



HM Government

Minutes of the Government and Partners Alcohol Working Group Meeting held
at
Conference Room 3a, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF on Monday 7th
January at 2.00 (**Meeting 9**)

PRESENT

Dan Greaves (Home Office, Chair), [REDACTED] (HO), [REDACTED] (HO),
Henry Ashworth (Portman Group), Dave Spencer (Northamptonshire Police),
Adrian Lee (ACPO lead), [REDACTED] (BIS), [REDACTED] (DEFRA), [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (Home Office), Chris Heffer (DH), Elaine Hindal (Drinkaware), Bruce Ray
(Carlsberg), Scott Wilson (Moulson Coors), Brigid Simmonds (BBPA), Campbell
Evans (SWA), David Patterson (Heineken), Rod Thomson (NHS), [REDACTED]
(DH), Eric Appleby (Alcohol Concern), Nick Sheron (Southampton Univ), Ian
Gilmore (Royal Liverpool Hospital), Jonathan Shepherd (Cardiff Univ)

APOLOGIES

Elizabeth Woodeson (DH), Jacqui Kennedy (Birmingham City Council), David
Scott (Morrisons), [REDACTED] (MoJ), [REDACTED] (DCLG), Andrew
Langford (British Liver Trust)

Item 1: Welcome and introduction

1. Daniel Greaves chaired the meeting as the new Head of the Drugs and Alcohol Unit. He welcomed all those present to the ninth meeting of the Government and Partners Alcohol Working Group and also introduced the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Police and ACPO lead on alcohol, Adrian Lee, along with Elaine Hindal, the recently appointed CEO of Drinkaware.

Item 2: Minutes and actions from the last meeting

2. The group agreed the minutes of the last meeting with minor corrections. The Chair asked Eric Appleby if he had received summaries of alcohol policies from industry representatives to help him produce a short paper on alcohol in the workplace for the Health at Work Network chaired by Dame Carol Black. Eric said that the group had since met and drawn up a draft pledge for companies and employees which would be discussed at a further meeting on 14 January. Initially, the non-alcohol companies signed up to the Responsibility Deal would be approached and asked to implement it.

Action: Eric Appleby to provide the Home Office with a copy of the pledge to circulate to the group.

Item 3a: Alcohol Strategy Consultation

3. ██████████ explained that the consultation would close on 6 February. The Home Office welcomed comments but would not be able to grant extensions. A series of roadshows (12 across England and Wales) and technical groups would start on 8 January. They would form part of the consultation consideration. Those who could not attend were assured that their responses would be given full consideration.

Item 3b: Red Tape Challenge

4. The Chair explained that the Government had committed to cutting bureaucracy under its “red tape challenge” (RTC) and to a ‘one in, two out’ deregulation agenda. ██████████ presented a paper to the meeting to prompt discussion. Specifically ██████████ updated the Group on measures in the current consultation and asked the group whether the balance on RTC was right or whether the Home Office could go further on those measures.

- Brigid suggested two other RTC measures: a standard renewal date for payment of fees for premises licences; and, in line with the localism agenda, that local authorities only review alcohol policies when they deem it necessary and so were not bound to do so every three years.
- There was a feeling among health practitioners present that an unintended consequence of deregulation could be a greater availability of alcohol generally (particularly as a result of the ancillary sales and MSA proposals). In some areas there was likely to be increased competition as a result of the provision of alcohol alongside services not previously linked to its sale (e.g. in hairdressers and tanning salons). Health practitioners stressed the need for evidenced-based policy making.
- Adrian Lee suggested that a baseline needed to be established to gauge an idea of the number of businesses making ancillary sales. Jonathan Shepherd thought that local authorities needed time to understand and use their own discretion with regard to red tape.
- Many present thought that deregulation should focus on areas already linked to the sale of alcohol rather than expanding the opportunity for others, who did not sell alcohol, to do so. Scott Wilson suggested that there was a danger of removing regulation in areas which might lead to an increase in harm. It would be better to focus on deregulating areas where responsible businesses faced red tape.

- There was concern expressed by Adrian Lee and others that the MSA proposals could be seen to link alcohol to driving. He thought that with deregulation came risks.
- █████ explained that the DfT had carried out work on overnight motorway lodges and lodges had raised the issue of unfair competition in regard to their non-motorway based competitors.
- █████ confirmed that anecdotally, many licensing officers had suggested that it was incredibly rare for representations to have been made as a result of newspaper advertisements.
- Rod Thomson thought the onus should remain with business to notify local communities of their proposals as not all had access to the web. █████ explained that the requirement for local authorities to provide information about applications on their website (a requirement since last April) and place a physical notice on the premises would remain.
- Pre-consultation impact assessments were available via the Home Office website and confirmed that the impact assessments would be revised following comments received during the consultation and from the comments received during road-shows and technical groups.

