

**EVALUATION OF TEST
PURCHASING PILOT FOR
SALES OF ALCOHOL TO
UNDER 18s – INTERIM
REPORT**

EVALUATION OF TEST PURCHASING PILOT FOR SALES OF ALCOHOL TO UNDER 18S – INTERIM REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2005, following consideration of an independent evaluation of tobacco test purchasing pilots, the Lord Advocate revised prosecution policy to allow test purchasing of age restricted goods by children and young people under the age of 18, in circumstances where the purchaser is not committing a separate offence. This allowed test purchasing of fireworks, tobacco and other age restricted products, but not alcohol. While satisfied, in principle, that alcohol test purchasing would be an effective enforcement tool, the Lord Advocate remained concerned about the safety and welfare of the young people taking part in test purchasing exercises. It was agreed, therefore, that before the relevant provisions of the new Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 are generally commenced (probably 2009), a pilot exercise was to be undertaken. The aim of this pilot, conducted in Fife, was to assess test purchasing arrangements to enable common procedures and operating protocols to be developed to ensure that alcohol test purchasing can be carried out safely, fairly and effectively in a Scottish context.

The Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen) was commissioned by the Analytical Services Division of the Scottish Executive Health Department to evaluate the Test Purchasing Pilot in Fife in May 2006. ScotCen adopted a mixed method approach to obtain the views of licensees, volunteers and parents, police officers, procurators fiscal, licensing board members, alcohol and drug action teams and community councils. Analysis of test purchase data sheets was also carried out. This interim report covers the period from baseline to impact only – the final report will also incorporate the research carried out as part of the outcome research phase.

At impact, the responses of all the participant groups involved in the research (licensees, volunteers, parents and police officers) suggested that the alcohol test purchase pilot had progressed very smoothly and that very few problems had been encountered. There was also evidence that there existed a greater level of support for alcohol test purchasing to be adopted than was the case during the tobacco pilot, with a majority of licensees arguing that test purchasing should be implemented more widely, although in tandem with a national proof of age card scheme, and possibly other measures such as increased surveillance and education of retail staff. As was the case during the tobacco pilot there was very little enthusiasm expressed for either the status quo or for test purchasing to be implemented in isolation.

The licensees tended to react favourably to the pilot at impact. A minority of licensees, especially among the group who had failed the first test purchase visit, did complain that the volunteers did not look 16 years of age and the police had reacted in a heavy-handed manner to the members of on or off sale staff. This was very much the minority view, though, and it is worth noting that the majority of the licensees who represented premises that passed or failed the test visit perceived that test purchasing should be adopted in the future, albeit in combination with other measures.

About 19% of premises failed the initial test purchase visit; this percentage was slightly higher in the on sale category at impact. During the first phase of the tobacco pilot about 14% of premises sold tobacco to volunteers. The level of test failures might potentially be related to a number of factors including the area of Fife (eastern Fife yielded a lower level of sales to volunteers), the sex of the volunteer, junior staff being at the point of sale and reported awareness of the test purchase radio adverts. It will be important to see whether these factors are related to test purchase failures when all premises have been visited at outcome.

The volunteers and their parents were very positive about their involvement in the pilot. Few could think of any difficulties that had arisen and all of the volunteers indicated their willingness to take part in test purchase exercises in the future. The parents perceived that the police had looked after the volunteers with great care throughout the pilot. Although the volunteers also stated that test purchasing could be at times both nerve-racking during attempts and tedious when the police were charging staff and completing paperwork, they argued that the positive factors involved in participating in such a project greatly outweighed any negative factors.

The police interviewees shared the views of the other key informants above in relation to the smooth progress of the pilot and the fact that test purchasing should be rolled out in other areas, again in combination with other measures and with reduced bureaucracy and intelligence-led targeting of premises. The police representatives also said that factors such as those under the age of 18 years being in the position of selling alcohol and restricting sales to their peers, as well as adults purchasing alcohol and acting as agents for those under the age of 18 years, were issues that may need to be addressed in the future. It was also thought that a partnership approach might be developed between the police and the licensed trade.

Therefore, at impact the general consensus was that the pilot had been operating at least as well as could have been expected, and that test purchasing combined with other measures was the favoured future strategy for restricting sales to those under the age of 18 years. Whether this will still be the case at outcome, when the views of Procurators Fiscal, Licensing Board representatives, Community councils and Alcohol and Drug Action Teams will also be represented, remains to be seen.

1. INTRODUCTION

In February 2005, following consideration of the independent evaluation carried out by the Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen) of tobacco test purchasing pilots conducted in 2002-4, the Lord Advocate revised prosecution policy to allow test purchasing of age restricted goods by children and young people under the age of 18, in circumstances where the purchaser is not committing a separate offence. This allowed test purchasing of fireworks, tobacco and other age restricted products, but not alcohol.

In deciding at that time to exclude alcohol from the revised policy the Lord Advocate took account of the fact that under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 it was an offence for a person under 18 to buy or attempt to buy alcoholic liquor in licensed premises or to consume alcoholic liquor in a bar. Moreover, although alcohol test purchasers were likely to be aged 16 and 17, there were still welfare concerns in relation to both the premises that young people would be expected to visit and the fact that they may be more likely to be called to give evidence if the Procurator Fiscal decided to take proceedings.

The Lord Advocate subsequently indicated that he was satisfied in principle that test purchasing of alcohol by children and young people would be an effective means of enforcing the law in this area. An amendment was made, therefore, to the Licensing (Scotland) Bill at Stage 3 to allow for test purchasing of alcohol which ensured that the primacy of welfare of children and young people involved was addressed. It should be noted, though, that: “Under the provisions of section 68(4) of the Act it is not an offence for a person aged 16 or over to purchase beer, wine, made-wine, porter, cider or Perry for consumption with a meal in a part of the premises, usually set apart for the services of table meals, which is not a bar, or in a bar during its regular use as a restaurant. Similarly it is not an offence for someone to sell the alcoholic liquor listed above to such a person aged 16 or over, or for someone to purchase on behalf of the person aged 16 or over” in these circumstances. For this reason, it was decided that when entering on sales licensed premises the test purchaser would only attempt to purchase alcohol at the bar and its purchase would not be linked in any way to the purchase of food.

While satisfied, in principle, that alcohol test purchasing would be an effective enforcement tool, the Lord Advocate remained concerned about the safety and welfare of the young people taking part in test purchasing exercises. It was agreed, therefore, before the relevant provisions of the new Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 are generally commenced (probably 2009), a pilot exercise was to be undertaken. The aim of this pilot, conducted in Fife, was to trial test purchasing arrangements to enable common procedures and operating protocols to be developed to ensure that alcohol test purchasing can be carried out safely, fairly and effectively in a Scottish context.

The Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen) was commissioned by the Analytical Services Division of the Scottish Executive Health Department in May 2006 to evaluate the Test Purchasing Pilot in Fife. This Interim Report covers the methodology adopted by ScotCen for the whole pilot, as well as the baseline and impact research phases in more detail.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 AIM OF THE EVALUATION

The main aim of the research was to review the operation of the test purchasing pilot in Fife in relation to the safety and suitability of the operating procedures, the impact of the initiative, the views of those involved, and whether the test purchasing of alcohol could be effective in reducing under-age sales, while protecting the safety of the young people involved in the scheme and taking cognisance of the views of the licensed sector.

The evaluation also addressed whether or not the procedures in place worked or whether they needed to be adapted for future test purchasing exercises. It should be noted that an assessment of the impact of the test purchase on the consumption of alcohol by under 18s in Fife was not within the scope of the research. However, it is possible that the evaluation will be able to reflect any impact on the recorded incidences of drink related anti-social behaviour based on information held by Fife Police Force and the local Alcohol and Drug Action Team; and perceptions of local communities of the impact of the test purchase pilot on drink related anti-social behaviour in the area. These issues will be addressed in the final evaluation report.

2.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The detailed objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Examine the results of the test purchasing exercises after analysing the data obtained by Fife Police to gauge the effect of the exercise in the pilot area, including the number of test purchases undertaken, the nature of the premises targeted, the number of sales made, etc.
- Gather the views of licensees in Fife (*possibly including a sample of licensed premises **not** targeted*) at three different phases: baseline, (June 2006) impact (late 2006) and outcome (spring/summer 2007); about their practice in relation to selling to young people, their views and practice in relation to proof of age schemes, their perceptions of test purchasing in principle, their perceptions of its anticipated or actual effect on their own practice and those in the licensed trade generally, and their perceptions of way it was it was carried out in practice.
- Gather the views of the young people involved in the test purchasing exercise to see what participation has meant to them, for example, if the experience has been enjoyable or distressing, anxiety provoking or not; and their parents or guardians to find out their perceptions of their children's participation and whether they would be happy for them to take part in similar work again.
- Gather the views of police officers involved in the pilot concerning the actual practice of licensees in relation to selling to young people, their perceptions of test purchasing in principle, their perceptions of the training offered and how well it operated in practice and any difficulties encountered, their perceptions of its reception by targeted licensees, their perceptions of its impact on licensees, and their recommendations for any continuation or extension of the practice of test purchasing.
- Elicit the views of Procurators Fiscal in the pilot area, to ascertain their views of the pilot exercise, its perceived impact on the courts' and Licensing Boards workload, etc.
- Gather the views from the Licensing Board, local community representatives in the Fife area on the perceived impact of the pilot on drinking related crime/anti social behaviour, via community councils and drug action teams.

After analysing the evidence gathered throughout the evaluation from all the sources identified above a final report will be produced which summarises the main findings in order to inform the steering group, Scottish Executive, the Crown Office, Fife Police Force and other interested parties, as to the benefits and drawbacks of the test-purchasing of alcohol. This should address whether or not the procedures in place worked safely and effectively or whether they need to be adapted for future test purchasing exercises, as well as pointing out benefits and drawbacks with the test purchasing approach.

This report focuses on the conduct of the pilot from baseline up to and including the impact phases. As a result not all of the evaluation objectives outlined above are addressed within this report.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN

The following research design was utilised, although there may yet be minor modifications to the outcome phase.

There were two main types of data gathered during the evaluation:

- quantitative data on all attempts at test purchases
- the views of samples of all major categories of stakeholder concerning various aspects of the pilot scheme and its impact.

The following major categories of stakeholder were or will be included in the evaluation:

- Volunteers involved in test purchasing exercises
- Parents/guardians of these volunteers
- Licensees who are targeted for test purchasing (different types of outlet, e.g. off licenses, hotels, supermarkets, public houses, restaurants etc)
- Licensees in the same areas who are not targeted for test purchasing. It is likely that every outlet will be targeted within Fife, therefore it is imperative that the researchers work with the police in order to organise a wave of interviews before the actual test purchases at baseline and (if relevant) outcome. It is possible that at outcome nearly every premise will have been targeted.
- Police officers and Procurators Fiscal.
- Licensing Board representatives, and members of community councils and the Fife Alcohol and Drug Action Team.

