

community alcohol project

**The Mid Devon
Community Alcohol
Partnership**



First Year Activity Report

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Devon County Council Trading Standards Service*

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Current Partners & Affiliates

[Devon County Council](#)

[Mid Devon District Council](#)

[Devon & Cornwall Constabulary Police](#)

The Retail of Alcohol Standards Group ([RASG](#))

Mid Devon [Doorwatch Scheme](#)

Mid Devon [Pubwatch Scheme](#)

In the UK there are an estimated:

- 3.5 million children aged 11-17 who have consumed alcohol
- 1.5 million children aged 11-17 who drink alcohol weekly
- 630,000 children aged 11-17 who drink more than once a week

10,000 children aged 11-17 are admitted to hospital each year as a result of their alcohol consumption (6,000 aged 11-15 and 4,000 aged 16-17)

Guidance on the consumption of alcohol by children and young people. Chief Medical Officer - December 2009

Background

In February 2010, Devon County Council Trading Standards Service proposed a pilot project, to create a Community Alcohol Partnership in an area of Devon. Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs) bring together local retailers, trading standards, police, health, education and other local stakeholders to tackle the problem of underage drinking and associated anti-social behaviour. CAPs are endorsed by the Home Office. What started as a pilot in Cambridgeshire is now being developed in a wide range of locations throughout the country..

The aim was to follow the principles of the Community Alcohol Partnership model using the Community Alcohol Partnership toolkit (see appendix), but modifying it to suit the needs of the chosen pilot area. Trading Standards discussed this project with various alcohol and community safety partnership groups and Mid Devon was chosen as the pilot. This was based on a range of factors including data on young people's use of alcohol, anti social behaviour, concerns about usage of fake or fraudulent identification and problems relating to under aged sales.



Aims and Objectives

The partnership's key objectives were to;

- Give retailers more confidence in dealing with under age purchase attempts,
- Make young people more aware of the potential harms of alcohol, and;
- Improve the perception of Mid Devon as a safer place to go out at night.

In addition, project objectives also included the following:

- Consult with the licensed trade, or their suitable representatives, across Mid Devon and build a relationship with them.
- Consult with the local community in relation to general alcohol related problems.
- Highlight alcohol related problems in Mid Devon and to devise practical solutions to begin resolving them. The project will include developing standardisation in the areas of ID usage and acceptance, and licensee training in effective prevention of under age sales.
- Commit resources to the pilot for one year minimum, to enable an effective estimate of benefits to be recorded.
- No significant increase in enforcement costs

Initial Activity Benchmarking Exercise

The strategies employed through the Community Alcohol Partnership model use a combination of intelligence, education, business support and community involvement.

At the start of the project a survey of local retailers of alcohol revealed high confidence in dealing with under age sales - 86% were very confident and 14% were moderately confident.

Trading Standards and Police then undertook test purchasing operations across Mid Devon in August / September 2010, asking young volunteers between the ages of 14-16 to attempt to purchase alcohol under their supervision. Unfortunately, from 59 attempts,

Mid Devon Licensing Manager, Marjory Parish -

“At the beginning we knew that local licence holders were unsure about what I.D they should accept from young people: many of them only accepted driving licences and passports as proof of age. Not every person has these, and anyway it's not ideal carrying passports on a night out! Less than two thirds of them accepted PASS cards – the government backed Proof of Age Scheme. Some licence holders were turning away potential customers because of fear of getting it wrong and incurring penalties or even losing their licence”

34% of the pubs, clubs and restaurants targeted sold alcohol to these young people. This is above the Devon average of 20-25% failures previously recorded in this type of operation. 15% of shops and 48% of pubs and clubs sold alcohol to our underage test purchasers. This indicated that there was a very real gap in perception between businesses' confidence in their ability to avoid illegal sales and the reality, evidenced by the relatively high proportion of such sales made during the test purchasing exercise.

