

What's Brewing

NEWSPAPER OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

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Minister's duty plea

A CALL from Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt for a rise in duty to reduce binge drinking among teenagers has been dismissed by the Treasury.

Her call came in an interview with children's paper First News, when she suggested that the drinks



Raise tax – Patricia Hewitt

most popular with young people, such as alcopops, should be hardest hit.

She told the newspaper it would stop teenagers spending money on drink and ending up in casualty.

"I am asking Gordon Brown when he comes forward with the Budget next year, to really increase taxes on alcohol," she said.

"We've got a real problem with binge drinking among young people. We've got enormous numbers of young people, particularly on a Friday and Saturday night, ending up in casualty because they're drunk."

The Treasury declined to comment officially on Ms Hewitt's suggestion. But a source said it was unlikely to be implemented.

And the idea of tax rises to curb binge drinking was dismissed by a firm involved in tracking underaged drinkers.

Answers Investigation spokeswoman Eleanor Brown said: "The issue of binge drinking cannot be solved through taxation."