The three main phases of the work will be:

- Baseline: June – July 2006
- Impact: November 2006 – December 2006
- Outcome: Probably April – May 2007.

Fife Police intended to carry out c900 test purchases (i.e. in every possible outlet where it is deemed safe to do so) over the course of the whole pilot exercise.

3.2 DATA ON TEST PURCHASES

Data on all test purchases was collected in a consistent and uniform manner. At baseline the researchers were made aware of which premises the police intend to target and on which occasion, in order to inform their own sampling strategy for licensee interviews.

The data sheet prepared by ScotCen and agreed with the Fife Police Force covered the:

- type of outlet (supermarket, off sales, licensed grocers, pubs etc)
- name and address of retail business
- date of visit
- code for police area and code number for test purchaser

- gender of young volunteer carrying out test purchase
- month and year of birth of young volunteer
- Type of test purchase (first visit, revisit)
- whether visit resulted in attempt to purchase (if not, the reason why)
- whether proof of age information requested
- outcome of attempt to purchase (purchase made, purchase refused, attempt abandoned, other)
- status of person informed (owner, manager, assistant etc)
- status of person from whom child attempted to purchase (owner, manager, assistant etc.)
- awareness of radio advertising in relation to pilot

As a result the following information was gathered and presented in this report:

- the total number of visits to premises to make test purchase attempts
- the proportion of visits abandoned before any purchase attempt, and reasons why
- the proportion of purchase attempts (first visits and revisits) that were successful, refused, or resulted in other outcomes
- the proportion of purchase attempts at which proof of age was requested.

3.3 YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

Data on all potential young volunteers was and will be collected in a consistent and uniform manner. It will be important to maintain strict standards of confidentiality. Also, consent will be sought from the young person and parent/guardian (if the volunteer is aged under 16 years) for participation in the evaluation.

3.4 KEY STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

The three phases of data collection of stakeholder views will be:

Phase 1: BASELINE: June to July 2006

The purpose of this phase was to gauge the views of licensees, volunteer test purchasers, parents/guardians etc as far as possible BEFORE the first test purchasing visits take place.

Phase 2: IMPACT: November to December 2006

The purpose of this phase was to gauge the immediate impact of the test purchasing visits on the licensees targeted by it, and a more general overview of the operation of the scheme from police officers.

Phase 3: OUTCOME: Approximately April – May 2007

The purpose of this phase will be to gauge the longer term effect of the test purchasing both on licensees who have been targeted by test purchasing and on others in the area who have still to be visited (if feasible at this stage), and a more general overview of the operation of the scheme from police officers with the benefit of longer experience. Procurators Fiscal, young volunteers and their parents and carers

will also be interviewed, and members of the licensing board, community council representatives and members of the Fife Alcohol and Drug Action team will be invited to take part in focus groups.

3.4.1 Stakeholder views – baseline

Views were sought as far as possible *before the first test purchase was attempted* from:

- Licensees and managers of premises (100 interviews)
- Young volunteers who were trained as test purchasers (6 interviews)
- Parents/guardians of these children (6 interviews)

Fife Police started carrying out test purchases on the 30th of June 2006. However, it was advisable to carry out as many of the baseline interviews with licensees before test purchasing actually started. The research team had carried out the majority of the licensee interviews before the 30th of June. After liaison with Fife Police Force the sample of licensees selected for baseline interview were not to be targeted by police officers during the initial test purchase, therefore all of the licensees interviewed by the research team after June 30th had not been visited for test purchasing at that point.

ScotCen carried out a random stratified sample of the list of licensees provided by Fife police in order to identify a sample of premises which covered all of the five outlet types. After this a baseline structured interview schedule was prepared. These were short interviews, were conducted on a face-to-face basis and were with the license holders or managers of the respective outlet; junior staff members were not interviewed. The interviews covered knowledge and awareness of test purchasing, licensees' practice in relation to selling to young people, their training of staff members, their views about and practice in relation to proof of age schemes, their perceptions of test purchasing in principle, and their perceptions of its anticipated effect on their own practice and those of other license holders generally, and their perceptions of risk re being targeted by such an intervention.

In terms of young test purchase volunteers and their parents, the baseline interviews were semi-structured, addressed their expectation and knowledge of the initiative, any concerns they might have had, the volunteers' views of the training or information provided by the police, etc. These interviews took place on a face-to-face basis, in the respondents' houses during the same visit. Six interviews were conducted with both volunteers and their parents and carers. No volunteer had been involved in test purchase visits at the time of the baseline interview.

3.4.2 Stakeholder views – impact

Views were sought *after* the test purchasing visits had become established from:

- Licensees/managers of outlets who had already been targeted with test purchase visits (30 interviews, 20 with those that sold alcohol and 10 in which no sale resulted)
- Police Force representatives: Interviews were held with those that had either a supervisory or an operational role (n=4).
- Volunteers and parents interviewed at baseline. (Also, five new volunteers and parents were recruited and interviewed; this group will be followed-up at outcome.)

The interview schedule at impact was similar to the baseline schedule, but with an additional component to address test purchase visits. The police officers were interviewed using an in-depth schedule; these interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis.

3.4.3 Stakeholder views – outcome

Views will be sought towards the end of the pilot from:

- Licensees (n=100; *not* the same as those who have been sampled at either the baseline or the impact phases)
- Volunteers and parents first interviewed at impact (n=5)
- Police Force representatives: Interviews will be held with those that gave their views at Impact (n= 4).
- Procurator Fiscal (1 interview)
- Focus groups (n=3) with Licensing Board representatives, community council members and the Fife Alcohol and Drug Action Team.

3.4.4 Stakeholder views – summary

The Table below shows the numbers of interviews/focus groups which were or will be carried out during the evaluation.

	Licensees		Young People	Parents	Procurator Fiscal	Police officers	Focus groups
	Targeted	Not targeted					
Phase 1		100	6**	6**			
Phase 2	30		6/5	6/5		4	
Phase 3	c80	c20*	5	5	1	4	3***
Total	110	120	c22	c22	1	8	3

*The exact number of licensee interviews with targeted and non-targeted licensees at baseline and outcome will depend upon the approach agreed with Fife Police Force.

** 6 volunteers and parents/guardians were interviewed at baseline and followed-up at Impact (Phase 2). Also, researchers recruited a new a sample of volunteers and parents at Phase 2 and followed this second group in Phase 3.

*** Licensing Board representatives, Community councils and Alcohol and Drug Action Team will participate in focus group research at the outcome phase.

Therefore about 286 interviews will be carried out, the vast majority of which will be held with licensees.

3.5 CONSENT AND INTERVIEWER SCREENING

In order that young volunteers participated in the evaluation of test purchase pilots ScotCen researchers sought their consent directly as they were over the age of 16 years of age at the time of contact. We negotiated with Fife Police as to how to approach the volunteers and parents in the first instance. All ScotCen interviewers and research staff undergo regular Disclosure Scotland checks.

3.6 ANALYSIS

All open-ended questions with licensees were recorded by the interviewer taking full notes at the time of interview, before preparing a near-verbatim account as soon as possible after the interview had been completed. This account was transcribed and entered on to Microsoft Access to aid analysis. A similar approach was utilised to analyse the responses of volunteers and their parents and guardians.

In-depth interviews with police officers and a procurator fiscal were or will be taped, transcribed and qualitative thematic analysis carried out using N6 or Framework. Focus groups will be taped, transcribed and entered on to N6 or Framework to allow thematic analysis to be carried out.

Data collected by police officers during visits was and will be collated, processed and analysed using SPSS. Statistical significance testing will be carried out, where appropriate.

4. RESULTS

4.1 BASELINE – LICENSEE INTERVIEWS

4.1.1 Licensee sample

Table 4.1 demonstrates that 48% of interviews at baseline were carried out with licensees working in all off sale premises combined; 52% of licensees represented the on sale categories. As would be expected, given the relative numbers of the respective outlets in Fife, the two most common categories of licensees interviewed were based in licensed grocer/shops (n=31) and pubs (n=43). The category of nightclubs was also expanded to cover ‘fun’ pubs – larger-scale theme pubs in the main with more similarities to nightclubs than pubs.

Table 4.1 Licensee interviews – types of outlet

Type of outlet:	Frequency N (%)
Licensed grocer/shop	31 (31.0)
Supermarket	12 (12.0)
Off licence	5 (5.0)
Public House	43 (43.0)
Nightclub/‘Fun’ pub	9 (9.0)
TOTAL	100 (100.0)

The interviews with licensees started on June 20th 2006 and the vast majority were completed before the police started their test purchase visits on June 30th 2006. Due to the fact that there were a number of interview refusals (n=4) and also a number of premises in the original sample which were found to be inappropriate when visited by the research team (n=10; no longer shops, no longer selling alcohol, etc) a minority of interviews took place in July 2006. However, due to ScotCen and Fife Police sharing their sampling and targeting strategy only one interview was conducted with a licensee who had already been targeted in the first wave of test purchasing. Therefore, at baseline 99% of licensee interviews were conducted with untargeted licensees (premises not visited for a test purchase at the time of interview).

The licensees were asked if their outlet sold alcohol to those over the age of 18 years or whether they had imposed their own age restrictions. Nine outlets, seven of which were off sale sites, were reported as having a rule that they only sold alcohol to those over and including the age of 21 years. Unfortunately, this number was too low to carry out meaningful analysis by the different categories of age restriction. It is also important to note that although analysis was carried out by type of outlet category (on and off sales) the small sample sizes mean that the results have to be treated with some caution.

4.1.2 Knowledge, awareness and views of test purchasing

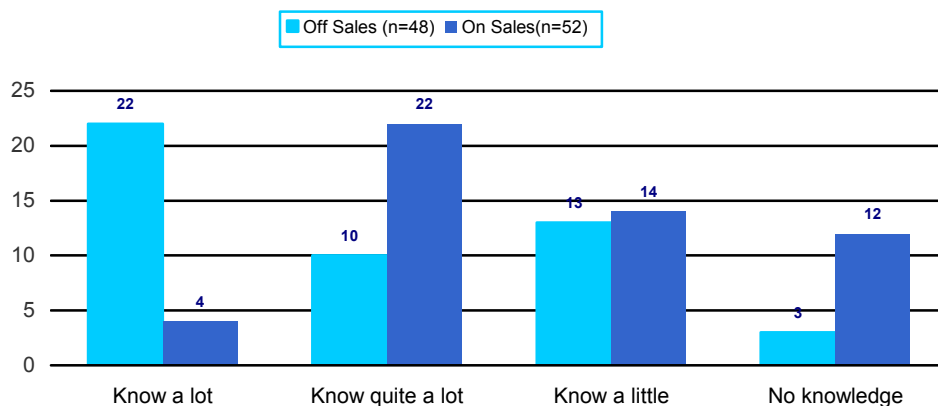
At baseline 42% of licensees reported that they knew little or nothing about test purchasing (see Table 4.2), despite the fact that there was a lot of publicity concerning the pilot exercise, and Fife Police had been in touch with every licensee in the area in a variety of ways (arranged meetings, leaflets, visits etc) to inform licence holders about the pilot scheme. However, the baseline knowledge levels reported during the tobacco test purchase pilot were not dissimilar, with 14% of tobacco retailers stating that they nothing about test purchasing compared with 15% of licensees at baseline.

