

Press release

Public Health Director calls for action to stop alcohol adverts aimed at under age drinkers

(Note: Due to circumstances outside of our control, we have been informed that the proposed member's bill (below) was not discussed as anticipated on the 9th September.)

Health experts in Bury are backing a campaign to restrict alcohol advertising in a bid to reduce the number of children and young people harmed by underage drinking.

In 2008 there were 2,843 deaths among 15-24 year-olds in England and Wales, almost one in four (23 per cent) of which was due to alcohol.

Evidence shows that exposure to alcohol advertising is associated with the onset of drinking among young people and increased consumption among those who already drink (NICE 2010).

On 9 September a private member's bill proposed by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP was debated in Parliament, calling for restrictions on alcohol advertising in cinemas, on television and online.

Dr Peter Elton, Director of Public Health for Bury, said: "Alcohol is leading to more and more young people being admitted to hospital. For too long our young people have been bombarded by messages promoting alcohol. Action is needed now to stop the endless exposure of our children to alcohol marketing."

"Dr Wollaston's proposals would mirror long-standing French legislation which allows advertising in newspapers, TV after 9pm, over 18 films and stop online advertising ploys such as 'advergames', which disguise alcohol promotion."

"I would urge anybody who is concerned about this to write to their MP to encourage him or her to attend the second reading and support Dr Wollaston."

"The Our Life campaign has put a simple link on their website, which has a simple letter you can easily send to your MP, complete with their contact details. It only takes two minutes to do and can be found at http://www.ourlife.org.uk/action_on_alcohol_marketing."

In 2009/10 Bury had 4365 "alcohol-attributable" admissions, costing around £1,800 each.

Bury's Alcohol Strategy 2008-2011 builds on the success of the Bury's Alcohol Strategy 2005-2008 and uses lessons learnt, as well as initiatives identified in the national agenda, to tackle the wide range of problems associated with alcohol consumption. A review of Bury's Alcohol Strategy 2005-2008 is available from the Bury Drug and Alcohol Action Team.

The Bury Drug and Alcohol Action Team facilitate an Alcohol Strategy Steering Group. This Group will oversee the production, implementation and monitoring of the Strategy with all progress communicated to the Substance Misuse Partnership Board, the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, Children's Trust and Team Bury

on a regular basis. Key partners represented on the Alcohol Strategy Steering Group include: NHS Bury, Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), Community Safety, Licensing, Trading Standards, Adult's Substance Misuse Services, Young People's Substance Misuse Services, Police, Probation, Road Safety, Service Users, Carers.

These partners have discussed and agreed the priorities for Bury for the forthcoming three years and will be accountable for delivering their specific targets and milestones. There are three key action plans: Children and Young People; Community Safety; and Prevention and Treatment where the following are included as priorities: Continue to provide a comprehensive treatment system for both adults and young people whilst responding to emerging trends and identifying any potential gaps, Implementation of Conditional Cautioning, Continue to develop test purchasing, Develop a strategic and operational response to the Hidden Harm agenda, Train front line workers to identify and screen an individual who may have a potential alcohol problem, Promote safe and sensible drinking; Provide a designated link worker within A&E, Acknowledge and address the link between alcohol and domestic violence.

Baseline data has been set against each priority and regular updates will inform progress achieved as well as any gaps in achievement or blockages to progress. A biannual progress report and annual review will be written by the Drug and Alcohol Action Team and will be disseminated to partners, including the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, Children's Trust and Team Bury.

ENDS

Date: 12th September 2011

For press & media enquiries: contact Caroline Dearden, Corporate Communications Manager on **0161 762 3106** or email communications@bury.nhs.uk

Notes to editors:

- The bill will be published shortly before the debate and available from Dr Wollaston's office. The first reading for the proposal's can be accessed on the MP's website; <http://www.drSarah.org.uk/in-parliament/alcohol-sales-children/382>
- Dr Sarah Wollaston is the Conservative MP for Totnes. A former GP she was elected in 2010 and has taken a significant interest in alcohol issues and the NHS.
- The proposals are based on the French 'Loi Evan' which allows certain types of alcohol advertising thereby prohibiting advertising elsewhere. The proposals would allow advertising in newspapers, TV after 9pm, over 18 films and stop online advertising ploys such as "advergames" which disguise alcohol promotion.