Underage Drinking

Visit our website for more information and links to other useful resources

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Community Safety Unit (CSU)
01892 526121

Citizen’s Advice Consumer Helpline
08454 04 05 06

KCC Community Warden Supervisor
07969 584175

To report a crime that is not in progress or for any other non-urgent police matters
101

For emergency police response
999

November 2012
Many young people under the age of 18 regularly drink alcohol. Young people are sometimes seen drinking in parks and car parks, and at various gathering points in towns and villages.

Underage drinking is a much more serious problem today than it has been in the past. Children are drinking at a younger age – and they are drinking more.

Over half (51%) of 11-15 year olds have drunk at least one alcoholic drink in their lifetime. Of those who drink regularly, the average weekly consumption has risen from 5.3 units in 1990 to 11.6 units in 2009.

Tunbridge Wells is a safe place in which to live and socialise and underage drinking is not a huge community safety issue for the borough. However, there can be serious health implications for underage drinkers.

Young people who binge drink at age 16 are 60% more likely to be alcohol dependent at age 30.

Not only do children who drink at an early age stand a greater chance of facing further problems later in life, their education and social development can suffer.

In 2010/11 there were 7054 young people in treatment programmes for alcohol abuse or addiction, 1817 of these were aged 15 or under and some as young as ten.

If you’re ever asked to buy alcohol for a minor, ask yourself:

Are you buying a bottle of vodka for the 17-year-old you see, or the 12-year-old you don’t?

The borough council, Kent Police, the NHS and Trading Standards share the aim of reducing underage drinking and proxy sales across the borough. The Community Safety Unit (CSU) runs regular retail awareness campaigns, and Trading Standards perform test purchases on suspected targets.

If you know or suspect a retailer is knowingly, or unknowingly, selling alcohol that is destined for a minor, please let the CSU know or phone the Citizen’s Advice Consumer Helpline to pass information to Trading Standards. (See the reverse of this leaflet for contact details.)

If you are a retailer and suspect an adult is buying alcohol for a minor contact the CSU.

As well as the harm it causes to young people and society, selling alcohol to children is a serious criminal offence. It could land you with a fine of up to £5,000.

There is a strong association between underage drinking and an array of other behaviours or conditions such as:

- Smoking and illegal drug use
- Risky sexual behaviour
- Depressive and anxiety disorders
- Eating disorders and obesity
- School truancy

Under-18s are more likely to become involved in anti-social and criminal behaviour after drinking.

If you have concerns about underage drinking in your neighbourhood, contact your local Kent Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) by dialing 101 or go to www.kent.police.uk. Police and social housing managers hold regular meetings in all wards and estates where you can draw attention to these issues.

www.tunbridgewellscsu.org.uk