

Tuesday 7th February 2012

Sir,

We congratulate Dr Sarah Wollaston MP on achieving a parliamentary debate today on the crucial issue of the forthcoming alcohol strategy for England. We hope this will strengthen the resolve of the Secretary of State for Health to heed the evidence on the policies that will have a real impact in reducing the toll of alcohol-related harm, especially on the health and wellbeing of young people.

The Secretary of State emphasised the principle of concentrating on outcomes at the recent launch of a Public Health Framework for England which included details of his aspirations for reducing deaths from liver disease in the UK, 80% of which are alcohol-related, and reducing alcohol-related admissions to hospital, both of which continue to rise at alarming rates. It would be a betrayal of this principle to ignore the evidence on what works best on the outcomes of alcohol-related health and social harm - strong action on price.

Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland have all committed to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol. If England were to join this 'coalition of the willing', Westminster could be in the vanguard of improving public health, rather than trailing behind, in implementing policies that tackle outcomes and are evidence-based. We urge MPs to support Dr Wollaston in this important debate.

Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, Chair, Alcohol Health Alliance
Sir Richard Thompson, President, Royal College of Physicians
Professor Lindsey Davies, President, Faculty of Public Health
Professor Vivienne Nathanson, Director of Professional Activities, British Medical Association
Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive & General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing
Dr Dominique Florin, Medical Director, The Medical Council on Alcohol
Professor Jonathan Rhodes, President, British Society of Gastroenterology
Professor Humphrey Hodgson, Director, Institute of Hepatology, University College London
Professor Graham Foster, President, British Association for the Study of the Liver
Dr Owen Bowden-Jones, Chair, Faculty of Addiction, Royal College of Psychiatrists
Dr Olivia Carlton, President, Faculty of Occupational Medicine
Professor Terence Stephenson, President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Dr Jennifer R Lisle, Trustee on behalf of the Royal Society for Public Health
Andrew Langford, Chief Executive, British Liver Trust
Eric Appleby, Chief Executive, Alcohol Concern
Katherine Brown, Head of Research, Institute of Alcohol Studies
Professor Jonathan Shepherd CBE, Director, Violence Research Group, Cardiff University
Professor Eileen Kaner, Director, Institute of Health and Society

Dr Evelyn Gillan, Chief Executive, Alcohol Focus Scotland
Dr Bruce Ritson, Chair, Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems
Dr Nick Sheron, Executive Member, Alcohol Health Alliance
Dr Marsha Morgan, Consultant Hepatologist, University College London Medical School
Professor Peter Hayes, Professor of Hepatology, Scottish Liver Transplant Unit, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh
Dr David Snashall, Professor of Occupational Medicine, Kings College London
Dr Noel Olsen, FRCP, FFPHM
Dr Kieran Moriarty, British Society of Gastroenterology
Dr Christopher Record, Liver Specialist, Newcastle University
Professor Robin Touquet, Emeritus Professor of Emergency Medicine, Imperial College
Dr Francis Keaney, Vice Chair, Faculty of Addiction, Royal College of Psychiatrists
Nick Barton, Chief Executive, Action on Addiction