

# Partnership campaign to tackle under age and anti-social drinking



A multi-agency initiative to tackle underage drinking and associated problems is being launched in the Capital today, supported by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice.

The East Edinburgh Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) is a campaign to educate the public on the impact alcohol abuse has on our communities.

The initiative, which is the first of its kind in Edinburgh, will focus on the Portobello and Piershill areas of the city, following successful trials elsewhere in the UK.

Agencies including City of Edinburgh Council, Trading Standards and Police Scotland will join local retailers, schools and youth groups to discuss how young people gain access to alcohol and gain a better understanding of the consequences of underage drinking.

A priority for the campaign is reducing the opportunities youths have to purchase alcohol through continued dialogue between alcohol vendors and enforcement agencies.

To assist with this, Scotmid Co-operative and Sainsbury's have agreed to train other licensed stores on responsible selling practises, including the 'Think 25' identification policy and proxy purchasing.

In addition, the East Edinburgh CAP will also deliver alcohol education seminars to parents and children as well as

supporting a range of diversionary activities that promote positive lifestyle choices.

Miles Beale, Chief Executive of Community Alcohol Partnerships said: "I am delighted at the launch of a flagship CAP for Scotland in East Edinburgh. Community Alcohol Partnerships are a tried and tested way of driving down underage drinking and creating better, safer and friendlier neighbourhoods.

"Locally tailored partnerships, which recognise that retailers and licensees are an important part of the solution, have been shown to be highly effective in driving down harm.

"Successful CAPs rely on the support of local stakeholders and the support of the East Edinburgh community will be vital."

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said: "The work of the East Edinburgh CAP will undoubtedly play a huge part in tackling underage drinking and anti-social behaviour and I am delighted that such a wide range of partners are involved.

"Alcohol misuse is a scourge on communities across the country and costs Scotland £3.6 billion a year as well as having a terrible knock-on effect on families and communities.

"Initiatives such as this promote responsible behaviour in young people and deter underage drinking which will all ultimately contribute to a safer, stronger and healthier Scotland."

Superintendent Matt Richards, from Police Scotland Edinburgh Division said: "We are committed to keeping people safe and protecting the young members of our community from harm.

"To reduce underage drinking, 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.

“The East Edinburgh CAP recognises that by working together and with the wider community, including the local youngsters and their parents, everyone can make a difference.”

John Lee from the The Scottish Grocers’ Federation added: “The SGF is delighted to be involved in the East Edinburgh CAP.

“We believe this is a highly innovative approach to tackling alcohol-related problems in our communities. What makes the CAP approach so effective is that it puts retailers at the heart of the partnership and sees them very much as part of the solution.

“This is an outstanding opportunity for local retailers to demonstrate their commitment to responsible retailing and their willingness to work proactively with key agencies in the community.

“Community Safety Leader, Councillor Cammy Day, said: “Underage drinking can cause serious harm to young people and contribute to anti-social behaviour, which affects the community as a whole.

“I am very pleased that retailers are taking a pro-active stance by participating in this initiative and responding to the impact that alcohol can have on communities.

“By working closely with them and with young people, I am confident that the CAP will address this very serious problem and help to create a safer neighbourhood for all local residents to enjoy.”