

An open letter via email

29 October 2014

Dear Sir Jeremy,

We write to you as public health professionals to express our deep concerns about the alcohol industry interests held by the newly appointed Chief Executive of the UK civil service, John Manzoni. We find it inexplicable and troubling that Mr Manzoni retains a paid position as non-Executive Director of one of the world's largest brewers, SAB Miller, while stepping down from two other paid positions in the energy sector. This appears to be only partial fulfilment of the Nolan Principles, which require holders of public office to 'take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.'¹ We believe this situation threatens to undermine the impartiality of the civil service and presents a direct conflict of interest with UK public health policy goals.

We urgently request assurances that the advice given by the Cabinet Office appointments panel in relation to Mr Manzoni took full account of the potential conflicts of interest presented by his continued employment by SAB Miller. The specific risks that are of clear public interest are as follows:

- Mr Manzoni's remuneration for his post with SAB Miller - taken in the form of company shares - means he has a pecuniary interest in growth of the company's sales and profits and therefore an interest in government policies that may affect this. SAB Miller has conducted a well-resourced and wide reaching lobbying campaign against UK Government policies aimed at tackling alcohol harm that potentially threaten the interests of the drinks industry, such as minimum unit pricing. The company also funds industry-friendly think tanks and research reports that actively seek to influence public policy and cast doubt upon the scientific evidence to support effective alcohol interventions that save lives². Given that alcohol policy is such a high profile and contested issue within government, it is problematic that the CEO of the UK civil service has such clear links to an organisation with strong vested interests on one side of such debates.
- SAB Miller has strong commercial ties to the tobacco company Philip Morris. The Altria Group (formerly known as Philip Morris Companies Inc) is the parent company of Philip Morris International and also has a 28.7% economic and voting interest in SAB Miller plc. Presently the two companies have high levels of cross representation on their respective boards. We seek clarification on whether Mr Manzoni's commercial links to the tobacco industry are considered to be compatible with the UK Government's obligations under Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its implementation guidelines, requiring that public health policies should be protected from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry³.

We believe Mr Manzoni's continued interest in SAB Miller poses a serious threat to the perceived neutrality and integrity in the role of the UK civil service in policy-making. The UK Civil Service CEO must be independent, and seen to be independent, to make decisions that are based on the public good and not influenced by vested interests.

We and our many colleagues, who strive to improve the health of our population, deserve a full disclosure of the details surrounding Mr Manzoni's appointment with a view to an early review of the Cabinet Office appointments committee advice.

Yours faithfully,

¹ UK Government Guidance for civil servants: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85772/Guidance-for-civil-servants.pdf

² Hawkins B, McCambridge, J, Industry Actors, Think Tanks and Alcohol Policy in the United Kingdom, American Journal of Public Health, June 2014

³ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf



Professor Sir Ian Gilmore, Chair, Alcohol Health Alliance and special advisor on alcohol to the Royal College of Physicians

Katherine Brown, Director, Institute of Alcohol Studies

Professor Klim McPherson, Chair, UK Health Forum

Alison Cox, Director for Cancer Prevention, Cancer Research UK

Deborah Arnott MBA FRCP (Hon), Chief Executive, Action on Smoking and Health

Amanda McLean, General Manager, World Cancer Research Fund UK

Dr John Middleton, Vice-President, UK Faculty of Public Health

Dr Evelyn Gillan, Chief Executive, Alcohol Focus Scotland

Dr Nick Sheron, Head of Clinical Hepatology/alcohol lead in Europe, University of Southampton/Royal College of Physicians

Professor Sir Simon Wessely, President, Royal College of Psychiatrists

Jane Landon, Deputy Chief Executive, UK Health Forum

Shirley Cramer CBE, CEO, Royal Society for Public Health

Dr Richard Heron, President, Faculty of Occupational Medicine

Dr Mark Hudson, Consultant Hepatologist/BASL President, Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Freeman Hospital

Professor Colin Drummond, Chair, Addictions Faculty, Royal College of Psychiatrists

Dr Kieran Moriarty C.B.E, Alcohol Lead, British Society of Gastroenterology

Hazel Parsons, Director, Drink Wise

Jackie Ballard, Chief Executive, Alcohol Concern

Professor Anna Gilmore, Professor of Public Health, University of Bath/UKCTAS

Andrew Langford, Chief Executive, British Liver Trust

Professor Rob Poole, Professor of Social Psychiatry, Bangor University

Sven-Olov Carlsson, President, IOGT International

Andrew P Dougal OBE, Chief Executive, NI Chest, Heart and Stroke



Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive, British Dental Health Foundation

