

25/11/2009

Kent Community Alcohol Partnership results

Reduced criminal damage, less people drunk or rowdy in public and increased feelings of safety. Those are the results of the **Kent Community Alcohol Partnership** that has been piloted in three areas of the county and mean that it will now be rolled out to four new areas.

An evaluation carried out by the University of Kent has shown positive results for the project. In the pilot areas criminal damage was down by 28%, people drunk or rowdy in public was down by 3% and overall feelings of safety were up by 4%.

The Kent Community Alcohol Partnership has been running since March this year in Edenbridge, Canterbury and Thanet and is now the largest partnership of its kind in the UK. It has brought together local authorities with retailers to reduce the impact of under-age drinking for young people and the communities they live in.

It is being run by Kent County Council's [Kent Trading Standards](#) working closely with Kent Police, the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group and Kent district councils, as the licensing authorities. The scheme has used a combination of training for retailers, patrols by police and community wardens, and activities for young people.

Kent's alcohol partnership includes a new accreditation scheme for retailers - a UK first, it has been launched as part of the project to help retailers deal with under-age drinks sales. The scheme is being launched as a visible sign in communities to show that shops, bars and clubs are working to try and change attitudes to alcohol.

Traders in the partnership areas who want to be accredited need to commit to stringent checks for alcohol sales that include asking anyone who appears to be under 21, or preferably under 25, for proof of age. In return, retailers have access to support and training from the partnership as well as a window sticker to show that they are a responsible trader. Retailers who have already signed up to be accredited in the pilot areas include retail giants Sainsburys, Tesco, Co-Op and Marks and Spencer.

The success of the project means that it will now be extended to four new areas in Kent: Heron ward (Herne Bay) and Whitstable Cliftonville West and Margate Central Maidstone High Street Swanley town centre.

Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Community Services, Mike Hill, said: "The results of this pilot scheme are excellent news for communities in Kent. Under-age drinking is a cultural issue that will not be solved overnight, but we are taking very positive steps towards reducing the impact of alcohol on young people and the areas in which they live."

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Chief Constable of Kent Police, Michael Fuller, said: “Kent Police works closely with Trading Standards and other key partners and retailers in the Kent Community Alcohol Partnership. One of our main priorities is tackling violence in the night time economy, often caused by excessive alcohol consumption. Problems with alcohol link into many of our priorities, including anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and drink driving.

“We are pleased to support this scheme in raising awareness of the issues of under-age drinking, binge drinking and those who buy alcohol for under-age drinkers. It is important that we reduce the impact of under-age or excessive drinking in the community and we will work with partners, retailers and young people to achieve this.

Chairman of the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group, Nick Grant, is also pleased with the results of the partnership. He added:”The results of this pilot scheme are excellent and demonstrate what can be achieved when local enforcement agencies work in partnership with retailers to curb under-age purchase of alcohol. Challenge 25 is already widely in use by retailers and the accreditation scheme will reinforce the work we are doing together to change the culture around alcohol.”

Retailers or communities interested in the scheme can contact Kent Trading Standards on 08458 247 247 or by e-mail: KCAP@kent.gov.uk

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