

## Executive Summary

In 2015 the Local Area Partnership raised concerns about the young people's accessibility to alcohol and its links to antisocial behaviour. Local engagement suggested that those prepared to purchase alcohol on behalf of young people did not consider it as wrongdoing and indeed could see no harm in their actions.

Police Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership and North Lanarkshire Partnership, established the 'YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT' project to target the supply of alcohol to young people through proxy purchases.

Identifying that enforcement alone would not be sufficient, partners created a bespoke action plan with an emphasis on media and marketing to increase public awareness, educate local retailers about their responsibilities and targeted adults prepared to act as agents. The project worked collaboratively to reduce the supply of alcohol through engagement, education and enforcement.

In addition to reducing proxy alcohol purchases the project contributed to a reduction in antisocial behaviour, crime and disorder in the locality whilst protecting young people at risk of harm from alcohol misuse.

This project was a finalist in the Innovative Media Campaign Safer Communities Award 2016.

## Background and Aims

'YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT' was established in response to concerns about young people access to alcohol; however a number of secondary issues were identified:

- Increased anti-social behaviour calls associated with young people and alcohol
- Increased concerns over the health and wellbeing of young people
- Increased vulnerability in young people
- Increases in fear of crime within local communities

The project adopted a holistic approach involving young people, retailers, parents and adults in the community, putting the community at the heart of the solutions. The project worked collaboratively to reduce the supply of alcohol through engagement, education and enforcement.

The media campaign focussed on raising awareness about proxy purchasing and was supported by alcohol awareness inputs to schools, and engagement with retailers. Following the awareness raising campaign known hot spots were targeted and enforcement measures taken where offences were identified.

## Activities

The project engaged with seven secondary schools to provide alcohol education. Through this engagement, tactics deployed to coerce adults to purchase alcohol on behalf of the young people were identified and used to inform the media campaign.

Pavement adverts and campaign messages were placed in key hotspot areas and outside problem premises to highlight that purchasing alcohol was an offence.



The project adopted a collaborative approach with partners contributing as follows:

- Trading Standards visited every retailer reminding them of their responsibilities relevant to the sale of alcohol, distributed partnership literature and conducted follow up retailer visits when offences were detected.
- Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership –co-ordinated and funded the project and provided executive support to the group.
- STORY UK – provided the innovative advertising campaign using clean street graffiti, eye-catching visuals and the management of the social media campaign that registered over 60,000 Facebook hits.
- Weber Shandwick –provided PR support and co-ordinated the official launch, ensuring the campaign remained focused with regular press releases.
- Police Scotland - engaged with young people on the dangers associated with alcohol, undertook a co-ordinated approach to detecting offences and reporting to the Procurator Fiscal.
- Procurator Fiscal - offered commitment that all reported offences would be dealt with through summary proceedings rather than the previous disposal option of a set fixed penalty fine.

## Outcomes

84 licensing offences were detected as selling to under aged young people, violence was reduced by 30%, alcohol related youth disorder dropped by 21%, antisocial behaviour fell by 13% and reports of street drinking were down 53%.

The creative use of street art graffiti prompted positive comments from the community, however, what was not expected was a call from a local retailer whose premises was identified as a 'hotspot' complaining that someone had vandalised the pavement in front of his shop with an art stencil.

A 17 year old who attempted to buy alcohol when caught replied 'I normally get someone to jump in but nobody's prepared to do it because of this stupid campaign'.

The girls who travelled five miles to a neighbouring town to try and get alcohol because nobody in their area was prepared to buy them drink. Unfortunately for them, they were still caught and given a free 'taxi ride' home to their parents courtesy of Police Scotland.

## Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

Changing the attitude of local retailers was a key factor in the project. Previously their 'defence' would be that they were selling alcohol legally to adults and that they could not be responsible for what the adult subsequently did with it. Retailers commented that the project was supportive rather than 'castigating' of the trade and throughout the project retailers increasingly reported young people outside their premises trying to coerce adults to purchase alcohol on their behalf.

Previous campaigns had failed to provide long term solutions and were unsustainable. This project aimed to increase public awareness and promote positive engagement encouraging sustainability by empowering communities and business owners.

## Resources

A budget of £30,000 was provided by the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership, which covered marketing and media costs and funding for additional police patrols.

The 350 additional funded police hours were matched by Police Scotland providing a further 350 hours to ensure the initiative was being adequately resourced.

Although there was no specific funding provided by the North Lanarkshire Partnership they contributed by offering free advertising space and allowing the free town centre Wi-Fi network connection to default to the project image.

## Practice Note Information

Practice Note Title:	You're asking for it?
Practice Note No:	PN74
Date Produced:	August 2016

## Contact Information

Organisation:	Police Scotland
Contact Name:	Alistair Anderson
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:Alistair.Anderson@scotland.pnn.police">Alistair.Anderson@scotland.pnn.police</a>
Address:	Wishaw Police Station, Stewarton St, Wishaw ML2 8AG