

## Tilley Award 2005

### Application form

The following form must be completed in full. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the competition.

Please send completed application forms to Tricia Perkins at [patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

All entries must be received by noon on the 29 April 2005. Entries received after that date will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262.

#### 1. Details of application

Title of the project "LOT CODE IDENTIFICATION"

Name of force/: DURHAM CONSTABULARY

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors): Sgt 1590 Tim Robson

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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s): Mr Gary Barnett

Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s): Assistant Chief Constable, Durham Constabulary

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s) Durham Constabulary, Force Headquarters, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5TT

## **2. Summary of application**

### **The nature of the problem addressed.**

Alcohol fuelled youth nuisance generates community problems such as noise nuisance, violence against the person and property and overall it does nothing to address the public's fear of crime of which the police and partnerships strive to resolve. Simply taking the alcohol from the youths is not a means of dealing with the problem. Addressing the root cause of the problem by identifying the supplier is the most positive way forward. This project has been given the title "*Lot code Identification*" and is designed to strike directly at the supplier, so that remedial action can be taken.

### **What is the initiative?**

This initiative is simple and yet extremely effective. By utilising the alcoholic beverage containers unique Lot Code (time and date of manufacture and batch number) it is possible to trace the supplier who sold the drink. The main intervention principles involve training officers and our extended police family in identifying the lot code on alcohol seized from youths and from those lawfully in possession of it who are contravening laws. Intelligence will have generated concern in specific licensed premises or the location of bootleg sales. Officers who have seized the alcohol and identified the lot code need only visit the suspect premises and identify that the coding of the goods on the shelves matches the lot code on the drinks seized.

### **What are the main outcomes of this project?**

Action can be brought against the errant licensee or the bootlegger who sells to the local youths. Interviewing the licensee and obtaining CCTV footage from the shop will support any action taken. The licensee could then be given cautions, fixed penalties, or prosecution under the licensing act. The process also identifies where over 18's purchase alcohol for children so that licensees can be apprised of the adults in the community purchasing by, or on behalf of children. This in itself has had an impact on the occasions where some elderly adults have been intimidated by young persons into making a purchase.

### **Evidence and evaluation**

The project identifies the difficulty in pinpointing the store where the alcohol was purchased, the frequency of youths being found in possession of alcohol and the impact that identifying the errant licensee has on the supply of alcohol in a specific area. Evaluation will demonstrate how alcohol is removed from young persons in the community.

(395 words)

### 3. Description of project

The culture of binge drinking in the UK remains a complex issue but one which must be tackled if we are truly to bring down levels of alcohol related crime and disorder in the UK. Unravelling these issues is a complex feat, involving a variety of agencies and individuals and finding ways to influence change across these requires using a number of different levers. The root cause of many incidents of civil disobedience and youth disorder has shown to be fuelled by the consumption of alcohol. On evenings gangs of youths have congregated in both urban and suburban areas where they have consumed alcohol. Stories of rampaging gangs, mindless vandalism and abusive or threatening behaviour fuelled by alcohol are all too familiar and decent people are rightly demanding action.

Apart from the detrimental effects that the alcohol has on the health of the child or young person there are the proven impact factors that it has on the community. It is a common occurrence that officers attend groups of young persons gathered around streets and parks and their attendance is nearly always as a result of complaints from residents or shop owners. This is a problem of significant concern to the community. Information from resident groups, Councillors, Primary Care Trusts, Police Community Support officers, Social services and the Education Authority has been supportive of the fact that a large proportion of youth nuisance, disorder and damage is fuelled by alcohol.

In the first month of the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign police 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. Many pubs and off licenses are putting profits above their local communities and the wellbeing of children.

The objective of this project is to deal positively and proactively with the people who supply alcohol to children or to those who act on behalf of children. This problem has been clearly identified by partnership organisations. Only by removing the root cause of the problem, the acquisition of alcohol can there be improvements made in this field of nuisance and disorder. Where alcohol has been purchased from a rogue unlicensed trader or "bootleg" purchase then this gap in information has been identified and taken into account. Pubwatch, Shop watch and effective partnership working has identified the location of such sales and this process of lot code i/d will still apply to the premises. Consultation has been carried out with all agencies that have a stake in this problem and are utilising the information obtained from the "Lot Code I/D".

On all alcoholic beverages purchased or supplied there is a unique "Lot Code I/D" applied to the bottle or container using an indelible marking system. The code contains a product code, a time and a date of manufacture. This code is unique to a specific batch of alcohol or product.

The code is demonstrated in the photographs below



**Spirit Bottle**



**Alco pop**



**Lager Can**

In demonstrating this a survey was carried out on a number of licensed premises to see if the product code on one alcoholic drink matched that of the same product in a nearby shop. On every occasion the code was different, and yet all of the alcohol in that premises had the same lot code. This analysis demonstrated that if alcohol was acquired from licensed premises it could be traced very quickly to the store that the product came from. Previous ideas of using specific store marked carrier bags or price labels are inaccurate and hold little evidential value. This method of response was chosen over others.

This project can be applied just as easily to solvents, butane gas and lighter fuel as demonstrated below.



**Butane and Lighter Fuel**



**Solvents**

Its uses are unlimited. Consideration can also be given to using this project to identify the source of the theft of property found in the possession of a identification of errant licensees. When a contributory factor to the conduct of th

A simple educational information she Residents, Social Services and Tradir project requirements and the process through the local focus sheets with n substance misuse unit should they ha developmental issues that can be appl that the code was the bar code on the this matter. Lot code marking is a su National Police Licensing Forum at C adopted by both the Metropolitan Polic have discussed this process and have from nearly all British and Welsh forc elsewhere. Research indicates that this as trading standards.



