

## SECTION 1: POLICY & LEGISLATION

### NEW BILL ANNOUNCED TO TACKLE BINGE DRINKING AND PUBLIC DISORDER

On 24 April The Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, T.D. and the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr Brian Lenihan, T.D., announced new legislative measures to tackle the increasing availability and excessive consumption of alcohol, and the public order problems caused by binge drinking.

The draft legislation, the Intoxicating Liquor/Public Order Bill 2008, proposes the reform of both licensing law and public order legislation in response to recommendations contained in the Report of the Alcohol Advisory Group also being published today. Drafting of the Bill is at an advanced stage with a view to its enactment before the Oireachtas rises for the summer break. The principal proposals contained in the Bill are as follows:

#### Sale of Alcohol

- off-sales of alcohol will be permitted only between 10.30 a.m. (7.30am at present) and 10.00 p.m. (12.30 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. on Sundays);
- wine off-licences, which may be obtained at present directly from the Revenue Commissioners, will in future require a District Court certificate;
- the grounds on which objection may be made to the grant of a District Court certificate for an off-licence will be extended to include consideration of the needs of the neighbourhood and the adequacy of the existing number of off-licences in the area;
- in future, alcohol products must be displayed and sold in supermarkets, convenience stores, etc. in a specified area which is structurally separated from the rest of the premises (where separation is not possible, alcohol products must be displayed and sold from behind a counter);
- test purchasing of alcohol products will be introduced; this will apply to both on-licences and off-licences.

#### Opening Hours/Licensing Laws

- a new statutory requirement to have a CCTV system in place in premises where special occasions to which the public are admitted are taking place, i.e. nightclubs and late bars;
- a strengthening of the public order ground on which the Gardaí may object to the grant of an order or its duration (the District Court shall not grant any such orders unless the premises concerned complies fully with fire safety standards);

- As regards premises with theatre licences, the current anomaly whereby such premises may remain open beyond normal licensing hours without having to obtain special exemption orders is being addressed; in future, such premises may only remain open after normal closing times if a special exemption order has been obtained from the District Court.

#### Public Order

- The draft Bill contains two important proposals designed to address the risk of public disorder: the first will permit a member of the Garda Síochána to seize any bottle or container which is in the possession of a person who appears to be under the age of 18 and which the member suspects, with reasonable cause, contains alcohol which is being consumed, or intended to be consumed, by a person under 18 years in a place other than a private residence.
- The second will permit the seizure of bottles and containers containing alcohol where there is a reasonable apprehension of public disorder and which may be used to require a person to leave the place concerned in a peaceable and orderly manner.

#### Alcohol Promotions and Discount Sales

There is widespread public concern at present in relation to alcohol promotions and reduced price sales and discounts. The draft Bill provides for the making of detailed regulations to prohibit or restrict such practices, whether by individual licensees or any other person, e.g. promotions organised centrally by supermarket multiples. Regulations may also be made which will prohibit events or activities which are intended or likely to encourage excessive consumption of alcohol.

The Minister also stated that while this draft Bill addressed the Government's immediate concerns, the Government Legislation Programme provides for publication of a comprehensive Sale of Alcohol Bill later this year. This larger Bill, in the course of being drafted, will modernise and streamline all the laws relating to the sale and consumption of alcohol by repealing the Licensing Acts 1833 to 2004, as well as the Registration of Clubs Acts 1904 to 2004, and replacing them with updated and streamlined provisions.

For further information please contact:

**Department of Health and Children**  
Hawkins House, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 6354000 Fax: 01 6354001  
Email: [info@justice.ie](mailto:info@justice.ie) Web: [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

## ON HOW TO RESPOND TO ALCOHOL MISUSE

On 15 April Minister for Children, Brendan Smith, TD, launched a report on the views of teenagers on alcohol misuse from consultations organised by the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) in five locations around the country during October 2007.

Four dominant themes emerged from the consultations:

- A reduction in the legal age for drinking alcohol to 16
- The provision of youth cafés and other alcohol-free facilities for teenagers
- Age-appropriate and improved education programmes
- An updated and effectively enforced ID system for young people.

The teenagers proposed the following measures:

- ID card for 16-21 year-olds, with a permitted allowance of alcohol according to age
- 16-18 year olds to be permitted 2 drinks of beer or wine
- 18-21 year olds to be permitted 3 or 4 drinks, including spirits
- ID card would be connected to a central computerised system linked to paying for drinks.

The need for more youth cafés that are free, comfortable and attractive, and have facilities such as: DVDs; internet access; karaoke; music events; games; counselling and other supports for teenagers was highlighted. Many teenagers spoke of the lack of transport to facilities and of the fact that 16 years olds have to pay adults rates for the cinema and on public transport. The need for other accessible and inexpensive activities as alternatives to drinking, such as discos, dancing, swimming, horse riding and rugby was also highlighted.

