PRESS RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT 'BOTTLES IT' ON ALCOHOL RECOMMENDATIONS

On the same week in which The National Suicide Research Foundation produced their first report, which shows the strong link between alcohol and suicide, the Cabinet inexplicably deemed it unnecessary to discuss measures to reduce the harm that alcohol causes in our society. Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign and the National Voluntary Drugs Sector are deeply disappointed at the Cabinet decision not to deal with the recommendations of Minister Shortall's Substance Misuse Report.

There are 52 recommendations in the Report covering areas such as prevention, supply, treatment, rehabilitation and research; all of which are evidenced based. However, the measures that seem to be causing Fine Gael Ministers most problems are those concerning the drinks industry, i.e. price and availability of alcohol, banning of sports sponsorships and the introduction of a social responsibility levy. It should be noted that the World Health Organisation has found that policies that place controls on price and availability are the most effective in reducing alcohol related harm. WHO also states that the effects of exposure to alcohol marketing can contribute to the normalising of drinking alcohol and eventually to increased levels of harmful use of alcohol in the population. In addition, a social responsibility levy has been placed on the drinks industry in other European countries and has been used to good effect to ameliorate the harmful effects of alcohol in society.

This report gives us the opportunity to make a massive difference to the lives of young people, families and communities. By putting this issue on the back burner, the Government is sending a clear message to the drinks industry that their interests are being protected.

The whole country is talking about our alcohol problem – why aren't our Government?

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