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27 April 2007

OVER 25S ONLY

ASDA raise age for buying booze without ID Exclusive by Cara Page

UNDER 25s are to be banned from buying booze unless they can prove their age.

The radical scheme is being launched by Asda to crack down on under-age drinking.

Customers who don't look at least 25 will be asked for ID to show they are over 18. If they don't have any, they won't get the booze.

Asda launched the scheme after research showed people often over-estimate the age of 16-year-olds.

It also follows figures which showed the amount of booze being consumed by 11 to 13-year-olds has rocketed in recent years.

In a study in 2006, girls who had drunk alcohol in the previous week admitted to knocking back an average of more than eight units.

Boys in the same age group admitted drinking an average of 12 units in a week.

For their study, Asda took a group of 16-year-olds on to the streets of Glasgow and asked shoppers to guess their age.

A massive 71 per cent thought they were at least 18 - and 23 per cent thought the kids were over 21.

Andy Clarke, Asda retail director, said: "For many, this trial will require them to permanently carry ID.

"However, we are confident that our customers will understand the importance of this campaign.

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"What we want to see is a culture in the UK where being asked for, and showing, ID isn't an issue."

The Asda scheme will be launched this weekend in stores in Grangemouth, Falkirk, Kirkcaldy, Alloa, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Dunfermline, Galashiels, and Chesser and St Leonards in Edinburgh. If the trial is successful, it will be extended to more than 300 Asda branches.

The supermarket are taking action ahead of a police scheme being brought in across Scotland from Tuesday to crack down on retailers who sell alcohol to kids.

New laws will give police powers to use 16-year-olds to carry out sting operations on off-licences, supermarkets, pubs and clubs.

The scheme has already been piloted by Fife Police. They carried out 880 tests. In 147 cases, the retailers were willing to sell alcohol to 16-year-olds.

Fife Chief Superintendent Andrew Laing said: "In the past, we've tried to educate kids not to drink. But this is decisive action against the suppliers.

"We support and commend Asda for taking this step."

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