Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Bill

Inverclyde Council

Thank you for your invitation to respond to some of the main proposals brought forward in the above Bill.

Within Inverclyde we benefit from a mature multi agency approach to alcohol related harm in our population supported by Community Planning Partners.

Initial comments in respect of the Bill are embodied within Greater Glasgow and Clyde Alcohol Action Teams response to ‘Changing Scotland’s relationship with Alcohol: A Framework for Action’.

Not withstanding this we are pleased to respond as follows:

- **Minimum Price Based on a Unit of Alcohol :-**

  We support this measure while recognising it is unlikely to impact upon so called ‘alcopops’ and other drinks designed for younger age groups.

  We recognise that minimum unit pricing may assist in limiting alcohol to older ‘at risk’ groups where cheap alcohol contributes directly to substantial harm e.g. liver disease, ARDB.

  The minimum price per unit should be reviewed continuously and adjusted such that cheap spirits, fortified wine and strong ciders retail at a price similar to the mainstream.

  Minimum pricing cannot in its self address all aspects of problem drinking. Of central importance is the availability of affordable recreation of all types which is not predicated upon the consumption of alcohol. This applies to all age groups and relies upon the evidence that those who are socially excluded experience an impact on their health and are far more likely to develop alcohol related harm.

- **Social Responsibility Levy :-**

  This will be resisted strongly by pubs and clubs in Scotland and would be difficult to apply/ enforce. This would also fail to address the realities of consumption locally and nationally i.e. off sales rather than on sales retail alcohol for private consumption and that a disbursement of taxation from drinks sales would create a finance stream to address the need for diversion, (from drink), prevention and care and treatment on a population basis.
Empowering Licensing Boards to Raise the Legal Age of Purchase to 21 Years:

An across the board rise in age for both on and off sales of alcoholic drink would assist in relation to under age drinking. A close application of current licensing laws would also assist in this area and we welcome test purchasing. However raising the age to 21 years in off sales alone is a partial response though maybe applicable where particular problems in relation to anti social behaviour are identified in certain areas.

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