Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership

Campaign tackles underage drinking in North Lanarkshire

Adults reminded of consequences of buying alcohol for under 18s

A campaign to reduce the number of adults in North Lanarkshire who buy alcohol for under 18s has resulted in 84 offences being detected over a four month period.

The campaign was jointly co-ordinated by the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership (SGAIP), the North Lanarkshire Community Safety Partnership and Police Scotland.

The offences included 49 adults in the Motherwell and Wishaw areas being charged with buying alcohol for children and nine premises being reported for selling directly to under 18s.

The campaign, which included pavement graffiti, social media, in-store signage and increased police patrols, has resulted in 23 times as many offences being detected compared to the previous 12 months.

The knock-on effect on local crime figures has been significant:

- Street drinking detection offences since the campaign started have dropped by 20%
- Violent crime is down 30%
- Reports of antisocial behaviour have reduced by 13% (490 less incidents compared to the same period last year)
- Reports of disorder have reduced by 15%
- Youth disorder down 10% in July, August and September
- Alcohol related disorder is down 21%

Inspector Alistair Anderson at Police Scotland said: “This campaign has been a considerable success, not just in achieving the campaign aims but also by making alcohol less accessible to children and reducing the risk of harm to them. By cracking down on purchases we have seen an improvement in crime statistics. Local officers will remain just as vigilant over the forthcoming festive period, and the weeks in between.

“In addition to the 84 offences detected, we know that the campaign has had a positive knock-on effect by deterring purchases. With less alcohol in the hands of under 18s, there’s a reduction in anti-social behaviour, violence and disorder in the area compared to the same period last year. There is no doubt that underage drinking contributes to antisocial behaviour, crime and violence in our local communities and it will not be tolerated.”

Sentences and fines will be decided as soon as each case is processed by the Scottish Courts. Buying alcohol for anyone under the age of 18 is a
criminal offence which carries a fine of up to £5,000 or up to three months in prison, or both.

**John Lee, Chair of the SGAIP Campaigns Group, said:** “Awareness of proxy purchase – and the consequences – are up. The success of this campaign is clear to see and we will look forward to replicating it in other areas of Scotland in the future.”

**Councillor Jim McCabe, Leader of North Lanarkshire Council and Chair of the North Lanarkshire Partnership Board, said:** “This campaign has delivered clear benefits for local people in Motherwell and Wishaw, by preventing under 18s getting their hands on alcohol illegally and, as a result, reducing incidents of antisocial behaviour locally. It has also raised awareness among licensed traders of their role in tackling underage drinking. Our partnership approach to this issue has had a positive, practical impact on our communities.”

Learnings and successes from this successful trial will now shape future campaigns across Scotland.

**Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership (SGAIP)**

**About SGAIP**

The campaign is jointly co-ordinated by the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership (SGAIP), the North Lanarkshire Community Safety Partnership and Police Scotland.

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 makes it an offence for a person to “act as an agent for a child in purchasing or attempting to purchase alcohol”. This is known as proxy purchase.

By raising awareness of the consequences of proxy purchase, the campaign aims to:

- Reduce the number of attempted purchases of alcohol for under 18s
- Reduce crime in the area
- Reduce antisocial behaviour and noise in the area
- Reduce the number of hospital admissions for under 18s with alcohol related injuries

The Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership (SGAIP) aims to deliver long term collaborative approach to fostering a culture where alcohol is consumed responsibly and in moderation.
Its main objective is to deliver joint initiatives to tackle alcohol related harm and promote responsible drinking.

Members of the SGAIP are listed below:

**About North Lanarkshire Community Safety Partnership**

North Lanarkshire’s Community Safety Partnership works proactively to tackle a range of local community safety issues including fire safety and safety within the home. The partnership is made up local agencies including North Lanarkshire Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Lanarkshire, Town Centre Activities and Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority.