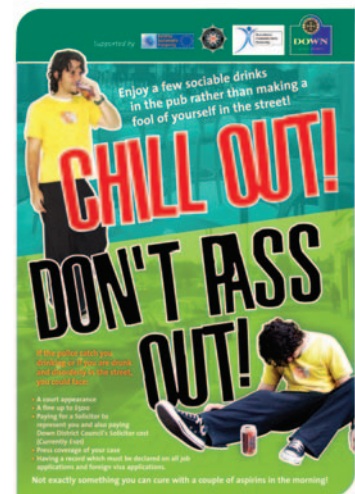


The Chill Out Campaign – Newcastle, County Down

This project was launched to address serious concerns about underage drinking, public nuisance and disorder in the centre of Newcastle, County Down. A partnership approach involving the police, council and local businesses publicised the initiative using posters in public areas and spill mats in local licensed premises to promote responsible drinking with the slogan “Chill out don’t pass out”. The advertising also encouraged people to ‘not make a fool of themselves in the street’ and also warned of the possible consequences of misbehaviour. Co-ordinated patrols by police and council enforcement officers were used to detect infringements of designated alcohol free areas. A number of complementary approaches were employed, including warnings, prosecutions, seizure of alcohol and referrals to a youth diversion scheme.



The increased policing profile had a positive impact on town centre crime, with the total volume of offences down by 33.5 per cent. Violent crime fell by 65.4 per cent, car crime by 40 per cent and both criminal damage and theft were reduced by more than 12 per cent. The project came second in the partnership category in the Northern Ireland policing with the community awards, reflecting its success both in enforcement and in improving communications between the public and private sectors. It has since been extended to the wider Down District and 80 per cent of licensed premises in the town have now joined a radio link scheme designed to maintain and build on the success in creating a safer, more welcoming environment.

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