Table 4.2 Knowledge of test purchasing

How much do you know about test purchasing?:	Frequency N (%)
I know a lot	26 (26.0)
I know quite a lot	32 (32.0)
I know little	27 (27.0)
I know nothing	15 (15.0)
TOTAL	100 (100.0)

Figure 4-A demonstrates that there appeared to be a difference in response between respondents working in off and on sales premises to this question. Licensees in the off sales sector were more likely to say that that they had a great deal of knowledge of test purchasing compared with the responses of their counterparts in the on sales sector. Almost one-quarter of the on sales interviewees stated that they had no knowledge of test purchasing.

Figure 4-A Knowledge of test purchasing by type of licensed premises



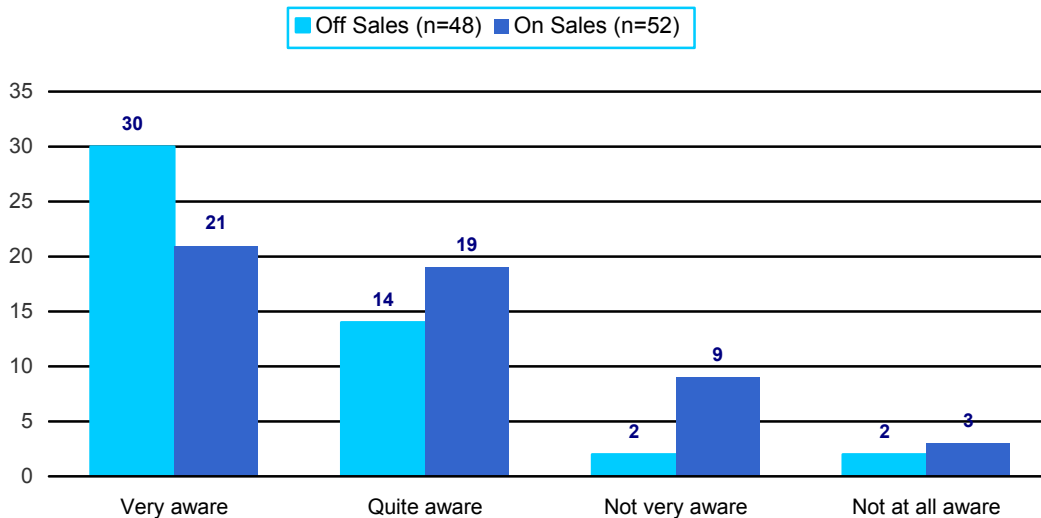
Although the licensees indicated that they might not have had a great deal of knowledge of test purchasing as a concept, they were able to demonstrate a greater awareness of the pilot initiative in Fife (see Table 4.3). Only 16% of interviewees reported that they were not very or not at all aware of the pilot, which suggests that the alcohol pilot information campaign did have some impact on the views of licensees.

Table 4.3 Awareness of test purchase pilot

How aware are you re the test purchase pilot?:	Frequency N (%)
Very aware	51 (51.0)
Quite aware	33 (33.0)
Not very aware	11 (11.0)
Not aware at all	5 (5.0)
TOTAL	100 (100.0)

It can be seen in Figure 4-B that awareness of the test purchase pilot tended to be higher in the respondents from off sales premises. However, if Figures 4A and 4B are compared it is clear that awareness levels of the test purchasing pilot overall were greater than the knowledge of test purchasing in both categories of licensee respondent.

Figure 4-B Awareness of test purchase pilot by type of licensed premises



At baseline over 60% of respondents said that test purchasing was a very good idea (see Table 4.4). Only 4 interviewees thought that test purchasing was not a good idea. Table 4.4 also shows that licensees in both the on and off sales sectors held very similar views. It should be noted that 41% of traders in the tobacco pilot described test purchasing as being a very good idea at baseline.

Table 4.4 Views of test purchasing by type of licensee

Test purchasing is:	Off Sales N (%)	On sales N (%)	TOTAL N (%)
A very good idea	30 (62.5)	31 (60.8)	61 (61.6)
Quite a good idea	16 (33.3)	18 (35.3)	34 (34.3)
Not a very good idea	-	-	-
Not a good idea at all	2 (4.2)	2 (3.9)	4 (4.0)
TOTAL	48 (100.0)	51* (100.0)	99 (100.0)

Notes to table *Don't know/Can't say = 1.

4.1.3 Likelihood of being targeted during pilot

Over three-quarters of licensees perceived that it was at least quite likely that they would be subject to a test purchase visit during the pilot phase (see Table 4.5). There was not a great deal of variation in response between licensees in the on and off sales categories. Nine interviewees, though, were unable to give a view as to the likelihood of being targeted during the pilot phase.

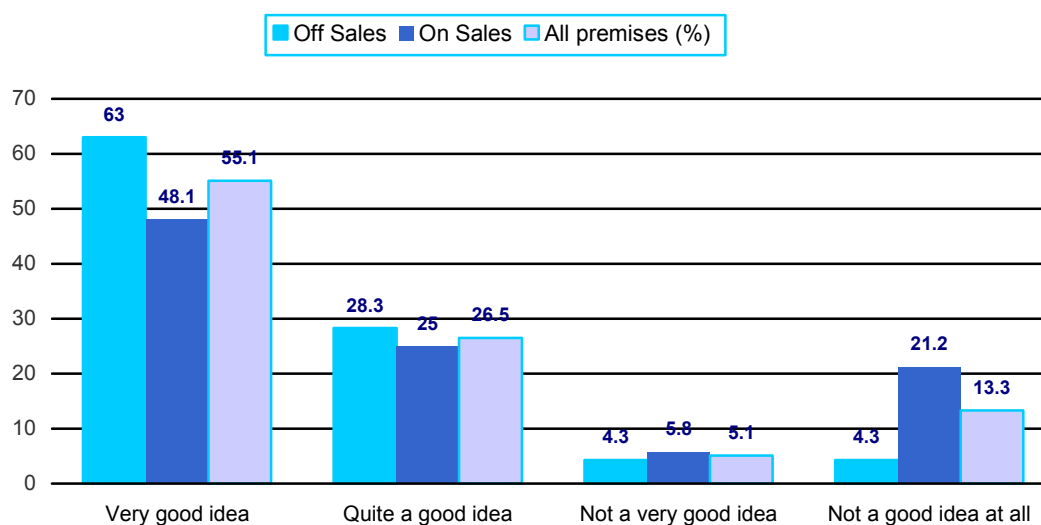
Table 4.5 Likelihood of test purchase occurring at outlet by type of licensee

Likelihood of test purchase being carried out at your outlet?:	Off Sales N (%)	On sales N (%)	TOTAL N (%)
Very likely	27 (56.3)	26 (50.0)	53 (53.0)
Quite likely	13 (27.1)	12 (23.1)	25 (25.0)
Not very likely	4 (8.3)	6 (11.5)	10 (10.0)
Not at all likely	1 (2.1)	2 (3.8)	3 (3.0)
Don't know/can't say	3 (6.3)	6 (11.5)	9 (9.0)
TOTAL	48 (100.0)	52 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

4.1.4 Proof of age card schemes

The interviewees were asked what their perceptions of proof of age card schemes, such as the PASS, Citizen or Prove it types. Although a majority of respondents thought that proof of age card schemes were a very or quite good idea, on the whole the licensees seemed to prefer test purchasing as an enforcement measure if Figure 4-C is compared with Table 4.4. Fourteen of those working in on sales premises reported that proof of age card schemes were not a good idea. On the whole, those working in the off sales sector appeared to hold more positive views of proof of age cards.

Figure 4-C Views of proof of age cards by type of licensed premises



It can be seen in Table 4.6 that over 90% of licensees stated that they would always ask for proof of age information (cards, driving licences, passports etc) if they had doubts that the person purchasing alcohol was above the age of 18 or 21 years. Only two interviewees said that they would request such information rarely or never.

Table 4.6 Requests for proof of age cards/information by type of licensee

If a customer might be underage would you ask for proof of age info:	Off Sales N (%)	On sales N (%)	TOTAL N (%)
Always	45 (93.8)	47 (90.4)	92 (92.0)
Mostly	3 (6.3)	3 (5.8)	6 (6.0)
Sometimes/rarely/never	-	2 (3.8)	2 (2.0)
TOTAL	48 (100.0)	52 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Notes to table Percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding.

4.1.5 Training of staff and licensee practice

Table 4.7 shows that licensees based in the off sales category were about three times more likely to say that they gave their staff a lot of training compared with those based in the on sales category. Twenty licensees working in on sale premises stated that they only gave staff a little or no training. This, of course, might reflect the different nature of the on and off sales categories, with those working in pubs and nightclubs dealing almost exclusively with alcohol sales, whereas those in many off sales outlets will be selling a variety of age-restricted and non age-restricted goods. However, it should be noted that only a slight majority of the on sales licensees said that they provided staff with at least “quite a lot of training” at baseline.

Table 4.7 Amount of staff training by type of licensee

Amount of training of staff re selling alcohol to young people:	Off Sales N (%)	On sales N (%)	TOTAL N (%)
A lot of training	22 (45.8)	8 (15.4)	30 (30.0)
Quite a lot of training	15 (31.3)	19 (36.5)	34 (34.0)
A little training	6 (12.5)	12 (23.1)	18 (18.0)
No training	1 (2.1)	8 (15.4)	9 (9.0)
Not applicable (no other staff)	4 (8.3)	5 (9.6)	9 (9.0)
TOTAL	48 (100.0)	52 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Those licensees that gave training to staff were asked to describe it in more detail. The open-ended statements suggested that both formal and informal training were given to staff. Many respondents argued that common sense had to be used – if anyone had doubts about the age of someone trying to purchase alcohol proof of age had to be asked for, and if that was not forthcoming the sale could not go ahead. These respondents tended to say that there was little actual training that could be given to staff. It was often pointed out in the smaller communities that those serving knew the locality and were aware of the age of young people attempting to purchase alcohol.

