

PORTMAN GROUP FEEDBACK TO CONSULTATION

“The Portman Group is the social responsibility body and regulator for alcohol labelling, packaging and promotion in the UK. Founded in 1989, it has over 160 code signatories from producers, retailers and membership bodies and it is funded by 19 industry leading member companies. The Portman Group aims to consistently challenge the industry to deliver high standards of best practice and fulfil the essential self-regulatory role of ensuring the responsible marketing and promotion of alcoholic products to UK consumers under our Codes of Practice.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on your licensing policy. We know that several other authorities have included a brief reference and description of the Portman Group as the regulatory body for alcohol marketing in the UK through our Code of Practice in the main body of the text as well as contact details in their document annexes. This builds on the UK Secretary of State’s initial Guidance on the Licensing Act in 2004 which commended the Portman Group Code: “The Code is an important weapon in protecting children from harm because it addresses the naming, marketing and promotion of alcohol products sold in licensed premises in a manner which may appeal to or attract minors. The Secretary of State commends the Code to licensing authorities and recommends that they should commend it in their statements of licensing policy” - which was subsequently adopted by many local authorities across the UK in their licensing policies. If you were to consider such a text to encourage retailers in your area to abide by Retailer Alert Bulletins to remove irresponsible products and promotions, we might suggest including the following: The Portman Group Code of Practice The Portman Group operates, on behalf of the alcohol industry, a Code of Practice on the naming, packaging and promotion of alcoholic drinks. The Code seeks to ensure that drinks are packaged and promoted in a socially responsible manner and only to those who are 18 years old or over. Complaints about products under the Code are considered by an Independent Complaints Panel and the Panel’s decisions are published. If a product’s packaging or point-of-sale advertising is found to be in breach of the Code, the Portman Group may issue a Retailer Alert Bulletin to notify retailers of the decision and ask them not to replenish stocks of any such product or to display such point-of-sale material, until the decision has been complied with. The Code is an important tool in protecting children and vulnerable consumers from harm because it addresses the naming, marketing and promotion of alcohol products sold in licensed premises in a manner which may particularly appeal to these groups. I would also highlight the latest edition of the Code of Practice (<https://www.portmangroup.org.uk/codes-of-practice/>), which contains several new important updates including action to target offensive marketing and associations with illegal behaviour.”