



1 November 2012

Social Policy Unit  
Department for Social Development  
By e-Mail: [social.policy@dndni.gov.uk](mailto:social.policy@dndni.gov.uk)

Dear Sir or Madam,

**Re Consultation on proposed changes to the law regulating the sale and supply of alcohol in Northern Ireland**

I am writing to you as Chair of the Alcohol Health Alliance (AHA) UK. AHA UK is a group of 31 organisations whose mission is to reduce the damage caused to health by alcohol misuse. The AHA, coordinated by the Royal College of Physicians, works together to:

- highlight the rising levels of alcohol-related health harm
- propose evidence-based solutions to reduce this harm
- influence decision makers to take positive action to address the damage caused by alcohol misuse.

For a full list of members of the AHA, please visit the Royal College of Physicians website ([www.rcplondon.ac.uk/policy/reducing-health-harms/alcohol](http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/policy/reducing-health-harms/alcohol)).

AHA UK supports the Northern Ireland Government's efforts to tackle the health harms of alcohol misuse by restricting the ways in which alcohol is promoted and sold. As highlighted by NICE (*PH24: Alcohol-use disorders: preventing harmful drinking*) promotion and availability are two of the key factors that should be addressed by Government in order to reduce alcohol-related harm.

AHA UK also welcomes the commitment to model the likely impact of minimum unit pricing in Northern Ireland, and look forward to supporting Northern Ireland to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol in the future.

In response to the specific measures proposed:

**Proposals regulating the sale of alcohol in supermarkets and off-sales premises (Proposals 1-5):** AHA UK strongly supports the proposed changes aimed at restricting the sale of alcohol in the off-trade. AHA UK support the principle of alcohol being treated as 'no ordinary commodity', which is reflected in these proposals.

**Proposal regulating the sale of alcohol in pubs and other on-sales premises (Proposals 6-16):** a number of these proposals relate to local arrangements in Northern Ireland that we do not feel qualified to comment on. However we welcome the proposal to prevent the sale of alcohol via Pour Your Own Pint tables and Vending Machines (Proposal 15), as AHA UK strongly supports all measures that would counter uncontrolled availability of alcohol. We also welcome the proposal to prevent the removal of alcohol (carry outs) from pubs (Proposal 16).

**Proposal for endorsing industry Code of Practice (Proposal 20):**

Industry codes of practice can have a role in raising standards in the alcohol industry, and we support the proposal that they are formally endorsed by the Department. However, these codes are not a substitute for government regulation, which should establish a clear framework to limit the extent of alcohol related harm.

Please do not hesitate to contact AHA UK Secretariat if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

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Chair, Alcohol Health Alliance UK

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