

NEWS FROM Alcohol Concern



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**BLUNKETT'S SUMMER BLITZ HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR ONGOING ENFORCEMENT TO STOP ALCOHOL SALES TO CHILDREN.**

The figures released today show the scale of the problem of sales to children, and underline how little has been done in recent years to enforce the law, warns Alcohol Concern.

In the first month of the campaign police sting operations in 646 licensed premises found that 51% of on licence and 29% of off licences were selling to under-age drinkers.

According to the Government's own figures, drinkers under the age of 16 are drinking twice as much as they did ten years ago, with one in five 13 year olds, and nearly half of 15 year olds drinking in the last week.

Alcohol Concern's Acting Chief Executive, Richard Philips says: "These figures throw into stark relief the terrible contribution of the alcohol industry to the nation's alcohol problem. Many pubs and off licenses are putting profits above their local communities and the wellbeing of children.

We now know that this is not a handful of rogue operators, but widespread through our communities.

We know that young people buying alcohol are likely to be drinking with other young people and unsupervised by adults, they are often getting into fights, causing trouble in communities and generally making life unpleasant for the rest of us."

He adds: "Young people often drink in dangerous situations such as along canals and by railways. They have also not yet learnt to limit their drinking and are at risk of overdose. "

Enforcement is the only deterrent for irresponsible traders, and we know it works. We look forward to seeing how many of the sting operations result in prosecutions. If the police back off after the summer, the problem will continue and the clamp down will have been of limited benefit."

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