

NCJH/AMK
16 January 2013

Alcohol Strategy Consultation
Home Office
4th Floor Fry
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Sirs

I understand you are consulting regarding alcohol abuse in the community and in particular about alcohol licence public notices advertising. My response is as follows:

Communities are suffering from alcohol fuelled crime and anti-social behaviour, and the Government is quite right to be considering measures to discourage this, but how bizarre that the Government is considering abandoning the requirement on the industry to advertise in the local newspapers licence applications or variations. Communities rely on local press for this information, and it is only right that on this important matter communities are consulted and all the views taken into account. Advertising in the local papers is both expected and the most effective way for reaching into the community. It is a small price for the drinks industry to pay in relation to the matters at stake.

I realise there is a suggestion that the notices could only be posted on local authority internet sites, but as we all know, local newspapers are still the most read publications in their area, no internet site rivals this. Internet sites are good for accessing detailed information, and people browse for specific information. They are not approached in the same way as a local newspaper, which is read for the serendipity of its content. Visits to local authority sites are stimulated by local newspaper advertising and local authority sites are not visited casually. No doubt the drinks industry will be delighted if they could hide these applications on these sites, but the community need to be consulted in the best possible way on licensing as part of the fight against alcohol crime and anti-social behaviour.

Yours faithfully

PS I have just tried to reach the local authority web site and had to go through eight sites to reach the information, which took several minutes! The Barnsley Chronicle is the second biggest circulating weekly newspaper in the country and our charge for licence advertising is £91 + VAT