“Always ask for ID if you think they are underage, if no ID, no drink... No formal training – I’m always in the shop, staff already here for a long time, they know what to do...” Respondent 009

“I’ve only got a couple of staff and I tell them if they think someone is under 21 to ask for proof of age. It is only the passing trade that is a grey area, this is a small village and really we all know everyone.” Respondent 013

“In-store induction when staff start, given a booklet ‘To Sell or Not to Sell’. I only let our staff sell one bottle of Buckfast at a time. I check outside the shop to make sure youngsters aren’t hanging around. The staff are trained to ID anyone under 21 and they only accept a passport, driving licence, Citizen or Pass card. Our tills have a prompt when alcohol is rung up to check for age so it makes them look up even when they are busy. We go over things every six months or so to refresh it in their minds so I would say ‘a lot of training’.”

Respondent 024

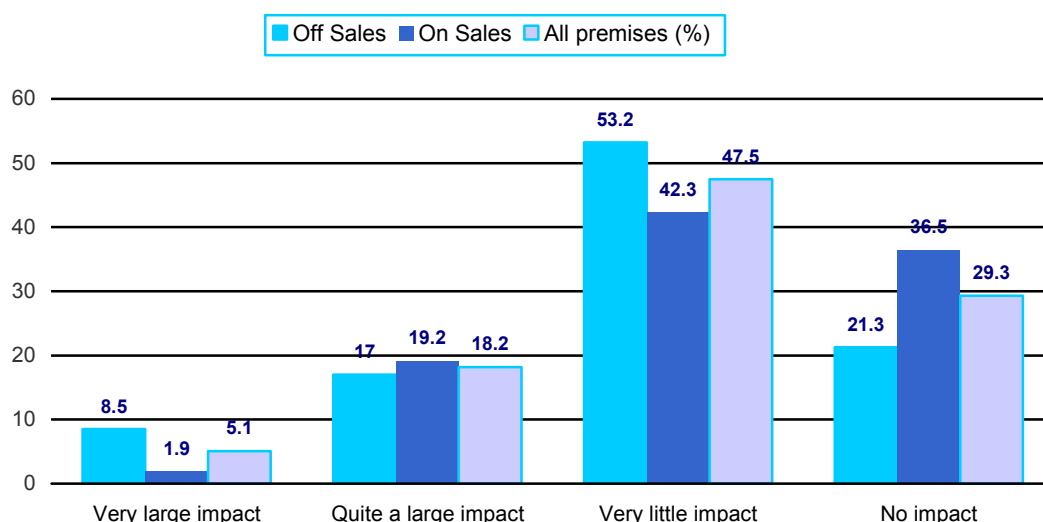
“We have a policy, if in doubt ask for photographic ID, driving licence or a passport or to come and ask the bar manager. They are briefed on the law relating to selling alcohol to the underage and consequences to our licence if they do.” Respondent 064

“My bar manager is pretty good, she deals with it all and she goes over everything with the new staff. The problem is we have quite a high turnover of staff so we’ve got to make sure everyone knows the score. We’ve just gone over it all again at a staff meeting because this pilot is going on.”

Respondent 086

It can be seen in Figure 4-D that over three-quarters of licensees perceived that the alcohol test purchase pilot would have little or no impact on their own practice in relation to selling alcohol to young people. Nineteen licensees in on sale premises (37%) thought that the pilot would have no impact at all on their working practice.

Figure 4-D Perceptions of impact of test purchase pilot on own practice by type of licensed premises



Although a majority of interviewees thought that the alcohol test purchase pilot would have a minimal impact on their own practice, a slight majority went on to say that the impact on the practice of other licensees in the same area would be at least quite large (see Table 4.8). One-fifth of respondents reported that the impact on other licensees’ practice would be minimal, but it should be noted that 28% of respondents were unable to give an opinion.

Table 4.8 Perceptions of impact of pilot on practice of other licensees in area by type of licensee

Impact of pilot on practice of other licensees in area:	Off Sales N (%)	On sales N (%)	TOTAL N (%)
Very large impact	10 (20.8)	11 (21.2)	21 (21.0)
Quite a large impact	13 (27.1)	17 (32.7)	30 (30.0)
Very little impact	9 (18.8)	8 (15.4)	17 (17.0)
No impact	2 (4.2)	2 (3.8)	4 (4.0)
Don’t know/can’t say	14 (29.2)	14 (26.9)	28 (28.0)
TOTAL	48 (100.0)	52 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Notes to table Percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding.

4.1.6 Measures aimed at stopping alcohol sales to underage young people

The interviewees were asked what they thought the best way of stopping the sales to those who are under the legal age to purchase alcohol would be in the future. Table 4.9 shows that the most popular response was for test purchasing to be utilised in combination with the use of a robust, nationally-accepted proof of age card scheme; 55% of licensees held this view. In comparison, 48% of traders interviewed at baseline during the tobacco test purchase pilot called for the combination of test purchasing and a national proof of age card scheme. One quarter of interviewees thought that a nationally-accepted proof of age card scheme was the most appropriate way to limit sales of alcohol to those under the age of 18 years. The “other” category was mainly comprised of those licensees who gave a combination of various options from Table 4.9. As a result 58% of licensees called for test purchasing to be carried out at baseline, albeit in combination with other methods. Few interviewees perceived that education of staff or increased surveillance were the best ways of stopping underage alcohol sales. It is important to note that there was very little support for the status quo (3%) and no support at all among licensees for test purchasing to be adopted in isolation.

Table 4.9 Licensee views of measures to stop sales of alcohol to those who are under age by type of licensee

Which of the following measures do you think is best:	Off Sales N (%)	On sales N (%)	TOTAL N (%)
Test purchasing combined with a national proof of age card scheme	29 (60.4)	26 (50.0)	55 (55.0)
National proof of age card scheme alone	10 (20.8)	15 (28.8)	25 (25.0)
Other	6 (12.5)	6 (11.5)	12 (12.0)
No TP, more education and training of staff	1 (2.1)	2 (3.8)	3 (3.0)
No TP, increased surveillance (police, trading standards etc)	1 (2.1)	1 (1.9)	2 (2.0)
Test purchasing alone	-	-	-
No change, status quo is fine	1 (2.1)	2 (3.8)	3 (3.0)
TOTAL	48 (100.0)	52 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Notes to table Percentages do not all add up to 100 due to rounding.

The respondents were asked to give additional comments in terms of future modifications to the practice of selling alcohol to young people. A number of themes were raised by the licensees. Firstly, it was argued that test purchasing was a good idea as many retailers or licensees known to the respondents were thought to be unscrupulous in the way they sold alcohol to those under the age of 18 years. This was especially the case when those based in on sales premises described the practice of those in certain parts of the off sale sector. Secondly, although proof of age card schemes were viewed quite positively by some, they were also perceived as being relatively easy to flout, and many comments were received about how young people were forging proof of age identification at present. Thirdly, the licensees said that the law as it stood was unfair, and that young people, their parents and schools should be responsible in upholding the law in relation to alcohol sales. It was claimed that young people who bought or attempted to buy alcohol were only ever cautioned, whereas the licensee was subject to a fine and possible loss of the licence. In relation to this, it was also emphasised that the police and courts could do more to stop underage drinking. For

example, a number of interviewees stated that they had contacted the police before to inform them of groups of young people drinking in a public place or older people purchasing alcohol for those under the legal age, but that the police did not act on this information. Fourthly, there was a view expressed that young people would get access to alcohol regardless of any safeguards in place, either by obtaining alcohol from home or as been mentioned using older people to purchase the alcohol for them. Finally, a minority of licensees were very negative about test purchasing, proof of age card schemes, increased education and surveillance and the pilot exercise running in Fife.

“It would be more of a deterrent if the young people buying and their parents were charged and fined, at present they are just cautioned... It has been very good that we have been consulted by the police and invited to their seminars.”

Respondent 005

“It's hard to control. If they want alcohol they'll get it, they send someone in for it. I had to bar someone the other week, I saw a young lad handing money over to another who I know was over 18. I refused and later another lad came in and bought alcohol, I had my suspicions and saw him handing over the bag further up the street.” Respondent 010

“I do think Test Purchasing is a good idea because it's the only way to catch out the unscrupulous licensee that will sell to anyone. As a parent, I'm all for it... we do Test Purchasing within our supermarket group anyway. All our staff wear badges saying they will ask for ID if the customer looks under 21, so everyone knows that we are serious about it. My licence is precious to me, I'm not going to take any risks.” Respondent 037

“Just that if there is a National Proof of Age card it has to have a photo and some kind of hologram or something so it can't be forged. We get a lot of forged cards in here. There hasn't been much information given about this pilot. We only got a flier that had a bit to tick if you wanted more information and I did that and sent it back but nothing has happened.” Respondent 050

“The problem is off licences selling to the underage.... When the police take the drunk, they should also fine them, they seem to have the money. Pubs get the blame for most of the underage drinking when everyone knows the biggest culprits selling to youngsters are the corner shops who close at 10pm and leave everyone else to mop up.” Respondent 070

“I think that increased surveillance by all authorities along with test purchasing. Police and courts need to work closer together. Police have stopped lifting people under the influence because the courts just slap hands; police are banging their heads with no results.” Respondent 072

“I think (test purchasing and national proof of age cards) are a good idea.... The bus stop along here is horrendous; the lane I find quite intimidating.”
Respondent 088

“... if there is a national proof of age card I hope it wouldn't be one of these that you can buy for a fiver off the internet, they would have to do it properly.”

It is a problem but I don't know how much this test purchasing thing will help. There's a place around here and on a Friday night there must be 600 in there and you would be lucky to find two that were over 18. The police know all about it but I think their attitude is that they know where they all are so leave it at that.” Respondent 092

“We actually got reported to the police for selling to underagers but they came and checked us out and everything was fine. I think it was someone who we had refused trying to get their own back. I'm quite happy with test purchasing but I think some of the other places in town will be in for a shock... Some of these cards they carry are a joke, smudged pictures and the rest. If they bring in a new one, it should be issued to everyone at school at age 15, with a photo and make it a certain colour then when they turn 18, they have to renew it and they then get a different colour, another photo and something that can't be copied...” Respondent 094

4.2 BASELINE – YOUNG VOLUNTEER INTERVIEWS

4.2.1 Background information

Six interviews were carried out in late June and early July 2006. The interviewees were all aged 16 years at the time of the baseline interviews. The interviews were carried out with three male and three female volunteers. Two interviewees were selected from each of the three areas of Fife (Central, West and East).

4.2.2 Involvement in the test purchase pilot

The interviewees were asked how they came to be recruited for the test purchase pilot. In most instances the police were said to have given information about the pilot to school staff, and the head teachers or guidance teachers then invited pupils to a meeting to see whether they were interested in becoming test purchase volunteers. Police officers then arranged home visits and gave more information about the pilot to the young people and their parents or carers. One respondent also said that the police had visited the school to give a talk about drugs and alcohol during which the pilot was mentioned, and another respondent also stated that he wanted to be involved when he heard a radio feature on the pilot.

