

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

The Scottish Alcohol and Tobacco Policy Summit held on 15th March 2011 hosted a participative Question Time style debate with the Health Spokespeople of the five parties represented at Holyrood: Ross Finnie MSP, Scottish Liberal Democrats; Cllr Alison Johnstone, Scottish Green Party; Shona Robison MSP, Scottish National Party; Mary Scanlon MSP, Scottish Conservatives; and Dr Richard Simpson MSP, Scottish Labour Party.

As there was not time to ask all of the many questions submitted, the political parties were asked to provide written responses. These are detailed on the pages below. The SNP, Scottish National Party response is colour coded yellow; the SLD, Scottish Liberal Democrats, colour coded orange; Lab, Scottish Labour, colour coded red; Green, Scottish Green Party, colour coded green. The Conservatives (Cons) submitted two statements rather than specific responses and those are colour coded blue.

To find out more about the positions of each of the political parties you can access their manifestos at their websites:

[Scottish National Party](#)

[Scottish Labour Party](#)

[Scottish Liberal Democrats](#)

[Scottish Green Party](#)

[Scottish Conservatives](#)

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

## Questions relating to tobacco

**Q. Would you consider introducing a target for reducing smoking amongst those in most deprived areas as there was prior to 2007?**

The Scottish Government is investing heavily in evidence-informed NHS stop smoking services, over £40 million in the current spending review period, to enable NHS boards to deliver high quality, accessible services across their population. This includes substantial stop smoking support provided in the heart of communities, including the most deprived areas, via the smoking cessation element of the national public health service contract with community pharmacies, introduced in 2008.

**SNP**

In 2009, 14,431 successful one month quits were recorded in the two most deprived within board Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles, equating to 54.5% of all successful quits recorded in NHS stop smoking services. The Scottish Government is considering how to build upon this as part of the work which is currently ongoing to review and update NHS Scotland HEAT targets to focus more on reducing smoking rates within our more deprived communities.

**SLD**

Scotland's scandalous rate of health inequalities is one of the most concerning public health issues the country faces. And the situation is getting worse, not better. Evidence shows that 32% of deaths in Scotland's most deprived areas are due to smoking, compared with 15% in the most affluent. Scottish Liberal Democrats are committed to robust action on smoking cessation and the wider issue of health inequality in Scotland, and it's clear that deprived areas require focused health interventions. Specific targets can be useful in setting ambitions and measuring progress, and we would consider introducing the targets you describe.

**LAB**

Yes, smoking is the single largest contributor to health inequalities and the response and successes in reducing smoking in deprived needs to be reduced by at least the same levels as in higher income brackets for any tobacco control strategy to be truly successful. Removing such a target is undoubtedly a retrograde step and putting in place revised targets will be central to Labour's refreshed plan.

**GREEN**

Yes.

**Q. ASH Scotland and other health organisations want a new tobacco control strategy. In government will you deliver this?**

Yes we will ensure a new comprehensive tobacco control strategy for Scotland is put in place to replace the current strategy which has come to an end. The Scottish Tobacco Control Strategy Group was replaced in 2004 by the Scottish Minister. Yes we will ensure a new comprehensive tobacco control strategy for Scotland is put in place to replace the current strategy which has come to an end. The Scottish Tobacco Control Strategy Group was replaced in 2004 by the Scottish Ministerial Working Group on Tobacco Control action plan "A Breath of Fresh Air for Scotland" (January 2004) to help shape the future direction of national policy. The formal remit of the Ministerial Group is, "To provide expert advice to the Scottish Executive on the health impact of tobacco and measures to reduce that impact; and to provide a forum for the dissemination of best practice in relation to tobacco control throughout Scotland."

**SNP**

Kenneth Gibson SNP, who came up with the original plan for Scotland's smoking ban which was then taken forward by Stewart Maxwell SNP, has presided over the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Tobacco Control (2007-2011). The Cross party group met on 15 occasions over the last four years and had a mixture of MSPs and members from a wide array of organizations dedicated to tackling Scotland's problem with tobacco. The SNP is committed to tackling the problem of Scotland's relationship with tobacco and believes that through the relevant working groups; Cross Party Group on Tobacco Control and Scottish Ministerial Working Group on Tobacco Control significant achievements can be made.

**SLD**

We are committed to making progress on smoking cessation measures and ensuring that these measures are as ambitious and robust as possible. If the Scottish Ministerial Working Group on Tobacco Control determines that a new strategy is necessary then we would support that.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**LAB**

Yes, Labour has already been in discussion with ASHS and this along with preventing tobacco advertising on merchandise forms an important part of Labour’s election manifesto. We look forward to working closely with ASH on its implementation if we are successful in May.

**GREEN**

Yes.

**Q. We’ve agreed that there is no safe level of smoking, but we don’t know whether smoking in Scotland will ever be completely eradicated or whether a ‘hard core’ of smokers will remain. What policies does your party have to reduce harm for smokers unwilling or unable to give up?**

In 2007 Shona Robison attended Scotland’s first ever smoking cessation conference in Glasgow and announced the SNP’s support for smoking cessation services. She outlined the SNP Government’s funding of £11m for each year to assist smoking cessation services. The table below details the ongoing financial assistance the SNP contributed to smoking cessation services;

	£/M	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
“Smoking Kills”		1	1	1	1
Health Improvement Fund		1	1	1	1
A Breath of Fresh Air		5	5	5	5
National No Smoking Day		4	4	4	4
Total		11	11	11	11

**SNP**

The SNP understands that there are many different ways in which to help people stop smoking. Most recently the SNP teamed up with Scottish Slimmer’s to help people lose weight as they also aim to lose weight. The programme started at the beginning of 2011. Further, there is the helpline number available and a website to assist those who may be struggling with giving up smoking. Also the incentive scheme introduced by NHS Tayside to encourage smokers in the most deprived communities to stop, has been successful and we would encourage other health boards to look at this scheme. These services have gone some way in giving support to smokers who are unwilling or unable to give up.

