Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Bill

Dumbarton East & Central Community Council

The advantages & disadvantages of establishing a minimum alcohol sales price based on a unit of alcohol:

Advantages:

- Should prevent certain groups of people from buying alcohol;
- Would prevent supermarkets from selling below cost price;
- Would show that the sale of alcohol is being treated seriously;
- Establish a fairness of competition between supermarkets & others;
- Should cut down on quantity of alcohol purchased at one time for home consumption;
- Other countries have proved that minimum pricing has positive effect in reducing consumption;
- Should improve health of people who currently over-consume due to cheapness of alcohol.

Disadvantages:

- Increase cost to reasonable drinkers.

The level at which such a proposed minimum price should be set and the justification for this level:

- Minimum price of £0.40p per unit of alcohol

Justification:

- Would raise the cost of the cheapest alcohol which is bought by youngsters & people who over-consume;
- A small & acceptable increase to sensible drinkers, if indeed affected at all.

The rationale behind the use of minimum pricing as an effective tool to address all types of problem drinking:

- Evidence based research from other Countries show that it would have effect in reducing consumption amongst problem drinkers;
- Should have effect in reducing irresponsible promotions in supermarkets & other licensed premises;
- Increased tax gained could be spent on more health promotions & education;
- Alcohol prices have never kept up with inflation and to now be cheaper to buy than water is totally unacceptable.
Possible alternatives to the introduction of a minimum alcohol sales price as an effective means of addressing the public health issues surrounding levels of alcohol consumption in Scotland:

- There is no alternative to minimum pricing but there are additional measures:
  - Raising the age to 21 for purchase and consumption of alcohol in licensed premises;
  - Reducing times of opening of licensed premises;
  - Significantly reducing the number of licensed premises in any area;
  - Instant loss of premises licence for selling to underage drinkers.

The advantages and disadvantages of introducing a social responsibility levy on pubs & clubs in Scotland:

- All licensed premises must be included if a social levy is introduced. Much of the anti-social behaviour in relation to alcohol which occurs throughout a day in public areas such as parks, housing estates, street corners etc is due to alcohol being purchased in supermarkets and other off-sales premises. This levy would be based on alcohol sales throughout the year.

The justification for empowering Licensing Boards to raise the legal alcohol purchase age in their area to 21:

- It would be a useful tool for the Licensing Board to have as a means of curbing underage purchasing in a specific premises or small defined area where evidence shows that there is a problem with underage purchasing.

The role of promotional offers and promotional material in encouraging people to purchase more alcohol than intended:

- They most certainly encourage people to buy more alcohol than intended.

Age Verification Policy:

- It is essential that there should be a compulsory requirement to prove identity for everyone under 25 years of age and that some form of national identify card could be produced for this purpose.

Other Information:

Summary of results of a Public Survey held 21/22 November 2009 by DECCC

A total of 255 people were asked the undernoted question outside Asda, Dumbarton on that date. The demographic makeup was:

Q3 Alcohol Abuse in Scotland costs us £2.35 billion in health, crime & social implications. Do You support the proposal to increase the price of a unit of alcohol in an attempt to reduce Alcohol abuse particularly amongst the young?

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Suggestions offered by some who answered No or as additions to those who answered Yes:

- More education for Children: 12
- Increase age of purchase to over 21: 9
- More policing & control of sales: 9
- Stop selling in supermarkets: 7
- More activities for kids: 5
- Increase price much more: 3
- Stop selling at corner shops: 3
- More fines for offenders: 3
- Cultural problem: 2
- Stop advertising: 1
- No solution to problem: 12

The above 3 pages contain the submission to the Scottish Government’s Health & Sports Committee’s call for written evidence on the Alcohol Etc (Scotland) Bill by:

Sheila Urquhart
Secretary
Dumbarton East & Central Community Council
15 January 2010