

**Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands, Diageo, Heineken and Molson Coors pledge half a million pounds to further bolster Best Bar None scheme**

□ **LONDON 10 MAY 2011:** Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands, Diageo, Heineken and Molson Coors today announced half a million pounds worth of funding for the Best Bar None scheme to help tackle alcohol related crime. This investment will help to guarantee the future of the Best Bar None programme which works with bars and pubs across England and Wales to promote responsible management.

The £500,000 investment pledged by the leading drinks companies will support the next stage of Best Bar None's development over three years. In particular it will fund the set-up of twenty new Best Bar None schemes across the country, especially in disadvantaged areas, along with strengthening existing schemes. The drinks industry partners are working with the Government and other stakeholders to include their commitment to Best Bar None as an additional pledge for The Responsibility Deal.

Best Bar None is a national award programme which promotes responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises. It aims to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder in town centres right across the country. In particular it provides a framework for training on enforcing proof of age policies, along with building relationships between the licensed trade, police and local authorities to reduce crime and improve safety. The programme is supported by the Home Office and British Institute of Innkeeping (BII), the professional body for the licensed retail sector, as well as the drinks industry.

There are now over 100 Best Bar None schemes in the UK, with around 3,600 venues taking part. Since Best Bar None was founded in 2003 it is estimated the programme has helped to achieve significant savings in the NHS and reduced alcohol related crime. A recent in-depth evaluation study by Leeds Metropolitan University found the Best Bar None scheme to be very effective.

It is also estimated that this additional funding could help the NHS and UK police forces make further savings, along with boosting the night time economy by generating an extra £3m in trade across the venues involved.

Minister for Crime Prevention James Brokenshire said:

“Best Bar None plays a vital role in tackling alcohol related crime and disorder, by helping local businesses and authorities improve their areas. I fully support their work and encourage more businesses to get involved and work together with local communities to drive up standards and reduce alcohol related crime.”

“The government is determined to tackle the harms caused by alcohol and have brought forward a comprehensive package of measures to address this, including an overhaul of the Licensing Act to strengthen the say of communities.”

Lord Redesdale, Chairman of the Best Bar None programme said:

“This strong strategic partnership and significant funding will take Best Bar None to the next level, ensuring a brighter future for the scheme. It will enable us to be bolder and more ambitious in scope and standards. The bottom line is that we will be able to develop our existing schemes and roll out Best Bar None across more areas of England and Wales, particularly in disadvantaged areas, like Barnsley for example. This will enable us to make even greater progress in reducing the impact of alcohol related crime and disorder. ”