**SLD**

When it comes to health measures, it’s clear that simply scolding people to do the healthiest thing possible is just not practical or reasonable. Instead we realise that people will decide that the benefits of certain behaviours are worth some risks, so we should try to help them reduce their risks. Cutting down the number of cigarettes smoked daily or smoking less damaging products may reduce the harm caused by smoking. It may also be a step towards stopping smoking completely. A very important part of tobacco harm reduction is simply educating people about the risks of different sources of nicotine. But we must ensure that this approach does not undermine the measure that quitting entirely has the clearest health benefits.

**LAB**

The ban on smoking in public places and the display ban and investment in smoking cessation services undoubtedly helps those who would otherwise find it difficult to give up however our refreshed tobacco control strategy will emphasise that, while a tobacco free Scotland is the ultimate aim, cutting down through nicotine replacement or counselling for example can also help to reduce and minimise health harms.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

The Scottish Green Party would develop a national tobacco control strategy. It is important that in developing this strategy the issue of 'hard core' smokers is looked at in detail. People need the right support, at the right time and in the right place for them, in order to make the decision to quit. It is also vital that the gaps in cessation services are tackled, because we still have communities where they do not have a local service aimed at prevention as well as supporting smokers to quit. If the services and support is not there within communities, the struggle will continue for those 'hard core' smokers.

**GREEN**

## **Q. Do you believe that Scotland can be tobacco free? If so what needs to be done next to achieve this?**

Preventing smoking in public places is an important step to creating a smoke free, healthier Scotland and the SNP is working in partnership with our European neighbours in the fight against tobacco. In addition to the Scottish Government's smoking prevention action plan, a number of initiatives have been taken at a European-wide level and the SNP will continue to work with the EU to make sure that future initiatives are powerful tools in creating a smoke free Europe. The SNP has an aspiration for a non-smoking Scotland as outlined in The Government's Economic Strategy 2007. Specifically smoking prevention action forms part of a programme of comprehensive and targeted action to accelerate progress on health improvement, tackling health inequalities, and improving the quality of health care set out in the Scottish Government's health action plan. Further the Scottish Government introduced its Smoking Prevention Action Plan "Scotland's Future is Smoke-free", an ambitious programme of measure designed specifically to dissuade children and young people from smoking thus making progress towards a tobacco-free Scotland.

The SNP has also introduced the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010 passed by Scottish Parliament in January 2010. The Act contains measures aimed specifically at reducing the attractiveness and availability of tobacco which is significant steps forward to a smoke-free Scotland. The Act:

- Bans the display of tobacco and smoking related products in shops;
- Bans the sale of tobacco from vending machines;
- Introduces a tobacco sales registration scheme, which will be free for retailers to join
- Makes it an offence for under 18s to purchase tobacco;
- Makes it an offence for adults to buy tobacco for under 18s;
- Gives trading standards officers powers to issue fixed penalty notices, and
- Gives courts the power to ban retailers from selling tobacco where they have continually broken the law.

**SNP**

Of course a smoke-free Scotland would be the ideal. But this won't happen overnight. We should do all we can to protect and dissuade all young people in Scotland from starting to smoke and to deter adults, individually and collectively, from encouraging or enabling them to smoke. This should take Scotland much further towards a future where smoking tobacco has become a thing of the past.

**SLD**

It is certainly a challenging goal but the improvements of the past 30 years, accelerated by the introduction of the smoking ban in 2006 show that a broad-based strategy underpinned where appropriate by legislation and investment can be successful. The experience has been much more marked in certain age, gender and income groups however, and tailoring action to this will be absolutely key to achieving a tobacco free Scotland and the good practice and data monitoring activities of ASH are invaluable in this respect.

**LAB**

The most important step to take in the next parliamentary session with regard to this issue is to get a national tobacco control strategy developed, supported and delivered. We'll develop a national tobacco control strategy, aimed at preventing young people taking up the habit, supporting people to quit smoking, and reducing the exposure of babies, children and young people to cigarette smoke. If we can put in that early prevention work, we can work towards a Scotland where fewer and fewer people start smoking.

**GREEN**

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

## Q. How can we reduce the numbers of women smoking in pregnancy?

**SNP**

The Cochrane Review concluded that the most effective intervention appeared to be providing incentives, which helped around 24% of women to quit smoking during pregnancy. For example the SNP trialed the “Give it up for Baby” scheme in parts of Perth and Rattray, the scheme has since been officially launched. It is a partnership incentive scheme which supports smoking cessation in pregnant smokers. An incentive of £12.50 per week is paid for every week a woman demonstrates she is smoke-free. The incentive is then redeemed via vouchers for local supermarkets. This type of action is helping to significantly reduce the numbers of women smoking in pregnancy.

**SLD**

As with so many issues related to reducing smoking, education is key. We also support greater use of nurse family partnerships to help prospective parents make healthy life choices.

**LAB**

As well as general awareness raising and smoking cessation support we need to draw upon local good practice and evaluations such as those from the Dundee smoking and Pregnancy Project. This included developing specialist tailored training for all health professionals working with pregnant women.

**GREEN**

It is right to target particular groups for whom it is hugely significant to stop smoking. Smoking when pregnant is detrimental to the health of both the mother and growing baby. They need support and advice to stop during pregnancy, and continue to stop smoking once the baby is born. At this time, women come in to contact with a range of services, and so if the right kind of support and advice is there for pregnant women, and in combination with other antenatal services, then progress could be made. Becoming a mother for the first time, or becoming a mother again, can be a very vulnerable and stressful time depending on what support is in place for the mother-to-be. Any cessation services at this stage aimed at pregnant women must be sensitive to their emotional and other needs and not be seen as yet another pressure.

