



POLICE SEIZE THOUSANDS OF LITRES OF ALCOHOL

Police have seized more than 5,000 litres of alcohol from youths and street drinkers in Scotland over the past four weeks.

In a bid to tackle alcohol-fuelled violence and disorder in our communities, police focused on alcohol offences as part of a year-long anti violence campaign.

Youths buying alcohol and agents purchasing alcohol on behalf of youths were targeted as police launched their campaign to make it more difficult for those under 18 to purchase alcohol.

A wide range of measures were put in place, with many forces opting to take the opportunity to educate licensees and shop staff on their responsibilities when selling alcohol, while other forces concentrated on targeting gangs of youths who congregate outside off-sales premises and cause disorder.

During the month-long Safer Scotland blitz, a total of 5,225 litres of alcohol was taken off the streets by officers using local byelaws. During September, police paid 4,268 visits to off-sales premises mainly with the intention of gaining their support for the campaign against under-age drinkers.

However, police also focused their efforts on proxy or agent purchasers – where adults knowingly buy alcohol for under 18s. A total of 44 people were detected in relation to agent purchase of alcohol. In one occasion in the Maryhill area of Glasgow, a 72 year-old woman was caught allegedly trying to buy alcohol for a group of youths who were hanging around the off sales. She has been charged with agent purchase (Licensing Scotland Act 1976 Section 68 (3)).

Officers also targeted people drinking in the street – a total of 2,159 drinking in public offences were detected during the four-week period.

The efforts by forces were backed up by a poster campaign sending out a message to those who might consider buying alcohol for under-age youths that the party's over. The message is that these people will be caught and they will be charged by police.



Assistant Chief Constable Neil Richardson is the ACPOS lead for liquor licensing, he said

“Throughout Scotland, communities report that youths under the influence of alcohol are blighting their communities through violence, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. By making it harder for them to acquire alcohol in the early evenings we are changing their behaviour later on and reducing the negative impact these groups have on their communities.”

Deputy Health Minister Lewis Macdonald said:

“Excessive alcohol consumption is taking a heavy toll on public health and community safety in Scotland. We need to turn around attitudes to alcohol and change our behaviour.

“That's why I welcome tough police enforcement action to crack down on violence by focusing on under-age sales and proxy purchasing. This complements other action such as the Licensing Act, the Fife alcohol test purchase pilot, and our alcohol communications campaign, which will all help to encourage personal responsibility and bring about long-term societal change.”


Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, head of the Violence Reduction Unit, added

“Alcohol is just one of the elements which contributes to violence in our society.

“Where it is used inappropriately, or by inexperienced drinkers it can lead to individuals acting in a manner in which they would not normally. Where this behaviour involves violence it is unacceptable, and it is therefore essential that both the police service and partner agencies work together to change attitudes towards alcohol consumption and in particular, tackle consumption of alcohol on the streets where young people frequently become both the victims and the perpetrators of violence.”

He added:

“We have a real issue in the west of Scotland with gangs of young men aged between 14 to 21, who are on the periphery of society. These young men often carry a weapon and when they have had a



few drinks the chances of them using that weapon increase dramatically.

“We need to educate young men about the dangers of carrying weapons and we need to restrict their access to alcohol. Whilst a cultural change to alcohol consumption is required, we need to act now to reduce the levels of alcohol-fuelled violence on the streets of Scotland.”

Jack Law, Chief Executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, gave his backing to Safer Scotland, saying:

“This campaign has clearly demonstrated the scale of the problems of under-age and street drinking in communities across Scotland. It is very concerning that there are so many people willing to break the law by supplying alcohol to under-18’s or by street drinking.

“We hope this police initiative has hit home the message that alcohol offences are taken seriously, and that supplying alcohol to under-18’s is illegal, dangerous, and will not be tolerated.”

One of the new initiatives introduced by police during the Safer Scotland campaign has been ‘Alco-dip’ kits, which have proved hugely successful. In many areas of Scotland, young people have got wise to how police deal with under-age drinkers and conceal their alcohol in soft drink containers. However, by using the ‘Alco-dip’ kits officers can now recognise instantly whether there is alcohol in a drink. This provides the evidence Police need if they are to exercise their powers to confiscate alcohol from under-age youths or charge street drinkers.