

Off-trade exposed as weak spot in sting

John Harrington

john.harrington@william-reed.co.uk

Supermarkets operated by six major chains could see their licences revoked for repeatedly serving underage drinkers in a recent blitz.

Four pubs also face licence reviews, but the vast majority caught in the campaign were from the off-trade. In total, 224 on and off-trade premises in 16 police forces were tested two or three times between 9 and 29 October.

The operation targeted premises that had previously failed stings or were suspected of serving under-18s.

Fifty three per cent of the venues challenged the sales, but 42 outlets – 38 of them supermarkets, shops

or off-licences – failed two or more stings and are having their licences reviewed.

Among the outlets that failed were venues owned by Tesco, Spar, Somerfield, Budgens, Kwik Save and Londis.

Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker promised “further enforcement activity” and added: “I recognise the work undertaken by the drinks industry to tackle underage sales, but the fact that 42 premises are going to licence review shows that there is still more to do.”

BII chief executive John McNamara said: “Staff need to be aware of the three types of acceptable forms of ID including PASS accredited cards, which are impossible to forge, as well as how to handle the situation in a positive manner.

“Again this issue raises the importance of qualifications and training and I urge all responsible alcohol retailers to invest in their staff by putting them through BIAB qualifications.”



Supermarket sweep: Spar was one of six major chains that could see licences revoked following sting operations