## Q. Is there a role for the tobacco industry in taking forward the tobacco control strategy?

**SNP**

We would be very sceptical of the tobacco industry in being willing to help take forward the tobacco control strategy. This is due to tobacco companies resisting, time and time again, any measures which they know will reduce smoking emphasized through their recent legal challenge against a ban on tobacco displays.

**SLD**

We need the cooperation of the tobacco industry in order to take forward effective control measures. Tobacco control cannot be handled in isolation.

**LAB**

Unlike alcohol, there is no safe level of tobacco use. We expect the tobacco industry and retailers to comply fully with legal obligations under the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services Act but Labour was disappointed that our amendments to prevent the tobacco companies advertising on non-tobacco merchandise were not accepted by the Government. This is a loophole which has been exploited elsewhere in Europe and Labour is committed to closing it.

**GREEN**

Any role for the tobacco industry must be treated carefully since they have a vested interest in keeping people smoking and retaining the culture of smoking that is so prevalent across many communities in Scotland. Since there could be some measures in the strategy that require co-operation from the industry, it would not be advisable to shut them out of the process altogether. The crucial point is that any involvement it has must be treated with caution, and that ultimately, decisions regarding the strategy must be taken independently of any vested interests and place public health as the top priority, not big business.

## Q. Does the introduction of the display ban in April 2015 reflect a lack of commitment by politicians or merely political awareness of impending elections? Why a 3 year gap between supermarkets and corner shops?

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**SNP** We want to introduce the display ban but have revised the original timetable so that it mirrors the UK Government's implementation dates. By synchronising the implementation of the display ban the Scottish Government is taking a practical approach to introducing the legislation. The differential timescale to allow small retailers more time to implement the ban we believe is necessary to give them more time to prepare and plan for these significant changes. Further, the delay has been brought on by an on-going legal challenge by Imperial Tobacco.

**SLD** The delay in Scotland is a result of legal challenge. The three year gap is recognition of the proportionately greater expense incurred by small businesses in implementing the ban.

**LAB** There has certainly some grandstanding by Government Ministers around the tobacco display ban but we felt that overall this piece of legislation was a sensible and necessary next step in building on Labour's ban on smoking in public places and earlier advertising ban. Although we were disappointed with some aspects, including the fact that our amendments to prevent tobacco advertising on other merchandise were not accepted, we did not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater were happy to vote for the Bill overall.

**GREEN** It would seem sensible to iron out any inconsistencies within the proposed display ban before its introduction.

## Questions relating to alcohol

### Q. If alcohol is 'no ordinary commodity' why can you buy it almost anywhere?

**SNP** The wide availability of alcohol is something which the SNP has taken significant steps towards reducing. Recently Stewart Maxwell, SNP called for the use of self-service machines in supermarkets to be ruled out in the sale of any alcohol. The Alcohol etc (Scotland) Bill introduced by the SNP Government has gone further in restricting the availability of alcohol including banning quantity discounts such as 'three for two' or '25 per cent off when you buy six', restricting alcohol promotions in off-sales.

**SLD** Alcohol, unlike most other products, can only be sold under licence and is subject to age, price and quantity restrictions.

**LAB** Labour's 2005 Licensing Act brought in a number of new restrictions on the availability and promotion of alcohol including introducing public health as a criterion in local licensing decisions. Labour's Alcohol Commission recognised that, whilst local decisions should be taken at a local level, overprovision of both on and off licenses remains an issue in several areas and that it is incumbent on local licensing boards to enforce both the letter and spirit of the Act. The recent court ruling regarding off-sales at petrol stations suggests that primary legislation may need to be revisited but new legislation is no substitute for robust enforcement of existing statute.

**GREEN** The ready availability of cheap booze certainly does not help in a country that already has an unhealthy relationship with alcohol. The Scottish Green Party will continue to support a minimum pricing alcohol policy, which must go beyond the UK Government's "duty + VAT" approach. We also believe that we must tackle the industry, which is currently based around big businesses that are focused on volume not quantity. Smaller, local producers that focus on quality should be supported in favour of the larger producers that want to saturate the market with cheap, poor quality but high strength alcohol.

### Q. What are ministers intending to do to tackle the massive problem of overprovision of alcohol for sale?

**SNP** The Alcohol (Scotland) Bill 2010 includes numerous measures to tackle the massive problem of overprovision of alcohol for sale and are a clear indication that the SNP is prepared to shine a light on Scotland's unhealthy relationship with alcohol and take the appropriate action needed to fix this. The measures include; a restriction on irresponsible promotions such as "six cans for the price of four" and alcohol being sold at heavily discounted prices; there will also be a Challenge 25 policy for all licensed premises which comes into force in October 2011; and there will be a restriction on alcohol promotions in off-sales.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**SLD**

Licensing boards have substantial – but underused – powers to address alcohol problems in their local areas, including overprovision. Legislation gives licensing authorities the objective of promoting public health. West Dunbartonshire was the first Scottish council to use these powers to refuse all future licence applications, in October last year.

**LAB**

See above.

**GREEN**

As with the answer above, the Scottish Green Party will continue to support a minimum pricing alcohol policy, which must go beyond the UK Government's "duty + VAT" approach. We also believe that we must tackle the industry, which is currently based around big businesses that are focused on volume not quantity. Smaller, local producers that focus on quality should be supported in favour of the larger producers that want to saturate the market with cheap, poor quality and high strength alcohol.

