mentions alcohol in two places. Chris mentioned DH are making progress with better signage in pubs and alcohol labeling. He stated that the majority of businesses (including DH) do not have a work place alcohol policy and DH are working on how to

engage corporate Britain and better retailing in the off-trade. Chris said DH are looking into lower strength/smaller size drinks and educating the public on these options. The timeline for this work is Spring.

Brigid Simmonds raised a point that the industry has stalled on its plans to introduce two thirds of a pint measures as Weights and Measures say that alcohol can only be sold in half pint and pint measures. The group raises issues with regulatory burden. Brigid Simmonds mentioned a paper on this which will be circulated with these minutes.

Mandie Campbell committed Home Office and DH to read the paper and discuss the issue with BBPA outside this meeting.

**Action point – Circulate paper on weights and measures (attached) – the paper has been sent to BIS for comment .**

Professor Jon Shepherd raised an issue of combining the different alcohol partnerships such as CAPs and BIDs as some people are attending both and discussing similar things. The general feeling of the group was that this was a good idea and is currently in the process of happening via the Responsibility Deal. Mandie Campbell highlighted a wider point about increased partnership working via CSPs.

█ highlighted that there have been two major alcohol issues since the last meeting. DEFRA are prioritising sustainable production and encouraging growth. Food 2030 will continue with backing from current Ministers. The Food Standards Agency has been through a machinery of Government change and works more closely with DEFRA. EU regulations state that alcohol will be exempt from providing ingredients and nutritional information on labels. This exemption does not cover mixers.

Brigid Simmonds highlighted that BBPA have been working on 'Brewing Green' with DEFRA Ministers.

█ gave a brief summary of events in HMT. █ announced that an increased rate of duty will be applied to stronger beers and a lower rate of duty will apply to lower strength beers. Draft clauses are due to be published shortly which highlight measures to target problem drinks. The rates will be announced at the budget and cannot be confirmed before then.

Professor Jon Shepherd asked if there was a general trend to use alcohol taxation to promote public health.

█ stated that there was no trend but HMT are looking to use targeted measures.

█ informed the group that a four year project on primary care is due to finish next month.

██████████ informed the group that intensive support visits have started in areas that have invited the Home Office. These form part of a series of visits to support police and local authorities and inform them of the powers that they have at their disposal.

Brigid Simmonds asked if the trade have been involved and offered to help. ██████████ accepted this offer and said someone from the alcohol strategy unit would be in touch to discuss this.

**Action: ASU to work with BBPA re intensive support visits and report back at next meeting.**

Mandie Campbell closed the meeting by asking the non Government members to raise agenda points to be discussed at future meetings.

Brigid Simmonds offered to give a presentation on unit awareness.

**Action: Put unit awareness on agenda for next meeting**

**The next meeting of the Group will take place from 2pm until 3pm on 16<sup>th</sup> March at Conference Room 2, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.**