

West Area Committee**Bottle tracing and illegal alcohol sales****Background**

Following July's West Area Committee, an agreed area for further development and action was with regard to illegal alcohol sales and the use of bottle tracing in the enforcement of licensing laws and helping to tackle anti social behaviour (ASB).

The Trading Standards Section, with support from Environmental Health, is currently visiting all Off-Licences as part of an education campaign. Licencees are provided with a pack containing information on age related sales, which includes alcohol, tobacco and fireworks. The pack contains information on staff training and the keeping of records for this. It also contains a refusal book to record when sales have been refused, giving evidence that the shop is living up to its responsibilities.

In addition, youth and alcohol related disorder features on both South and West LMAPS. LMAPS is a well established Police and Community Together (PACT) meeting and is held on a five weekly basis. The meeting allows for discussion around current problems relating to youth and alcohol related disorder. Each area will discuss current hot spot areas and individuals which are coming to notice to both the police and partners. Individual action is then formulated and the results are then fed back into the LMAPS process.

Current Activity

Individual complaints are investigated by Trading Standards Officers, initially with a visit to the trader to make them aware an allegation has been made and to remind them of their responsibilities. Further complaints would trigger a more formal approach to the problem with efforts being made to seek a review of the licence or a prosecution.

The Neighbourhood Police Teams feel that bottle tracing is an area for further development as to its feasibility. Inspector Warcup has made contact with the company who manufacture the bottle marking stickers to discuss introducing the scheme in the South and West (neighbourhood policing) areas of Sunderland. Inspector Warcup will lead on this area.

Currently both South and West are dealing with youth and alcohol related disorder via Operation Generals. This involves targeting off licence premises that may be selling alcohol to persons under age and taking positive action with young people causing disorder relating to alcohol consumption.

Due to the short timescales for this operation CSO staff attended off licence premises to mark bottles with UV pens. This would then allow staff, when bottles were seized and discarded, to link them back to individual premises. This however is time consuming for the staff to carry out. As well as seizing

alcohol, officers issued fixed penalty tickets and arrested those persons acting in a drunk and disorderly manner.

Operation Generals was commenced on Friday 21st August and below shows some of the results for Friday 21st August and Saturday 22nd August:

Alcohol seizure - One bottle of vodka, eight bottles of cider, numerous cans of Fosters lager, three bottles of lambrini;

Stops - 29 stop checks;

Items of intelligence - 5 intelligence updates

Marking of Alcohol in local stores. - Max & sons, Boozebusters Etterick Grove; Barnes News, Humbledon Park; Mills, The Broadway; Costcutters, Thorndale Road (6 x Bellabusco, 4 x Cassini); Sanghas, Toronto Road; Clinton Stores; Allendale Road Spar/post office; Gills, Ashdown Road; Kems, Londis Store; Courtney Stores; Pearys News; Mills, Blind Lane; Bargain Booze; Mill Hill Newsagents;

Arrests made in relation to alcohol related youth disorder - 1 male arrest for Drunk and disorderly in Foxcover Lane; 1 female arrest for offence weapon Mineral Line rear of Castle Mews.

Fixed penalty tickets - two adults given fixed penalty tickets for buying alcohol for youths at Bargain Booze, Silksworth - this will also be followed up by the licensing officer.

This operation will continue to run throughout the school holidays and will then be evaluated to see what reduction in alcohol related youth disorder have been achieved. Both teams will also continue to run another operation during October half term.

Others areas which are being developed include using and monitoring of 3G cameras in hot spots involving youth disorder.

Gaps

There is currently a shortage of intelligence of sufficient quality to justify directed surveillance in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

There is a need to run more joint operations between the Police and Trading Standards. Due to the short time scales given this was unable to be accommodated on this occasion, however a problem solving approach involving test purchases will be requested in October 2009 during the next half term holiday.

Proposals

Review: Develop proposals for a retail watch/off watch for premises to contact each other/police when problems arise.

Review: Trading Standards Section to undertake a presentation at all LMAPS meetings to raise awareness of the role of Trading Standards in the control of alcohol related disorder. An 'aide memoire' with Trading Standards' contact

details will be produced for all enforcement partners to assist in intelligence gathering.

Review: A briefing note will be prepared for each Neighbourhood Policing Team in relation to the use of lot marking to trace bottles back to the store that sold them.

Review: Trading Standards Section to investigate complaints on intelligence led basis. Initially a consensual approach to compliance will be sought. If a consensual approach to compliance does not succeed, the Trading Standards Section will seek to review licences. The reviews will promote compliance and assist the detection of offences. Where warranted, in accordance with the Enforcement Policy, traders will face prosecution.

Review: Develop more joint operations between Police and Trading Standards and publicise the results.