“We had a talk about drugs and alcohol by the police at school and told us about the project and if we were interested we had to fill out a form and passport photo to our teacher... The police phoned the house to speak to my mum then came to see us and to get my mum’s consent.... They explained what would happen... If we didn't want to do it we could pull out, even at the last minute, it wouldn't be a problem.” Respondent 2

“Last September or October the Head Teacher asked me if I would be interested. She had already spoken to my mum and she said okay. In January or February I got a phone call from the police and I went down to get my photo taken at the police station. Then I didn't hear anything for ages.” Respondent 5

4.2.3 Awareness of test purchasing

Three of the volunteers reported that they had no knowledge of test purchasing or the pilot before they were approached by teaching staff at school and the police officers. Two of the other respondents spoke of seeing television programmes or hearing radio features on test purchasing or the alcohol pilot. The final interviewee had knowledge of a similar exercise run in Fife on a previous occasion, although on a smaller scale.

"I knew nothing about it at all." Respondent 1

"I had heard of Test Purchasing of cigarettes and computer games, I had seen a programme on TV about it and like I said, I had heard about this Test Purchasing of alcohol pilot on the radio." Respondent 6

4.2.4 Parental reaction to involvement in the pilot

At baseline, the interviewees tended to state that their parents thought that participating in the test purchase pilot would be beneficial for them. In two cases the respondents perceived that their parents had little knowledge of test purchasing but once the nature of the pilot was explained to them they were happy for their children to become involved.

"I explained about it and she was up for it and happy for me to do it and said it would be good for my CV." Respondent 2

"I think at first they didn't really understand much about it. Once the police came to see me and he explained everything, they were fine with it. They are all for it now and think it's a good thing to be involved in." Respondent 6

4.2.5 Training and briefing for the pilot

Five respondents reported that they had been fully briefed for the test purchase pilot at the time of the interview. Only one volunteer said that he had started the briefing programme, but this had still to be completed. When the volunteers were asked to describe the training or briefing they all said that there was no formal training, but that the police visited their homes and gave a detailed account of what was expected of volunteers, how the pilot would work in practice and how their safety would be ensured.

"Once we said we'd do it, we had our photographs taken by the policeman. I was given a form to fill out and hand it back to the policeman. Then a policeman came here and spoke to me and my dad. He gave us more detailed descriptions of what I'd be doing, going into off-licenses to purchase alcohol without ID, with (one of the policemen) standing close by." Respondent 3

"The policeman who is organising it came to see me and my parents at home... He explained the procedure, how I'll be accompanied by two officers, one will come into the premises and one will stay outside. I will already have been briefed on the individual shop or whatever so I know where the alcohol will be, then after there will be a debrief and I may have to go to court. That's

all there was to it, just the talk from the policeman at my house, but it was good. He told me everything I needed to know.” Respondent 6

The interviewees were asked for their views on the quality of the briefing they had received. At baseline the briefing was viewed positively, with all of the respondents rating it as being of very or quite good quality and very or quite useful. It was also said to be comprehensible, and all but one of the interviewees perceived that the right amount of information was provided – the final volunteer thought that too much information had been given.

“Again, he answered everything I needed to know as well as reassuring my parents...he covered just about everything without giving too much information.” Respondent 1

“They went over everything that would happen, they made me feel safe because someone would always be with me and I could pull out... if I walked into a pub and got nervous, and it wouldn't be a problem... they made it easy, any questions I asked they explained so I understood. It was basically straightforward.” Respondent 2

4.2.6 Views of participation in test purchasing visits

All of the volunteers had yet to take part in a test purchase exercise at the time of interview, although one volunteer had been given a provisional date for involvement. They were all asked if they had any concerns about taking part in the pilot, as well as what positive features might result from being a test purchase volunteer.

One volunteer expressed some concern at baseline. He thought that there was a possibility that he might be recognised by someone even if the test purchase was carried out in a location away from his own neighbourhood, and that this person might inform the retailer in question.

“I'm a bit concerned that even though I'll be taken to another area, just by coincidence there might be someone I know there and they might tell the shopkeeper. That's all really.” Respondent 5

On the other hand, almost all of the interviewees foresaw certain benefits with participating in the pilot. It was reported that the volunteers wanted to become involved to carry out a worthwhile service for their community and the police. The respondents added that they hoped the pilot would reduce or stop underage drinking. Participation was also thought likely to be useful in terms of future career development.

“I think it will give some benefits to the community and prevent or decrease underage drinking. It will look good on my CV.” Respondent 1

“it will be good getting to experience what kind of work the police will do to stop underage drinking.” Respondent 3

4.2.7 Future test purchase exercises

Although the volunteers were yet to take part in the alcohol test purchase pilot, they were asked if they would be interested in taking part in other test purchase activities in the future, assuming that they were the appropriate age. At baseline all interviewees perceived that they would like to be involved in other test purchase exercises in the future, although it was acknowledged that this might depend upon how the alcohol pilot developed. Again, the volunteers suggested that the benefits for the community and indeed themselves would outweigh any disadvantages if they were to participate in other test purchasing projects.

“I think test purchasing is a really good idea and I'm glad to be taking part in it. Also, it will be good for my CV, especially since I'm thinking of joining the police.” Respondent 6

4.3 BASELINE – INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS

4.3.1 Background information

The interviewees with the parents and the young volunteers were conducted during the same visit to the house, although they were carried out on a one-to-one basis. All of the parental interviews were carried out with the mothers of the volunteers.

4.3.2 Involvement in the test purchase pilot

The parental interviewees were asked how the volunteers had become involved in the pilot. As would be expected, they gave very similar responses to the volunteers.

“The Year Head at school had been approached by the community policeman to ask if she could recommend anyone suitable. She phoned to ask if I would agree to X's name being put forward. That was the end of last year, I think. I said okay, then the police phoned a few months later, we had to go to the station for a photo which was then passed to HQ for the volunteers to be selected.” Respondent 5

4.3.3 Awareness and knowledge of test purchasing and pilot

Four of the parents said that they had never heard of test purchasing or the alcohol pilot before their children had become involved. The other two respondents indicated that they had limited knowledge gleaned from television programmes or newspaper articles.

“I knew they had done one on tobacco from either the papers or on TV, but not a lot more other than what X told me about her meeting at school.”
Respondent 4

“I had never heard of Test Purchasing, I didn't know what it was.”
Respondent 6

Five of the respondents stated that they felt very well informed in relation to the pilot itself as a result of information provided by the police, and to a lesser extent the volunteers. One parent thought that the police might have been able to provide a bit more information in relation to the potential start date for their daughter's test purchase visits and also the frequency of volunteer involvement.

"I was informed adequately by my daughter and by the Community Police Officer." Respondent 1

"We haven't had much feedback apart from the policeman being here, other than a call from them to find out when X is on holiday. I would like to have been told the starting time, we were told it should have started earlier but it had been put back and I would also like to know how often X might be expected to take part." Respondent 4

4.3.4 Perceptions of the training and briefing programme

In contrast to the volunteers, only one parent reported that the briefing programme had been completed at the time of interview. Most of the other interviewees thought that the training had not taken place fully, but they also admitted that it was possible their sons or daughters had not informed them of more recent developments. It is likely that the parents were also unsure how to respond as the question related to formal training as well as briefing.

"I don't know if there was to be any more steps in-between the policeman being here and X starting." Respondent 3

"X is yet to start the briefing or training programme, but that is not to say she hasn't had anything at school and not told me." Respondent 4

The parents who were able to respond said that the information provided by the police was of a very or quite good quality. As the parents were often present at the same time as the volunteers when the police described the process and what was expected of young people participating in the pilot they were able to give additional comments as to quality of the briefing. They said that verbal rather than written information was given, it was presented in a straightforward and understandable way and questions were encouraged. The consensus was that a sufficient amount of information was provided by the police.

"Because the (police) were very informative and good at putting it across, they had a real sense of how to put it across in layman's language, what would be expected of X... They explained exactly what they would do and that police would be there to support them. They are always safe and supervised... If they didn't want to do a particular purchase because they felt uncomfortable that was okay... if there was any area we wouldn't like them to go to... I feel we are fully in the picture of what they are going to do."

Respondent 2

"It's been more a briefing than training. The policeman went into lots of detail and gave a very good explanation. It was all verbal, I don't think he's been given anything written but I would say it's been very good."

Respondent 6

4.3.5 Views of volunteer participation in test purchasing visits

The interviewees were asked if they had any concerns about the volunteers taking part in the pilot, as well as what benefits might accrue from their involvement. Four respondents stated that they had no concerns as long as the process outlined by the police was followed. The other two parents did express some concerns. It was said that the test purchase attempts might take place too close to home with the concomitant possibility that the test purchaser be recognised, with unknown repercussions. Also, it was argued that the volunteer might be breaking the law and could also face being called to give evidence in court.

“My concern was that they would be technically breaking the law and I raised that with the policeman... and he said they were also looking at them not having to go to court to give evidence.” Respondent 4

“My main concern was that if he went into somewhere local that he would be recognised and you don't know what the repercussions could be. The police said it would be well out of his area but his friend from X has carried out some in Y and that's only five minutes away, they did ask him and his mum if it was okay, mind you. I feel that it's a bit close.” Respondent 6

All of the parental interviewees thought that there would be benefits for the volunteers resulting from their involvement in the pilot. The respondents said that test purchasing would be worthwhile work experience, would potentially make the volunteers more responsible and was also providing a service to the community at the same time. Some comments related to the issue of alcohol sales to young people in particular – a few of the respondents viewed this as a major problem. The police providing a certificate and payment for the volunteers was perceived positively, as was the fact that payment was only mentioned after the young people had been recruited to the project.

“... it is an experience for them, showing them the responsibilities for future life, why they shouldn't buy it at that age and why it shouldn't be sold to them at that age. It will also be good for their CVs, they get a certificate at the end of it.” Respondent 2

“I think it'll be a good experience... I think it'll be something that he can put on his CV. I think it's good to get involved in things. I thought it was good that they weren't told they were being paid until after they had been chosen but it's nice that they get something for it.” Respondent 5

“I think X will enjoy it... He is thinking he might join the police so it's interesting for him to be involved. I think it's good to be involved with this project in particular, it will make him aware of how big a problem it is.”

Respondent 6

4.3.6 Future test purchase exercises

Five parents stated that they were willing for their sons or daughters to take part in other test purchase projects in the future. One interviewee reserved judgement until the alcohol pilot had become established and any impact on volunteers could be assessed. The consensus was

that it was likely to be a positive experience and any test purchase activities are likely to be of benefit to young people in the longer term. The only slight criticism at baseline raised by one mother was that there had been a significant time lag between the first contact with the police and being selected and then given a provisional start date.