Colin Shevills, Director, Balance, the North East Alcohol Office

Robin Touquet, Emeritus Professor of Emergency Medicine, Imperial College London

Dr Zulfiqar Mirza, Alcohol Lead, College of Emergency Medicine

Ailsa Rutter, Director, FRESH – Smoke Free North East

Dr Peter Rice, MB ChB, FRCPsych, FRCPE, Chair, Scottish Health Action of Alcohol Problems (SHAAP)

Dr Adrian Boyle, Chair of the Quality of Emergency Care Committee, College of Emergency Medicine

Martine Stead, Deputy Director, Institute for Social Marketing, University of Stirling

Professor Mark. A. Bellis, Alcohol Lead, UK Faculty of Public Health

Professor Robert West, Professor of Health Psychology, University College London

Sheila Duffy, Chief Executive, ASH Scotland

Dr Peter Miller, Commissioning Editor, Addiction

Tim Stockwell, PhD FCAHS, Director, Centre for Addictions Research of BC, University of Victoria, Canada

Professor Kypros Kypri, Senior Brawn Fellow, University of Newcastle, Australia

Professor Christine Griffin, Professor of Social Psychology, University of Bath (and a partner in the UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies (UKCTAS))

Robin Ireland, Chief Executive, Heart of Mersey

Terry Martin, Trustee, AlcoHELP

Diane Goslar, Patient Representative, Royal College of Psychiatrists

Professor Richard Ashcroft, Professor of Bioethics, Queen Mary University of London/UKCTAS and a member of the RCP Tobacco Advisory

Professor John Britton CBE, Professor of Epidemiology and Director, University of Nottingham/UKCTAS

Dr Moira Plant, Emerita Professor of Alcohol Studies, University of the West of England

Professor Sarah Lewis, Professor of Medical Statistics, University of Nottingham/UKCTAS

Dr Tim Coleman, Professor in Primary Care, Queen's Medical Centre/University of Nottingham/UKCTAS

Dr Annie Britton, Senior Lecturer in Epidemiology, University College London/UKCTAS



Dr Chris Record, Consultant Gastroenterologist, Newcastle University

Professor Gerard Hastings OBE, Professor, Institute of Social Marketing, University of Stirling and the Open University

Dr Gillian W Shorter, Lecturer in Mental Health Sciences, University of Ulster

Professor Ann McNeill, Professor of Tobacco Addiction, King's College London/UKCTAS

Professor Sally Casswell, Director, Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation (SHORE) & Whariki Research Centre, Massey University/UKCTAS

Professor Mike Daube AO, Professor of Health Policy, Curtin University, Australia

Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director/CEO, Alcohol Justice

Professor Linda Bauld, Director, Institute of Social Marketing, University of Stirling

Dr Clifford J Mann, President, College of Emergency Medicine, FCEM/FRCP

Dr Lida Lhotska, Regional Coordinator for Europe, International Baby Food Action Network

Patti Rundall OBE, Co-Chair, International Baby Food Action Network

Professor Jeff Collin, Professor of Global Health Policy, University of Edinburgh/UKCTAS

Professor Eileen Kaner PhD, HonFRCP, HonMFPH, Institute Director and Professor of Public Health Research, Newcastle University

Professor Marcus Munafo, Professor of Biological Psychology, University of Bristol/UKCTAS

Professor Petra Meier, Professor of Public Health, University of Sheffield/UKCTAS

Professor David Leon, Professor of Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Dr John Holmes, Research Fellow, ScHARR, University of Sheffield

Susan Fleisher, Executive Director, NOFAS-UK

Professor Matt Field, Department of Psychological Sciences, University of Liverpool/UKCTAS

Professor Susan Michie, Director of UCL Centre for Behaviour Change, University College London/UKCTAS

Steve Parrott, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Health Sciences, University of York/UKCTAS

Professor Christine Griffin, Professor of Social Psychology, University of Bath/UKCTAS

Professor Nick Heather, Emeritus Professor of Alcohol and Other Drug Studies, Northumbria University



Prof John S Yudkin MD FRCP, Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University College London/UKCTAS

Dr Niamh Fitzgerald, Lecturer in Alcohol Studies, Institute of Social Marketing, University of Stirling

Professor Amanda Amos, Professor of Health Promotion, University of Edinburgh/UKCTAS

Professor Penny A. Cook, Professor of Public Health, University of Salford

Dr Carly Lightowlers, Lecturer in Criminal Justice, Liverpool John Moores University

Dr Jamie Brown, SSA Senior Research Fellow, University College London/UKCTAS

Dr Sadie Boniface, Research Associate, Department of Epidemiology & Public Health, University College London/UKCTAS

Professor Graham MacGregor, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH) and Action on Sugar, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine

Colin Payton, Consultant occupational physician, Royal United Occupational Health

Nicoletta Denticò, Co-director, Health Innovation in Practice

Xaviera Cabada, Nutrition Health Coordinator, El Poder del Consumidor, Mexico