

SUNDERLAND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

20 March 2015

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALCOHOL DECLARATION

Report of the Acting Director of Public Health

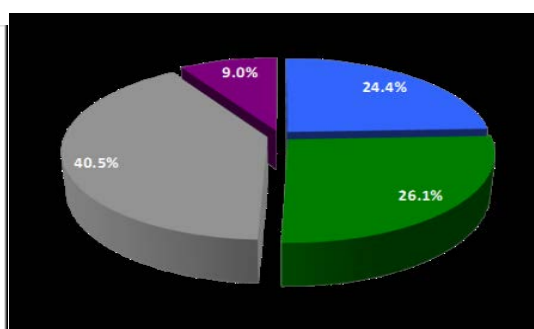
Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of the development and purpose of the Local Government Alcohol Declaration. The full declaration is set out in Appendix 1.

Background

2. The harm caused by alcohol is extensive. Every year in the UK, there are thousands of deaths, hundreds of thousands of hospital admissions and over a million violent crimes linked to drinking alcohol. This is not a problem of a small minority it is a problem that cuts across the whole population.
3. Alcohol impacts upon a raft of frontline services, from the NHS, to the police, to the Ambulance Service, Licensing teams and Social Services. It impacts upon the workplace, through lost productivity and absenteeism and on education, through truancy and disruption.
4. The personal, social and economic cost of alcohol has been estimated to be up to £55bn for England. Alcohol harm presents a significant financial burden across the North East economy as a whole. The total cost for the North East is estimated at £1.1 bn per year. The diagram demonstrates how this cost is broken down into the different elements.

NHS:	£264.97m
CRIME & LICENSING:	£296.31m
WORKPLACE:	£440.06m
SOCIAL SERVICES:	£97.81m



5. Further to the financial impact, more than two in five (44%) violent crimes and 37% of domestic violence incidents are committed under the influence of alcohol. One fifth of all violent crime occurs in or near pubs and clubs and 45% of adults avoid town centres at night because of drunken behaviour.

Overview

6. The Local Government Declaration on Alcohol is a response to the ongoing damage the alcohol does to communities in the North East. It is a pledge to take action and a statement about the local authority's commitment to protecting our local community from the harm caused by alcohol.
7. The declaration was initiated following a meeting of the North East Directors of Public Health Group following a BALANCE conference in November 2013. Whilst the Declaration is intended as a regional statement of intent, it's development has been led by collaboration between Gateshead Council and the regional alcohol office BALANCE, with oversight from the North East Directors of Public Health Group.
8. The goal of the Declaration is not only to demonstrate local authority leadership on tackling alcohol harm but also to make a collective statement about the importance of this issue nationally.
9. The commitments set out in the declaration will result in action across the system to address the harm that alcohol causes.

Recommendations

10. The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:
 - Agree to sign up to the alcohol declaration as included in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – Draft Declaration on Alcohol

We acknowledge that:

- Alcohol is one of the greatest causes of premature death and morbidity in our communities;
- Reducing alcohol harm in our communities significantly reduces costs to public services;
- Although lower income groups are not the heaviest drinkers, they suffer from the greatest alcohol harms;
- Evidence-based, government-led action to regulate the price, promotion and availability of alcohol is the most effective option for tackling alcohol harm;
- Although it might be appropriate to engage with elements of the alcohol industry around the management of the night-time economy, the alcohol industry should have no role in the development of alcohol policy or strategy;
- The volume and content of alcohol advertising influences young people to drink earlier and to consume more.

As leaders of our communities we welcome the:

- Opportunity for local government and key partners to lead local action to tackle alcohol harm and secure the health, welfare, social, economic and environmental benefits that come from reducing excessive alcohol consumption;
- Opportunity to further embed public health priorities within the local authority framework, particularly in relation to community safety, regulatory activity and economic regeneration;

We commit our Council from this dateto act at a local level to reduce alcohol harm and health inequalities by:

- Influencing national government to take the most effective, evidence-based action to reduce alcohol harm, particularly via the introduction of greater regulations around the price, promotion and availability of alcohol;
- Influencing national government to rebalance the Licensing Act in favour of local authorities and communities, enabling local licensing authorities to control the number, density and availability of alcohol according to local requirements;
- Developing evidence-based strategies and commissioning plans with our local communities and partners including the local NHS Acute Trust, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the police;
- Ensuring that public health and community safety are accorded a high priority in all public policy-making about alcohol;
- Making best use of existing licensing powers to ensure effective management of the night-time economy;
- Raising awareness of the harm caused by alcohol to individuals and our communities, bringing it closer in public consciousness to other harmful products, such as tobacco.