## **Q. Will the candidates commit to resolving alcohol consumption at a population level as a key public health objective?**

**SNP**

The SNP has confirmed that if re-elected in May, minimum pricing legislation will be re-introduced. This is a necessary commitment made by the SNP in resolving alcohol consumption and the health problems associated with alcohol consumption. It is clear that the increase in alcohol consumption has been driven by cheaper alcohol amongst other factors.

**SLD**

Scottish Liberal Democrats agree that reducing alcohol related harm should be a key public health objective for Scotland.

**LAB**

Labour does not want to prevent people from engaging in responsible alcohol consumption but we are committed to challenging excessive alcohol intake through a broad-based National Strategy. This requires recognising that over consumption affects people across the age and income groups and there is no silver bullet which will provide a quick fix but a broad-based and long term approach is required.

**GREEN**

Scotland's consumption of alcohol and its unhealthy relationship with alcohol undoubtedly must feature as one of the most important public health measures. It must be prioritised within the next Parliamentary session for the sake of Scotland's public health.

## **Q. Why do politicians continue to say alcohol is part of Scottish culture – there are lots of different cultures some of whom do not drink?**

**SNP**

It is widely recognised that Scotland has an unhealthy relationship with alcohol. Images of Buckfast bottles are widely recognised as representing Scotland's relationship with alcohol highlighting the Scottish culture. Lord Advocate, Elish Angiolini has also noted that to improve the problem of alcohol in Scotland a change in culture is needed. The figures on alcohol use in Scotland are staggering and point to a long culture which must be tackled; Scots aged 18 and over bought an average of 1,227 units of alcohol in 2009 — which adds up to about 12.2 litres of alcohol per year. Americans, by contrast, drink 9.4 litres a year. Nearly 5 percent of Scottish adults are dependent on alcohol, and one study suggested that one in 20 Scots dies of alcohol-related causes.

**SLD**

Socialising in pubs and sharing a drink with friends is long standing Scottish tradition, and is generally unproblematic. When it becomes a problem is when this turns into a culture of binge drinking and drinking to excess.

**LAB**

While it is certainly not the case that all Scots drink to excess, we cannot ignore the fact that Scotland does have a particularly difficult relationship with alcohol with overall consumption as much as 25% higher than in England and disproportionate levels of alcohol disease and deaths which are amongst the highest in Europe and even the world. These differences are cannot be explained due to alcohol prices which are broadly similar across the UK so there are clearly wider social and cultural factors at play which require to be addressed if we are to be successful.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

Alcohol is part of Scotland's mainstream culture and has been for a long, long time – ask any teetotaler whether they live in an alcohol culture. The problem is not simply about the fact that in our culture we consume alcohol. The problem is that we consume alcohol irresponsibly, and we have a negative, and destructive relationship with alcohol that ultimately has a huge impact on communities, families, relationships, public health and so on.

The structure of the alcohol industry has changed for the worse over recent decades, with ever greater control in the hands of big businesses which have no connection to the communities they impact on. Politicians have talked about changing Scotland's alcohol culture, but have supported economic policies that allowed this to happen. The Scottish Green Party believes we should shift support to independent pubs and retailers, small local producers, which make a profit from quality instead of volume, and the positive celebration of a healthier approach to alcohol. This has to be taken forward at the same time as a fully comprehensive and strategic approach to addressing the harm caused by alcohol, and indeed other drugs.

**GREEN**

**Q. Given the recent downward trend in alcohol related harms in Scotland, is there a danger that current strategy will be viewed as sufficient by industry and others meaning that additional policies, such as those targeting price, will be dismissed? If so, how do we ensure that alcohol remains as a public health priority?**

The SNP is committed to keeping alcohol a public health priority. We deeply regret the actions of opposition parties in rejecting minimum pricing as it would have been a significant step forward in addressing the health issues Scotland faces with alcohol. As a result the SNP manifesto has outlined the SNP's promise to re-introduce minimum pricing if re-elected in May. By keeping minimum pricing and alcohol misuse on the agenda they will both remain a public health priority.

With support now growing amongst the opposition parties with recent calls for the introduction of minimum pricing from Dianne Abott, Labour's public health spokeswoman at Westminster, and the Labour party convener of Inverclyde Council's Health and Social Care, Councillor Joe McIlwee the issue is not likely to go away until further action is taken.

**SNP**

The downward trend is welcome, but rates of alcohol related harm are still unacceptably high. And the patterns of harm are changing, which shows that the current strategy is more effective amongst some social demographics than others. We cannot be complacent, or overlook the areas in which harm is increasing. Politicians are responsible for ensuring that alcohol remains high on the public health agenda.

**SLD**

Although the reduction in alcohol related harms and deaths in recent years is certainly welcome, this should not detract from the need to continue to tackle excessive alcohol consumption which is still the highest in the UK and amongst the highest in the world. Carrying the public with us will be crucial and this means that measures used need to be shown to be fair, effective and without unintended consequences and that our focus is on excessive consumption, not responsible drinkers or just those on lower incomes.

**LAB**

There has been insufficient progress on alcohol to even consider dismissing the range of additional policies that must be delivered in combination with minimum pricing. Politicians, NGOs and civic Scotland must continue to focus on this as a significant public health priority.

**GREEN**

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**Q. Can we trust the alcohol industry to share the public health's concerns around their product? Should they to be included in policy discussion and in policy-making?**

**SNP**

The SNP has always aimed to achieve a consensual result in tackling alcohol abuse in Scotland. The minimum pricing proposals brought forward brought together a diverse group of supporters from the health profession right across to the alcohol industry. It is vital that the alcohol industry is included in policy discussion to achieve the best legislation possible. The committee stages of a bill in the Scottish Parliament act as a key moment for those interested from the alcohol industry to make contributions if they wish. However, not all alcohol companies have been receptive of the need for minimum pricing.

