

New book “Drinking in Context” proposes that reducing harm around drinking is a collective responsibility

Book sets out feasible and practical approaches implemented in partnership and with available resources

LONDON, 27 March 2007 – The launch of a new book, *Drinking in Context*, airs a fresh approach to reducing harm around drinking. The book lays out a dramatically different view of policy. It concentrates on what is practical, meets specific needs, priorities and settings, and is feasible with the resources that are available. Policy needs to be relevant to different cultures and responsive to the immediate needs of communities

The book is being launched today by the International Center for Alcohol Policies (ICAP)¹ at the House of Commons. The event is hosted by the All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Alcohol Misuse, Beer, Cider, Scotch Whisky and Wine & Spirits and is chaired by Kevin Barron, MP Chairman of the Commons Health Select Committee.

“Alcohol policy should be the art of the possible,” says the book’s lead editor Professor Gerry Stimson of Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. “Resources are available to address health concerns and the public’s worries around safety at the local and community level. They are waiting to be harnessed in new and creative ways. This book sets a way forward for doing this.

“The conventional view of alcohol policy is to regulate and restrict, not to deal specifically with harm.” Adds Marcus Grant, President of ICAP, “Surely a more efficient use of scarce resources is to direct them at those individuals at risk for harm and those settings and behaviours that are problematic.”

The book’s sponsorship and authors reflect the underlying notion that crafting sensible policies is a collective responsibility. ICAP has taken the lead in the preparation of the book but with the contribution of three other organizations: the *International Harm Reduction Association* (IHRA), the *World Federation for Mental Health* and the *Institut de Recherches Scientifiques sur les Boissons*. Individual authors worked under the guidance of an autonomous Editorial Advisory Group.

¹ The International Center for Alcohol Policies (ICAP) is a not-for-profit organization supported by some of the major international producers of beverage alcohol. Set up in 1995, ICAP’s mission is to promote the understanding of the role of alcohol in society and to help reduce the abuse of alcohol worldwide. It works to foster dialogue and partnerships involving governments, the public health community, the beverage alcohol industry, civil society, and others interested in alcohol policy. ICAP’s work in the alcohol policy field is shaped by its commitment to pragmatic and feasible solutions to reducing harm that can be tailored to local and cultural considerations and needs.