



Alcohol Focus Scotland

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2011

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Alcohol Focus
Scotland is
committed to
improving the
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Scotland's
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- promoting
responsible drinking
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foreword

As the national charity for alcohol issues, Alcohol Focus Scotland has a long history and record of achievement in the alcohol field. Since the early 1970s we have constantly evolved and developed in order to meet the challenges of harmful, excessive drinking. However we cannot rest on our laurels and over the past two years we have been reviewing our purpose, aims and objectives in order to ensure that we achieve a real change to Scotland's drinking culture and reduce the immense harm caused.

Our Strategic Plan for 2006 -2011 describes how we intend to build on our past achievements to meet the challenges ahead. It clarifies our vision, aims and objectives over the next 5 years but is also flexible and will be reviewed each year to ensure that it reflects new developments and changed circumstances.

Many people have been involved in the development of our Strategic Plan, both within and outwith Alcohol Focus Scotland, and we hope that everyone connected with our work will feel able to identify the part they can play in helping us achieve a positive change to the quality of people's lives in Scotland.

Prof. Peter Brunt
Chair

purpose of plan

This plan forms the guiding framework for AFS's development over the next five years. Its purpose is to:

Define AFS's distinctive purpose

Provide a clear focus to, and outcomes from our vision

Provide a framework and structure which will best deliver our aims

our vision

This is encapsulated in our 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.'

and in our strapline:

promoting responsibility, reducing harm, changing culture

Alcohol Focus Scotland is aiming to create a Scotland:

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

AFS will do this by adopting a community development approach, which involves working in partnership with a variety of communities (geographical/interest) on alcohol issues to achieve change in Scotland's drinking culture. We aim to do this by:

- > engaging, informing, and empowering communities with interest in alcohol misuse
- > supporting community work through networks, links with practitioners, and collaborative work with partner organisations
- > undertaking research, evaluation and policy analysis
- > disseminating good practice through training, conferences, publications and consultancy

role and purpose

AFS aims to continue to be the leading organisation in the alcohol field in Scotland, an organisation which:

- > works in partnership on issues of common concern to influence policy and practice
- > provides consultancy and project management services to other agencies working in the alcohol field
- > communicates its views effectively and is prepared to debate its position with others
- > is a positive influence on changing Scotland's drinking culture and reducing alcohol-related harm

- > provides high quality, nationally accredited training services
- > provides services to people with the aim of developing a sense of personal responsibility, reducing alcohol related harm and changing people's attitudes towards Scotland's drinking culture

three year strategic assessment

main challenges

Significant national policy initiatives which will influence the delivery of our services in the next 3 years are:

- > The introduction of the updated Plan for Action on alcohol problems
- > The introduction of the new Licensing Laws
- > The implications of the NHS Scotland report 'Building a Health Service – Fit for the Future'
- > The creation of local partnership arrangements such as Community Health and Social Care Partnerships, Community Justice Authorities, and local Licensing Forums

Furthermore, we will be faced with other environmental, economic and social challenges:

- > Increasing awareness of alcohol misuse as a public issue
- > Increasing evidence of the health and social impact of alcohol related harm
- > Continuing problems of young people's and women's drinking
- > A developing alcohol and inequalities agenda
- > The continuing consolidation of the drinks industry
- > The influence of large scale retailers (on and off-sales) on the sale of alcohol
- > An increasingly ageing population
- > The changing training environment

service prospects

AFS continues to build its reputation as an organisation which works in partnership to deliver its services. Significant factors which will influence the delivery of our services in the next 3 years are:

- > Increased resourcing of alcohol services through the Action Plan
- > Implementation of the Licensing Act
- > Ensuring that alcohol issues are acknowledged and dealt with across a variety of policy agendas
- > Efficient government initiatives and the implications of the introduction of the new Charities Act
- > Engaging with and growing our membership

We will take cognisance of these challenges and opportunities in our planning and performance activities.

strategic aims & objectives

We have identified, in consultation with staff and stakeholders, 3 strategic aims which are our priorities for 2006/11. These reflect the current and anticipated challenges which face AFS as well as those areas of our work where improved performance will lead to significantly better outcomes. Over the next 5 years AFS will seek to achieve the following:

promoting responsibility

AFS's aim in promoting responsibility is to achieve: **The acknowledgement by the public, trade and industry that alcohol should be produced, served, marketed and consumed in a safe and healthy way which would minimise the negative consequences of alcohol misuse for individuals, families, communities and society, and ensure that everyone plays their part in tackling our culture of drunkenness.** We will do this by:

- > Training more licensees, bar staff, retail staff and others in their social and legal responsibilities
- > Developing a vision of a responsible alcohol trade and industry in Scotland
- > Improving the quality, range and availability of our information about alcohol
- > Increasing the range and audience for our training packages, including volunteers, alcohol problem practitioners and related professions, the licensed trade and industry
- > Supporting community based initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of alcohol related issues and how to respond to them, for example community safety initiatives, pub watch schemes, work with Action Teams and the alcohol industry
- > Improving our work with the media by developing partnerships and proactively seeking to stimulate interest in alcohol issues

reducing harm

AFS's aim in reducing harm is to achieve: **An understanding by the public, trade and industry that there are risks associated with the way in which we consume alcohol in Scotland, and that these risks can be eliminated or significantly reduced if we change our drinking culture.** We will do this by:

