

28 May 2010

Alcohol Labelling Consultation
628 Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Rd
London
SE1 8UG

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing in response to the '*Consultation on options for improving information on the labels of alcoholic drinks to support consumers to make healthier choices in the UK*'.

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics considered the issue of alcohol labelling within the wider context of public health strategies for alcohol in its 2007 report '*Public Health: ethical issues*'. The report can be downloaded at www.nuffieldbioethics.org/publichealth

Notes in brackets below refer to the paragraphs of the report.

The Council concluded in this report that, given the harms caused by alcohol, the UK Government would be justified in introducing measures that are more coercive than those which feature in the National Alcohol Strategy (2004 and 2007) [paragraph 6.31].

We consider that labelling is an important element of any public health strategy on alcohol, and we would argue that the voluntary agreement currently in place needs to be maintained as a minimum. The Council found that "legislation in this area would bring labelling alcoholic drinks into line with that for tobacco products and meet what we believe is the government's responsibility to promote health by providing information and advice under the stewardship model" [paragraph 6.35].

We note that whilst it is not clear that the evidence available points to the effectiveness of labelling as a tool for behaviour change, evidence does however indicate that it increases people's awareness of the associated health risks.

We also make a number of other recommendations targeted at reducing the harm from alcohol, focusing on price, marketing and

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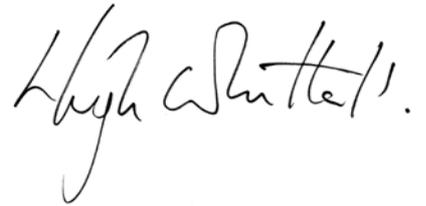
Director
Hugh Whittall

Assistant Directors
Dr Alena Buyx
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availability. Coercive measures in these areas are shown by the evidence available to be effective at reducing consumption and harm. Please see the report for further details.

I hope that this is a helpful contribution. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Whittall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H' and a long, sweeping underline.

Hugh Whittall
Director