

# Age Restricted Sales Newsletter

Summer 2009



## New figures: Tobacco and Alcohol

Too many young people are buying tobacco before they are legally old enough. Sales of tobacco to young volunteers increased to 23% after the legal age to purchase went up to 18 in October 2007. Tests in 2008/09 showed some improvement, with illegal sales falling to 18%, but we need your help to reduce this still further.

Alcohol sales from shops is also at 16%, so nearly one in five volunteers who are no older than 16 are

able to purchase. Most stores follow 'Challenge 21' policies, and should be asking our volunteers for photo ID.

With new penalties, there are likely to be serious consequences for making two or three sales. This is the time to make sure you are taking all reasonable precautions.

Some Trading Standards authorities work with the Police in pubs and clubs. Under age Alcohol sales at 36% are too prevalent here.

*When we receive concerns about specific outlets, we use young volunteers to test compliance with the law. Here's a summary of tests carried out in the region this year.*

	Number of tests	Number of sales	% of sales
Alcohol (Total)	1847	322	17%
Alcohol (Off licences)	1680	262	16%
Alcohol (On licences)	167	60	36%
Tobacco	675	121	18%
Tobacco vending machines	68	44	65%
Fireworks	139	11	8%
Spray paints	30	5	17%
Knives	289	73	25%
Videos/DVDs/PC Games	0	0	0
Solvents/Butanes	17	6	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3065</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>19%</b>

For your chance to  
**win £100**  
see centre pages!

This newsletter is being distributed to all retailers who sell age restricted goods across the south east of England. Please circulate it amongst your staff to complement training and reduce the risks of sales to young people.





Remember to fill in our feedback form

## Be vigilant with vending machines!

In our tests, 65% of young people were able to purchase cigarettes from these machines. If you have a vending machine, position it where staff can monitor who is using it, and always 'Challenge 21'.

Machine providers and publicans all need to play their part in reducing the use of these machines by young people.

## Say no to knives, spray paint and solvents

Knives, cans of spray paint and solvents are still purchased by young people far too easily. However, firework sales to young people in the last four years have always been under 10%, as this table shows:

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
	%	%	%
Alcohol	25%	24%	16%
Tobacco	12%	17%	23%
Fireworks	7%	4%	7%
Spray paints	37%	33%	34%
Knives	17%	21%	26%
Videos/DVDs	31%	0%	29%
Solvents/Butanes	22%	18%	24%

**Trading Standards officers and businesses have a common goal in reducing sales of age-restricted products to young people. We appreciate the efforts most stores make and are aware of how difficult this can be.**

## Why some staff don't challenge underage purchases

Common factors in the sale of age restricted products to young people include:

- The biggest single cause of under-age sales is lack of eye contact and interaction between the seller and customer. In tests where there was no such interaction, 92% of attempts resulted in a sale to a person under 18. Staff should greet customers and always make eye contact – not only will it help to stop sales to young people, it's also great customer service.
- The seller is not confident challenging customers for ID. Training for staff, large signs on display and badges can all help improve confidence when staff are asking to see ID.
- Staff are unaware of what forms of ID are acceptable. Read on for help on what cards retailers should be accepting.

35% of costs for all Accident and Emergency visits (and ambulance journeys) are alcohol related.

# ID – Are you asking for it?

How often do you or your staff ask for and check ID? Valid identification is an important tool in reducing sales of age restricted products and by not asking for it, you run the risk of selling to young people.

Adopt a 'Challenge 21' policy, or you could even decide to challenge people up to 25 years old.

Remember the rule 'No ID, No Sale'. The best form of photo ID are PASS approved cards, which are widely available, and passports or driving licences.

Check ID carefully and ask yourself:

- Does the card have the PASS hologram?
- Is the person in front of you the same as in the photograph?

- Has the card been altered in any way?
- What does the card say? Be suspicious of cards that say 'National Identity Card' or 'European Identity Card'.

Be confident in asking for ID and refusing a sale if someone does not have it. Challenge customers early and take hold of the products whilst they are producing identification.

