

DON'T BINGE & CRINGE EVALUATION

Lewisham 2007 Anti-Binge Drinking Festive Campaign

Over the festive period Lewisham Drug & Alcohol Strategy Team (DAST) in partnership with the Police, Salvation Army and volunteers from substance misuse treatment agencies and LBL Community Safety Team took a different approach to tackling binge drinking and its many consequences such as anti-social behaviour, violence, accidents, sexual assault & rape, unplanned pregnancy's and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's).

This time instead of posters and beer mats we tried for a more realistic, pragmatic binge drinking message focussing on a harm minimisation approach, to keep people safe if they are binge drinking, which they are more likely to do over the festive period.

On Thursday 20th Dec and Friday 21st December 2007 between 7pm and 2am the Safer Lewisham Partnership bus was parked in Blackheath and New Cross, respectively, with 20 volunteers from the DAST, Crime Reduction Service, substance misuse agencies & Police handing out goodybags containing water and lollipops to revellers leaving pubs and clubs or on their way home from nights out in the city.

Positioned outside train stations, in pubs and pounding the streets they extolled harm minimisation substance misuse advice particularly focussing on the dangers and risks of binge drinking and how to keep safe and get home safely....and quietly! The Salvation Army even came out with their band (of 2) to play some carols to keep up morale and raise some festive cheer.

The goody-bags and water bottles were embossed with the phrase ***Don't Binge & Cringe*** with a telephone number for Drinkline -a confidential helpline for anyone concerned about theirs (or a loved ones) drinking, also the CABWISE number text 60835 with the word HOME to receive details of local taxis and minicab firms.

The bag contained:

- a condom
- an alcohol leaflet about drink driving, what is a unit, safe sex and how to plan your night to make sure you get home safe
- information about alcohol/drug related rape and where to get support
- spikey's to prevent drug-assisted rape
- a lollipop
- an overdose card advising what to do if you find someone passed out in the street

Lollipops have been used successfully by Police Forces in Southampton, Newcastle, Daventry, Guilford & Bolton to quieten down noisy revellers as they are leaving bars and clubs. They work on 2 levels-keeping people quiet (they can't shout with their mouth full) and raising their blood sugar levels (depleted by alcohol) back up making them more alert (therefore less vulnerable) and less inclined to violence.

Cost

LBL Communications Department funded the £1,400 scheme

Effectiveness

Police data is too patchy to reveal anything meaningful and we continue to try to get alcohol related crime accurately and consistently flagged up. 2x 6hr stints in a bus is not going to turn around a rising alcohol related crime wave overnight. However, what we were trying to do is give people key facts about alcohol, make them more mindful of how much they're drinking and what they can do to minimise risks and keep themselves safe. The attitude of the volunteers on the nights was excellent and they were well received by the general public who took the interventions with good humour and genuine interest. The most common phrase we heard when they looked at the Drinkaware wheels was "I didn't know I was drinking that much". The Police demonstrated superb partnership working and an enthusiasm for leaflet-handing-out that will need to be utilised again in the future!

- Interacted with approx 1100 people (1100 alcohol facts sheets were distributed)
- 500 goodybags handed out

Sgt Tim Bennet

"It was a great opportunity to work with our partners in an effort to combat drink related disorder together. The Stay Safe drinking campaign was a great success and the response from the public to the leaflets and goodybags was extremely positive and supportive. Myself and the team enjoyed the evening and I have every confidence that it was well received by customers enjoying an evening in Blackheath"

Landlord of The Crown PH in Blackheath

"I was pleased to see the Police out in numbers in the village, it was reassuring to myself and the customers"

Sgt Sharpe-Licensing Unit

"The operation was a very good example of partnership working. It was a joint exercise which I believe was very well received in both Blackheath and New Cross wards"

Operations such as these are better assessed qualitatively and this event showed that a serious message can be delivered in a light hearted innovative way, drawing on the skills and good nature of the Police, crime reduction and substance misuse partnership working in Lewisham at this time. Anecdotal reports indicate that the initiative played a role in calming the night time atmosphere in the 2 areas as well as developing a channel with which to communicate with people when they're out drinking. If we were to attract more media attention for next years campaign this 2 pronged approach would be a useful awareness raising tool.

1000 lollipops & 500 water bottles were left over and will be distributed (with leaflets) in similar campaigns throughout the year across pubs, clubs, taxi ranks and kebab shops in the borough.

Thanks goes to:

Suzy Mckenna

Geeta Subramaniam

June Al-Malah

Patrick Murphy

Deirdre Bryant

Gary Seaman

Jacqui West

Dr David Davies

Danny McGowan

Ann Marie Healey

Philip Breslin

Kellie Williams

Neil Roberston

Natascha Baylor

Helen Kelsall

Inspector Andy Laurie

Sgt Tracey Sharpe