A Non-Enforcement Approach

Businesses making repeat illegal sales of alcohol to young people may be subject to formal enforcement action, including fixed penalty notices, prosecution and licence reviews. However, for the purposes of the CAP, regulatory partners were determined to work with businesses, where possible, to try and find alternative, non-enforcement approaches that would yield sustainable results. These included:

- Follow Up Support – All failing premises received a follow up visit from Trading Standards/Licensing Officers where they received support and guidance to enable their staff to refuse the sale of alcohol with confidence. Each licensee received a copy of the Trading Standards CD Rom “No Proof of Age, No Sale”, Toolkit A survey was also used to record their views on the issue of preventing underage sales.
- Training – The partnership developed a training programme for all Mid Devon licensees. Focused on understanding the law and on adopting practical strategies for avoiding illegal sales, it had two objectives. Firstly, it was designed to build on best practice and improve business systems designed to prevent illegal sales (and record/monitor attempted purchases by young people). Secondly, it was designed to promote acceptance of only three forms of proof of age (ID); Driving Licence, Passport or PASS (Proof of Age Standards Scheme- <http://www.pass-scheme.org.uk/>) card, and provide the confidence for staff to refuse alcohol sales to minors. So far the project has trained 170 Mid Devon licensees and their staff, including those selling alcohol from village halls, pubs, clubs, shops and supermarkets. Use of the “No Proof of Age, No Sale”, Toolkit was also a key component of this process.

Dealing With Fake IDs

Under the CAP an ID “bailment” pilot scheme, was introduced in the Tiverton area specifically to address an area of concern for the local retail trade and door staff - the use of fake or “borrowed” forms of identification.

As part of the scheme, door staff, if presented with proof of age they feel is not genuine, can take it, provide the holder with a receipt and then pass it to the police. The owner is then required to visit the police station to retrieve the document, during which time it can be checked and verified. It will be returned only if it is genuine and belongs to that individual.

Twenty nine suspect IDs have so far been seized by door staff in Mid Devon under this scheme, including one stolen Passport. So far none have been reclaimed from the Police.

This scheme has now won national recognition.

*Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Licensing Officer, Mike Sais*

“This scheme seems to be working well, a stolen passport has been recovered and a number of driving licences used by people other than the owners, none of whom have returned to claim them.”

This scheme was “highly commended” at the recent Responsible Drink Retailing Annual awards in London. The Director of PASS particularly singled out the innovative partnership work carried out between enforcement agencies and local Pubwatch and Doorwatch schemes. This scheme is now recommended as an example of best practice in the new Home Office guidance on dealing with fake IDs.

Business Involvement: A Retail Focus Emphasising Local and National Partners

Our partnership includes both small local businesses and the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group (RASG) who represent a large proportion of the national retail trade and also provided assistance in setting-up and developing the scheme in Mid Devon.

The RASG is a group of national alcohol retailers who meet to exchange best practice and to co-operate to reduce the incidence of illegal alcohol sales.

In November 2010 CAP organised an alcohol retailers meeting, which was attended by large retailers and local independents. There was interest in progressing the CAP objectives within Mid Devon. This, combined with the retailer training, has developed a firm and effective working partnership between agencies and local businesses, producing benefits which include increased levels of local intelligence.

Working in partnership provides the CAP with access to many opportunities, including further development of retailer training resources, tackling 'proxy' sellers (adults who buy alcohol for children) and joint promotion of the scheme and its key messages.

An action plan for phase 2 of the partnership will be developed and agreed at a future partnership meeting.

Bob Cartmel, chair of CREDITON PubWatch and licensee of the Mitre in CREDITON:

“This is a fantastic idea that will really help licensed premises in Mid Devon”

Neil Atkins, chair of TIVERTON PubWatch licensee of the White Horse, TIVERTON

“We’re really pleased that the Council is supporting the licensed trade in this way, and it’s helpful that they are working with the police and Trading Standards”.

Community Engagement

The CAP seeks greater practical involvement from the wider community to make neighbourhoods safer and cleaner, particularly in respect of night-time economy, which in turn helps economic regeneration in localities. In order to gain some input from local communities on their perception of alcohol related problems (and to add to intelligence from enforcement agencies), CAP commissioned a survey in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton. The survey took place in late 2010 and there were 199 responses.