Thanks to Citizencard for their support. Free 'No ID, No Sale' retailer packs are available from them, go to [www.noidnosale.com/index.php](http://www.noidnosale.com/index.php)



Alcohol is costing the NHS £2.7 billion per year.



These PASS approved cards are widely available:



Please ensure your staff are confident to ask for ID. Looks can be deceptive - The ages for the young people in the photo are left to right 19, 14, 16, 20, 15. All should be asked for ID.





# Test purchasing: **Your questions answered**

26% of people drink more than the recommended safe levels of alcohol.

Using under-age volunteers to test purchase age restricted products is part of the work we do to improve compliance with the law.

## **Why test purchase?**

Trading Standards has responsibility for enforcing laws relating to the sale of a range of age restricted products. The laws exist to protect young people and their communities.

Tests are to check businesses are complying with the law. The tests can find weaknesses in systems which can be addressed and improved, and can result in legal actions such as fixed penalty notices, licence reviews or prosecutions.

## **Are the tests fair?**

Everything is done to ensure that the tests are as fair as possible. A national best practice guide is followed. It ensures that volunteers are significantly underage, they do not wear excessive make up, will not be jangling car keys and will not have over 18 ID.

Test purchasing is nearly always done after complaints and allegations from a variety of sources, often after an advisory visit.

Trading Standards Officers are actively involved in helping

businesses with best practice. If you need any advice or information, please contact us.

## **What more can you do?**

*Ask yourself the following questions to work out whether you could be doing more to prevent underage sales:*

**How often do staff receive underage sales training?** It is not only new staff who should get good training in underage sales. Updates for current staff should be provided. Staff returning to work, such as students, should be refreshed.

**When did you last refresh your training materials?**

**Are you displaying warning and deterrent posters?** You could display posters at the entrance to your store, adjacent to age restricted products and at the tills.

**Do you and your staff know which Age ID cards are acceptable?** See page 3 for more information.

**Are you making best use of technology?** Till prompts, electronic refusals registers and CCTV can all help you.

**Has a test purchase been conducted in your store?** You may have been visited and passed – check with your local authority to find out and to get more advice. Some authorities send you a well

done letter. We are trying to widen this practice. Some stores do their own testing using young looking 18 year olds.

### Quick wins:

- Circulate this newsletter, especially to your trainers and counter staff

- Discuss underage sales with staff, especially before school holidays, when young people will have more free time
- Encourage staff to talk to customers
- Keep recording all refused sales in your refusals log.



22,000  
premature  
deaths caused by  
alcohol per year.

# Driving down underage drinking

16% of stores sold alcohol to our under-age test purchasers across the south east this year. This is an excellent improvement on earlier years' results of 24% and 25% but we want to see the rate falling even further in the coming years.

Most shops adopt a 'Challenge 21' policy, so our volunteers should be refused all the time.

We still receive a large number of reports that young people are able to buy alcohol and drink it in recreational areas. Most offences of selling to volunteers are dealt with by an £80 fixed penalty notice. Some warning letters are sent and occasionally the licence review process is used. If the offence is more serious or has been committed before, you may be taken to court.

Research suggests that there is still a big problem with older people,

including parents, buying alcohol for young people. It is an offence for adults to buy alcohol for anyone under 18 and they could receive an £80 fixed penalty notice or a fine of up to £5,000 if caught. This part of

**UNDER 25?**  
Please be prepared to show proof of age when buying alcohol

Acceptable forms of ID:  
• Cards bearing the PASS hologram  
• Photographic Driving Licence  
• Passport

DRINKAWARE.CO.UK

the Act is enforced by the police.

The Home Office has just launched a new consultation paper on selling alcohol responsibly that proposes a new code of practice for retailers, pubs and clubs plus a small number of mandatory licence conditions.

Drink Aware –  
[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)



Advertising cigarettes on TV has been banned since 1965

# Tobacco in focus

A new tobacco control strategy is on the way and new sanctions have been introduced. So it is very much in your interests to get tobacco sales right.

## The facts about tobacco:

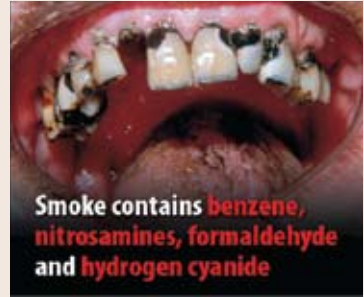
Tobacco can only be sold to those aged 18 or over. This includes tobacco papers but not matches and lighters.