**SLD**

As with tobacco, it is impossible to exclude the alcohol industry from alcohol policy making. While the industry will, of course, have a different perspective from health groups, its cooperation is vital if we are to take forward effective initiatives to reduce alcohol related harm.

**LAB**

It is not Labour's position to prevent responsible drinking by adults who chose to consume alcohol but to encourage those who do to keep within recommended levels, in appropriate circumstances and to prevent alcohol falling into the hands of minors. There are examples of both good and bad practice by sections of the alcohol industry and we should encourage responsible marketing and retail of alcohol as much as possible. Refusing to engage at any time is neither constructive nor helpful to the aim of reducing and eradicating alcohol abuse.

**GREEN**

The involvement of the alcohol industry within policy discussion and policy-making is a valid concern. The alcohol industry needs to be included to a point, because there are measures that will require their co-operation. We must progress those policy discussions, however, independently to ensure that is not vested, commercial interests that drive the discussion and solutions, but public health concerns and policy and research evidence (that is also independent of industry connections).

**Q. One way of helping de-normalise the all-pervasive influence of alcohol would be to have a ban on advertising attached to sporting teams/events, as in France. Would each of the political parties support such legislation?**

**SNP**

The SNP has campaigned on its belief that children's sports kits should not have alcohol adverts printed on them. Stewart Maxwell emphasized that banning alcohol adverts from children's sports kits would be a logical step in tackling Scotland's relationship with alcohol.

**SLD**

Conservative MP Dr Sarah Wollaston launched her Members Bill at Westminster at the beginning of April 2011. The Bill is based on French law and would result in all alcohol advertising being banned all alcohol advertising on television and in the cinema, except for 18-rated films, all sports sponsorship by alcohol firms and all advertising on social media such as Facebook and YouTube. The SNP fully supports these measures and believe they will contribute to the ongoing fight against alcohol abuse in Scotland. However, it is only with full advertising control devolved to Scotland that the SNP can take forward a strong agenda on curbing the excessive use of alcohol advertising.

**LAB**

It is difficult to ban advertising on sports that are broadcast globally by satellite television, and that is a problem facing the countries that have introduced nationwide bans. Some progress has been made on sports sponsorship through agreement with national and international sporting bodies, and we would like to see this extended.

**GREEN**

Although an immediate ban on all sports sponsorship could have unintended consequences for some sports clubs and organisations, Labour's Alcohol Commission did recommend this as a long term goal. For example we view recent moves to remove alcohol sponsorship from children's replica strips as a welcome step in the right direction along which we would like to see continued.

**SNP**

**Q. If we can find ways around 'legal advice' regarding interventions in foreign policy, why can't we do this for alcohol?**

In creating policy it is imperative that legal advice is adhered to otherwise policy will be ineffective and open to numerous court challenges. To ensure the best action plan is taken forward in tackling alcohol abuse policy must be within the law or any progress will be hindered.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**SLD** We must comply with the letter and spirit of the law. If the law is flexible and allows for some leeway or different interpretation then there is no reason why this can't be explored.

**LAB** Whilst any measure has to be compliant with EU competition law and we note the evidence of the Law Society of Scotland in this regard, there are measures on alcohol pricing and other aspects in place within the EU and which we therefore know to be legal. We could not accept the Scottish Government's argument that Labour's proposal to restrict caffeine content in pre-mixed alcohol drinks is contrary to EU law as similar restrictions are already in place in Denmark for example.

**GREEN** When there is a political will on any issue, solutions will always be found regardless of the obstacles in place. The problem at the moment with regard to alcohol or tobacco issues is that not all political parties are willing to take on the influence of big businesses; not surprisingly given political donations some of them receive. We saw that very recently in the Scottish Parliament when a debate on a retail tax saw all the Westminster-based political parties at Holyrood vote with the supermarket-lobby, even though none of those parties declared the financial donations they had received from some of those big businesses. The Scottish Green Party is willing to stand up to those industries, whether the arms trade or alcohol industry, to ensure their interests are not put before our communities.

## **Q. What do you think of the Westminster responsibility deal that saw health experts walking away from the table due to prioritised industry views?**

**SNP** The SNP believes it's in Scotland's interest that all parties involved in the drive against alcohol abuse are involved in negotiations to ensure the best possible consensual way forward. It is important that the parties involved can co-operate to a high-level in order to avoid situations as seen in England. The SNP has highlighted through networks and consultation programs ran during the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010 progress through the Scottish Parliament that progress can be made together with all parties having an interest in alcohol participating.

**SLD** The responsibility deal is only one strand of a much wider public health policy. It is disappointing that the deal was not able to command the full cooperation and support of all the stakeholders originally involved. It is still, however, a substantial agreement that improves upon the previous government's measures. We should strive to improve upon it, with the engagement of health experts.

**LAB** It's unfortunate, though perhaps understandable, that there could not have been some agreement. Reaching agreement through dialogue is preferable but Scottish Labour believed the statutory measures in the Alcohol (Scotland) Bill banning alcohol discounts and promotions were a fair and proportionate. It is worth noting though that the divide between those for and against particular measures is not always as clear cut as.

**GREEN** Again, like the answer above, it demonstrates how involved the UK political parties are with the commercial interests of big businesses, and how far they are willing to compromise solutions on public health matters in favour of big business. The Scottish Green Party finds this unacceptable, and believes that the voting public also find this unacceptable too.

