



# HM Government

Minutes of the Government and Partners Alcohol Working Group Meeting held  
at  
Conference Room 3a, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF on Tuesday 11  
September at 2.00 (**Meeting 8**)

## PRESENT

Chris Heffer (DH, Chair), Brigid Simmonds (BBPA), Eric Appleby (Alcohol Concern), [REDACTED] (Head of Alcohol, Home Office), Campbell Evans (SWA), Phil Witcherley (Heineken), Colin Wilkie-Jones (Portman Group), [REDACTED] (BIS), Miles Beale (WSTA), [REDACTED] (DEFRA), Kieran Moriarty (British Society of Gastroenterology), [REDACTED] (DH), [REDACTED] (DfE), Scott Wilson (Moulson Coors), Sue Robinson (ACPO), [REDACTED] (ACPO, [REDACTED]), Jacqui Kennedy (Birmingham City Council), Siobhan McCann (Drinkaware)

## APOLOGIES

Elizabeth Woodeson (DH), David Scott (Morrisons), [REDACTED] (DEFRA), Ian Gilmore (Royal Liverpool Hospital and University of Liverpool), [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (HMT), Rachel Atkinson (MoJ), [REDACTED] (CLG), [REDACTED] (DCMS), Nick Sheron (Southampton Univ), Bruce Ray (Carlsberg), Rod Thompson (NHS), Laura Brennan (RCP), [REDACTED] (MoJ), Andrew Langford (British Liver Trust)

## SECRETARY

[REDACTED] (HO)

### Item 1: Welcome and introduction

1. The Chair welcomed all those present to the eighth meeting of the Government and Partners Alcohol Working Group. Following the recent reshuffle, the Chair explained that the meeting would be a good opportunity for Government departments to update the group on ministerial changes and for attendees to update the group on their areas of work.

### Item 2: Minutes and actions from the last meeting

2. The Chair asked whether the group accepted the minutes from the last meeting. [REDACTED] sent amendments prior to the meeting and [REDACTED] agreed to amend and circulate revised minutes.
3. [REDACTED] had approached Theresa Marteau to ask if she could address the group at a future meeting. Awaiting response.
4. [REDACTED] confirmed that he thought Alison Hadley had circulated the international report to the group.
5. Brigid had completed the outstanding action points to send BBPA guidance on the sale of alcohol to drunks and that on the European Championships and Olympics to the Home Office.
6. [REDACTED] would circulate an update to the group about alcohol labelling.

**Item 3: Updates from Government departments.**

7. [REDACTED] explained that Mandie Campbell had left her previous role and would no longer be chairing the group. Likewise, Gus Jaspert had moved to take up a position as [REDACTED]. The Alcohol Team was now part of the Crime Directorate headed by Jaee Samant the Director. The Home Office updated the group on new appointments.
8. HO update: From a ministerial perspective, Jeremy Browne -was now Minister for Crime Prevention.
9. The consultation, as mentioned in Gus Jaspert's August letter, will be launched after Parliament returns from recess. [Note – the Government remains committed to consulting on this and a number of other proposals in the Strategy later this autumn]. The Strategy was specific about what would be consulted on and the HO intended to run technical working groups where possible. Impact assessments would be published about the relevant policies. The outstanding measures (such as the late night levy and Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Orders) in the PRSR Act would be in place by 31 October with locally set fees planned for introduction next year.
10. DH update: The Chair confirmed that Jeremy Hunt was now Secretary of State for Health. There were four junior ministers and Lord Howe remained in the Lords. Anna Soubry was the new the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State.
11. [REDACTED] explained that the Health Select Committee report was published 4 weeks ago. The Government had until 18/9 to respond. DH was working with the Chief Medical Officer to set up suitable groups with a view to implementing a workplan later in the year. DH were commissioning research for those who were

alcohol dependent. Kieran Moriarty added that incentives for GPs to carry out those checks had worked in the past.

12. In regard to brief interventions, the Chair confirmed that checks for alcohol misuse would be included in all health-checks. This would be mandatory for local areas by April 2013.

13. BIS: [REDACTED] stated that changes were underway so that in cases where a policy was deemed to have a minimal impact on business and charities that the related impact assessment could be 'fast tracked'.

14. DEFRA: [REDACTED] confirmed that Owen Paterson was appointed Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

15. DfE: [REDACTED] stated that in support of the Government's Positive for Youth statement, DfE has launched an open access database of evaluations of services and programmes that support young people, including alcohol education and prevention. The aim was to spread knowledge of what genuinely worked among commissioners and practitioners. An initial set of evaluations – including a couple on alcohol and drug-related programmes – had been loaded, and members of the Group had asked to encourage programmes with which they have connections to consider submitting evaluations they may have carried out.

#### **Item 4 Updates from non- Government members**

16. Birmingham City Council: Jacqui Kennedy confirmed that BCC had launched its Alcohol Strategy 2012-16. A new National Training Standards Board had also been launched and a Director of Public Health appointed.

17. Scotch Whisky Association (SWA): Campbell Evans confirmed that a Scottish alcohol sponsorship has been implemented and that the SWA was working with the Portman Group to apply these to the rest of the UK. It does not support MUP.

18. Heineken: Phil Witcherly was clear that Heineken supported the Responsibility Deal and was keen to exceed targets on many of the measures currently signed up to, such as that on labeling. Heineken supported partnership initiatives such as Best Bar None and CAPs but does not support MUP.