The member of staff selling the tobacco and the proprietor of the outlet could face a fine of up to £2,500. If there are three sales in two years, the shop and seller can be banned from selling tobacco.

An A3 size Statutory Tobacco Notice like the one below must be displayed prominently.

Cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco must be fiscal marked 'UK Duty Paid'.

All tobacco products must carry the correctly worded health warnings



such as 'Smoking Kills' and from 1 October 2009 all cigarette packs must carry picture warnings.

Only one A5 size tobacco advertisement is allowed at the point-of-sale gantry. No other adverts are allowed in or outside the premises.

Tobacco vending machines could be banned in the near future and tobacco displays in shops could disappear after 2011.

## Trading Standards Officers and tobacco control

With funding from the Department of Health, we're working to improve people's health by reducing the supply and availability of tobacco. We have:

- Carried out over 700 test purchases
- Provided advice to poorly-performing businesses
- Monitored shopping channels and internet auction sites for illegal advertising

**It is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18**

- Worked with Customs Officers to check for the sale of counterfeit or illicit tobacco
- Scrutinised cigarette vending machines, especially in pubs
- Checked that packs are displaying the correct pictorial warnings.

For more information visit [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)



For the past decade, eliminating premature death and disease caused by tobacco use has been a foremost public health priority. During this time, smoking prevalence rates have declined and a range of new legislation, policies and initiatives have encouraged and assisted smokers to quit as well as discouraging young people from starting. Smoking rates in England now sit at around 21%.

However, more still needs to be done, with just over 80,000 smoking related deaths a year – this is still the biggest preventable cause of death. In particular, focus must be maintained on preventing the



recruitment of new young smokers and reducing the health inequalities caused by smoking.

In 2008, the Government consulted a wide range of organisations on the 'Future of Tobacco Control in England'. A new national tobacco control strategy is now being developed to further reduce smoking rates. The new strategy will be published later in 2009, and will include ways to:

- Reduce smoking rates throughout all communities
- Reduce smoking during pregnancy
- Reduce smoking uptake by young people
- Raise awareness of the dangers of smoking
- Promote the support that is available to quit through NHS Stop Smoking Services
- Develop local activities to implement comprehensive tobacco control, including work with Trading Standards and Environmental Health
- Work in partnership with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to tackle the problem of illicit cigarettes and tobacco.

For more information on tobacco control activity in the South East, contact Jo Locker, Regional Tobacco Policy Manager -

[joanne.locker@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.locker@dh.gsi.gov.uk)



Each year it is estimated 200,000 children try smoking cigarettes



Over 50% of hand rolling tobacco is illicit

## Help stop smuggling – it damages business

A national network of teams to target illicit fuel and tobacco and alcohol smuggling has been launched by HMRC. Illicit tobacco smuggling means that up to £3bn in tax is lost every year that would otherwise be spent on essential public services.

Tobacco, alcohol and fuel smuggling creates a cheap and unregulated supply operated by criminals. This damages honest businesses, whose trade is reduced when smugglers undercut them by evading tax.

The HMRC teams will tackle illicit tobacco and alcohol distributed through unlawful channels and in the retail sector:

Those who are caught trading in illicit products will face a wide range of penalties and sanctions as well as confiscation of their stock.

Anyone with information about smuggled tobacco, alcohol or fuel should call 0800 595000, email [customs.hotline@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customs.hotline@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk) or visit the secure hotline webpage at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/customs-hotline](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/customs-hotline),



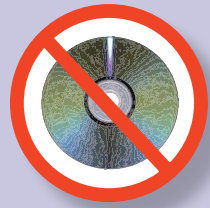
The maximum fine for selling spray paint to U16's is £2500

## Spray paints

Aerosol paint cans are used by some young people to spread graffiti onto buildings. It is very costly to clean this up and adds to the council tax bill. It is illegal to sell spray paints to anyone under 16 years of age; make sure you apply similar precautions as you would

for all age restricted products. Sales in the region this year are at 16.6% and we would like them to go down further.

