



College of Psychiatrists warns proposed Sale of Alcohol Bill will have ‘hugely negative’ impact on mental health

- **‘The Bill as proposed ignores public health and gives absolute primacy to the financial and business interests of alcohol retailers’**
- **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice resumes its pre-legislative scrutiny of the Sale of Alcohol Bill today (Tuesday)**

Tuesday January 31 2023. The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland has warned that proposed aspects of the Sale of Alcohol Bill (2022) will have a hugely negative effect on people’s mental health and should be reconsidered in consultation with medical professionals as a priority.

The Joint Committee on Justice will today resume its pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill.

Among the proposals are:

- The general extension of licensing hours of all bars/restaurants from 11.30pm to 12.30am
- The facilitating of late-night opening of bars to 2.30am
- The extension of nightclub hours to 6am
- The revoking of the requirement to extinguish a license before opening a new premises. This will increase the number and density of alcohol outlets.

Speaking today, **Dr Edyta Truszkowska, Chair of the Faculty of Addiction Psychiatry with the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland**, said: “Alcohol causes or contributes to a vast array of mental health problems across a person’s entire lifespan. These start before birth with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and extend to old age with its role in dementia. In between, we see its harms in episodes of deliberate self-harm, suicides, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and alcohol dependence.

“Beyond the individual drinker of alcohol, we see extensive evidence of its harm to the mental health of others, arising from its role in and as a driver of acts of violence, abuse, and neglect.”

Dr Bobby Smyth, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and a member of the College Faculty of Addiction Psychiatry, said that it was regrettable that proposed aspects of the Bill ignored

public health. “The Bill as proposed gives absolute primacy to the financial and business interests of alcohol retailers. The College of Psychiatrists advised that there be no increase in hours of sale of alcohol, as it is clear that increased availability leads to increased use and harms. The Bill, however, proposes to greatly increase opening hours in all on-license settings.”

He urged the Committee to again consider the detailed submission of the College of Psychiatrists, with a view to keeping alcohol licensing hours unchanged.

Editors’ note:

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland is the professional and training body for psychiatrists in Ireland and represents 1,100 professional psychiatrists (both specialists and trainees) across the country

ENDS

Issued on behalf of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland by Gordon MRM

Julian Fleming

Ph: 087 6915147

julian@gordonmrm.ie