

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

LICENSING FORUM

PROOF OF AGE STANDARDS SCHEME (PASS)

Report by Dialogue Youth Senior Practitioner

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To ask the Forum to consider the issues set out in this report

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) is a U.K. wide scheme for 11 years to 26th birthday and is designed to give retailers confidence to accept accredited PASS cards as valid proof of age when selling age restricted goods and services.
- 2.2 The PASS scheme was set up in 2002 by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) at the urging of the major supermarkets, who at the time were beginning to lose confidence in proof of age cards due to the number of different cards on the market, and the proliferation of fake or "novelty" cards that could be purchased over the internet.
- 2.3 Rather than setting up a new proof of age card, the BRC established PASS as a body to accredit genuine proof of age card issuers, giving them the right to place the PASS hologram on their cards as a symbol to retailers that the card can be accepted. A hologram was chosen because it is technically difficult and very expensive to forge. The hologram design and PASS symbol are also trademarked, so if any of these "novelty" card companies does attempt to reproduce the hologram in any way, then Trading Standards departments across the U.K. are on standby to take legal action.
- 2.4 The only PASS accredited card scheme based in Scotland is Young Scot/NEC, which works with all 32 local authorities and the Scottish Government to produce the PASS hologrammed Young Scot National Entitlement Card. At present nationally, over 360,000 young people carry a Young Scot card with the PASS hologram.
- 2.5 Young Scot and PASS has the support of the Scottish Government and the enforcement bodies, the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) and the Trading Standards Institute (Scotland).

- 2.6** In addition, all of the major trade representatives bodies have endorsed PASS, including: the Scottish Retail Consortium, Scottish Grocers Federation, Scottish Licensed Trade Association, Scottish Beer and Pubs Association, Night Club Owners Association and the British Institute of Innkeeping (Scotland).
- 2.7** The Young Scot/National Entitlement PASS is a voluntary card, which does more than give proof of age, although this is one of its most popular features amongst young people. Around 95% of cards are distributed via schools, with details taken from education records. For those young people who cannot get a card through school for whatever reason, they can apply in person to a local authority office, and have to complete a passport-style application form.
- 2.8** Young Scot audits every local authority on a regular basis to ensure that the high standards of processing are being maintained.
- 2.9** The acceptance of PASS by retailers and by pubs and clubs (and door stewards in particular) is a constant issue, mainly due to lack of awareness by licensees, door stewards and sometimes police officers of the integrity of the card, and the processes that go behind their production. This is despite the acceptance of PASS hologrammed cards being written into the subordinate regulations surrounding the new Licensing (Scotland) Act, which came fully into force on the 1st September, 2010.
- 2.10** To help counter this lack of awareness, a major publicity campaign has been funded by the Scottish Government to promote PASS.
- 2.11** The PASS awareness campaign was officially launched on 23rd November, 2010 by Public Health Minister Shona Robinson. This was tied into the launch of new tobacco legislation which is due to come into force in April 2011, which includes regulations stating that the only acceptable proofs of age are driving licenses, passports or PASS cards.
- 2.12** For several years Young Scot have been working with partners to distribute a Retailer Awareness Pack to help to increase the awareness and acceptance of PASS cards, including the Young Scot/NEC. Building on the success of this pack and feedback through consultation, Young Scot have developed a new PASS training and awareness pack.
- 2.13** The new pack seeks to ensure that all those working in retail and the licensed trade across the country know that cards bearing the PASS hologram, including the Young Scot/National Entitlement Card (NEC) are as credible as passports and driving licenses for providing proof of age. It will also help staff to identify the authentic PASS proof of age cards and what to do in the instance that someone tries to obtain goods to which they are not entitled.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The issues contained in this report impact on all themes of the Community Plan.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As with any proof of age document there is an element of risk, however in this situation, fraudulent copy is significantly reduced due to the strict vetting procedures and production at a central processing bureau.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Forum are asked to:

- (i) Consider the issues set out in this paper.
- (ii) Consider recommending the contents to the Licensing Board for their consideration in respect of Licensees accepting Young Scot/National Entitlement PASS hologrammed cards as proof of age.

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