Main Findings;

- 35% of respondents either agreed, or strongly agreed, that drunken behaviour was a problem in their town/village.
- This figure fell to 29% when the question related to under 18's drunken behaviour.
- More respondents felt that drunken behaviour was a problem in their area compared to Anti Social Behaviour
- Nearly half of respondents felt that their town/village was not a safe and social place in the evening and at weekends, due to alcohol related problems.

Respondents complained about young people drinking, but also mentioned disorder or noise from pubs, specifically during late closing and weekends.

When questioned as to what improvements they wanted to see, responses included; more police, cleaning up the litter, fining offenders, more facilities for young people, adjusting licensing hours and being strict on sellers of alcohol including supermarkets. When asked what initiatives they knew of in their locality to prevent alcohol related crime, most respondents either didn't know, or indicated that the police dealt with these issues. The survey results highlight future challenges for the partnership.

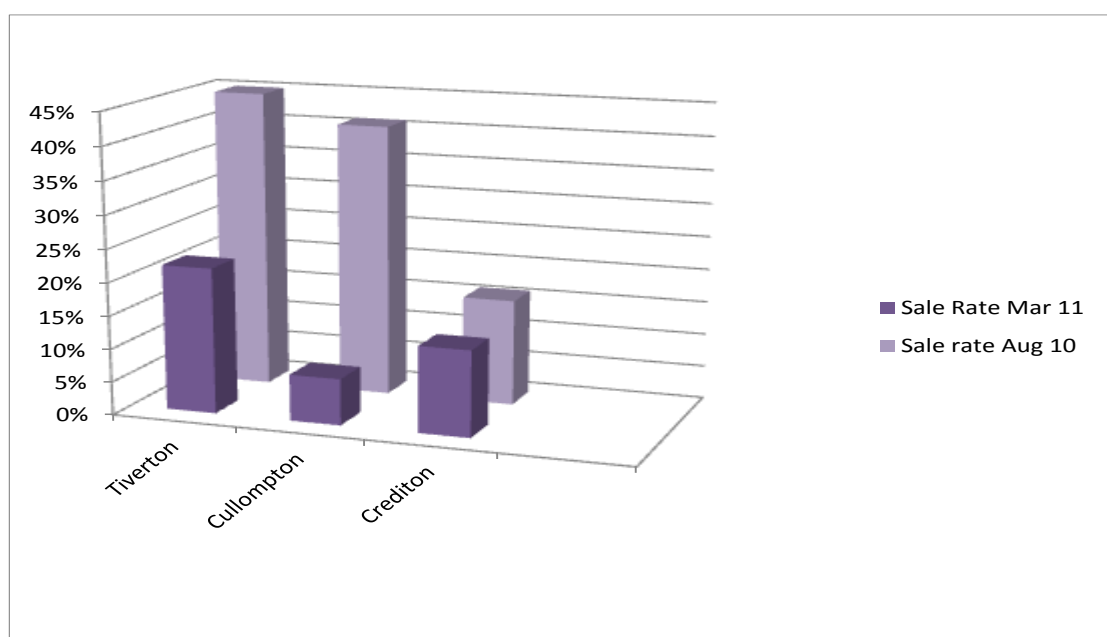
*Devon and Cornwall
Constabulary East and Mid
Devon LPA Commander,
Superintendent Paul Davies*

"This project is an excellent example of where agencies can work together to improve our community. Each organisation has committed to reducing the risks, harm, and disorder associated with irresponsible drinking, and the first year of the project has been a real success. Every agency that has contributed is determined to make these improvements sustainable, there has been some excellent work throughout the last year, and we hope the public have noticed the benefit".

Improvements following CAP Initiatives

Following CAP activity, a second round of test purchasing operations was conducted in March 2011. The comparison in results (see below) showed a significant drop in the number of test purchase failures. In August and September 2010, prior to the CAP, 59 attempts at purchase were made and 20 illegal sales resulted. Following the CAP initiatives, in March 2011, a similar exercise was carried out, where 53 attempts at purchase were made but in this instance only 7 illegal sales resulted.