“If she wanted to, it's her choice.” Respondent 1

“If it will prevent problems for young people in the future it would be a positive thing, no matter what the test purchase project was.” Respondent 3

“The only thing is that it's been a very slow process from being contacted to being chosen. We had no idea if he had been picked and then a long time until he has been given a date. There is no contact in-between times so we were left wondering. I didn't know whether I should phone them or not”

Respondent 5

4.4 IMPACT – LICENSEE INTERVIEWS

4.4.1 Licensee sample

At impact only 30 licensees were interviewed. All of these 30 interviewees were based in premises that had already been subject to a test purchase visit. Also, the sample was chosen to reflect:

- Licensees who had failed (n=20) and passed (n=10) the test purchase test
- On (n=15) and off sale (n=15) premises of all types (e.g. grocers, supermarkets, pubs)
- Licensees based throughout Fife
- Premises with alcohol sales to over 18s (n=25) and over 21s rule (n=5).

The interviews with licensees started in late October 2006 and were completed in early November 2006. However, due to the small numbers in the sample at impact basic frequencies will be used in the following sections. Limited comparison is also made to baseline interviews, but due to the small sample size at impact this has to be treated with some caution.

4.4.2 Knowledge, awareness and views of test purchasing

As would be expected given the fact that the licensees had all been subject to test purchase visits, the vast majority of interviewees said that they knew at least quite a lot about test purchasing at impact (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10 Knowledge of test purchasing

How much do you know about test purchasing?:	Frequency N
I know a lot	12
I know quite a lot	14
I know little	3
I know nothing	1
TOTAL	30

Again, levels of reported awareness among the group of ‘targeted’ licensees was quite high at impact, with a slight majority of respondents stating that they were very aware of the pilot in Fife (see Table 4.11). Not surprisingly, the two licensees who said they were not very aware of the pilot exercise represented premises that had not sold alcohol during the test purchase visits.

Table 4.11 Awareness of test purchase pilot

How aware are you re the test purchase pilot?:	Frequency N
Very aware	16
Quite aware	12
Not very aware	2
TOTAL	30

Table 4.12 shows that the vast majority of interviewees stated that test purchasing was at least quite a good idea at impact, despite the fact that 20 of these licensees had been caught selling alcohol to volunteers. Two off sale licensees thought that test purchasing was not a good idea.

Table 4.12 Views of test purchasing

Test purchasing is:	Frequency N
A very good idea	14
Quite a good idea	13
Not a very good idea	1
Not a good idea at all	2
TOTAL	30

4.4.3 Likelihood of being targeted during pilot

All of the licensees at impact thought that they would be subject to a test purchase visit in the future during the pilot phase (see Table 4.13). As all the licensees at impact had been targeted during the pilot, and indeed the majority had sold alcohol to volunteers, this result is to be expected. Fourteen interviewees who had sold to volunteers during the pilot perceived that a future test purchase visit at their outlet was very likely.

Table 4.13 Likelihood of test purchase occurring at outlet

Likelihood of test purchase being carried out at your outlet?:	TOTAL N
Very likely	20
Quite likely	10
TOTAL	30

4.4.4 Proof of age card schemes

As was the case at baseline, the majority of those licensees able to give an opinion said that proof of age card schemes were at least quite good idea (see Figure 4-E). Three licensees who worked in premises which failed the test purchase test thought that such schemes were not a good idea.

Figure 4-E Views of proof of age cards by result of test purchase visit

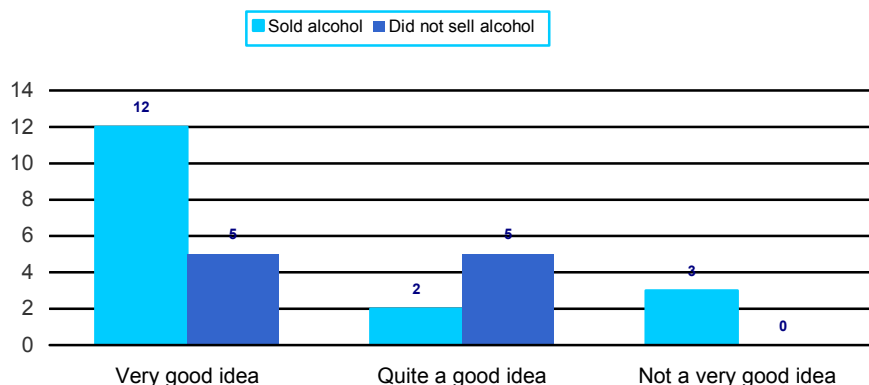


Table 4.14 shows that almost all of the interviewees at impact said that they would always ask for proof of age information (cards, driving licences, passports etc) if they had doubts that the person purchasing alcohol was above the age of 18 or 21 years. One licensee thought that such requests would be conducted on a majority of occasions.

Table 4.14 Requests for proof of age cards/information

If a customer might be underage would you ask for proof of age info:	TOTAL N
Always	29
Mostly	1
TOTAL	30

4.4.5 Training of staff and licensee practice

In the sample of licensees responding in the impact phase the reported amount of training given to staff appeared to be increased when compared with training given to staff at baseline (see Table 4.15), although the usual caveats related to small sample sizes apply. Only one individual who had failed the test purchase test said that no training was given to staff members.

Table 4.15 Amount of staff training by type of licensee

Amount of training of staff re selling alcohol to young people:	Off Sales N	On sales N	TOTAL N
A lot of training	7	3	10
Quite a lot of training	3	8	11
A little training	4	1	5
No training	-	2	2
Not applicable (no other staff)	1	1	2
TOTAL	15	15	30

The open-ended statements elicited at impact were broadly similar to the ones elicited at baseline. Again, it was stated that both formal and informal training were given to staff. Some respondents outlined quite rigorous procedures whereas others suggested that the main point worth stressing to staff was that if they had any doubts regarding the proof of age of a customer they had to ask for relevant documentation and, if this was not forthcoming, the sale could not go ahead. According to the licensees, the fact that they had been targeted during the early phases of the pilot appeared to have some impact on the training given to staff.

“Training is given during staff induction, it's mostly verbal. I do go over it from time to time, obviously more recently... it's not the training, they know what to do but it's having the confidence to challenge people, they are scared of the abuse they get, especially the young ones.” Respondent 111

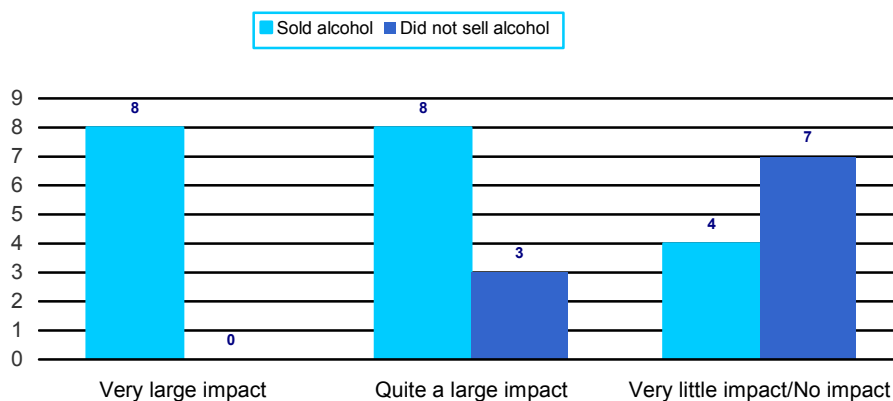
“Informal, as a family business. Everyone aware of consequences of selling underage substances.” Respondent 117

“ We were made aware of the consequences of selling and to ask for ID, driving licence or matric cards... with photographic ID and if in any doubt don't serve them.” Respondent 126

“We hold collective training and any new personnel are told about the scheme. The staff have to sign and confirm training and that they will carry out the procedures asked of them. Although, we have an over 18s policy, they are instructed to ask ID from anyone they think is under 21. We have posters about the Test Purchasing scheme in every bar and the check list we received from the police. They are reminded of procedures by the Duty Manager.” Respondent 136

Figure 4-F suggests that the test purchase pilot would appear to have had an immediate impact on those who were caught selling alcohol to volunteers, with only four of these licensees describing the impact as being minimal. Eight of the 11 licensees who thought that the overall impact on their practice would be minimal represented pubs, hotels or nightclubs.

Figure 4-F Perceptions of impact of test purchase pilot on own practice by result of test purchase visit



4.4.6 Measures aimed at stopping alcohol sales to underage young people

The interviewees were asked what they thought the best way to enforce the law related to alcohol sales to young people would be in the future. It can be seen in Table 4.16 that (as was the case at baseline) most licensees (n=17) favoured test purchasing to be utilised in combination with a robust nationally-accepted proof of age card scheme. It should be noted that 15 of the licensees who had failed the test purchase test perceived that this combination of test purchasing with a proof of age card scheme was the best way forward. Six respondents who had passed the test purchase test said that a national proof of age card scheme should be utilised in future. The “other” category was comprised of those licensees who gave a combination of various options from Table 4.16, such as test purchasing and a national proof of age card scheme being further enhanced by the criminal prosecution of the person attempting to buy alcohol illegally.

Table 4.16 Licensee views of measures to stop sales of alcohol to those who are under age by type of licensee

Which of the following measures do you think is best:	Off Sales N	On sales N	TOTAL N
Test purchasing combined with a national proof of age card scheme	10	7	17
National proof of age card scheme alone	4	4	8
Other	1	2	3
No TP, increased surveillance (police, trading standards etc)	-	1	1
No change, status quo is fine	-	1	1
TOTAL	15	15	30

4.4.7 Views of the test purchase visit

Almost all of the licensees were aware that a test purchase had been conducted in their retail outlet or bar. However, two interviewees based in off sales premises which had not sold alcohol to volunteers during the pilot said that they had no knowledge that a test purchase visit had taken place in their shop. This appeared to be because of staff turnover in the shops concerned.

Table 4.17 demonstrates that in the small sample of interviewees at impact, during 13 test purchase visits, other senior staff members were serving during the test purchase attempts. It should also be noted that on a majority of occasions when alcohol was purchased by volunteers junior members of staff were serving.

Table 4.17 Staff member serving at time of test purchase by result of test purchase visit

Who was serving during test purchase?:	Sold alcohol N	Did not sell alcohol N	TOTAL N
A senior staff member	7	6	13
A junior assistant	10	1	11
I was serving	1	1	2
Other	1	-	1
TOTAL	19*	8	27

Notes to table can't say/Don't know = 1.

Although the numbers of licensees interviewed at impact were very small, Table 4.18 suggests that the majority of staff members (n=19) did not think that the test purchase visits were particularly obvious. As would be expected, in most cases when alcohol was sold to volunteers the staff in the shop or bar did not think that it was a test purchase visit. However, alcohol was sold during test purchases on occasions when, according to the interviewees, it was obvious to staff (presumably in retrospect) that it was indeed a test purchase visit.

