

## **Portman Group Consultation - Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks (Sixth Edition) - Revised Rule 3.2(h): Particular appeal to under-18s**

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(Link to consultation page: <https://www.portmangroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Portman-Group-Code-Rule-3.2h-Consultation-1.pdf>)

28<sup>th</sup> June 2023

To whom it may concern,

### **Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks (Sixth Edition) - Portman Group Consultation Revised Rule 3.2(h): Particular appeal to under-18s**

The Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF) is the leading trade association for the Scottish Convenience store sector. There are 5,098 convenience stores in Scotland, which includes all the major symbol groups, co-ops and convenience multiples in Scotland. SGF promotes responsible community retailing and works with key stakeholders to encourage a greater understanding of the contribution convenience retailers make to Scotland's communities. In addition, Convenience stores are known to be economic multipliers and an important source of local employment, providing over 49,000 jobs in Scotland ([Scottish Local Shop Report 2022](#) (SLSR 2022)).

Modern local convenience stores are community assets. Offering busy families a top-up shop facility, helping patrons (particularly vulnerable people) manage their weekly household budgets during the cost-of-living crisis, and providing an essential alternative to larger or out of town supermarkets. Many people rely on their local convenience store, with the average shopper visiting their local store 2.7 times per week and with 57% of customers choosing to walk as a mode of travel to stores (SLSR 2022).

Modern convenience stores now offer a wide range of products and services, from deli counters, coffee and collection lockers, to access to cash, bill payment facilities and post-office facilities. Whilst it is ancillary to wider ranges of grocery and retail, alcohol is an important sales category for our members.

A typical convenience store offers a range of at least 17 kinds of different product categories. Alcohol accounts for 18.1 % of total sales turnover (SLSR 2022). In addition, 74% of convenience stores across the UK have an alcohol licence (ACS Local Shop Report 2022).

### Consultation

Proposed amendment to Code rule 3.2(h), shown in bold italics:

*A drink, its packaging and any promotional material or activity should not in any direct or indirect way have a particular appeal to under-18s. **A producer must not allow the placement of brand names, logos or trademarks on merchandise which has a particular appeal to under-18s or is intended for use primarily by under-18s.***

#### Questions:

1. Do you agree that the Code should be amended to prevent promotional material and activity that is intended for use primarily by under-18s?
2. Do you agree with the proposed drafting of the Code rule?

SGF notes that Scotland is globally renowned for producing high quality Food & Drink, which is a vital sector for both the Scottish Economy and Scottish exports. Many jobs, communities, and organisations depend upon a thriving Alcohol sector, and may be directly impacted by changes to the Code on alcohol marketing.

SGF also promotes responsible retailing, however. Our members comply thoroughly with the measures introduced on Minimum Unit Pricing; adhere to the regulation associated with Alcohol Licensing; and ensure compliance with all regulations regarding Age Restricted Products, for example. You may be interested to know that Scotland presently has the strictest rules in the UK in this regard, with a total of approximately 222 products and services that are age restricted.

**With that in mind, however, SGF do not foresee any significant concerns with the proposed amendment to the Code rule 3.2(h), or with the wording of the amendment as drafted.**

SGF notes that branded merchandise is a critical aspect of distillery and brewery tourism, particularly in the Scotch whisky industry, which is Scotland's leading tourist growth sector. Responsible alcohol marketing is a crucial part of how distilleries and breweries build their brands and differentiate themselves from competitor brands. It is also a significant multiplier for hospitality/events/cultural businesses and organisations. With many producers providing branded equipment, furniture, and souvenirs. Nevertheless, SGF agrees that branding and merchandising should not be targeted at under 18s and believes that the vast majority of the alcohol industry and retail sector are fully compliant with this objective.

As you are aware, the retail sector and alcohol industry are already taking great strides in reducing misuse of alcohol in Scotland. With widescale support for initiatives such as 'Challenge 25'. In addition, SGF is proactive in sharing alerts, guidance or key messages from both Trading Standards and the Scottish Government with our membership and retailers across Scotland.

Furthermore, SGF has been and will continue to play a key role in the 'It'll Cost You' campaign and sits as Chair of the group. The "It'll Cost You!" programme is an ongoing collaboration between Police Scotland, local authorities, alcohol producers and retailers which aims to raise awareness of the damaging effects and criminal nature of buying alcohol for under 18s. More information is available at: <https://www.itwillcostyou.com/>.

SGF will continue to promote responsible retailing and hopes the Portman Group find this response useful.

Yours sincerely,

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- SGF gives permission to the Portman Group to publish its consultation response and to share this response internally as required.
- SGF is also content to be contacted again in the future, in relation to this consultation exercise.