There was an overwhelming consensus amongst the young people that there is not enough education about alcohol. Participants wanted age-appropriate education programmes on alcohol, delivered by experts (e.g. counsellors, doctors, youth workers, former alcohol misusers) rather than teachers.

Other recommendations from the consultations include:

- Education programmes to start in 5th or 6th class in Primary schools, which include talks from teenagers
- Different programmes for different years at second-level, e.g.
  - 1st year: guest speakers, 6th year mentors, scare-tactics, pictures
  - 2nd/3rd years: dangers and consequences of alcohol and the medical effects, as this is when young people often start to drink

- 5th/6th years: messages about responsibility with peer mentoring from young adults and 3rd level students
- Fortnightly classes on alcohol and drugs, with age-appropriate messages, focused on choice, responsibility and trust as part of SPHE.

Other issues of importance noted in the report included the role of parents, the role of the Gardaí, peer-mentoring programmes, the role of the media and advertising, and peer pressure in youth culture. The full report is available as a download from the OMC website @ [www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie)

For further information contact:

Office of the Minister for Children  
Hawkins House, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6354000 Fax: 01 6743223

Email: [omc@health.gov.ie](mailto:omc@health.gov.ie) Web: [www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie)

## MINISTER ANNOUNCES NEW MEASURES TO CONTROL ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

On 24 April 2008 Mr Pat the Cope Gallagher T.D., Minister for Health Promotion and Food Safety announced the Government's decision to strengthen the measures in place to control alcohol advertising, having agreed to accept the strengthened Codes on Advertising and Sponsorship negotiated between the Department of Health and Children, representatives from the Irish Alcohol Industry and representatives from the Irish Advertising Industry. The Codes aim to reduce the exposure of young people to alcohol advertising and marketing and further limit the volume and placement of alcohol advertisements across all media in Ireland.

Alcohol advertising will be limited to no more than 25% of available space or time on any occasion across all Irish media i.e. TV, Radio, Cinema, Outdoor Advertising and the Print Media. Additional restrictions will be placed on the times and places that alcohol advertisements can appear. New restrictions will deal with alcohol advertising or sponsorship during the broadcasting of sports programmes.

All alcohol advertising being placed in Irish media will continue to be subject to approval of content by Central Copy Clearance Ireland before acceptance by any Irish

media. Monitoring and adherence to the Codes will be overseen by the Alcohol Marketing Communications Monitoring Body and research will be undertaken into the effectiveness of the Codes to establish the extent to

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which they are being successful in reducing the exposure of young people to alcohol advertising.

The Department of Health and Children will commence a process to identify areas in relation to alcohol advertising, promotions and sponsorships where legislative measures might be necessary to afford greater protection to young people. This process would encompass areas outside of the scope of the existing codes on advertising. In order to have a broader examination of the extent of alcohol sponsorships, the Minister will establish a Working Group to examine the extent of the existing sponsorships and the terms and length of existing contracts.

There is also a need to address concerns around alcohol companies' sponsorship of large public events, particularly music events, which appeal mainly to young people and young adults. This matter will also be considered by this Group.

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Tel: 01 6354000 Fax: 01 6354001  
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## SECTION 2: ROUND-UP

### **NEW NATIONAL DETENTION FACILITY FOR CHILDREN**

On 6th March 2008 the Minister for Children, Brendan Smith TD, announced a new national detention facility to cater for all children up to 18 years, who are ordered to be detained by the courts. The facility will be developed on a single site at the existing Oberstown Campus in Lusk, Co. Dublin.

The new facility will provide a total of 167 places in safe and secure accommodation. This capital development will facilitate the transfer of responsibility for 16-17 year old boys from the Irish Prison Service (St. Patrick's Institution) in the first phase of development, and enable them to be accommodated within children detention schools. The new facilities will replace existing outdated detention schools and will result in the transfer of the

current facility based in Finglas (Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre) to the site in Lusk.

For further information please contact:

**Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform**  
**94 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2**  
Tel: 01 6028202 Lo-Call: 1890 221227  
Email: [info@justice.ie](mailto:info@justice.ie) Web: [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

### **CHILDRENS QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS SURVEY FINDINGS PUBLISHED**

KIDSCREEN measures subjective health and well-being of children, to screen for and detect at an early stage the needs and gaps in services/resources. The project is a European effort, involving 13 countries to develop a standardized health-related quality of life instrument for children and adolescents. It also aims to provide an evidence base to support policy, intervention and national planning for children.

A national sample of 1800 children in Ireland was drawn from the 8 -18 year old age group and the questionnaire was administered in schools nationwide. The results were published in February 2008 and the full report entitled *Kidscreen: A Study on the Quality of Life Tool KIDSCREEN for children and adolescents in Irelands: Results of the KIDSCREEN National Survey 2005* is available as a download from the OMC website @ [www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie)

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Irish YouthWork Centre**  
Tel: 01 8729933  
Email: [fbissett@youthworkireland.ie](mailto:fbissett@youthworkireland.ie)  
Website: [www.iywc.com](http://www.iywc.com)