

## The Office of The Secretary for Scotland

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Ref: N:\Scotland Secretary\letter\Getting our Priorities Right

25 September 2012

Graeme Hunter  
Child Protection Policy Team  
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Dear Graeme

### CONSULTATION ON GETTING OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT

The Salvation Army welcomes this forward thinking strategy to address the challenges faced by children at risk of parental alcohol and drug use.

“Getting it Right for Every Child” is an important approach to breaking the trans-generational problems of substance misuse which often mitigates against social inclusion. The “Recovery Agenda” will hopefully address the clinical needs of people with problematic alcohol and drug misuse in a timely fashion. Whilst appreciating the intent of the waiting time targets of 90% within three weeks, the experience of the Salvation Army in working with people with these issues clearly indicates the necessity to assist at their point of need. This will initially require basic physical support which will help to engage the person with the support systems during this window of opportunity.

The recognition that “Sensible Drinking Guidelines” are not understood and do not influence the drinking behaviour of men and women supports the notion that there is no evidence that guidelines are effective and that a cumulative risk-based approach, as suggested in the ALICE RAP (2012,EU) report should be promoted.

The increased consumption of alcohol, of 11% since 1994, is concerning and highlights the need to address “affordability”, as being progressed via the commitment to minimum unit pricing (MUP) by the Scottish Government. However, the change in purchasing behaviour, particularly by young people, from “on sales” to “off sales”, on the consequential increase in home drinking, presents a greater potential for increased domestic violence and compromising the nutritional support of children in the homes of hazardous drinkers. These significant negative influences on the nurturing of children need to be recognised in the context of threats to cognitive development and later life vulnerability to employability, mental health issues, and substance misuse. These developmental threats are highlighted by the recognition to address maternal drinking behaviour and consequential increases in Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).



The  
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The Salvation Army Registered Charity  
No: 214779 and in Scotland SC009359

Founder: William Booth

With heart to God and hand to man

Whilst this joined-up approach to addressing substance misuse in individuals, children and families recognises the need to clearly identified lead professionals and case workers, the role of the wider community, especially the faith-based non-statutory services should be encouraged in helping to provide a "... protective wall of human community..." (Jung, 1961).

Our general view would be that any initiative that seeks to address this issue is to be supported and so welcome the proposals and general direction which this initiative takes

Yours sincerely

***(sent electronically)***

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Dixon".

Alan Dixon  
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**ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND**