Scottish Ambulance Service Response

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?**

   The Bill sets out clearly a number of steps to reduce the impact of alcohol in Scotland and, as such, as a Health Board dealing with a high proportion of incidents where alcohol is a factor, we welcome the Bill as a whole.

2. **Do you support particular provisions in the Bill?**

   We particularly welcome provisions to prohibit the sale of reduced price multi-pack alcohol and the ban on advertising of alcohol near schools.

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

   It is unclear what, if any impact there would be for SAS in respect of breach of a Drinking Banning Order (DBO). Given that the Scottish Ambulance Service will potentially attend incidents involving individuals subject to one of these orders, and recognising the positive partnership working in place with ACPOS and local authorities to manage treatment outwith custody or hospital, we would wish to ensure any additional legislation did not impact on these proactive arrangements which have a positive impact on both the safety of individuals and a reduction in avoidable hospital attendances.

   We are also unclear how any DBO would be enforced, particularly where no offence has been committed.

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

   See point 3 above.

   Whilst there is estimated to be a very small number of DBO applications per annum, SAS has been required to support similar applications for ASBOs and evidence frequency of 999 calls or rates of ambulance attendance, for example. It is unclear whether any similar expectation would be placed on SAS to evidence that an individual was under the influence of alcohol when an offence was committed, e.g. an assault.

   SAS crews have the facility to collect this data and to record whether there were any additional factors, such as drugs or alcohol, involved in an incident, but this is not done routinely depending on the circumstances of individual incidents. It should also be noted that is not to evidence that drugs or alcohol
were the cause of the incident, but merely additional factors noted by the crew, so further clarity may be required in respect of this.

5. **Will the Bill have financial or resource implications for you or your organisation?**

   See point 4 above – costs are unknown but may be incurred if there is any requirement to provide evidence in respect of DBOs.

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

   No