Illegal sales of alcohol to young people, compared to attempts (test purchasing operations):



- **Overall the illegal sales rate following CAP interventions has dropped from 34% to 14%**
- **Pub/Club illegal sales dropped from 48% to 13%**

Action plans were put in place for repeat offenders or premises where specific issues were identified. One premises in Mid Devon, which had given the partnership and its local area major cause for concern, voluntarily relinquished its licence after partnership interventions. Further test purchasing in July 2011, focussed on problem premises in the Tiverton area, and no illegal sales were made (6 premises). These are significant improvements following only 6 months of targeted activity by the partnership.

Costs

CAPs are designed to be low cost and resourced through partner contributions

The CAP used partner resources where possible, including the community survey which was commissioned through the Consultation Department of Mid Devon District Council.

Detailed plans for phase 2 have yet to be agreed by the partnership. Those requiring resourcing could include;

- Developing promotional and educational material on issues around alcohol and young people, targeted at schoolchildren, young adults and parents. The RASG have currently agreed to supply some funding for this particular area.
- Promotional materials for retailers supporting the partnership.
- The development of a responsible retailer scheme as part of the CAP.
- Further sustainable training options for retailers and their employees.

Despite the current financial challenges, the partnership remains committed to ensuring projects meet the partnerships objectives, represent a high return on resource investment and are appropriately targeted to produce maximum impact.

In 2009/10 Devon Trading Standards carried out alcohol test purchases at 108 licensed premises. Sales were made in 22% of cases – representing a 12% drop in the rate from 2008/9

What's Next?

The following are some of the proposed objectives for the next phase of the Mid Devon CAP project;

- Identifying potential resources to further develop CAP in Mid Devon and roll out the project to other District Council areas.
- Developing Partnerships – Furthering our relationship with local businesses and inviting further input from those who work with young people in local communities.
- Working with young people – Mainly through schools and colleges, bringing home the message of the health, legal and social consequences of under-age drinking.
- Retailer accreditation scheme – Promoting responsible alcohol retailing in Mid Devon, particularly encouraging the use of a robust age verification scheme.
- Public Perception – Responding to the findings of the community survey to improve communities' perception of Mid Devon as a safe and social place to be in the evening and at weekends.
- Test Purchasing – Targeted at problem premises .
- Promotion – To promote the benefits of CAP to local communities, businesses and regulators

The Mid Devon CAP are committed to continuing their work, providing a sustainable base on which to further reduce alcohol related harms affecting young people in Mid Devon.

Devon County Council Trading Standards Service, Operations Manager Peter Greene

“The evidence of the test purchasing activity clearly indicates a significant fall in the number of illegal sales of alcohol following the CAP initiatives. This shows what can be achieved when regulators and businesses work together in local communities, with shared commitment and objectives. The challenge now for the CAP is to maintain and further develop the partnership to ensure these improvements are sustained”

Your Input

The partnership welcomes input and feedback on the project from local communities, businesses and organisations, particularly in relation to how the project can be improved.

Contacts

On the Mid Devon website there is a CAP page and we also have an email address where anyone – trade or public may send us licensing queries which we will deal with. The CAP page may be found at www.middevon.gov.uk/communityalcoholproject and the email address is cap@middevon.gov.uk.

Or Contact:

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Trading Standards Service
Tel: 01271 388136
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community alcohol project

What is CAP?

A Project in Mid Devon to tackle underage drinking and sales of age-restricted products.

What are we doing?



Support

To help licence holders and staff to appropriately challenge young people for acceptable ID and to universally accept PASS cards in Mid Devon.



Enforcement

To continue to confiscate fake and fraudulent ID's, confiscate alcohol from underage drinkers, to take action against those who purchase alcohol for those underage, and to test purchase retailers.



Education

To help and advise young people regarding acceptable forms of ID and to promote the PASS scheme.

MID DEVON
community
alcohol
project



For more information visit

www.middevon.gov.uk/communitysafety

For advice and support on alcohol issues or to report concerns please email cap@middevon.gov.uk or phone **01884 244617 / 8 / 9**