

THE MAGISTRATES' ASSOCIATION
JUDICIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Response to Home Office consultation on how alcohol is sold and supplied —
Safe, Sensible, Social. Selling alcohol responsibly

The Magistrates' Association supports fully the implementation of any measures designed to reduce alcohol-related crime. We are very concerned about the increasingly high number of defendants appearing before us in court in cases where alcohol is cited as a reason, or even an excuse for committing offences.

Although for us the most significant of the four licensing objectives is *crime and disorder*, magistrates are also involved, either directly or indirectly in cases involving the impact on *public safety, public nuisance* and *protection of harm to children*.

We would support the proposed mandatory conditions and would make these mandatory for all licensed premises.

We fully support a legal requirement for licensed premises to display prominently, unit and health information, in a simple, easily understandable format at points where alcohol is bought.

We condemn the practice of allowing only doubles to be bought and would support the proposals that both 25ml and 35ml measures should be offered.

We similarly condemn the irresponsible drinking practices such as '*all you can drink for £10*' which have become popular and would support the bringing in of a ban on all such practices. (We have had other less blatant practices brought to our attention, such as in restaurants where there is a long delay before food is brought and where often the waiting staff insist on topping up glasses, thus encouraging more alcohol to be drunk).

We have great concerns about the promotion of alcohol in supermarkets. We frequently see in court evidence of under-age drinking, where there has apparently been no difficulty in obtaining alcohol in shops. We would support the banning of sales below the price level of excise duty plus VAT. Although there is evidence that the large supermarkets are asking for proof of evidence, we feel strongly that this must be rigidly imposed throughout the industry.

We would support attempts to control the sale of alcohol online and by mail order, but are unsure as to how this can be achieved. We are aware that, when ordering alcohol online, a box must be ticked declaring that the purchaser is over 18, but have no information on whether this is checked. We assume that it is up to the delivery driver to obtain proof of age, but we have no evidence to confirm that this is done.

August 2009

Consultation document available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/cons-2009-alcohol/cons-2009-alcohol-doc?view=Binary>