

## **Barnardo's Scotland response to the Alcohol Minimum Pricing (Scotland) Bill**

### **Introduction**

Barnardo's Scotland works with more than 10,000 children, young people and their families in 98 specialised projects in communities across the country. Every Barnardo's project is different but each believes in the potential in every child and young person, no matter who they are, what they have done or what they have been through.

Barnardo's Scotland strongly welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to tackle alcohol misuse and stated policy aim of reducing alcohol consumption.

Barnardo's Scotland has specialist services that deal with alcohol misuse specifically and substance misuse more generally. The majority of all our services have to deal with the impact of alcohol misuse on children/families. This is an area in which we have considerable experience of and an area where we have specialised expertise and services. It is from this perspective that this response is made.

### **The Bill**

**Barnardo's Scotland fully supports the Scottish Government's plans to introduce a minimum price regime for alcohol as set out in the draft Bill.**

There is now significant evidence to show that price directly affects consumption.

However, we also believe that a minimum price alone will not solve Scotland's alcohol problem.

Barnardo's Scotland would like to see action beyond the Bill to ensure that Scotland's alcohol problem is successfully tackled.

### **Beyond the Bill**

Barnardo's Scotland would like to see a robust implementation of *Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol: A Framework for Action*.

It has been nearly three years since the framework has been published and Barnardo's Scotland would like the Scottish Government report back on the progress made on all actions listed in Annex C of the Framework.

The Scottish Government needs to ensure that the framework is incorporated into all of the Government's current and upcoming strategies relating to children and young people for example, the Mental Health Strategy and the National Parenting Strategy.

Barnardo's Scotland would also like to see:

- An early intervention/ preventative approach to tackling Scotland's alcohol problems and the needs of children and young people always put at the heart of alcohol policy.
- Adequate, appropriate and accessible services have to be made available to all children and families affected by alcohol misuse. Provision of these services is currently patchy and it is crucial that all those affected by alcohol misuse have access to support.
- The Scottish Government rigorously enforce the provisions of 2005 and 2010 Licensing Acts relating to the supply of alcohol to children and young people and ensure maximum penalties are issued to those that break the law.
- Restrictions on the marketing of alcohol products in places and times where they can be readily seen by children and young people. Barnardo's recently supported Sarah Wollaston MP's Private Member's Bill at Westminster on alcohol marketing and would like to see a similar policy brought to Scotland. However, the responsibility for alcohol marketing is currently reserved.
- Restrictions on alcohol sponsorship of events and activities that target and include children and young people, such as T-in-the Park.
- A sustained and integrated approach to tackling parental alcohol misuse including a Scottish Government led social marketing campaign. This should include a sustained programme of health education, for example on Foetal Alcohol Syndrome.
- Specific guidance provided to all social and healthcare professionals on how to address and support families with alcohol misuse problems more adequately.
- The Scottish Government should implement the Social Responsibility Levy (SRL) passed under the 2010 Act to ensure that additional revenue generated by a minimum pricing regime is recuperated by the Government. We believe that revenue raised by a SRL should go towards services needed for children and families affected by alcohol misuse.
- Barnardo's Scotland would like to see some of the revenue generated by the Scottish Government's proposed Public Health Levy earmarked for an ongoing public health campaign to tackle parental alcohol misuse and parenting when drunk. This would include a focus on early intervention and education work with all age groups.

### **Supporting Information**

Alcohol was 66% more affordable in 2009 than in 1987 (ISD, 2011). There is now overwhelming academic research, as well as international examples, which proves that minimum pricing regimes have a direct effect on the consumption of alcohol by quantity and type. Barnardo's welcomes the Government's plans to introduce a minimum price regime.

A significant percentage of children throughout Scotland are harmed in various ways and to varying degrees by alcohol. Sometimes the negative effects are caused by

alcohol consumption among children and young people themselves. In addition, there is abuse and/or neglect of children resulting from alcohol abuse of parents or the other adults in their lives.

Latest ISD statistics found that when asked 11% of thirteen year olds and 31% of fifteen year olds reported having a drink in the last week. Each year in Scotland there are on average around 350 alcohol-related hospital admissions amongst people under 15 years (Alcohol Focus Scotland). It is estimated that at least 65,000 children in Scotland are affected by a parent with a drink problem. Each problematic drinker is likely to negatively affect the lives of at least two other family members. (Alcohol Focus Scotland)

In the 2011 ISD survey a range of negative effects of drinking alcohol were reported by children, including having tried drugs, having been in trouble with the police and vomiting. Fifty five percent of fifteen year olds reported experiencing at least one effect compared with 39% of thirteen year olds. 'Vomiting' and 'having an argument' were the most common negative effects of alcohol to be reported.