- > Providing a development service which will provide consultancy and support, assess the effectiveness of initiatives, and advise on good practice
- > Extending and developing our range of training programmes for volunteer counsellors, alcohol and related professions
- > Focusing on the links between social and health inequalities and developing pilot initiatives aimed at addressing them

- > Developing an innovative early/minimum intervention project
- > Improving the quality and range of information on alcohol related risks
- > Improving our partnership working on a range of issues, for example, research with Health Boards, academics, other health agencies, police, minimum interventions with partner agencies

changing culture

AFS seeks to achieve: **A positive change in Scotland's drinking culture to one which considers drunken behaviour as irresponsible and unacceptably risky.**

We will do this by:

- > Establishing a research capacity within the organisation which will inform our approach and understanding of alcohol issues
- > Developing an educational support role with our membership, health and education partners
- > Establishing a policy review capacity which will inform the organisation's approach to influencing policy development and implementation
- > Recognising that Scotland's drinking culture is neither consistent nor uniform, and targeting specific initiatives at specific sections of the population
- > Developing a national alcohol awareness campaign
- > Working with the media, providing information and analysis
- > Campaigning on alcohol related issues
- > Providing events and training for those in the alcohol and licensing field
- > Working with the Scottish Parliament, the UK Government and the EU to influence policy
- > Engaging with the international community on alcohol issues to inform and influence what's happening in Scotland

current performance & future targets

The need for our services is growing alongside public awareness of alcohol issues and problems. Some examples of our achievements over 2001-06 are:

corporate

- > Successfully re-branded as Alcohol Focus Scotland, previously known as The Scottish Council on Alcohol
- > Communicated a new mission statement and core values, signalling a broadening of our role.

strategic

- > A key role in shaping the Scottish Plan for Action on alcohol problems and the Scottish Licensing Bill
- > Contributed to the Scottish Ministerial Advisory Committee on Alcohol Problems (SMACAP)

- > Established the Cross Party group on alcohol and drugs
- > A strong profile in national communication campaigns
- > Membership of the National Licensing Forum

partnership working

- > Presentations to the industry, advertising groups, government bodies, alcohol problem agencies, community organisations
- > Working with the alcohol industry including The Portman Group, Diageo, Tennents, SLTA, Scotch Whisky Association etc
- > Commissioned by Lanarkshire ADAT to develop a new service in South and North Lanarkshire
- > Commissioned by Argyll and Clyde ADAT to support the reformulation of the Argyll and Bute Councils on Alcohol

communications

- > Relaunch of the AFS website
- > Improved media profile with an average of 60 press enquiries per quarter and 70% of enquiries converted into coverage in national press, radio, TV and trade press
- > Increased participation in media events relating to alcohol
- > Developed and implemented a media campaign
- > Distributed around a quarter of million information leaflets per year

training

- > Improved delivery of our volunteer counsellor training, with more people receiving training than ever before (389 Counsellors over the last 5 years)
- > Increased our general training programme from a single series of workshops in 2001 to at least 3 per annum
- > Increased the available range of training opportunities
- > Courses now validated and certificated by COSCA, and Counsellor Training Standards now competence-based, thus preparing the organisation for the introduction of National Standards in 2007

ServeWise

- > Grown from a Scottish Executive funded minimal intervention project in Aberdeen City Centre to a national programme validated by the SQA
- > In 2005, ServeWise trained 3822 people from the licensed trade, using 110 ServeWise Registered Trainers in 70 ServeWise Registered Centres across Scotland
- > Influenced the review of Licensing Law, and reinforced the connections between licensing, alcohol problems and the health of the nation

commissioned projects

- > National Alcohol Liaison Officer – contracted to operationally manage the National Alcohol Liaison Officer post whose role is to support the development of the Alcohol Action Teams
- > Gender Issues Network on Alcohol – contracted to manage and develop work on gender issues on alcohol, the first priority being women
- > Glasgow Service Users Project – commissioned to manage and develop the first alcohol Service User involvement project in Greater Glasgow
- > Commissioned by ICAP to write the UK chapter on Young People's drinking habits

infrastructure

AFS recognises that it constantly needs to ensure that it delivers its service to ensure best value, and will introduce the following in 2006-07:

- > Improve its performance management
- > Implement a staff appraisal system
- > Improve its budget and financial management systems and processes
- > Phased implementation of a new operational structure
- > Improve its governance structure and systems
- > Improve its administrative structure and systems
- > Review its fundraising and income generation strategy.

conclusion

This plan is intended to describe a clear understanding of our vision, aims and objectives for the future to Alcohol Focus Scotland staff, Executive Committee and membership, our partner agencies, local authorities, the Scottish Executive, supporters, donors and other stakeholders.

While it covers the five years 2006 – 2011, it will be subject to review and revision as circumstances change and experience develops over the period. It is a guiding framework which will enable us to make our more detailed operational plans meet our key strategic aims.

We hope that all Alcohol Focus Scotland stakeholders will understand the connection between their roles and responsibilities and the aims and objectives detailed in this plan, and work with us in partnership to help achieve them.

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