

PRESS STATEMENT

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GREATER MANCHESTER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WELCOME THE INTRODUCTION OF A MANDATORY CODE FOR ALCOHOL RETAILERS

The Greater Manchester Alcohol Strategy Group - representing the Greater Manchester responsible authorities, welcomes the proposals set out today for the government to tackle irresponsible alcohol promotions with the introduction of a mandatory code, but thinks government could still go further.

Alan Higgins, Lead Greater Manchester Director of Public Health for Alcohol, said:

“Any new legislation that seeks to reduce the effects of harmful or hazardous drinking and the impact on our communities is obviously welcomed by the Greater Manchester Public Health Network (GMPHN) and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) Health Commission.

“The introduction of a mandatory code of practise will regulate the information that is available to the public on the number of units that each drink contains, allowing individuals to make sensible choices.

“We are disappointed that the government did not go further and introduce a minimum price for a unit of alcohol to at least 50p per unit. This would have targeted the off sales of discounted alcohol sold by supermarkets, in line with the research that the Sheffield University has carried out on behalf of the Department of Health. [<http://www.shef.ac.uk/mediacentre/2008/1128.html>]

“Greater Manchester has the worst health statistics in relation to alcohol according to health profiles published in 2008. The estimated levels of dangerous, harmful and binge drinking in Greater Manchester are higher than regional and national averages.”

ENDS

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Notes to editors.

Greater Manchester has a number of excellent partnership arrangements in place to tackle alcohol misuse. With the support of the AGMA Board, a series of interventions are being developed to ensure that the people of Greater Manchester are given the appropriate services to target the Inequalities in Health that they face.

The National Alcohol Conference, held in November 2009 in Liverpool, it was asserted that “*the government recognises the call for a unit price of alcohol, but requires further research looking further at crime and the effects of employment*”. We in Greater Manchester call for the government to provide a timetable for this to happen, ensuring that we move forward with this debate effectively.