Developments in Relation to Alcohol Policy in Ireland

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Outline of Presentation

- Alcohol Consumption in Ireland
- Alcohol Harm in Ireland
- Policy Developments
- Future Direction
In 2008 average consumption of pure alcohol per adult over 15 years of age was 12.35 litres.

This represents a fall of 7.6% in consumption between 2007 and 2008.

Taking into account that 20% of the population do not drink this is equivalent to:-
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<tr>
<td>0.75 Litres of Spirits per week</td>
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<td>Or</td>
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<td>7 Litres of Beer per week</td>
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<td>3 Bottles of Wine per week</td>
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<td>0.75 Litres of Spirits per week</td>
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In 2009 alcohol sales continue to fall
Particularly difficult for pubs and bars where sales are down more than 10%
Effect of cross border sales from Northern Ireland
National Health and Lifestyle Survey (SLAN) 2007

- 19% of the population are non-drinkers (23% women and 15% men)
- Irish people generally drink less frequently than other EU countries
- 41% drink only once a week
- 30% drink at least 2-3 times per week
- 8% drink 4 or more times per week
National Health and Lifestyle Survey (SLAN) 2007

- 28% reported consuming 6 or more standard drinks at least once a week
- (The figure is 40% in the 18-29 age group)
- However, these figures represent reductions since 2002 across gender, age and social class
Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study 2006

- 50% of 15-17 year olds report to be current drinkers
- 33% of 15-17 year olds report being “really drunk” in the last 30 days
- The legal drinking age in Ireland is 18 years old
Alcohol-Related harm

- Alcohol-related hospital discharges increased by 92% between 1995-2004
- Liver disease increased by 147% in the same period
- Alcohol-related mortality increased from 3.8 deaths per 100,000 adult population in 1995 to 7.1 in 2004
Harm To Others

- Impact on family, community and wider society across a range of indicators
- Increases in drunkenness and public disorder – alcohol related street violence
- Alcohol-related road deaths and injuries
Policy Direction

- National Alcohol Policy (1996)
- Strategic Task Force on Alcohol (2002-2004)
Recent Developments in Alcohol Policy in Ireland

- Introduction of new laws
  - Mandatory Alcohol Testing of Drivers (2006)
New Legislation in 2008

- Reduced hours to sell alcohol in supermarkets (10.30am to 10pm)
- Increased Police powers to seize alcohol
- New conditions for the sale of alcohol by supermarkets (Structural Separation)
- More strict conditions to obtain “late opening” licence
- On the spot fines for Alcohol-Related Public Order Offences
To Be Introduced

- Test Purchasing of alcohol by Police
- Regulations to control “two for one” offers and offers of “free” alcohol on the purchase of one or more alcohol products
Recent Developments in Alcohol Policy in Ireland

- Strengthened Advertising and Sponsorship Codes (July 2008)
- Limited to 25% of available time and space
- Alcohol advertising on any Irish media is pre-vetted with regard to content
- No alcohol industry sponsorship of children and adolescents’ leisure-time activities
Recent Developments in Alcohol Policy in Ireland

- New agreement on the advertising of alcohol by supermarkets in the Irish media (no alcohol only advertisements and 25% of ad space for alcohol)
- Working Group established to consider sport sponsorship by the alcohol industry
Excise Duties

- Ireland has the highest excise duties on Wine and the second highest on Beer and Spirits among EU Member States.
- Reduced rate of excise duty on low alcohol beers being introduced (2009).
- Increases (in 2008 and 2009) in annual excise fees to obtain a licence for off-sales.
Future Policy Direction

- New Road Traffic Bill 2009 to provide for a reduction in the current BAC of 80mg/100mls
- Legislation to be drafted to provide for mandatory labelling of alcohol containers warning about alcohol consumption in pregnancy
- Labels to show the number of standard drinks or grams of alcohol contained in each bottle/can
Future Policy Direction

- New “Sale of Alcohol Bill” later this year
- Government agreement to the development of a National Substance Misuse Strategy to include alcohol and other drugs
- Establishment of a Group in Autumn 2009 to develop the new Strategy
Challenges

- A test of the resolve to tackle alcohol-related harm
- Challenging economic environment
- Cross Border shopping
- Loss of employment in the alcohol industry
Thank You for Your Attention