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Alcohol sales to underage children falls in North Devon

Devon County Council's Trading Standards Team and Devon and Cornwall Police have praised the efforts of license holders in North Devon to dramatically reduce the sale of alcohol to underage children.

Recent test purchasing exercises carried out in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and Fremington have revealed that underage sales have fallen in the area. Of the twenty premises visited during the operation, only one sold alcohol to the 14 year old volunteer.

Previous checks carried out across Devon found 15% of retail shops and 40% of pubs to have sold alcohol to young people.

Councillor Roger Croad, Devon County Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Trading Standards said: "The message about not selling alcohol to underage children appears to be getting through. It is encouraging to see that licence holders are acting on the advice of Devon County Council's Trading Standards and the Police and are carrying out age checks before making sales to young people.

"With the Christmas period fast approaching we will expect retailers and publicans to continue to be vigilant to prevent the sale of alcohol to children."

PC Paul Daw, Neighbourhood Beat Manager of The Night Time Economy said: "The results speak for themselves. We don't have a major problem with underage sales and the message of vigilance, staff training and professionalism has finally got through to the Licence Trade.

"Together with Devon County Council's Trading Standards and our partners, we will endeavour to ensure these standards are maintained in North Devon."

Since 2007 Devon County Council's Trading Standards Service has distributed over 5000 training and advice packs to all licensed premises, and retailers of age restricted products in Devon.

The 'No Proof of Age - No Sale' packs, produced by a South West regional partnership of local authority trading standards services, include a video training tool for retailers and licensees highlighting the problems involved in preventing the sale of age restricted products and advice on how to avoid making illegal sales to young people.

More information for businesses and online access to 'No Proof of Age - No Sale' is available on Devon County Council's website at www.devon.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Consumers and businesses can also report illegal trading activity to Devon County Council's Trading Standards Service via a confidential phone line on 01392 381380.