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Alcohol Focus Scotland Annual Report

The yearly review of Alcohol Focus Scotland

Mission statement

Alcohol Focus Scotland is committed to improving the quality of people's lives by changing Scotland's drinking culture – promoting responsible drinking behaviour and discouraging drinking to excess.

Vision

Alcohol Focus Scotland wants to see a Scotland where.

- Moderate, responsible drinking is the norm, and drunkenness has become socially unacceptable.
- Town and city centres are free from alcohol fuelled disorder and violence.
- Fewer families break up and have children taken into care because of parental drinking.
- People who do develop alcohol problems can access appropriate treatment and support quickly and effectively.
- All alcohol producers and retailers take their legal and social responsibilities seriously.
- Significantly fewer Scots have their lives cut short by alcohol misuse.

Chair's Introduction

For several reasons, 2008/09 may well turn out to be a pivotal year in the battle against harm due to alcohol and for our organisation. Two important events are impacting on AFS and driving two of our main activities. The implementation in September of the 2005 Licensing Act has meant a huge increase in the work of the ServeWise team led by Mary Ellmers, training being a crucial element of the Act's provisions.

The government's plans for a framework of action to tackle abuse are due to be laid down in a Bill before the Holyrood Parliament next year, a key component of which - and one with the most evidence for its effectiveness - is minimum pricing. Alcohol Focus Scotland strongly supports this and has taken a lead role in trying to counter the scepticism, misunderstanding and outright opposition. We have been working closely with our colleagues in SHAAP and with a range of other organisations through the recently formed Scottish Alcohol Coalition. Relationships are also good with our colleagues in the Scottish Government Health and Justice departments in our support for the proposed measures.

Many other parts of the growing AFS are progressing well, including our community projects, work with young people, the amazingly successful "Rory" project with children, and others.

The Executive Committee of AFS are looking forward to the development of the

organisation through 2009 and beyond and with the help of an excellent management team revisiting the AFS strategy, this will be against the background of the impending retirement of our Chief Executive and the search for a successor.

In the ten years Jack Law has been Chief Executive, AFS has improved and developed unrecognisably. His drive and inspiration has moulded a dedicated staff and raised the profile of AFS both nationally and internationally. We will owe him an enormous debt.

Professor Peter Brunt
Chair, Alcohol Focus Scotland



Alcohol in Scotland: The Facts

- Alcohol is a contributory factor in 1 in 20 deaths in Scotland.
- Alcohol related death rates in Scotland are twice as high as in England and Wales and have doubled over the last 15 years.
- More than 42,000 discharges from hospital per year relate to an alcohol-related admission.
- Women in Scotland are more likely to die of liver cirrhosis than men in England.
- 1,172,000 people in Scotland are drinking dangerously/harmfully.
- Alcohol misuse is estimated to cost Scotland £2.25 billion per year - £500 for every taxpayer.
- It is estimated that 65,000 Scottish children live with a parent with an alcohol problem.
- Alcohol is a factor in 1 in 3 divorces in Scotland.

It gives me great pleasure to report on the year 2008-09. This annual report highlights some of the key achievements in one of the most exciting years for all of us working in the alcohol arena. I am proud of the work of all my staff who continue to engage and work in partnership with key stakeholders within the alcohol field and associated disciplines.

The publication of the Framework for Action in March 2009 was a landmark Scottish strategy on alcohol misuse. We welcome its principles and proposals which are closely aligned to our purpose.

This report shows our excellent performance on our work towards the realisation of our mission to make Scotland a healthy and vibrant place to live and work.

Alcohol misuse significantly impacts on individuals, families, communities and our nation as a whole. The path ahead requires continuing commitment and resources that will allow the new policies to be embraced by all who are tasked with changing Scottish drinking culture.

On an international level we have played a major part in informing and debating alcohol issues with many countries now looking towards Scotland as a pioneer in new approaches to reduce alcohol related harm. It was a pleasure to host the Education Core-Group of the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions in February 2009.



I believe that the year gone by is the beginning of a journey towards a real change in Scotland's drinking culture that builds upon the work of this organisation over the past 37 years.

Jack Law
Chief Executive

Since last year's report, Alcohol Focus Scotland has:

- Responded to the Scottish Government's alcohol consultation "Changing Scotland's relationship with alcohol" and is now campaigning for the introduction of minimum pricing.
- Worked with City & Guilds to launch the Certificate for Staff Working in Scottish Licensed Premises and Staff Workbook.

