

# Alcohol Research UK & Alcohol Concern

## Background information for prospective applicants

### Introduction from Alan Maryon-Davis, Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in joining the board of the new charity formed from the merger of Alcohol Research UK and Alcohol Concern. This is a hugely exciting time for the charity, as we complete the merger of these two great charities and build something even greater.

We are committed to making the UK a better place to live, for everyone, by taking action to reduce (and where possible eliminate) these serious harms.

If your application is successful, you will be joining a dynamic and committed board. I hope this briefing pack gives you all the information you need.

### About Alcohol Research UK and Alcohol Concern

#### Background

Alcohol Research UK funds high-quality research and uses the findings to influence policy and practice. It works to ensure that policy and practice can always be developed on the basis of reliable, research-based, evidence. It was formed in 2011 as a successor to the Alcohol Education and Research Council, which was itself founded in 1982.

Alcohol Concern was established in 1984 to help reduce the problems that can be caused by alcohol. It does this by helping people with information, advice and guidance, helping professionals working with people who have alcohol problems and advocating for a different drinking culture. It also runs Dry January, leads on Alcohol Awareness Week and provides the secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Alcohol Harm.

On 1 April 2017, Alcohol Research UK took over the assets, undertakings and staff of Alcohol Concern. This has combined the complementary strengths of the two charities in one organisation - the evidence and scientific credibility of Alcohol Research UK alongside Alcohol Concern's high public profile and track-record of influencing policy and practice. This is an incredibly powerful combination and the potential of the merged charity to become the major player in the alcohol-harm reduction field is now considerable.

Currently, all the existing activity of the previously separate organisations is continuing and both the Alcohol Research UK and Alcohol Concern brands have been retained. We have confirmed our new strategic framework, have selected a new name and have approved our new brand. In mid-November our new website will launch and we will go public with the name, brand and strategy

#### What we do

Following the approval of our new strategic framework, we are now reconfiguring our work-programmes. Broadly speaking we seek to make change happen in five inter-linked areas:

**Improved knowledge.** We want alcohol-related policy and practice to be developed on the basis of robust research evidence; new ideas about alcohol harm reduction created, tested and shared; and the knowledge base enriched by the experiences of those affected by alcohol harm. Everything we do is based on this.

**Better policies and regulation.** We want to see a policy environment that prioritises the reduction of alcohol harms in all their forms based on robust and reliable evidence.

**Shifted cultural norms.** We want to see the development of more informed and balanced drinking cultures across the UK, with alcohol playing a less central role.

**Improved drinking behaviours.** We want to help more people gain the motivation, confidence and ability to exert control over their drinking; with less need for specialist support.

**More and better support and treatment.** We want to see a vibrant and diverse treatment sector that is effective, properly funded, well commissioned and coordinated, and easy for people with drinking problems and their families to navigate.

## **The team**

Alcohol Research UK is governed by a board of 10 trustees who bring a wide range of skills and include senior people from academia, business, other charities and the public sector, two of whom are former trustees of Alcohol Concern. The board is engaged and trustees are particularly involved in the charity's various sub-committees.

There is a small, friendly and highly professional staff team, 12 of whom are based at our new permanent offices near Kings Cross in London and two in our Alcohol Concern Wales office in Cardiff.

## **Financial position**

We are fortunate enough to own our own headquarters and to have additional unrestricted reserves of around £12 million. Historically our approach has been to invest this money in order to generate returns and currently this is our primary source of income. The capital value of our reserves has grown significantly over the last few years and this has enabled us to draw down some of the capital to supplement our charitable work. However, our ambition is to grow the charity's impact and that means growing our expenditure and, therefore income. We will therefore soon be embarking on a new long-term financial plan, including investing in fundraising.