



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National charity calls on supermarkets to end multi-buy promotions

12 December 2011, national – Swanswell’s calling on supermarkets in England and Wales to stop encouraging people to buy more alcohol than they otherwise would have, by ending multi-buy promotions.

The national charity, which helps people overcome drug, alcohol and other problem behaviour, is asking retailers to do their bit in tackling alcohol misuse and the associated harm it causes, by taking responsibility for introducing this buying behaviour.

It follows early signs of success in Scotland, where a ban on multi-buy deals has been in force since October. During the first eight weeks, the sale of wine fell by 5%, spirits by 3% and beer by 8% compared with the same period in 2010, according to analysis by Nielsen¹.

In England and Wales during the same eight weeks, sales of wine decreased by 4% and spirits 1% with beer sales increasing by 1%¹.

As well as banning the sale of multi-buy deals on alcohol, the Alcohol Scotland Act also brings in age verification checks and restricts alcohol advertising around premises.

Debbie Bannigan, Swanswell’s Chief Executive, said: *‘We know there are lots of factors that can affect the sale of alcohol but it’s positive to see sales have fallen in Scotland since the ban was introduced.*

‘It highlights how multi-buy deals can affect our buying behaviour, choosing to buy more alcohol than we actually would otherwise because it’s cheaper. Supermarkets often place these promotions at the front of the store, so you see them as soon as you walk in.

‘The alcohol industry spends around £800 million pounds a year on alcohol promotion in the UK² but in 2009/10 for example, the government spent £17.6 million on alcohol information and education campaigns³ – the figures don’t add up.

‘So we’re asking retailers – and the drinks industry - to seriously consider ending such promotions and direct some of that funding to educate people instead about the risks of excessive alcohol consumption.

‘However, that’s just a first step – we all have to take responsibility for tackling alcohol misuse, it’s not something supermarkets, the drinks industry or the government can do on its own.

‘Next time you’re at the supermarket or an off-licence, think about whether ‘buy one, get one free’ deals or other multi-buy discounts are actually a good idea or whether you’re just increasing the risk of you drinking more than you should.’

To find out more about Swanswell and the services it provides, visit www.swanswell.org.

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Notes for editors

For more information or supporting photographs, contact Stuart Goodwin:

Swanswell
Suite 5, Hilton House
Corporation Street
Rugby
Warwickshire
CV21 2DN

Tel: 01788 559 422

Email: stuart.goodwin@swanswell.org

About Swanswell

Swanswell is a national charity that helps people overcome drug, alcohol and other problem behaviour. We believe that everyone deserves the chance to change and to be happy. We help them to remove the things that stand in their way, whether physical,

emotional or practical. So, as their lives improve, they can feel well, do well, and stay well. Swanswell has a reputation for innovation and is a leading developer of new services which help people to change their behaviour for the better.

Swanswell has a number of offices across the country including Coventry and Warwickshire, Birmingham, Barnsley, Sandwell, Leicestershire and Rutland. Visit Swanswell at: www.swanswell.org.

Join the conversation, follow Swanswell on twitter at www.twitter.com/Swanswell.

References

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