

6 October 2009

Tolson calls for more responsible advertising to mark alcohol awareness week

Jim Tolson, MSP for Dunfermline West is marking alcohol awareness week by calling on ministers and policy makers to encourage more responsible alcohol marketing to help bring about the culture change needed to tackle Scotland's damaging relationship with alcohol.

Alcohol awareness week runs from 4th - 10th October and aims to raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol abuse and encourage responsible drinking across Scotland.

Commenting, Jim said "I fully support alcohol awareness week. It is vital that we do more to raise awareness, particularly amongst young people about the dangers of alcohol abuse.

Today, I met David Sands, Chief Executive and the store manager at the Crossford store to discuss alcohol sales issues as part of 'Alcohol Awareness Week'. David Sands has been leading the way in his stores by conducting his own 'test purchasing scheme' and asking everyone who looks under 25 to produce ID.

"The figures from the Scottish Ambulance Service highlight just how widespread and damaging the effects of alcohol abuse are in Scotland. Alcohol related call outs are largely preventable if, as a nation, we can adopt a more responsible approach to alcohol consumption.

"Key to achieving this will be targeting the bad practice of *"pre-loading"* where people get tanked up at home before going out to clubs and bars. Ministers and the alcohol industry itself must do more to discourage irresponsible drinking like this.

"A good first step would be to adopt much more responsible marketing campaigns. A partnership between Government, Fife, alcohol producers and supermarkets to use advertising budgets to help change attitudes could be very effective.

"The SNP's new legislation plans won't really address the root causes of why people drink themselves stupid in the first place.

"The Government should instead focus on creating the culture change needed to tackle Scotland's battle with the bottle and using existing laws to crack down on irresponsible retailers and bars."

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- A BBC Scotland investigation this week revealed that alcohol plays a major roll in 68% of Scottish Ambulance Service call outs at weekends.