### **Interventions that work**

A WHO review of 32 alcohol policy measures found that the most effective alcohol policies are controls on price and availability, drink driving laws and brief interventions for hazardous and harmful drinkers. Alcohol policies found to be least effective include education, public service announcements and voluntary regulation by the alcohol industry (Alcohol policy in the WHO European region: current status and the way forward, 2005).

### **Advertising and Marketing**

Barnardo's Scotland recently supported Sarah Wollaston MP's Private Member's Bill on Alcohol Marketing and would like to see a similar policy introduced in Scotland. The responsibility for marketing is currently reserved to Westminster.

There is a significant link between alcohol marketing and consumption among adolescents which has been shown in a number of academic studies. A systematic review of those studies concluded that increasing exposure to alcohol marketing encourages children to start drinking younger and to drink more when they do. The Academy of Medical Sciences report, *Calling Time*, showed a consistent correlation between consumption levels by 11-15 year-olds and the amount spent on marketing.

The sponsorship of sporting events and teams, as well as youth events, such as T in the Park by alcohol products is not acceptable. Nor is the production by alcohol industry of 'advergames' on the internet and for use on mobile phones, which promote alcohol products.

Barnardo's Scotland supports legislation that would only permit the promotion of alcohol in media that adults use. This would include the print media (90% of readers are adults rather than children), radio and TV after 9pm and films with an 18 rated certificate. It would allow advertising at the point of sale in licensed premises and at traditional producer events. Every advert would also be required to carry an advisory message about responsible drinking and health. Any other marketing or promotion

not specifically permitted would therefore be banned, and this would include pre-watershed television, social media and youth-certified films.

There should be heavy penalties for those that break these rules.

The estimated spend on alcohol marketing is around £800million compared with the Drinkaware Trust's funding by the industry of just £2.6million.

### **Parental Alcohol Misuse**

In *Untold Damage*, published by SHAAP and ChildLine in 2009, the report found that a disproportionately large number of calls received by ChildLine from children concerned about a significant other's drinking come from Scotland. It found that parental drinking problems contributed to their own problems and unhappiness. In calls the vast majority of children relate the violence as happening when the parent is drunk or has been drinking. Children also described how family relationships are affected by harmful parental drinking resulting in verbal aggression and conflict. They provide accounts of their own isolation within the home and a general lack of parental attention and care. Parental drinking has a significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

Barnardo's Scotland would like to see a sustained and integrated approach to tackling parental alcohol misuse including a Scottish Government led social marketing campaign.

### **Enforce existing laws**

ISD Scotland statistics have found that the three most common sources of buying alcohol for school children were friends/ relatives, shops and off licences. Among both 13 and 15 year olds the most common way to have bought alcohol was from a friend or relative. Of those pupils who had ever drunk alcohol, one in ten 13 year olds and 17% of 15 year olds had made an attempt to purchase alcohol from a supermarket/shop/off-licence (irrespective of success) in the previous four weeks of being asked by ISD researchers. In both age groups, if an attempt was made, it was more likely to result in a purchase than a refusal. Attempts to purchase alcohol at a pub, bar or club were rarer as 4% of 13 year olds and 12% of 15 year olds who had ever drunk alcohol reported that this had occurred in the last four weeks. Since 1998 the proportion of 13 year olds and 15 year olds, who had ever drunk alcohol, who bought alcohol from friends and relatives more than doubled. Although there has been a small decline in 15 year olds buying alcohol from pubs and clubs between 1996 and 2008, there has been an increase in the percentage that have bought from supermarkets.

Barnardo's Scotland would like to see the Government focusing on prosecuting those that sell alcohol to underage drinkers with the rigorous enforcement of the of 2005 Licensing Act relating to the sale of alcohol to those under the age of 18.

#### **For Further Information Contact:**

Richard Meade, Public Affairs Officer, Barnardo's Scotland  
T: 0131 314 6632 or e: [richard.meade@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:richard.meade@barnardos.org.uk)