

Dear SU/DoH

As a former member of the Leeds Alcohol Reference Group and as a social drinker who believes in socially responsible drinking (and moderate amounts of alcohol it is argued can enhance creativity) I offer the following comments for consideration as part of the consultaion process:

Areas of enquiry (i) The priority I believe is to change the current drinking culture to one which promotes and encourages more socially responsible drinking. Need adverts, role models such as celebrities, the media , beer mats etc to promote socially responsible drinking as "cool." At present we have the hard "get hammered" macho drinking culture which is also being taken on by younger people and worryingly is being imitated by younger women ("ladettes")

(v) Need to encourage people to "Know Your Limit and Stick To It!" Need to encourage people to take personal responsibility and to be in control, this could be empowering, why lose your control to excess alcohol, you can still have fun whilst sticking to your limit. (I remember years ago some pubs stamped a card you collected and after a drink in a number of pubs you got a free drink, we could adapt this idea and encourage people to keep there own score so they don't go over their limit?) Also need more ex-abusers of alcohol to talk to students in school, colleges, universities, workplaces, community groups etc. Drinking and driving - people shouldn't even have one drink and drive!

(vi) Some would argue that we are reaping the winds of the culture of individualism and personal excess and that we do need some community intervention both locally and nationally. Ideas could include: (a) better training for bar staff which is often casual labour,

this could be accredited as in Ireland (I understand) including how to deal with aggressive customers and not to serve people who have had too much. (b) again taking ideas from Europe (Austria, Ireland) staff could bring drinks to where people are sitting, is more

civilised and will avoid the mayhem and scrum at the bar which it could be argued encourages less civilised behavior. In Slovenia bar staff have change on them and this is carried like the old bus conductors ticket machine. (c) Need much cheaper soft drinks and free water! People also encouraged to drink a lot of water after a night out, this helps people feel better next day and may help re absenteeism. (d) continue promot meals with drinks in pubs etc. helps break down the alcohol and is also good for business. (e) promote lower alcohol content in beers, lagers etc. Promote this as cool and being in control, at present the opposite appears to be the case, stronger beers with a larger alcohol content seem to be promoted as part of the "macho myth about alcohol." Government could even tax lower alcohol beers etc at a lower rate, similiar idea to promoting use of unleaded petrol!

(f) Need national and local strategies and policies including local government and other agencies including voluntary sector and industry working together, the lead should be the LA and need to have Socially Responsible Drinking Policies as do Employers and Universitise etc.

Finally we also need more support forthe victims of alcohol abuse and need to address the causes why people feel that they must escape into the oblivion of excess alcohol. Need Government, LAs, the Industry and voluntary sector working in partnership. Hope these comments offer some food for thought in what is becoming an increasingly important issue, sadly unless action is taken I can only see things in the future getting worse. However I

am an optimist and I believe that collectively we can change the  
current drinking culture in this country.  
With best wishes,  
Barry Ewart,  
Community Education Development Officer.