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Launch of the first Kent Community Alcohol Partnership

The largest scheme of its kind in the country was unveiled at Sainsburys in Maidstone on Monday 24 November, to launch the Kent Community Alcohol Partnership aimed at changing attitudes to drinking among young people and supporting retailers to reduce sales of alcohol to underage drinkers.

Kent County Council's Trading Standards officers joined with colleagues from the industry and many other agencies, including Kent Police, the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group which represents major retailers, backed by the Wine and Spirit Trade Association. Together they plan to inform and advise young people on sensible drinking limits and help local communities to tackle alcohol related problems.

On Monday, Maidstone Sainsburys customers were able to talk to Trading Standards officers to give their views on the issues involved in the partnership and enter a prize draw. They were also encouraged to try and guess the ages of a selection of images of young people, showing some of the difficulties faced by retailers. Representatives from Kent Police and the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group were also on hand

Following the launch, the scheme will focus on three key pilot areas in Thanet, Canterbury and Sevenoaks.

Anyone keen to give their views on the issues relating to the sale of alcohol and underage drinking should contact Kent Trading Standards at 08458 247 247 or email trading.standards@kent.gov.uk

KCC Managing Director of Communities [Amanda Honey](#), who was at the launch said: "To reduce underage drinking and to make a difference we need to work together with those who sell alcohol to better understand the problems they face and try to deal with them. The knock-on effects of binge drinking to individuals and local communities can be severe and together we can bring about a change in attitudes and behaviour."

Kent Police Chief Constable Mike Fuller said: "We know that in Kent, in the last financial year, 6046 people were arrested for alcohol related offences and over 400 of these were young people. I am hopeful that by working with our key partners, using not only enforcement but also preventative activity, we can make a positive step towards a change in young people's attitudes towards binge-drinking, and therefore, an improvement in behaviour and a reduction in disorder incidents within our communities."

Kent Trading Standards News Release

Page 2

Chairman of RASG Nick Grant said: “Experience shows that collaboration can help tackle underage drinking and KCAP takes it to the next level, involving local health authorities for the first time to address the health impact of alcohol consumption by young people. We’re delighted to be involved in this partnership and look forward to working together to curb underage alcohol sales and possession.”