

**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
CHURCH AND SOCIETY COUNCIL**

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Official Response

SUBJECT **Changing Scotland's relationship with alcohol**
REQUESTED BY **Scottish Government**
AUTHOR
REFERENCE **OR - 006**
DATE: **September 08**

The Church of Scotland is currently preparing a Report on Drugs, Alcohol and Addictions for the General Assembly. Thus we are unable to comment in detail at this time but would hope to contribute fully to the ongoing debate once the General Assembly has reached an agreed position.

Based on previous deliberations of the General Assembly the Church and Society Council has recognised that these are issues of great concern to the people of Scotland and welcome the Scottish Government's efforts to address the concerns about the place of alcohol within Scottish society and the great damage that it is doing. We recognise that alcohol is currently misplaced within Scottish society and that public attitudes and approaches to alcohol do not align with the appalling health and social impact that alcohol is having. That imbalance needs to be addressed urgently if Scotland is to be regarded as an attractive, responsible and civilised place to live.

The Church and Society Council supports the broad targets outlined in §3:

- "Reduced alcohol consumption
- Supporting families and communities
- Positive public attitudes towards public health and individuals better placed to make positive choices about the role of alcohol in their lives; and
- Improved support and treatment for those who require it"

We support proposals that can be demonstrated to achieve these aims. We recognise that alcohol is currently too cheap when viewed on an historic basis and have no doubt that both reduced cost and increased availability have contributed to the problems that are currently being experienced and are increasing.

We welcome the Consultation Document and the valuable digest of the problem that it contains. We look forward to seeing the legislation resulting from this consultation and hope that it will be rigorously enforced. It is essential that the impact of that legislation on the problems of alcohol abuse will be fully monitored and evaluated. Legislation can

only be one tool in tackling the problem but it can set an important marker to change attitudes to alcohol within Scotland so that the harm that it causes can be reduced.

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