- Ran a publicity campaign encouraging women who are pregnant or trying for a baby to avoid alcohol.
- Secured funding for the continuation of the Community Action on Alcohol project and set up the National Communities Group.
- Organised successful national conferences on licensing and counselling, with record numbers of delegates attending both.
- Launched the Scottish Network of Alcohol Practitioners for the Young (SNAPY) – a network to share good practice, skills and resources when working with young people affected by their own or someone else's drinking.
- Developed the 'Rory learning resource', a toolkit which teachers, counsellors and social workers can use to help children cope with parental alcohol misuse.
- Improved our links with European and international alcohol agencies and hosted the Education group of the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA).
- Worked with Alcohol Support Ltd in Aberdeen to develop a web-based support and counselling service, which was piloted from November 08 - April 09.
- Responded to over 200 media enquiries and generated our own press, online, radio and TV coverage on a wide range of alcohol issues.

AFS Executive Committee and Senior Management

Executive Committee

Professor Peter Brunt,
Chairman

Dr Mac Armstrong (co-opted February 09)

Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan

Professor Gerard Hastings

Mr Ian Innes

Mr Stephen MacDonald

Mr Harry Miller

Dr Peter Rice

Ms Joan Stuart (Until February 09)

Mr Paul Waterson

Mr Chris Wigglesworth

Senior Management

Jack Law,
Chief Executive

Barbara O'Donnell,
Director of Services

Mary Ellmers,
Head of Training

Amanda Patterson,
Head of Business Development (until May 09)

Christina McKenzie,
Head of Finance and HR

Information and campaigns

Our new look website and forum, which was launched in May 08, has already received over 30,000 unique visits. New for 2009 is an online payment facility for training courses and events.

Building on the 'Rory' storybook, which raises the issue of children affected by parental alcohol misuse, we developed a learning resource pack. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop MSP, officially launched the resource at Our Lady of Lourdes primary school in Blackburn. Nine primary schools taking part in a 6 month pilot received the Rory learning resource containing an mp4 player, book, puppet, board game, activity sheets and a teacher's pack.



AFS were partners for the 2nd national Alcohol Awareness Week in October which asked the public "Will you take the challenge?". We supported the week by distributing campaign materials to a wide range of organisations across Scotland, running a shopping centre information stand, and scheduling our Annual General Meeting to take place during the week.



"Alcohol and pregnancy don't mix" was the message of our November campaign to encourage women to have an alcohol-free pregnancy. The campaign was promoted by leaflets, posters, and radio advertising, and with so many health professionals welcoming such an important issue being highlighted, we hope to repeat and extend the campaign this year.

We launched an innovative online support service - AFS Alcohol Support Online - for people in the Aberdeen area concerned about their own or someone else's drinking. The free service allowed people to exchange messages with a trained alcohol counsellor online and was used by almost a hundred people during the 6 month pilot.

Influencing policy

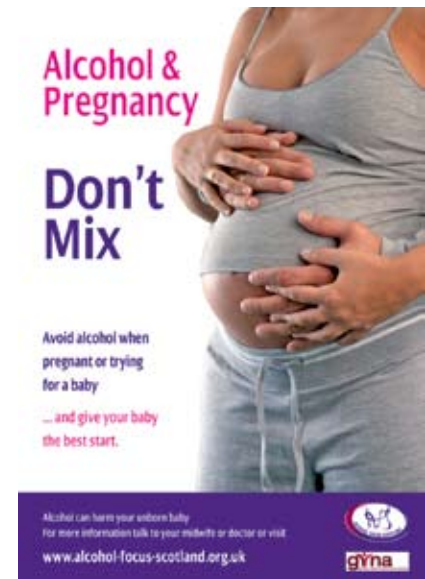
2008/09 has seen major steps forward in Scottish alcohol policy, backed by record funding of £85m over the next three years.

The Scottish Government's 'Changing Scotland's relationship with alcohol' consultation resulted in its 'Framework for action' published in March 09. Key proposals in the radical strategy for tackling alcohol misuse included setting a minimum price for a unit of alcohol, raising the off-sales purchase age to 21, an end to irresponsible promotions and a social responsibility fee for some retailers. We have focused our efforts on campaigning for the introduction of minimum pricing, persuading others of the strong evidence that raising the price of alcohol reduces consumption and related harm.



As co-conveners of the Cross Party Group on Drug and Alcohol Misuse, we organised meetings in Parliament on issues affecting local alcohol services, workplace alcohol policies, and a joint meeting with the Mental Health Cross Party Group on substance misuse and suicide.