19. Moulson Coors: Scott Wilson explained the company supported the Responsibility Deal and would support legislation to tackle below cost sales. It nevertheless does not support MUP at any price.

20. WSTA: Miles Beale, the recently appointed new CEO, explained that WSTA supported the SWA's stance on MUP. WSTA expected consultation responses from members to comment on the principle as well as the implementation of it. WSTA's members were content to meet the current pledges of the Responsibility

Deal but were less committed to see the implementation of newer ones at present.

21. Kieran Moriarty provided a hospital treatment update. He added that while primary prevention was important, secondary treatment was often overlooked. The poor and vulnerable were the most affected. Of the estimated cost to the country for alcohol misuse, 78% of these costs came from hospitals and 14% from ambulance costs. He added that the Alcohol Strategy did not focus enough on treatment. Eric Appleby stated that primary and secondary treatment was vital, while Sue Robinson stressed that alcohol intervention was crucial in reducing re-offending. ██████████ suggested primary and secondary services could be combined. Kieran also thought that focus was also needed on outreach sessions as those were proven to reduce repeat admissions.

22. Kieran went on to highlight the problem of elderly drinkers, as featured in a recent Panorama programme. There had been a 62% increase in admissions for patients who were 65 and over. That was bigger than admissions for the age group of 16-24 year olds. Excessive drinking was linked to a higher risk of falls and high blood pressure among the elderly. Cheap cider and spirits were often drunk by this group and thus he felt there was a link to cheap alcohol and so was supportive of Minimum Unit Pricing. He added that health inequalities among social economic groups needed to be addressed as the poorest were 4-15 times more likely to die from alcohol.

23. Sue Robinson agreed that alcohol intervention was crucial in reducing re-offending. Eric Appleby added that tackling the role of youth reoffending was important. He highlighted a project in which regional groups of young people discussed real social norms. Among those challenged was the notion that it was the norm for the young to drink to excess. November was alcohol awareness week which this year sought to get people to think about how much they drank.

24. Sue Robinson explained that ACPO supported MUP in principle providing it was set at a rate which would discourage crime and disorder. ██████████ Foskett suggested the new Alcohol lead for ACPO, Adrian Lee would be likely to take an active interest in the group. Sue highlighted that it was important to share best practice nationally. There was a drive to make alcohol a major problem in its own right rather than just a 'golden thread'. It needed recognition as a problem outside the NTE.

25. The Portman Group: Colin Wilkie-Jones explained that the group had consulted on extending the Portman Group remit to cover co-promotion between producers. The group was working with the ASA to ensure that there was a greater consistency with the under 25 Code, e.g. with regard to links between alcohol and success. The Portman Group was also working to draw up a sponsorship code based on work in Scotland to apply to the rest of the UK. The new Portman Group code would be published in spring.

26. BBPA had made views clear to the Select Committee. It recently produced a leaflet about accessibility to pubs for wheelchair users. BBPA was disappointed the Government did not take the opportunity to extend opening hours during the Olympics and asked that future celebrations were given consideration.

27. Drinkaware: Siobhan McCann stated that Drinkaware was working with the Scottish Government to support young people's awareness of alcohol. They supported the Responsibility Deal. The next spike of Why Let the Good times go bad was due to be published on 14 September. The adult campaign was due to being in late October.

### **Item 5 Problem solving exercise – led by Eric Appleby**

28. Eric highlighted 3 problems:

- a) There was a problem with alcohol in the work place but no up-to-date figures on its extent.
- b) How to get employers to act on problems. Company policies used to be punitive. There was now a focus on health and well-being and alcohol formed an important part of that. But few companies had real programmes in place – the economic benefit to employers could be appealing.
- c) Companies which had social team building events which heavily focused on drinking and those who had to entertain corporate clients were often expected to drink. It was perceived as a way of progressing in people's careers.

29. Brigid agreed with Eric that a number of companies in the trade had good policies on the matter as it was deemed a risk for employees. Colin added that there has been a question as to whether the problem fell with health in the work place or whether a specific programme was needed for alcohol itself. As a result a working group had been set up. Campbell Evans stated that the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership had developed a 'Model Employee Alcohol Policy' template from which businesses could develop their own company alcohol policy by selecting those parts of the template that best met their circumstances. Jacqui added that Birmingham CC had a toolkit for small business. Scott explained that there was a life template and a work template in relation to alcohol consumption. The former focused more on welfare.

30. Eric also asked how it would be possible to get the Government to take a lead on the matter. [REDACTED] suggested that an approach to business from the centre on work alcohol policies was likely to run counter to its intention to deregulate in a number of areas.

31. The discussion also drew attention to 'functioning alcoholics' and that their problem would only be noticeable when a person's life had been significantly

affected. Eric also suggested that breathalysers in the workplace might be a good way of identifying problems earlier and for jobs where there was an element of danger to them (such as forklift drivers, taxi drivers and particularly pilots) so that their presence might also act as a deterrent to those excessively drinking on a work night.

32. The Chair asked if Eric would write a short paper outlining the working group's position on the matter as there was general agreement that alcohol problems among workers needed to be identified and that a greater awareness among workers about their drinking in the context of their work and life in general would be beneficial.

**Action: Members to provide Eric with summaries of their alcohol policies to help him produce a short paper on alcohol in the work place for the group to endorse and send to Dame Carol Black.**

#### **Item 6 AOB**

33. No matters raised.

34. The Chair thanked everyone for attending. The Home Office would confirm the next meeting date when the minutes were circulated.