



Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



Age Restricted Products Responsible Trader Scheme

The Background

The Responsible Retailers Scheme was developed by Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service as part of its ongoing program of business advice. This new initiative is aimed at providing all retailers with the tools they need to comply with laws regarding age restricted products.

Trading Standards developed the scheme as a way of working with retailers to try and reduce sales of these products to under age youngsters.

As a result, a pack has been produced to give retailers and their employees clear information on the law and also advice on good practice measures that should be adopted to prevent such sales taking place.

This scheme operates alongside other initiatives involving local schools. These will not only tackle health education on smoking and drinking but will also encourage young people themselves to get involved in addressing the issues.

Retailers, who sign up to the Responsible Retailers Scheme and meet the criteria outlined, will be awarded a certificate to display at their premises. Together with other promotional material provided, this will show customers and other traders that they are supporting this valuable community project.

How to be a responsible retailer - requirements for best practice

Putting some or all of these measures in place will help a retailer demonstrate that they are taking "all reasonable precautions and exercising all due diligence". This is what the courts would look at should a sale take place. What is "reasonable" will be different for a small business than for a large national chain. A responsible trader should:-

- Ensure all staff must understand the law in these areas. They will need training to help them. This should be done on a regular basis. New staff must be trained before being involved in the sale of age restricted products. Keep a record of any training or updates. This pack is a good start.
- Keep a refusal register. This records details of any sales you refuse and the name of staff involved. It shows diligence. It can also act as a deterrent to young people attempting to buy. Refusal sheets are included our pack.
- Implement a policy of not selling to anyone wearing a school uniform.

- Do not sell to anyone you suspect of buying on behalf of underage youngsters. You are perfectly at liberty to do this even if they are old enough to buy.
- Ensure senior staff and managers give support and back up to staff who decide to refuse a sale.
- Have a policy of "No proof of age - no sale" is sensible. Encourage staff to ask for proof of age for all customers who appear to be under the age of 21. Ensure staff all know what proof of age is acceptable, preferably this should be some form of photo ID card.
- Use till prompts at the point of sale. This can be a scanned bar code message, stickers, or posters.
- Ensure that owners / managers / area managers regularly check the statutory signs are displayed, the training records and refusals logs are maintained and support staff who refuse sales. It is good practice to keep records of these checks.

Brent & Harrow Trading Standards are very active in enforcing the laws which are aimed at preventing illegal sales to young people eg cigarettes, alcohol, knives, fireworks, lottery tickets, solvents and videos. We work to stop under age sales in a number of ways including test purchasing surveys using young volunteers and by prosecuting offenders. We also work closely with the police and have carried out a number of government sponsored initiatives over the past few years.

Members of the Brent & Harrow scheme will receive will be supplied with a sticker to display their shop to show customers and young people they belong to the scheme. This should be displayed in a prominent position to discourage attempts to purchase by underage people.

The Trading Standards Service enforces the following legislation which relates to age restricted goods.

Type of goods	Age restriction
Cigarettes and tobacco	18 years of age
Butane gas lighter fuel	18 years of age
Knives	18 years of age
Alcohol	18 years of age
Fireworks	18 years of age
Solvents	18 years of age
Spray Paint	16 years of age
Lottery tickets/scratch cards	16 years of age
Videos (depending upon certificate)	12, 15 and 18 years of age
Air Weapons	18 years of age

Traders must not serve any of the above products to a person who has not reached the required age.

There are more restrictions on the sale of some of the above goods, for example, Videos should be clearly marked with their classification symbol. The video box should also display the symbol on its largest face and on the spine, and the symbol and explanatory statement should be displayed on the other largest face of the box.

Cigarettes must be sold in their original packaging, you must never split a pack and sell them as single items.