

VIOLENCE reduction

Violence is preventable – not inevitable



POLICE SEIZE MORE THAN 1300 LITRES OF ALCOHOL IN FIRST TWO WEEKS OF CHRISTMAS CRACKDOWN Interim figures show booze blitz a success

PRESS RELEASE

Police have seized over 1300 litres of alcohol from street drinkers so far during a seasonal booze blitz.

The three week crackdown, which ends at midnight tonight (21 December), aims to reduce violence and anti-social behaviour.

Interim figures for the first two weeks of the campaign show that 1308 litres of drink has so far been banned from Scotland's streets.

The blitz is the latest phase in the ongoing Safer Scotland anti-violence campaign, co-ordinated by the Violence Reduction Unit.

The alcohol phase has seen police aim to reduce the amount of alcohol getting into the hands of underage drinkers and highlight the dangers of agent purchase – where adults knowingly buy alcohol on behalf of under 18s.

As part of the campaign a test purchasing initiative – whereby 16 year underage volunteers attempt to buy alcohol - was launched by Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill and Assistant Chief Constable Ian Dickinson from ACPOS. Of the 190 premises visited across Scotland as part of the initiative, just 18 sold goods to underage test purchasers.

Officers also targeted street drinking by all age groups using local byelaws. Some 235 males and 55 females under the age of 18 and 328 males and 49 females over the age of 18 were detected as a result of this operation.

Forces have worked closely with Community Safety Partnerships and Alcohol Action Teams throughout the phase, ensuring it goes to the heart of the local communities. This partnership working is now set to continue as an example of good practice.

Safer Scotland co-ordinator Chief Inspector Andy McKay said:

“The first two weeks of this campaign have proved hugely successful and forces across the country have been maximising their efforts during the final week as we approach Christmas. However, the end of this phase does not mean there will be a let up in the fight against alcohol related violence – now or in the future. Alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour is a blight on Scottish society, and we will come down hard on those who think it is acceptable to be violent toward others whilst blind drunk.

“The good news is that the message is getting through – the low number of positive results from the test purchasing initiative is testament to the fact that most off licence retailers are behaving responsibly when confronted with under age customers. We are doing our best to find kids alternative things to encourage them away from hanging about street corners drinking. All the good practice learnt during this phase will now be built into to standard police procedure, enabling us to tackle this problem even more effectively as we move into 2008.”

The phase is backed by an additional £1m government funding which was pledged by Cabinet Secretary for Justice Kenny MacAskill at the Safer Scotland Weapons & Alcohol Fuelled Violence Conference held on 26th September in Edinburgh.

A final, complete set of figures for the alcohol phase will be available in the New Year.

- ends -

NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

1. The Safer Scotland anti-violence campaign is supported by the Scottish Government and is being delivered throughout Scotland by ACPOS and the national Violence Reduction Unit.

2. The strategic aim of the campaign is to build appropriate local alliances to respond to their respective levels of violence. The campaign's main objectives are to find sustainable, innovative solutions to our violence problems through a series of targeted and locally focused campaigns, with particular emphasis on problem solving violence, and identifying what works to:
- Tackle the highest instances of violent offending behaviour in our hardest hit communities.
 - Educate violent and aggressive young men to become less violent.
 - Reduce possession and access to weapons, particularly knives.
 - Reduce youth access to / consumption of alcohol.
 - Divert youths away from street gang membership / violent group activity
3. Each force will carry out a range of activities as part of the knife phase of the campaign. For more information on what is happening in your force area, please contact your media representative (details below)

Force	Name	Designation	Tel. No:	E-mail Address
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Dumfries & Galloway	Graeme West	Media Relations Officer	01387 242253	graeme.west@dumfriesandgalloway.pnn.police.uk
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For more information please contact Caroline Foulkes, Communications Manager, Violence Reduction Unit, on 0141 532 5835.

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