

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Alcohol awareness campaign targets young drinkers

A major campaign to promote safe and responsible drinking in Torbay is being launched next Saturday (July 9).

The Know the Code campaign uses striking images chosen by young people, and a range of posters, leaflets, beer mats and other publicity material focus on key messages, which give information and advice on issues surrounding alcohol.

The event will take place in Princess Gardens, Torquay. A line-up of talented local bands and DJs will provide entertainment, whilst free non-alcoholic cocktails will be served up throughout the day.

Organiser Kirsty Passmore, from Safer Communities Torbay, explained: "The aim of the campaign is not to stop young people drinking, but to encourage them to do it sensibly. We live in a society where alcohol is a part of everyday life, and, as parents and role models, we need to examine our own attitudes towards drinking. This is why the campaign focuses on a 'code' – it's a way of ensuring that if you do drink, you stay safe and healthy and have fun without taking risks.

"The partners involved in the campaign have been working very closely with young people, from the initial consultation on alcohol use, right through to the selection of campaign material. We need to ensure this continues, and are grateful to the young

(mf)

people who have been involved in this campaign for their commitment.”

The campaign is the final result of research that began last year into young people’s drinking habits in Torbay, and about the risks they take as a result of their alcohol use.

The aim of the survey commissioned by Torbay Council’s Youth Offending Team, entitled No Limits was find out from young people what might encourage them to drink more sensibly.

650 questionnaires were sent out to different agencies and schools throughout Torbay with 434 completed and returned (representing approx. 3.3% of young people within Torbay).

The survey showed:

- 85% of 15 to 16 years olds reported drinking once a week.
- 198 of the 434 questioned drank mainly at home, with 70 drinking regularly in pubs and 29 in clubs in Torbay.
- 81 young women said that they walked home alone after drinking. 8 said they had been victims of sexual assault. 10 said that they had been victims of sexual harassment.

Evidence from the report also showed that drinking increases the risk of being involved in anti social behaviour.

These findings resulted in this ‘Know the code’ campaign, targeting young people, their role models, parents, and the licensing trade to promote safe and responsible drinking across the community of Torbay.

Councillor Alan Faulkner, Chairman of Torbay Council’s Licensing Committee, said:

“Young people must be educated to realise that while alcohol is an everyday part of life, it can only be safely enjoyed in moderation. As the parents, we are ultimately the people responsible for this learning and we need to be thinking hard about how our own use of alcohol is perceived by younger people generally. This campaign is aimed as much at raising parental awareness, as it is the youngsters.’

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“That said, licensees, supermarkets and even the local corner shop, all have a role to play. The days of cheap drinks promotions are numbered, and we must all do more to prevent the kind of binge drinking that leads to problems.”

"This campaign deserves all our support. It is enormously important to the future of our children and the future of the Torbay community as a whole that these problems are addressed."

The Torquay event runs from 2.00pm to 8.00pm in the Princess Gardens, Torquay (next to Torquay Pavilion). A similar launch will be taking place as part of Brixham Happ'nin on Saturday 16th July 2005 in St Mary's Park from 2.00pm to 6.00pm.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

For further information please see our website www.safercommunitiestorbay.org.uk/knowthecode, contact Rachael Powell in the Safer Communities Office on 01803 841440, or alternatively Louise Raymond, Communications Officer on 01803 208851