



1.

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is the largest charity supporting people affected by crime across Scotland through the provision of practical help, emotional support and essential information. As such, we welcome the opportunity to provide NHS Grampian a statement on the impact alcohol has in relation to crime. We hope this will be beneficial for the upcoming NHS Grampian event on the wider impact of alcohol in society

2.

VSS seeks to work in partnership with a range of organisations and individuals to support all aspects of its work. VSS works to build support, knowledge and rights for victims and witnesses affected by crime and to assist the development and resilience of communities and individuals who experience crime. We believe that together we have more strength to improve the position of victims and witnesses of crime far more than we have on our own.

3.

VSS does not record data on the role of alcohol in offending. However, our experience as an organisation is that we do come into contact with victims who reveal to us that the perpetrator's alcohol consumption was a factor in the crime.

4.

The VSS witness support service provides support for victims throughout the court process. It is often the case that exposure to alcohol is made known during trials and so the link between criminal behaviour becomes apparent and presents a common theme.

5.

We should maintain a robust criminal justice response to offending. However, we recognise that prevention of crime is important in order to reduce the number of victims and this is why we recently advocated for “*Hate Crime*” to be seen and treated as a public health issue. It is our belief that the link between excessive alcohol consumption and offending should also be seen in this context.

6.

VSS understands from wider research evidence that the links between excessive alcohol consumption and criminality are well established. We are therefore supportive of social interventions that look at causes and patterns of offending behaviour so people have the opportunity to learn about the dangers associated with alcohol misuse. We also recognise the need for positive engagement activities - particularly in the area of youth crime where the correlation between alcohol misuse and offending is most stark.

ENDS