

Alcohol Bill Consultation - Shifting the Culture

RESPONSE FROM RCGP SCOTLAND

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is the academic organisation in the UK for general practitioners. Its aim is to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and act as the 'voice' of general practitioners on education, training and issues around standards of care for patients.

The College in Scotland came into existence in 1953 (one year after the UK College), when a Scottish Council was created to take forward the College's interests within the Scottish Health Service. We currently represent over 4000 GP members and Associates in Training throughout Scotland. In addition to a base in Edinburgh, the College in Scotland is represented through five regional faculty offices in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee and Glasgow.

We read with interest your possible Members Bill in relation to shifting the culture on alcohol, which has been reviewed by members of RCGP Scotland with an interest in alcohol-related issues.

Since RCGP Scotland is an active participant in SHAAP, we would like to say that on the whole we concur with the response of SHAAP to your consultation. We endorse their comments on both sections around health and justice and the evidence used in stating their case.

We felt in the main that your Bill was focussing more on the problem drinker and we believe that there is a need to add alcohol-related harm at a population level and reduce overall consumption, while continuing to deal with the chronic health problems that can develop through overuse of alcohol.

We would wish to agree with SHAAP's comments under Question 18 and also do not believe that notifying a GP of a patient's conviction for an alcohol-related offence would be beneficial. We would have concerns on legal convictions being on a patient's medical record and how to ensure that this remained confidential. We also support SHAAP's recommendations in their answers to your general questions 1 and 2.

More attention around dealing with health inequalities and the effects alcohol-related problems have on our more deprived communities would be welcomed.

Dr John Duncan
Deputy Chair
July 2012