

HOME OFFICE

Code of practice for alcohol retailers

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Alan Johnson): The Home Office has today published the Government's response to the consultation on the new code of practice for alcohol retailers. The consultation ran from May to August 2009 and invited responses from the public, the licensed trade, enforcement agencies and health bodies. More than 7,000 responses were received from across a range of respondents and independently analysed.

The Government's response to this consultation has been published on the Home Office website, and can be read at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/alcohol-related-crime/index.html>. A copy will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

We are committed to reducing alcohol related crime, violent crime and anti-social behaviour on a number of fronts, including educating young people, campaigns encouraging people to drink more responsibly, and tough enforcement when those who drink too much cause harm to themselves and others. We also need those who retail alcohol to work in partnership with Government, the police and local authorities to reduce these risks. The majority of alcohol retailers behave responsibly, but a minority conduct irresponsible promotions or practices - the mandatory code will stop these where they take place.

Subject to the Parliamentary timetable, we intend to introduce the following mandatory licensing conditions that will apply to pubs, clubs and hotels and other "on-licensed" premises:

Banning irresponsible promotions, such as drinking games, speed drinking, women drink for free, and all you can drink for £10;

Banning pouring drinks directly into the mouths of customers;

Ensuring free tap water for customers; and

Ensuring that all on trade premises offer small measures of beers, wine and spirits to customers.

In addition, we will also introduce a mandatory licensing condition to ensure that all those who sell or supply alcohol have an age verification policy in place requiring them ask anyone who looks under 18 for proof of age by providing appropriate identification.