## **Q. Two health select committees and WHO have recommended that alcohol policy be guided by public health interests and best available evidence not influenced by competing commercial interests. What is your opinion on this?**

**SNP** The SNP regard both the public health interests and commercial interests very highly. It is important that in creating a program to tackle alcohol abuse in Scotland, attention is given to both these interests. During the creation of the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010 the SNP listened to public health interests and gathered support from the BMA, the Chief Medical Officer Dr Harry Burns and numerous other health professionals. The evidence from medical experts on the impact of alcohol was overwhelming and became central to the measures taken forward by the SNP Government. It was clear that the commercial interests in cheap alcohol was not an excuse to fail to act on the matter and so the SNP has exercised its strong belief in standing up to big commercial interests when the health of the nation depends on it.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**SLD** Public health interests and evidence are, and should remain, central to alcohol policy making. But it's not sensible, nor desirable, to carry out policy making in a vacuum. Wider societal and economic concerns will always be pertinent to some degree.

**LAB** Public health and safety should be the primary aim of alcohol policy, but this means the particular measures in place must be effective, proportionate and truly evidenced based.

**GREEN** The Scottish Green Party would agree that vested commercial interests should not lead or guide the policy requirements on alcohol. Public health and evidence-based policy should of course lead the way forward.

**Q. Despite recent increases in licensing regulation/law the availability of alcohol to young people is still very high. Its easy for young people to get a hold of alcohol – licensed premises face very little consequences (in practice) for selling to young people; young people face little or no consequences for attempting or buying alcohol underage. What is being done to address this issue in practice?**

The SNP Government introduced a package of measures included in the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010 to improve the relationship between young people and alcohol. These measures included tough new laws to allow bar staff to refuse to sell alcohol in pubs and nightclubs to anybody that looks under the age of 25 unless they can prove their age. This law will come into force on October 1st 2011. The Act has also set the ground work for the introduction of a 'social responsibility fee' for retailers selling alcohol.

**SNP** The SNP government also introduced a Youth Commission on Alcohol, in conjunction with Young Scot, looking at the impact of alcohol misuse on young people. Further the SNP had hoped to introduce a legal obligation on licensing boards to consider whether alcohol-related problems in their area warrant an off-sales purchase age of 21, with local police Chief Constables able to request this at any time. However, the opposition parties rejected this measure in Parliament.

**SLD** We need to ensure the strict enforcement of our existing alcohol legislation, which is designed to tackle these problem. It is not acceptable that since 2007, only 3 people have been prosecuted for selling alcohol to people who are already drunk. Neither is it acceptable that 12% of 15 year olds have bought alcohol from a shop or supermarket yet only about 200 people are prosecuted each year for selling alcohol to underage young people. This needs to change.

**LAB** Labour was successful in amending the Alcohol (Scotland) Bill to bring in a mandatory Challenge 25 scheme for alcohol sales, however we remain concerned that the current provisions are not being enforced with sufficient vigour. Labour's questions last year uncovered that only 116 out of 202 prosecutions against license holders for under-age selling resulted in a conviction while the average fine was only £244. Worryingly the Justice Minister admitted that data on the number of licenses lost due to under-age selling has not been collected. As well as addressing this Labour's manifesto proposes more test purchasing and encouraging bottle-tagging to improve tracability. We are also encouraging more alcohol partnerships bringing together the police, retailers, licensing authorities and young peoples' service to address under-age drinking and provide diversion

**GREEN** There is often a gap between law and practice, not least because legislating is the easy bit and implementing the law is harder. Implementation takes resources, and with many cuts to public services as well as local authority budget reductions, there will be gaps in provision either to implement the law on matters such as young people purchasing or attempting to purchase alcohol underage, or indeed young people's services that can divert them away from drinking into sport or other activities. The Scottish Green Party believes that the cuts to public services are misguided and un-necessary. We believe there are alternatives to the cuts, for example by introducing progressive taxation, to ensure that the law can be properly enforced and that young people are well supported to enjoy many activities and services that can prevent underage drinking.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

## Questions relating to both alcohol and tobacco

**Q. In light of today's conference and some of the research findings about the links between booze and fags, what does the panel think is the likelihood of the creation/establishment of alcohol drug and tobacco partnerships?**

The SNP has taken action to deal with the country's dangerous relationship with booze and fags. Building on from the success of the Smoking Ban the SNP Government introduced in The Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010 contains a number of new controls on the sale and display of tobacco, including a new tobacco retailers' registration scheme, new offences of underage and proxy purchase and a ban on the display of tobacco and related products in shops. These new measures will be phased in over the next few years. Further the SNP raised the minimum age for purchasing tobacco from 16 to 18 from 1 October 2007 and invested over £40m on smoking cessation services in this spending review period – £11m more than the previous administration.

**SNP**

Further, significant action has been taken during the four year SNP government administration to tackle Scotland's dangerous relationship with alcohol. The Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010 brought in specific measures aimed at tackling the growing problems in Scotland with alcohol abuse.

**SLD**

There are examples of such schemes already being developed, including in West Lothian.

**LAB**

We would certainly encourage public health practitioners to learn from experience and good practice in different fields, however there are a number of differences between alcohol and tobacco which mean the particular response needs to be different. For example tobacco use is most prevalent in lower income groups whereas alcohol consumption increases with income. Small amounts of alcohol may not be harmful or even beneficial to health, tobacco use is never beneficial.

**GREEN**

This indeed seems a possibility. The Scottish Green Party supports a comprehensive strategic approach to tackling the harm caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

**Q. Do you think the drug and alcohol field could learn from the tobacco field in terms of treatment? If so, what could they learn?**

**SNP**

People who stop smoking completely - particularly those who were hardened smokers can be great champions and an inspiration for those who don't believe they ever live a smoke-free life. Using similar 'recovery champions' for those with substance problems can have similar benefits.

**SLD**

Tobacco treatment is accessible to the public and widely accepted as a societal norm. It is doubtful whether alcohol and drug treatment could achieve quite the same level of public acceptance, but there are lessons to be learned in relation to the ease and convenience in which people are able to access treatment services.

