

Manager: Simon Gordon
M.A.(Hons), LL.B., M.Sc., C.B.A.

The Clerk
Orkney Licensing Board
OIC
School Place,
Kirkwall,
KW15 1NY

20 February 2018

Dear Sir,

Over Provision

A response from OACAS; Orkney Alcohol Counselling & Advisory Service.

Recap: OACAS is a local charitable body which provides counselling for those experiencing problems with alcohol, drugs, mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. It has been working in Orkney for over forty years now having evolved from Drinkwise Orkney.

Our position on consumption of alcohol is one of sensible drinking.

Alcohol is a serious problem in Scotland and Orkney.

Alcohol Focus Scotland, the body that advises the Scottish Government, indicates that Russia is the leading consumer of alcohol at 11.3 litres per head annually, Scotland is close behind at 11.2 litres per head.

There is an acknowledged culture in both countries that supports high alcohol consumption, this in Scotland coupled with longer licensing hours, marketing, and increase in outlets means that the supply has increased.

This culture that supports high alcohol consumption leads to under reporting, and to a state of denial.

Alcohol focus Scotland estimate that the cost to Scottish society is high; £3.6 billion a year or £900 per head.

The costs include related health care, related crime, reduction in productive capacity, breakdown in families.

In the last 30 years, in Scotland there has been a 45% increase in mortality due to liver cirrhosis. Due to alcohol there are 25 deaths per week, 100 hospital admissions per week are alcohol related. 50 % of prisoners in police cells were drunk at the time, alcohol was a factor in 1 in 3 divorces.

65,000 children are at risk from due to alcohol misuse.

Alcohol has been identified as a factor in heart disease, injuries from fights, road traffic accidents, and now in cancer.

Orkney has followed the Scottish trend for alcohol deaths.

The Scottish government has studied successful strategies in other countries to develop a plan to reduce harm.

There have been two points of focus:

1. Price
2. Availability

On price the Scottish government have introduced minimum pricing.

On Availability they are aiming at a Total Population

Strategy which will involve, Local Data, building a Local Alcohol Profile, involving the community.

They hope to skill up the community to signpost individuals to help in the local area, to develop a body of skilled practitioners to identify and act upon alcohol harm.

A key part of this total Population approach is the role of the Licensing Board and their over provision statement.

Specifically, on over provision OACAS submits that Orkney is in that situation.

We have a small population of around 20,000 people, yet: -

We have 2 Whisky distilleries that now actively sell direct to the public and visitors through open days.

We have 3 Gin distilleries which will actively sell to the public through shops, mail order, and now a Gin festival.

We have 2 Breweries, and a Winery which is also now producing Rum.

We have 5 supermarkets with licensed sections, ie Tesco, Lidl, and 3 Co-ops.

We have licensed restaurants.

We have licensed hotels.

We have shops which have licenses.


As a part of the package of interventions, outlined earlier, the adoption by the Licensing Board of an Over Provision Statement would help by signalling just that; that it recognises the downside of over consumption of alcohol, that the community is already well supplied with alcohol, and that a duty of care and prudence for the physical and mental health of the community must surface.

Its action in doing so would not be it acting alone, but in concert with other initiatives to reduce demand.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alastair MacLeod', with a stylized, looped initial 'A'.

Alastair MacLeod,
Chairman.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Gordon', with a stylized initial 'S'.

Simon Gordon,
Manager.