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Councillor Bill Hartnett  
Chair, Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel  
Redditch Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Walter Stanz Square  
Redditch  
Worcestershire B98 8AH

23 MAY 2011

*Dear Councillor Hartnett*

Thank you for your letter of 14 April about alcohol related hospital admissions.

The Medical Council on Alcohol is a charity concerned with the effects of alcohol on health. In its publication *Alcohol and Health* (2010), it states:

*The National Poisons Information Service advises that all children with features of alcohol intoxication should be referred to hospital. Those who have ingested >0.4 ml/kg body weight of absolute alcohol should be observed for at least 4 hours.*

However, no other national guidance or policy has been issued on this subject.

Departmental officials have made enquiries with the local NHS in relation to the matters you raised. Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust confirms that the decision to admit intoxicated young people into hospital overnight is made on a case-by-case basis depending on injury, level of consciousness, and issues associated with safeguarding. The Trust also confirms that there is no significant difference between how these patients are managed across its hospital sites.

Departmental officials also made enquiries with other NHS trusts across the UK to determine how widespread the practice of overnight admission is. Typically, trusts have a local policy to assess the need for admission based on safeguarding young people as well as on clinical thresholds. Approximately 50-60 per cent of emergency department attendances as a result of alcohol misuse in under-16s are admitted. It is the responsibility of the treating clinician to decide whether to admit the young person in question into hospital.

Please do contact me again if there are any further concerns.

*No further action  
A.M. N.K.*

ANNE MILTON