**LAB**

Building on the success of that Alcohol the success of Drug Testing and Treatment Orders we believe that and Alcohol equivalent can be effective in tackling the root cause of abuse and related disorder and could be used as a constructive alternative to short term prison sentences or fines. As a legal substance people with alcohol addictions may not be referred for treatment in same way that those with illegal substance addictions are through criminal justice system so it is vital that alcohol treatment is easily accessible via the NHS or voluntary sector support.

**GREEN**

There is a range of treatments for problem drug use, and it's not a case of one-size fits all. Specialists across different fields, and from different services, could usefully exchange experiences and likewise those being helped can offer solutions as to the best and most accessible design of services suited to their particular needs.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**Q. Do you agree that ‘nudging’ could be an effective way to change behaviour and how would you apply this to reducing harm from alcohol and/or tobacco?**

The SNP has already recognized how effective ‘nudging’ can be and have developed many different services to help people quit smoking and give up drinking by ‘nudging’ them out of the habit. The SNP has contributed significant funding to programs designed to ‘nudge’ people out of the habit of smoking and drinking. Over the four years in Government the SNP contributed £11m annually to smoking cessation and the money was shared amongst a group of initiatives including; ‘Smoking Skills’ £1m; ‘Health Improvement Fund’ £1m, ‘A Breath of Fresh Air’ £5m; ‘National No Smoking Day’ £4m.

**SNP** Alcohol Awareness week, an initiative by the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership features posters highlighting the challenges in key locations such as railway stations and on buses. Some stores also give away free water with every alcohol purchase and there are free alcohol awareness training sessions. It is hoped that this initiative will encourage people to reduce the amount of alcohol they are drinking and even nudge them towards a decision to give up alcohol. These initiatives highlight how the SNP is using the ‘nudging’ technique to assist people to give up smoking or drinking.

**SLD** Yes. Appealing to people’s self interest is often a useful tool in encouraging behavioural change. We need to strike the right balance between protecting individual freedoms but also encouraging personal responsibility.

**LAB** When you are dealing with adults exercising legal personal choices the public health response needs to be imaginative and it is the role of government and public health practitioners to increase awareness and persuade people to exercise those choices responsibly. To be successful however it is important that lifestyles of people of different income groups, ages, genders and geography are taken into account and that stereotyping is avoided.

**GREEN** Yes, and this could also be applied to alcohol and/or tobacco if the evidence suggests this would be appropriate and useful.

**Q Are there opportunities to strengthen the concerns surrounding the conflict of interest for commercial interests? For example, to enable the lessons from the FTCT (The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control) to be incorporated into government i.e. transparency of interactions, clarified meeting agenda, links with industry and public health known?**

**SNP** At all times the Scottish Government’s policy formulation process is within the public domain, this includes consultations, stakeholder group meetings, amendments to Bills etc.

**SLD** Greater transparency in policy making and legislative procedures is always to be encouraged.

**LAB** A Scottish Labour Government would be happy to listen to the evidence which is collated by organisations, like the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

**GREEN** There are opportunities to address those conflicts of interest at all levels, including government, to ensure that public health concerns are the top priority, not the commercial interests of big business.

**Q. We can recognise the differences between alcohol and tobacco and yet we see enough similarities to be able to come together today. Is there merit in recognising the similarities between all substance use and pursuing policies that tackle all harmful substance use jointly?**

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

Yes, the SNP believe that the most effective way to tackle alcohol and tobacco issues is through joined up policy. This is displayed through the linked up policy thinking in health and justice as it is widely recognized crime, drugs and alcohol are interlinked. Therefore it is essential to have legislation that complements the web of connections between drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

**SNP** The measures included in the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010 complement each other in driving forward a program to tackle alcohol abuse. It is this joined up thinking that will gain the most effective policy outcome.

**SLD** While there are some similarities across the board in terms of substance misuse, the many differences between alcohol, tobacco and drugs issues mean that a one-size-fits-all approach to policy would be unsuitable. We should encourage cooperation and shared initiatives where appropriate.

**LAB** See above.

**GREEN** We should pursue joint policies where appropriate of course. The Scottish Green Party supports a comprehensive strategic approach to tackling the harm caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

## **Q. Will all the parties commit to facilitating the integration of the health and anti-social behaviour agenda where they overlap in respect to all age restricted products (alcohol, tobacco, spray paints, fireworks, solvents)?**

Yes, the SNP is committed to ensuring health and anti-social behaviour agendas are integrated in these areas as too often the anti-social behaviour of youths is fuelled by their easy access to age restricted products.

**SNP** The SNP has taken stringent action on the problem of anti-social behaviour and in 2007 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), giving police officers the power to issue £40 fines for lower level offences such as breach of the peace, urinating in a public place and drinking in public where it is banned, have been rolled out across Scotland following a successful pilot scheme in Tayside. This is positive action from a Government dedicated to tackling the issue of anti-social behaviour.

**SLD** Yes, greater integration in these areas is likely to be beneficial.

**LAB** Yes, the equalisation of age restrictions has been helpful in this regard. Whilst a different approaches and responses are required for legal use by adults there is certainly scope for improved integration to prevent use by children where purchase is illegal and the model of local alcohol partnerships bringing together police, criminal justice, retailers and young person services is a good basis for this.

**GREEN** There should be a concerted and integrated approach to tackle these overlaps, and work alongside the premises and with young people to recognise the harm this causes and ensure prevention is prioritised, and law enforcement supported.

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

**Q. As the health & anti-social behaviour agenda in respect to alcohol and tobacco are considered so important, can long term funding be committed to the control of the restricted products and crucially ensure this reaches regulators and enforcers?**

The SNP recognises the importance of the controlling restricted products as, for example, restricted products such as alcohol often fuel anti-social behaviour. The SNP took steps to combat this issue by introducing new measures in the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Act 2010 for bar staff to refuse to sell alcohol to those who look under 25 if they are unable to prove their age.

