

Police target alcohol proxy purchases



Police Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council Community Safety Team and staff from Sainsbury's and Scotmid will be out and about talking to independent licensees and customers at off-sales, shops and supermarkets in East Edinburgh tonight to raise awareness of the harm alcohol proxy purchases can have on their community.

The aim of the scheme is to reduce proxy purchases of alcohol – where an adult purchases alcohol and supplies it to young people under the age of 18.

The joint patrols are part of a wider project led by East Edinburgh's Community Alcohol Partnership, a multi-agency partnership set up to reduce underage drinking and associated anti-social behavior. The partnership comprises of Police Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council's Community Safety Officers / Licensing, Health Opportunities Team, Youth Bus Group, Queen Margaret University, Scottish Grocers Federation, Scotmid, Sainsbury's, Community Learning & Development and Scottish Business Resilience Centre.

Supplying alcohol to under-18s is a criminal offence, and those caught could face a £5,000 fine or a prison sentence up to three months. The joint patrols will be talking to customers about the legalities of passing on alcohol to under-18s and the criminal consequences, of what some consider a relatively harmless or minor act despite of the obvious dangers and risks associated with young adults and teenagers drinking.

Constable Mark Pickavance, Chair of East Edinburgh CAP, said: "Proxy alcohol sales for under-18s is an ongoing problem, it

can happen between friends, family members and strangers. Procedures surrounding the sales of alcohol have been significantly strengthened in recent years and young adults and teenagers are placing not only themselves but their older friends, family members and strangers at risk by asking them to break the law in order to fuel a few hours of enjoyment at found at the bottom of a bottle.

“East Edinburgh CAP are asking people to think before buying alcohol for young people. It is an offence to buy alcohol for a someone under 18. By working in partnership we can create a safer, happier and healthier community

Superintendent Matt Richards Police Scotland, said: “Since the launch of the East Edinburgh Community Alcohol Partnership in July 2013, protecting young members of our community from harm remains a focus of Police Scotland. The CAP has helped local officers, along with partners, to better engage with the licensing trade and this has been key to reducing the availability of alcohol to young people. However, we will not become complacent and this initiative focuses on reducing proxy purchases of alcohol – buying alcohol for or supplying alcohol to someone underage is a crime. In raising awareness amongst licensees and customers, and relentlessly pursuing those who supply alcohol to young people, we continue to address the knock-on effects of alcohol misuse in our communities.”

City of Edinburgh Council’s Community Safety Leader, Cllr Cammy Day, said: “Alcohol abuse can cause young people to take more risks than they would when sober and this can lead to anti social behaviour or violence. The Council works regularly with partners such as Police Scotland and NHS Lothian to encourage young people to keep themselves safe.

“People can also help us with this by not buying alcohol for under 18s, which is not only illegal but can have very serious

consequences for the community as a whole.”