During the year we responded to several consultations including a World Health Organisation consultation on policy initiatives to reduce alcohol-related harm, and a joint submission with Scottish Drugs Forum and the Scottish Poverty Information Unit on tackling poverty, inequalities and deprivation.



ServeWise training

Our licensing training programme, ServeWise, saw many developments in the last year with the introduction of new courses to meet the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

With City & Guilds, we launched the Certificate for Staff Working in Scottish Licensed Premises in May 2008. Like our Certificate for Personal Licence Holders, courses cover both on-licence and off-licence premises. This new qualification completes the ServeWise training package ensuring that we offer training at all levels of the licensed trade, from staff and managers to Licensing Board members and Licensing Standards Officers.

We also launched a Workbook for Staff of Licensed Premises as a useful training tool for licence holders who want to train their own staff in-house.

During the year, 8911 people had achieved the Certificate for Scottish Personal Licence Holders qualification and 194 completed the Certificate for Staff Working in Scottish Licensed Premises.

Almost 200 people attended our annual National Licensing Conference in Aviemore.



Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill remarked that the conference “has become the top event for getting Boards, Police, the Government and the licensed trade together to share experiences, good practice and catch up on the latest gossip”.

Exciting new developments include an online ServeWise staff course – www.servewiseonline.co.uk - and setting up a network of registered Alcohol Focus Scotland trainers who will deliver both alcohol awareness and licensing training.

Alcohol and counsellor training

Our alcohol training has also been going from strength to strength with a busy programme of one-day training workshops running in spring and autumn.

For the 5th year, we provided training to the telephone advisers who operate the national alcohol helpline, Drinkline.

We were pleased to work with STRADA and NHS Health Scotland as partners in the development and delivery of Alcohol and Brief Interventions training for Keep Well and Anticipatory Care Practitioners in Scotland.

In partnership with the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives and Scottish Drugs Forum, we developed training sessions for managers on how to deal with substance misuse issues in the workplace.



The theme of our third annual Counsellors Forum, held in Perth, was ‘Changing Lives’. Robin Shohet, psychotherapist and author, gave a well received presentation on “Supervision as Spiritual Practice”.

We trained teachers in 9 West Lothian primary schools in how to most effectively use the Rory learning resource in the classroom. DrinkWise 4 Young People alcohol awareness sessions with S1 and S2 pupils were successfully trialled in the same area and this programme is now being rolled out for teachers to deliver themselves next year.



Nine people successfully completed our first COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate in December, and a further 10 are currently working towards becoming counsellors. In total we trained 36 people to become alcohol counsellors through our Fast Track and full counsellor training programmes, as well as 7 counsellor supervisors.



Managing Projects



Funded by Comic Relief

SNAPY (Scottish Network of Alcohol Practitioners for the Young) is a three year project bringing together professionals who work with children affected by their own or someone else's drinking to share good practice, skills and resources. SNAPY was officially launched in March 09 and already has over 500 members. For more information visit www.snapy.org.uk



Funded by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

The Service User Involvement Partnership has continued to champion service user involvement with services and staff across Greater Glasgow and Clyde, providing an authoritative voice on involving service users, and promoting best practice. The partnership mapped 77 drug and alcohol services across the area and has developed service user involvement capacity building training which is now being delivered to these services.



The main focus this year for GINA was researching alcohol use and attitudes among older people, particularly older women, and carers. GINA worked with Age Concern, the Scottish Pensioners Forum and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers to distribute questionnaires, run focus groups and develop training. This year also saw the launch of a dedicated project website www.ginascotland.org.uk



The National Licensing Officer continued to provide information and support to the 40 Local Licensing Forums across Scotland and organised joint regional training sessions for Licensing Boards, Forums and Licensing Standards Officers.

www.local-licensing-forums.org.uk



Funded by The Robertson Trust

Following a community consultation and review of service and community provision within Blackburn, the Community Action - Blackburn (Changing Attitudes to Alcohol) project produced an action plan aimed at supporting the community in addressing their concerns around alcohol. The project has been working closely with local schools and coordinated a Primary 7 conference and an under-age/agent purchase campaign. A number of actions have been developed since the start of the project and the new community newsletter, Blackburn News, is used to keep the community informed. Visit the project web page at www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/blackburn



Orion Practice Management Systems, a company established in partnership with Alcohol Focus Scotland, develops software offering data management solutions to substance misuse, community care and mental health organisations.

