NHS Orkney

Alcohol (Licensing, Public Health and Criminal Justice) (Scotland) Bill

The Committee is seeking responses to the following questions—

1. Do you support the Bill as a whole?

Yes, NHS Orkney supports the Bill as a whole.

2. Do you support particular provisions in the Bill?

see above.

3. Do you have concerns about particular provisions in the Bill?

With regards to the container marking in off-sales, we are aware that there is some concern that off-sales premises may be unfairly punished for selling alcohol to those under age should young people be caught in possession of a coded bottle. It may be that the alcohol was sold legitimately but that the young person has acquired it via other means such as from a friend or family member or theft. Education of the population is required to ensure that the inappropriateness of providing alcohol to those under age is addressed.

4. How will the particular provisions in the Bill fit with your work, or the work of your organisation?

NHS Orkney would welcome in particular the minimum price for packages containing more than one alcoholic product, alcohol awareness training and notification of offenders to General Practice as these measures would all contribute to work already being undertaken by NHS Orkney and the Orkney Alcohol and Drugs Partnership around reducing the impact of alcohol on our community and our alcohol related hospital admissions which are at present the highest in Scotland.

In addition, the Alcohol Education Policy Statement could encourage the evaluation at least every 5 years of local alcohol education provision, and thereby provide additional local focus on the overall progress of Scottish Government's policy on alcohol.

The Bill should also support the work of the local Community Planning Partnership, for which addressing the consequences of alcohol use in the community has been identified as a priority.
5. Will the Bill have financial or resource implications for you or your organisation?

There may initially be some resources utilised by NHS Orkney or the Alcohol and Drug Partnership in supporting the provision of training or upskilling of local police officers to ensure that they have the correct information when liaising with someone who has committed an alcohol related offence. However, it is assumed much of the relevant training will be provided nationally.

General Practitioners will need to ensure that they are recording when a notification is made to them regarding an offender’s alcohol consumption at the time of offence. This may have implications for practice IT systems, and should be addressed nationally. We envisage that a notification to a general practitioner would lead onto an Alcohol Brief Intervention being undertaken when the patient presents at the practice.

A reduction in usage of health care services as a result of reduced consumption of alcohol by the Scottish population would release resources for the provision of care for other illnesses and the promotion of well-being.

6. Do you have any other comments or suggestions relevant to the Bill?

None.

NHS Orkney