Table 4.18 How obvious test purchase was to staff serving by result of test purchase visit

How obvious was test purchase visit?:	Sold alcohol N	Did not sell alcohol N	TOTAL N
Very obvious	2	2	4
Quite obvious	1	1	2
Not very obvious	8	1	9
Not at all obvious	6	4	10
TOTAL	17*	8	25

Notes to table can't say/Don't know = 3.

Table 4.19 shows that the majority of licensees interviewed at impact perceived that the test purchase visits had been carried out quite or very fairly. Five respondents who said that the visits were not conducted very fairly were associated with outlets that had failed the initial test purchase test. The six respondents who stated that the test purchase had been carried out unfairly all worked in on sale premises.

Table 4.19 Perceptions of fairness of test purchase by result of pilot visit

How fair was test purchase visit?:	Sold alcohol N	Did not sell alcohol N	TOTAL N
Very fair	5	3	8
Quite fair	8	3	11
Not very fair	3	1	4
Not at all fair	2	-	2
TOTAL	18	7	25*

Notes to table can't say/Don't know = 3.

Most of the open-ended comments shared the view that the test purchases were carried out quite fairly, the volunteers did not look over 18 years of age and if they were challenged they

told the truth about their age. Some of the respondents added that members of staff had not followed procedures or had not been concentrating fully and this was responsible for the sale to the volunteer. On the other hand, a minority of licensees thought that the volunteers looked over 18 years of age, the female volunteers were wearing make-up and male volunteers were unshaven (this may well have been a police officer mistaken for a volunteer), and in such cases that the pilot verged on entrapment. Also, it was felt that the police reacted in a heavy-handed manner when a sale to a volunteer had taken place.

“I wasn't on the ball when it happened first time and I failed. It was not a nice experience. I was very aware next time and passed.” Respondent 112

“It was a 19 year old girl that was serving and she thought she recognised the boy as someone in her year at school. She was devastated when she realised she'd mistaken him. I didn't see him but apparently he was about six foot which I think is a bit unfair. The other time it's been young girls and I think it's been fair enough with them.” Respondent 113

“Because the girl was not dressed up, looked underage and purchased alcopop which is an obvious sign... the only down-side was once the purchase took place the officer entered the premises and approached the member of staff and cautioned her there and then. My opinion was they should have asked for the Duty Manager. It could have been done more discreetly as it was not done deliberately.” Respondent 121

“The operator carried out our ‘Think 21’ policy so everything went according to policy. The volunteer was challenged and said ‘okay’.” Respondent 122

“I think it was all done properly. I wasn't here but the staff member said as soon as they walked in she thought they were underage so she just followed procedure.” Respondent 125

“Because the guy had a beard and the girl had full make-up on, they were obviously trying to catch us out.” Respondent 131¹

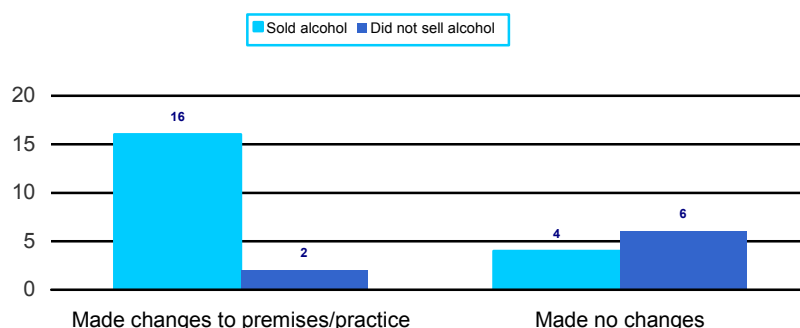
“The girl who bought the drink was made up, both girls behind the bar said she was made up and the one who was 20 thought she was older than herself.” Respondent 135

“I think the way it was done was very heavy-handed, as soon as the barman served, the police asked for me, both of us were taken round the back and read our rights. It was quite shocking. Then I got a letter saying because it was a first offence, it was a warning but further action would be taken if it happened a second time. We have been visited since and passed but it is worrying.” Respondent 139

¹ This assertion was checked by the project steering group and found to be invalid.

The majority of licensees (n=18) reported that they had made changes to their premises or their retail practice as a result of being visited during the pilot (see Figure 4-G).

Figure 4-G Changes made to premises and retail practice as a result of test purchase visit



Most interviewees stated that they were now more vigilant as a result of being targeted during the pilot, they had stressed to staff the importance of sticking to recognised procedures and to ask for proof of age documentation if they had any doubts. Training and provision of information to staff appeared to have increased as a result of the pilot visit. In some cases new procedures had been adopted as a result of staff failing the test purchase test. Those individuals who said that no changes had been implemented tended to argue that existing procedures were adequate and that a major overhaul of current systems was not necessary.

“Now have new guidelines from (name of organisation). We are more alert. We give more staff training, before it was informal training, now it is formal training. We keep an incident report sheet.” Respondent 119

“No changes but we have reinforced how important it is to stick to routines.” Respondent 122

“We are much tighter now with existing policies; we go over the training material more often and ask for ID from all young people.” Respondent 123

“We ask anyone who looks under 25 now. Last week I asked someone who was 35! We are much more careful but we're lucky here because it's mostly locals.” Respondent 131

“I implemented the 21 ID (rule) and an ID book. When local young people come in we have noted their date of birth from their driving licences so they don't have to bring in ID every time – at the back of the book we note refusals. I was registered to attend the ‘Servewise’ course prior to... the visit, I have since been on it and implemented their course with staff.” Respondent 133

The licensees were asked if they wanted to make any additional comments. Most of those who responded argued that test purchasing was a good idea, although it should not be operated in isolation, and that it should be extended beyond a pilot scheme. Other interviewees thought that it would not address the fundamental problem of adults buying alcohol for younger people. A few licensees also called for more support to be given to them by police officers working within the community.

4.5 IMPACT – YOUNG VOLUNTEER INTERVIEWS

4.5.1 Background information

The six volunteers who participated in the research at baseline were interviewed again in late October or early November 2006, when their involvement in the test purchase pilot was either coming to an end or had stopped due to age restrictions.

4.5.2 Involvement in the test purchase pilot

At the time of interview all of the volunteers said that they had taken part in test purchase visits. One volunteer had participated in over 20 visits, whereas another interviewee had only been involved in 3 test purchases. However, all of the interviewees had been sold alcohol. In total, the six volunteers reported that they had been sold alcohol on 17 occasions.

4.5.3 Training and briefing for the pilot

The six volunteers perceived that the briefing they had received from the police had prepared them for taking part in the pilot. They stated that the briefing was thorough, attempted to address every eventuality and that those giving the information also checked with the respective volunteer to see that they understood everything. No negative views regarding the briefing were elicited.

“They prepare you for the worst, talk through what sort of things could go wrong and what we would do about it and find our way out of difficulties, so that helps to feel more confident.” Respondent 2

“The police had told me what was going to happen and it pretty much all went the way they said it would. They were there with you anyway so if anything unexpected happened it wouldn't have been a problem.” Respondent 5

4.5.4 Parental reaction to involvement in the pilot

It was reported by the interviewees that the parents of the volunteers had no concerns about their involvement in the pilot. The volunteers tended to say that their parents asked them how the actual test purchase visits had been, and encouraged them to take part in more visits.

“They haven't said much, they are happy for me to do it and then just ask me how it went.” Respondent 4

“They've not really said anything, they are happy for me to take part. They think it's a good scheme.” Respondent 6

4.5.5 Perceptions of the test purchase visits

The respondents were asked what they liked and disliked about taking part in test purchase visits. Most of the volunteers said that they liked the idea of helping the police and raising the awareness of underage drinking, and they were especially pleased when they were sold alcohol. Other factors which were viewed as being positive in terms of being a volunteer

during the pilot included the excitement of attempting to buy alcohol and also being paid for the work.

“Don't really know, making the money I suppose.” Respondent 1

“The buzz from doing it, going in and being sold alcohol and then driving away in the car quickly. I like working with the police and seeing how they work, not just with us but with each other.” Respondent 2

“I don't know, just helping the police and making people aware of the situation of selling alcohol to underage people. I suppose I liked the idea of helping.” Respondent 5

“I enjoyed working with the police, I liked it when there was a sale. I'm thinking about going into the police so it was a good experience from that point of view.” Respondent 6

The only negative features noted by the volunteers were that the initial test purchase visits could be quite nerve-racking and, in common with the volunteers who took part in the tobacco pilot, when a sale occurred the experience could become quite boring as the necessary paperwork was completed. One volunteer also admitted to feelings of guilt when a retailer or publican sold alcohol and then was informed by the police that they had failed a test purchase test.

“The time it took to charge the people in the shop, I feel I could have been doing more purchases.” Respondent 1

“Feeling guilty about certain people who have sold you alcohol... being nice to you then the police go and charge them for what they have done.”
Respondent 2

“Going into the first bar, I was a bit nervous.” Respondent 3

“The only thing was, after the one where I was sold, there was a lot of paper work. I had to sit there while we went through it all, it was boring.”
Respondent 4

The volunteers agreed that taking part in the pilot had been as they had expected. The reasons given for this were that the briefing had been thorough and covered a number of possible scenarios during and after test purchase visits and that nothing unforeseen had arisen.

“Because of the briefing, everything was clear so nothing unexpected happened.” Respondent 1

Four of the interviewees stated that they were still participating in the pilot, although due to the fact that they would be turning 17 in the near future they would not be involved in many more visits. Two volunteers were no longer participating in the pilot. In both cases this was due to the fact that they were no longer 16 years of age. No volunteer had stopped participating in the pilot for any other reason at impact.

4.5.6 Future test purchase exercises

All of the volunteers indicated that they would be willing to take part in future test purchase exercises if they were of an appropriate age. This was because the process had been enjoyable on the whole and also was viewed as assisting the police, the local community and society at large. It was also stated that it gave the volunteers a sense of achievement to take part in such a pilot. The six volunteers expressed no concerns about taking part in similar exercises in the future.

“I enjoy it, it's good and it helps underage drinking and helps the police.”
Respondent 2

“It's been a good experience and it's helped the police out.” Respondent 4

“It's been good. I think it's been a worthwhile project; it's raised the awareness of the underage drinking problem so... yeah, I would do another one.” Respondent 5

Very few suggested modifications were given by the volunteers as to how the test purchase pilot might be improved if it were to be rolled out across other areas of Scotland. Two interviewees thought that the police had been too obtrusive in particular test purchase visits, although this was probably for reasons of safety, and perhaps there might be ways in which they could be less conspicuous during actual attempts. Two young people also said that they occasionally were taken to premises relatively close to their own home or areas they knew well, and preferably test purchase visits should only utilise volunteers who are not known in specific neighbourhoods. Finally, it was said that more police officers might be employed on test purchase exercises so that volunteers could always be involved with carrying out visits, and not left waiting for police officers to charge licensees who have failed the test.

