



Pubs get dressing down over 'fourplay' ad

by Evelyn Ring

FOUR licensed premises have been rapped for suggesting "sexual success or prowess" in a drinks promotion.

The nightclubs and bars in Drogheda, Co Louth, were featured in four advertisements placed in a local newspaper under the headline — "West Street's Thursday night Fourplay".

All of the advertisements, published in the Drogheda Independent on August 6 included the image of a woman, who was scantily clad and posing suggestively.

MEAS, the group set up by the drinks industry to promote responsible drinking, said its independent complaints panel found that the advertisements had breached their code on responsible drinking.

Three of the premises

were in Drogheda's West Street — Storm Nightclub, Redz Vodka Bar and Westcourt Hotel's Earth Nightclub — while a fourth — O'Shea's Bar — is on Narrows West Street.

The panel, which oversees the MEAS code, found that the advertisements breached a section of the code that states that any promotional material must not suggest any association with sexual success or prowess. The complaints were made to the panel by the Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland, which represents the drinks industry in Ireland.

Defending the promotion, a spokesperson for Westcourt Hotel said the promotion was to highlight the fact that there were four

venues taking part.

"The 'fourplay' terminology was not ever thought up by us or the other pubs or club in a sexual context," she said.

The panel has sought clarification on aspects of the O'Shea's promotion because they related to the provision concerning excessive drinking and have not made a final decision on this aspect of the promotion.

Last month, MEAS and its independent complaints panel found that Home night club in Balbriggan, Co Dublin, committed multiple breaches of its code by suggesting alcohol can lead to success and by encouraging binge drinking.

A member of the public had complained about promotions outside the club and the panel also examined promotions on the social networking website Bebo.

MEAS chief executive, Fionnuala Sheehan said the code was very clear in relation to the promotion of alcohol suggesting an association with sexual success or prowess. "That is not regarded as acceptable when it comes to promoting alcohol," she stressed.

Ms Sheehan said an increasing number of complaints were being brought to the attention of its independent complaints panel.

"The public are well aware of the code now and the majority of the complaints are from members of the public," she said.

Ms Sheehan said all complaints were dealt with in confidence and were treated seriously.

"It is particularly useful when fliers, advertising posters or photographs accompany the complaint itself," she added.