In an expansive year, Orion has increased their user base notably securing a contract with Widnes-based Community Integrated Care. Several additional contracts were secured with existing Orion clients for the purpose of migrating to the new Nebula web-based platform.

The year ahead will see the launch of a new ground breaking product, the Nova system. This is a web-based product aimed at smaller alcohol and drug agencies and will be delivered on a subscription basis placing the essential client based management features of Nova within the reach of all substance misuse organisations.

Financial overview

This year has seen a rise in our income from £1,526,718 to £1,636,558. This reflects another year of increased activity and this short report focuses on the key financial aspects of our work.

Much of our income is restricted: £742,869 this year (2008 - £683,801) which means that we are obliged to spend it all on the purposes for which it has been received. Normally these activities are fully funded and will break even financially. The exception to this each year is volunteer counsellor training where there is always a shortfall but we have continued to fund the gap from our unrestricted incoming resources (£73,000 this year).

Our loss for the year, before adjusting for other recognised unrealised losses, was £77,646. £51,708 of this is attributable to activities funded by restricted income, for which we had received funds in prior years so we had reserves to cover it. £36,000 of the loss relates to unrestricted funds. In common with many voluntary organisations we have been required to hold the actuarial value of the defined benefit pension scheme as part of our reserves. Unfortunately, due to the recent economic climate, the valuation as at 31 March 2009 resulted in a loss of £163,000 which further reduces our reserves.

We need to hold reserves to meet financial obligations as they fall due. We have identified a reserve requirement of £356,000 and our accessible reserves were £276,033. Whilst there is a significant shortfall, the pension reserve is a long term liability and the actuary will adjust our future contributions to eliminate the deficit. Our current reserves are sufficient to meet our short and medium term requirements and to eliminate the pension deficit in due course.

This overview and the accompanying financial information is a short summary taken from our statutory financial statements. For a copy of our full report and financial statements, please contact Christina McKenzie at our registered office.

Alcohol Focus Scotland summarised accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009

Income	2009 (£)	2008 (£)
Voluntary income	531,175	388,742
Charitable activities	1,068,104	1,091,258
Bank interest	36,279	35,718
Other income	1,000	11,000
Total income	1,636,558	1,526,718
Expenditure		
Education and training	574,479	622,742
Business development	811,973	607,912
Policy & communications	260,582	201,644
Governance	67,170	67,644
	1,714,204	1,499,942
Net movement before other recognised gains/(losses)	(77,646)	26,776
Funds		
Unrestricted - property	169,158	141,533
Unrestricted - other	276,033	499,577
	445,191	641,110
Endowment	110,000	100,000
Restricted	171,794	223,502
	726,985	964,612

Figure 1. Income

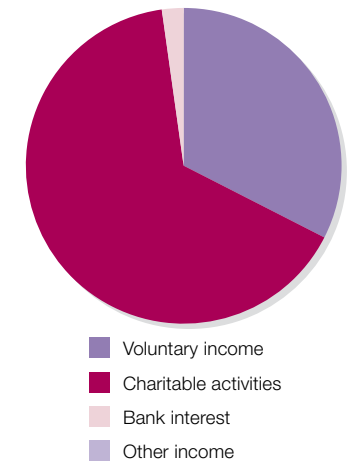
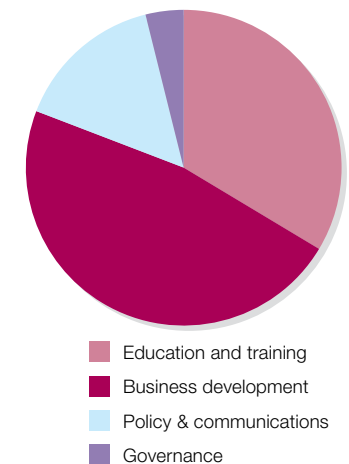


Figure 2. Expenditure





About Alcohol Focus Scotland

We are the national charity dedicated to raising awareness of, and reducing the significant health and social harm caused by alcohol. Our long term aim is to achieve a culture change in Scotland where far fewer lives are affected by alcohol misuse, and moderate, responsible drinking is the norm.

We'll achieve this by providing information to the public and professionals, training people to recognise and help people overcome alcohol problems, influencing government and policy, and working in partnership with other organisations on specific projects.



Thank you to all of our members, partners and funders for their continued support of our work this year.

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Alcohol Focus Scotland is a registered Scottish charity (SC009538) and a company limited by guarantee (Scottish company no. SC094096)

promoting responsibility, reducing harm, changing culture