**Press Release from Independent Complaints Panel of the Joint Industry Code on the Responsible Promotion and Retail of Alcohol in Northern Ireland**

**26.09.2016**

**Statutory footing required for industry code on irresponsible drinking to make alcohol problem thing of the past says Panel Chair**

Duncan McCausland, Chairman of the Independent Complaints Panel of the Joint Industry Code on the Responsible Promotion and Retail of Alcohol in Northern Ireland has welcomed the Minister for Communities, Paul Givan MLA, proposal to give statutory recognition to industry codes that control the promotion of alcohol. He said:

*“The role of the Responsible Retailing Code NI, which regulates the responsible promotion of alcohol in Northern Ireland, is recognised by the current Communities Minister Paul Givan, and previous Ministers, since its inception in 2012. But it is still a voluntary Code. The opportunity for the Code to be placed on a statutory footing, will give the Code real teeth and further deter any rogue licensees / retailers from undertaking any irresponsible promotions of alcohol.”*

*“I think it is more apparent than ever, whether it is the ongoing issues in the Holylands in Belfast, the recent MTV concert in Derry/Londonderry, or the below cost selling of alcohol which is fuelling problem drinking at home, that we need a Code with real teeth to tackle the root causes of the problem. Irresponsible drinks promotions are of significant concern for society and the industry, given the harm of increasing alcohol abuse and misuse in Northern Ireland.”*

*“Since 2012, the Code has been accepted by the industry as the standard to which responsible retailers of alcohol should adhere. The work that we have carried out to date, and continue to push forward, on the responsible retailing and promotion of alcohol, is focussed on making irresponsible consumption of alcohol a thing of the past.”*

*“Placing the voluntary Code on a statutory footing is vital and will help add weight to the Panel’s decisions on the application of the Code. We encourage the Communities Minister, the Committee and our wider elected representatives to grasp this opportunity now to ensure that this safeguarding is in place before the problem potentially spirals out of control.”*

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For further information or to set up an interview:

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