# DVDs and video games



These have been low on our priorities; no tests were done this year. A recent consultation by the Department of Culture, Media and

Sport has been carried out and as a result we will be carrying out some tests this year to assess compliance.

# Knives

With more attention on young people carrying knives and the often horrifying consequences that accompany this, it is inevitable there will be more focus on sales of knives in the future. Some police forces across the UK have received funding to combat this growing problem and some test purchasing will be done. Our tests this year have shown quite high sales levels of around 25% – these need to be reduced.

It is illegal to sell knives and knife blades to anyone aged under 18. The ban also extends to razor blades, axes and any other article that has a blade or is sharply pointed and which is made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person.

The sale of knives and blades should be treated seriously. Can your knife display be better positioned and under greater supervision?

Make sure you brief your staff, update training and use the same precautions as with alcohol and tobacco.

To keep up to date on the government campaign 'It Doesn't Have to Happen', which provides education materials and facts on knife crime; visit

[www.crimereducation.homeoffice.gov.uk/stopknifecrime/](http://www.crimereducation.homeoffice.gov.uk/stopknifecrime/)



1 in 4 shops  
sold knives  
when tested  
by young  
people

For your chance to  
**win £100**  
see centre pages!



# Education update



Alcohol related hospital admissions went up by 80,000 last year.

Educating young people about the dangers of underage products helps reduce future demand and pressures on your staff. Here's a sample of what's been going on:

- The stop smoking charity, QUIT, has recently given presentations to school pupils as part of their 'Quit Because' programme. The talks and discussions aim to warn pupils about the dangers of smoking.
- Performances of the 'Last Orders' play have been put on in schools by the Solomon Theatre Company for Year 9 pupils. The plays aim to educate young people on the dangers of drinking and reduce demand for age restricted products. Plays are followed up



Traders in Hailsham after a training session on alcohol and tobacco and young people.

with workshops to discuss the consequences of alcohol misuse.

- Trading Standards Officers have been working with after school groups to warn of the dangers of tobacco and alcohol use. 'Drunk Goggles' have been used to show the practical effects of alcohol on your vision – often with amusing results!



# Solvents

Butane lighter gas can lead to instant death if inhaled. Other substances abused include a wide range of everyday products such as glue, deodorant, hairspray and paints.

Cigarette lighter refills must not be sold to anyone under 18 years of age. You should also be vigilant when young people are purchasing aerosol based products. It is an offence to sell intoxicating substances to anyone under 18 if you reasonably believe that the product will be used for intoxication.

Look for warning signs that someone may be abusing these

products, such as young people with sores around the nose and mouth, frequent or volume sales.

Till prompts and point of sale/ staff reminder stickers will help prevent under age sales. Re-solv are currently in the process of producing some more Solvent Abuse packs available for trade. The packs will include an A5 booklet, A3 poster and an A frame picture to be displayed on the retailers counter.

For more information, go to [www.re-solv.org](http://www.re-solv.org)



49 deaths in 2006 from substance abuse

# Fireworks

Sales of fireworks have had a consistently good compliance rate, this year the figure is 8%. This is great news and we would like to thank you for all your efforts.

You need to be registered (or licenced) to sell fireworks.



97 people were injured by fireworks in 2007. Most were young males

**IT IS ILLEGAL TO SELL ADULT FIREWORKS OR SPARKLERS TO ANYONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18**

**IT IS ILLEGAL FOR ANYONE UNDER 18 TO POSSESS ADULT FIREWORKS IN A PUBLIC PLACE.**

## *Ensuring fair and safe trading throughout the South East*



*Trading Standards South East is a partnership of 19 local authority Trading Standards Services in the South East of England operated by TSEL Ltd, a limited liability company registered in England and Wales.*

*Visit our website:*

**[www.tsse.org.uk](http://www.tsse.org.uk)**

For a copy of this publication in another language or format  
(e.g. large print) email: [underage.sales@hants.gov.uk](mailto:underage.sales@hants.gov.uk)

**If you know stores who do sell age restricted products to young people, let us know, we can help.**

**Phone Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06**