Action point: Home Office to circulate link to the impact assessments

Item 4: Updates from Government departments

5. The Chair asked the group for updates on their areas of work. Eric explained that Alcohol Concern's 'Dry January Campaign' was launched on 1 January with the intention of getting people to think about their drinking and not forming habits. He explained that it had a slightly different message from the British Liver Trust's 'Love your Liver' campaign which was launched around the same time. There was no conflict between the messages.

6. Rod Thomson mentioned the Liverpool John Moore's University's publication of the prevention of violence data. This was available on the publication page at <http://www.cph.org.uk/>.

7. Elaine Hindal announced that the Drinkaware website, which currently has 4 million visitors a year, was re-launching at the end of January. A parents' campaign would be launched in May and there was to be an independent evaluation of its work in schools. Chris Heffer explained that Sir Hugh Taylor is leading a panel, including Sir Ian Gilmore, Ben Page, Jeremy Beadles and Chris Heffer, which would oversee the independent review of Drinkaware, and had appointed 23red to carry out the work. As part of their work, 23red would shortly be sending a questionnaire to several hundred partners as part of the review.

Further details are contained on the Department of Health's website at:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2013/01/review-drinkaware/>

8. Adrian Lee cited the problem of ID card acceptance. Brigid had worked with the military on this and offered assistance in regard to what was acceptable as a proof of identity. He also referred to sales to drunks work in Northamptonshire and an evaluation of police data as alcohol played a role in over fifty per cent of police work.

9. Henry Ashworth stated that the Portman Group Code of Practice, launched in November, deals with co-promotional activity and outlined changes to strength following the Responsibility Deal (i.e. unit reduction). The fifth edition of the Portman Group Code would protect under 18s as images of people who were or looked to be under 25 could no longer be featured in a significant role or be seen drinking or holding alcohol. There would be help for those products and promotions which would be caught by this when changes came into effect in May. The group reported progress on pregnancy warnings and unit information on labels to meet the Responsibility Deal's commitment.

10. Nick Sheron expressed his concerns about the exposure of children to alcohol. The Rand report provided further information:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/alcohol_rand_youth_exposure_marketing_en.pdf

Item 5: Glassware

11. ██████████ presented a paper (circulated prior to the meeting) on a designing-out crime issue: the use of plastic/polycarbonate drinking vessels or other alternatives to glassware in late night premises its role in reducing injuries.

12. Discussion followed including the following key points:

- Brigid Simmonds explained that BBPA/Bar entertainment and Dance Association (BEDA) had produced a pamphlet also available on-line about *Managing Safety in Bars, Pubs and Clubs* which in part promoted the use of plastic glassware according to circumstance and provided guidance on risk assessment. More could be done in terms of spreading best practice. Legislative routes were disproportionate. A great many bars and pubs opening late are using plastic glassware.
- Adrian Lee stated that the work in Northamptonshire had been triggered by an incident involving glassware injuries. Although legislation was probably not the answer it was important that the police and local authorities had powers or scope to take actions that pre-empt such events.

- Premises should undertake risk assessments. Glassware related injuries result in many A & E cases, including injuries from discarded glassware in the streets not just from pubs and bars, as Jonathan Shepherd noted.
- Local solutions to counter the problem had included implementing bans on the use of glass drinking vessels in cumulative impact zones. In other countries (e.g. Germany and France) where there was a market for glassware with refunds available for its return, there was less discarded glass and so fewer injuries. Recycling schemes, including examples from Sainsbury's and Tesco, could be helpful on this point.
- There was some customer antipathy to using plastic glasses. Scare stories about the dangers of plastic drinking vessels and phenol release needed to be countered. Scott Wilson suggested the need to provide an incentive for producers, for example, via tax incentives, and encouraging consumer behavioural shift. Customer expectations could be influenced, for example, audiences for rugby and football events expect to use plastic glassware. They have no choice.
- Daniel Greaves summed up, noting that there was no appetite for blanket legislation but for targeted and risk based solutions.

Item 6: Forward Look

13. The Chair asked the group if members thought the group was useful and about its future focus. There was agreement that it provided an opportunity to discuss important matters of the moment. The following future agenda items were suggested:

14. Elaine Hindal asked whether it was an appropriate forum to discuss the concept of a unit of alcohol. Chris Heffer explained that the Chief Medical Officer was currently reviewing unit guidelines. Evidence would look at consumption and harm and a decision would be made on whether amendments were necessary.

15. Jonathan Shepherd asked for an update on the success of public health bodies as responsible authorities and whether there were any good practice examples. Rod Thomson thought an update on how health and well being boards were contributing to changes in the late night economy would be useful. Bruce Ray offered to see whether Morrisons could field a representative for future meetings.

16. Eric Appleby mentioned that the All Party Parliamentary Group on alcohol misuse would meet at 10am on Wednesday to discuss alcohol misuse in the work place.

Item 7: AOB

17. Nothing was raised.

The next meetings would be held on 15 May and 12 September in conference room 3a, 2-4pm.