The SNP also took action in Government to improve regulations on tobacco and achieved this through measures such as; increasing the legal age from 16 to 18; by signing the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which is the first international treaty relating to health and endorsing the 10 point plan for the future of Tobacco control in Europe.

The Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act was also passed by the SNP administration during the four years and delivered a strengthened control and regulations on the access to tobacco products. The Act introduced a registration scheme for tobacco retailers, fixed penalty notices for retailers who sell cigarettes to under 18s, making it an offence to buy cigarettes for an under 18 and for under 18s to buy cigarettes, banning orders to prevent retailers selling cigarettes if they continually flout the law, the legislation has also banned cigarette vending machines and banned tobacco displays in shops.

This highlights how committed the SNP are to controlling restricted products and putting measures into legislation to ensure they are carried out.

**SNP**

**SLD** Sustainable funding should be in place to support the Government's alcohol and tobacco initiatives and services.

Looking for saving by cutting back on alcohol and tobacco treatment is a false economy as it costs the health and social costs will be greater in the longer term. Labour is committed to protecting these services even in the current financial climate. Any law is only as good as its enforcement and this is not an area which should be sacrificed for short term financial gain.

**LAB**

In the current climate of cuts to public services, it is difficult to see how the UK coalition parties who want to enforce the cuts, and the Scottish parties who are simply happy to manage the cuts, and pass them on in Scotland, can commit to long term funding on these kinds of issues. The Scottish Green Party is the only political party that is willing to protect Scotland's vital public services, and stand up to the Tory cuts in Scotland. We are the only party that is willing to be honest about the fact that we must raise taxation fairly and progressively, to ensure that big businesses and the better off pay their share, in order ensure we protect public services. Consequently, we are the only political party who is in the genuine position of being able to say that yes, long term funding can be prioritised to key issues on Scotland's public health.

**GREEN**

Scottish Conservative position on alcohol and tackling alcohol related harm:

It is generally recognised that alcohol price is only one factor affecting levels of alcohol consumption – individual, cultural and social factors are also influential. In Scotland, we have a complex relationship with alcohol. The prices and promotion of alcohol are the same in Scotland as they are in England, but in Scotland we consume almost 25 per cent more alcohol.

As part of the UK Government's consideration of how to deliver the coalition commitment to deliver a ban on below cost sales, the Home Office and Treasury have carried out respective reviews of alcohol pricing and taxation. Banning the sale of alcohol below the rate of duty plus VAT is an effective starting point for tackling the availability of cheap alcohol and will stop the worst instances of deep discounting which result in alcohol being sold both cheaply and harmfully. Importantly this system will also have a limited burden on business and can be delivered at low cost to the taxpayer.

Scottish Conservatives have been calling for these measures for over a year as they are a much more effective way of tackling binge drinking than indiscriminate blanket minimum pricing, which is a regressive measure which would see any profit from higher prices go straight to retailers instead of Government which could use this money on further preventative measures. Minimum pricing would be undermined by a proliferation

**CONS**

# SCOTTISH ALCOHOL & TOBACCO POLICY SUMMIT – PANEL Q&A

in cross border and internet sales which only a UK approach through the tax and duty system can avoid.

Whilst tax and duty are reserved issues, there is scope for the Scottish Government to incorporate the ban on the sale of alcohol below cost price through a Legislative Consent Motion in the Scottish Parliament. In December 2010, I wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Nicola Sturgeon MSP to ask the Scottish Government to press ahead in this direction.

We must ensure that those underage find it more difficult to purchase alcohol to begin with, rather than focussing all our attention on initiatives that deal with the aftermath of the event. Many responsible businesses comply with the law in selling alcohol and we would rather the irresponsible licence holders who sell to underage buyers were held to account. We also support tougher enforcement of existing laws such as the sale of alcohol to those under the influence.

Scottish Conservatives believe that we must tackle the root causes of dependence on and abuse of alcohol, and we believe that early intervention is vital to this. We are clear in our commitment to develop a national health visiting strategy in order to tackle the current post-code lottery that faces Scottish families and ensure an equivalency of service across the country. We believe that health visitors should be attached to a GP, a view shared by many GPs in Scotland, allowing for greater communication between the health visitor and the family doctor and ensuring more of the child and families' needs are picked up on. We want to ensure that all families, regardless of income, area, or need have access to the health visitor service.

This is why we have pledged to direct £20 million from the health budget towards providing more and better support for new parents through a massive increase in home health visiting services.

In addition, working with community pharmacies, we will provide free health checks for men and women between 40 and 74. This will enable early identification of potential health problems and allow risk factors to be acted upon. These checks are aimed at those who are not otherwise being treated for health conditions and are designed to catch the early signals of potential problems, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease, as well as checking blood pressure, cholesterol and general wellbeing.

We believe these measures will help identify alcohol related harm at an early stage and encourage individuals to seek help before the problem develops to a serious problem.

Scottish Conservative position on tobacco and tackling tobacco related harm:

Scottish Conservatives fully acknowledge the link between smoking and associated health problems. Every year, over 13,000 smokers in Scotland die from smoking related diseases, such as heart disease and lung cancer. Scottish Conservatives therefore believe that we must do all we can to support those who want to give up smoking, as well as to prevent individuals from starting to smoke in the first place.

In order to achieve this, we feel that the Government should focus its attention on ensuring the rigorous enforcement of existing laws. Scottish Conservatives support Government measures to enforce the current law and proposals for enforcement actions, such as Fixed Penalty Notices, the introduction of a registration system for tobacco retailers, and barring retailers from selling cigarettes if they continually break the law.

We wish to encourage further reductions in the rate of smoking, but the Government measures taken to achieve this must be evidence based and effective.