Officers have been requested to highlight each and every use of the Lot Code I/D process, and that it should be applied to all seizures of alcohol. Chester Le Street was chosen as an evaluation area due to the high number of seizures of alcohol. Areas around this busy town centre were prevalent with alcohol fuelled youth nuisance. Officers were seizing alcohol from young persons and adults in the company of young inebriated persons. Consistently the individuals concerned failed to inform the officers and concerned parents as to where they were acquiring the alcohol from. The manner in which this problem was addressed was simply a reactive "mopping up" exercise where the true underlying problem was being allowed to continue. Seizing the alcohol and pouring it out was only a short term remedy as new purchases were made and the impact of this process was again felt across the community. The impact of this anti social behaviour was further aggravated by the fact that adults were lawfully purchasing alcohol for the young persons. Effectively it was an unstoppable chain of events.

Consideration should be given to the impact that substance misuse has on the individual. Alcohol, solvents, and butane products have been the causation of many fatalities over the years and with the implementation of the new Licensing Act allowing for extended hours and access of children into licensed premises it is imperative that all available techniques are used to deal positively and effectively with the root cause of the problem.

Since November 2004 officers have been checking the lot code on alcohol seized from individuals. Whenever alcohol is seized the information gathered is always recorded on a seizure of alcohol form, in adapting this form to include Lot Code I/D a simple means of recording the alcohol seized, offender or child and more importantly the targeted premises. The process information sheets and the Licensing Focus sheets have been very productive both informing the relevant officers and allowing for improvement of the process by effective response. As an example out of all the alcohol seized from persons there is a 98% success rate in identifying the source of the alcohol. Clearly the response achieved was very much what was intended. There is evidence to support that one night club door staff have seized Alco pops from persons in the queue waiting to gain entry to the club and it was discovered that the bottles had come from the Off licence next door to the club identifying that premises as contributing to disorder in the area of the club.

This data will be of paramount importance with the implementation of Alcohol Disorder Zones, where there is currently controversy as to the impact that off licences and supermarkets have on the night time economy. The data collated from the alcohol seizure has in its essence identified target premises that have clearly been serving alcohol unlawfully.

This has allowed the opportunity for officers to visit the premises view the CCTV and speak to the licensee regarding the sale. This has provided a valuable opportunity to get the licensee to take on the "21 or over" Scheme. This scheme is a voluntary agreement with the licensee whereby they agree to serve alcohol only to persons of 21 years or over on the weekend. Not only does this prevent the sale of alcohol to persons who are clearly around the 18 age group but it prevents those persons being friends of the children from purchasing alcohol for them. The "21 or over" scheme has proven to be a very effective tool in dealing with alcohol fuelled anti social behaviour.

By utilising the "*Lot Code I/D*" process officers can further identify if this premises is still breaching the legislation. Following the implementation of the scheme should there be further sales to young persons or to persons who are under 21 then there is supporting evidence to show a further element of disobedience from the legislation.

The impact of this project on the quality of life of residents has been promoted through discussions with residents. The groups of children may still be gathering but their behaviour and the alcohol fuelled youth nuisance has shown marked improvements. Licensees are very much aware of this scheme and are more wary of the age of the person who they sell the alcohol too and in on licensed premises should a child be found in possession of an alcoholic beverage then the Lot Code I/D will support evidence of the purchase of that particular drink from within the premises. Effectively this keeps licensees on their guard in the knowledge that the police and other interested partnerships can isolate their premises as the offender to unlawful sales. Parental responsibility should not be discounted from the impact of this process. By informing parents of their child being found consuming alcohol with others or in an area where youth nuisance, damage and disorder are prevalent the officers can indicate the premises from which the child has acquired the alcohol. In this bristling night time economy which is growing disproportionately over the years, and the "Booze Britain" media reports filling our evening television it is vitally important that the parents are fully aware of the main outlets of alcohol to youngsters.

Problem Oriented Policing is an innovative way of dealing with and addressing community problems and any positive and productive means of targeting the true root cause of a problem should be embraced and evaluated. Durham Constabulary is proud to be able to identify this positive means of tackling the encumbrance of alcohol fuelled nuisance that officers and the extended police family have to deal with constantly. The Licensing Act ensures that all sales of alcohol are lawfully authorised and only by placing the onus on the licensee and bootleg operators can we start to address the root cause of alcohol fuelled youth disorder. An evaluation success rate of 98% is an excellent result in taking that step closer to dealing proactively with the disgraceful images that blight our television screens daily.

It is with the above information that the author submits this project for consideration for the Tilley award by and on behalf of Durham Constabulary.

2563 Words  
488 KB

Endorsing officers statement:

This is a simple and yet highly effective initiative which underpins Durham Constabulary's determination to deal with alcohol fuelled youth disorder. Lot Code identification enables police officers and police community support officers to readily identify licensed premises suspected of selling alcohol to under-age drinkers, but in addition facilitates intelligence concerning unlicensed sales. The initiative is a useful tool for operational staff faced with addressing such matters on an almost daily basis and provides an innovative approach to longer-term problem solving at a local level. Given the benefits of lot code identification I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending this project for consideration to the Tilley Award Scheme.

ACC G Barnett