“While the people were being charged, I had to hang about for some time. If more officers were available, we could have used that time more efficiently by doing more test purchasing.” Respondent 1

“They should be done out of my area... because I had to do one locally recently... I felt more nervous than I think I might have been in (name of town) because I am known here and my name might get known and if a place gets charged it might get back to me.” Respondent 2

“Nothing really, it was pretty well run. Maybe the only thing would be to have the police officers a bit further behind the volunteer. I felt last week at the nightclub they were too close to me so it was a bit obvious...”
Respondent 5

4.6 IMPACT – INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS

4.6.1 Background information

The six parents who were interviewed at baseline were interviewed again during the impact phase.

4.6.2 Awareness of the progress of the test purchase pilot

Three of the parents said that they had been very well informed by the police throughout the pilot. The other three respondents thought that they had been quite well informed of the progress of the pilot. Two parents in particular thought that there could have been greater communication; one thought that this was needed at the beginning of the process whereas the other perceived that little information was given when the volunteer was no longer required in the pilot. It was also stated that the parents had heard about the alcohol pilot through various media sources.

“Each time the police come to collect X they give an account of where they were going to go, what was going to happen and what time they expected to bring my son back.” Respondent 3

“The police were good at explaining everything to us and there's been a lot in the press about it.” Respondent 5

“I wouldn't say ‘very’ because we didn't hear anything after the last one X did. (The volunteer is now) too old I suppose but it would have been nice to have had some communication to say it was finished...” Respondent 6

4.6.3 Perceptions of the training and briefing programme

The majority of parental respondents thought that the briefing carried out by police officers before the pilot started as well as on the occasions of the test purchase visits resulted in the volunteers being very well prepared. Indeed, even those who stated that the volunteers had been quite well prepared went on to say that the police had covered what was likely to happen during the visits in sufficient detail.

“Police kept me well informed... Any briefings by the police were done in the house when I was present.” Respondent 1

“X knew what she was going out to do and felt confident about doing what she was asked to do.” Respondent 2

4.6.4 Views of volunteer participation in test purchasing visits

At impact the parents were asked what the volunteers had liked best and least about taking part in the pilot. According to the parents, the volunteers enjoyed providing a public service by working with the police, they liked getting an insight into how the police worked and they also were pleased when they were sold alcohol. Other positive features included being paid for the work. Four interviewees were able to give negative factors encountered by volunteers,

including the fact that the young people found it boring to wait for the police to charge licensees, one volunteer did not greatly enjoy being filmed as part of a news feature and another volunteer complained that groups of young people had made unpleasant comments outside some of the premises visited during the pilot.

“X seemed to enjoy all of it...being paid, meeting different officers from different stations and (getting) a good insight into how the police work.”

Respondent 1

“I think what's maybe been the worst is the ‘neds’ outside when she has been going in or coming out of premises and comments made, not a personal thing they say, just general.” Respondent 2

“(The best?): In the most mischievous manner, being served!... I think (the worst) is the time after X has been able to purchase alcohol , to sit around and wait while the police contact the licence holder and interview staff.”

Respondent 3

“X really enjoyed the interaction with the police, he wants to join the police... so it was a great opportunity for him... I think he enjoyed it all.”

Respondent 6

As was the case at baseline, the parents were asked if they had any concerns about the volunteers’ participation in the pilot, as well as what benefits they might have experienced. The responses elicited were similar to the ones given at baseline. Again, four respondents expressed no particular concerns. One parent was a bit concerned as her child carried out test purchases in an area where the family used to live. Finally, an interviewee said that she was still unaware whether volunteers might be called to give evidence in court.

“Initially I was concerned about what happens after if the sale went ahead, would she have to go to court. There didn't seem to be an answer at the time, they were still sorting it out. To be honest, I still don't know the answer.”

Respondent 4

The interviewees able to offer a view at impact perceived that there would be benefits for the volunteers resulting from their involvement in the alcohol pilot. The respondents said that test purchasing would be worthwhile work experience, would potentially make the volunteers more responsible and was also providing a service to the community at the same time. The parents also stated that it made it more likely that the volunteers would not get involved in drinking alcohol when they were under the legal age. A majority of the respondents also reported that the confidence of their sons or daughters had increased as a result of taking part in the project.

I think it will make him very aware when he goes to work... and aware of the seriousness health-wise of what alcohol can cause.” Respondent 3

“I think it's given him more confidence and I think it's given him some community experience – that's quite worthwhile.” Respondent 5

4.6.5 Future test purchase exercises

As would be expected given the responses of the volunteers, four parents said that their offspring still were going to take part in a few more test purchases, whereas the final two interviewees indicated that the volunteers' participation had ended. The only reason given for their involvement in the pilot ending was the fact that the individuals concerned had turned 17 years of age.

All of the interviewees reported that they would be willing for their sons or daughters to take part in other test purchase projects if they were of an appropriate age. As was noted above, the volunteers had tended to enjoy the experience and there were many perceived benefits to taking part in such a project. Also, the interviewees thought that this pilot had been well-conducted and the police had looked after the volunteers with great care.

"Up to now it has been very successful and well-organised. I have had to sign her out when she goes and they like an adult to be home when she is returned. They give an approximate time and if they are going to finish earlier or later they phone to let us know." Respondent 2

"I think X quite enjoyed it, he thinks it was worthwhile and so do I, it's been a good experience for him." Respondent 5

Four of the interviewees could not think of any ways in which the alcohol test purchase pilot might be improved if it were to be rolled out in other areas of Scotland. As has been mentioned, they were full of praise for the way the initiative had been conducted in Fife. The other two respondents had minor suggestions for changes. One parent said that the police should try to give the dates volunteers are needed as far in advance as possible and the final interviewee thought that the police should give more information to the test purchaser when he or she has become too old to participate in the exercise.

"I wouldn't change anything, it has been most organised, everyone has been upfront with us and she has been safe." Respondent 2

"The way X has been treated I have no changes to recommend... The policemen who have come to pick him up have always been 100 per cent informative and pleasant in every way." Respondent 3

"Not much. Maybe just to know what dates they might need (volunteers) a bit more in advance; there's all the talk at first then I felt we were left hanging a bit. I know it's not easy and the police have a lot on their hands, it's not a complaint... it's the only thing I can think of." Respondent 5

"I don't think there is anything, it's been fine. Maybe just a little bit more communication... someone to say 'now you are 17 we can't use you now, but thanks,' that sort of thing." Respondent 6

4.7 IMPACT – INTERVIEWS WITH POLICE STAFF

4.7.1 Background information

Four members of Fife Police Force were interviewed at Impact. They were chosen in order that both strategic and operational aspects of the pilot could be covered, as well as to reflect the progress of the pilot in the three different divisional areas of Fife. Therefore, the interviewees spoke of being out on actual test purchase visits, sometimes on a supervisory basis, carrying out risk assessments as well as coordinating the implementation of the pilot with the support of other key agencies and individuals.

4.7.2 Test purchase test failures

At the time of interview it was estimated that about 14% of total test purchase visits were resulting in sales to volunteers. However, the test failure rate was said to vary across the different divisions, with the sales in one division thought to be lower than 10% of the total visits attempted.

The interviewees were asked if the level of sales was what they would have expected before the pilot started. Most of the interviewees stated that they would have expected more sales to have resulted, especially because of intelligence that had been received to identify premises that were selling alcohol illegally. One police staff member thought that more sales had resulted than would have been predicted as there had been a great deal of publicity related to the pilot, and licensees had been informed by police officers about the aims and conduct of the exercise.

“There have been more failures than I thought there would be despite lots of publicity, visits to licence holders prior to the pilot, them having posters up in their premises, even in premises operating a 21 policy there have been a number that still failed.” Respondent A

“Probably less than I thought there would have been initially. There have been more from unexpected premises and less from premises I would have, from intelligence, expected to fail.” Respondent C

All the interviewees stated that all test failures had been reported to the procurator fiscal and licensing boards had also been informed. It was emphasised that this would have been the case even if the pilot had not been in operation. At the time of interview it was thought that the fiscal had not proceeded with any cases as yet and no court cases were pending. However, the licensing boards had suspended three licences as a result of staff at retail outlets selling alcohol to volunteers on two occasions.

“All failures are charged and reported to the procurator fiscal. As far as I am aware, none have been prosecuted to date.” Respondent B

“Well obviously when there’s... an offence under section 68 of the Licensing Scotland Act 1976... there’s no room for us not to report because there’s an offence and the Fiscal would require us to submit a report and the Licensing

Board would expect the circumstances to be reported to them. What I think is important to remember is nothing has changed because that would always have happened... the Criminal Justice process can be a slow machine anyway but..., because there's been reporting issues it's delayed any criminal prosecutions which may have been taken.” Respondent D

4.7.3 Feedback from licensees

On the whole the police respondents perceived that the licensees had reacted very positively to the pilot, even if they had been caught selling alcohol to volunteers during visits. It was said that most of those who had failed the test admitted that they needed to be more aware and to increase vigilance among their staff and had asked for advice or training programmes from police officers. Shop or bar staff who passed the test purchase test, as might be expected, also reacted favourably to the pilot exercise. However, it was also pointed out that some licensees who failed the test purchase visit reacted negatively to the whole process and were critical of test purchasing and the way the pilot was operating.

“Those who pass make it... a point of pride, some premises have given their staff a bonus for passing, so it shows they are taking it seriously. Those who fail are upset, they haven't just let themselves down but their employers as well, particularly when it is an under 18 who has been caught selling. The majority clearly take cognisance of a fail the first time and take steps to make sure it does not happen again.” Respondent A

“The vast majority of license holders are fully supportive in principle of test purchasing but they're also afraid of it because they don't want to get caught, now that could be a good thing... in terms of it encourages them to be more responsible.... I think we've got a responsibility as the police to not just charge people but to actually... help them to implement procedures on their premises that they're going to limit the chances of failing on a second occasion or a future test and I think that's appropriate.” Respondent D

4.7.4 Views of volunteer participation in test purchase pilot

Firstly, the interviewees were asked for their views as to the success of the recruitment programme for volunteers. The general consensus was that the recruitment programme had worked well considering the demands of the pilot exercise. Due to the fact that such a large number of premises had to be visited, the volunteers had to be a particular age and had to look and act in a specific way and had to visit premises outwith their own neighbourhoods it was stated that such a recruitment exercise was always going to be time-consuming. Particular problems were outlined, such as potential volunteers being identified and passed on to police only for it to be found that they were about to turn 17 years of age and could not participate in the pilot. Despite hitches such as those outlined above, the interviewees were quite satisfied with the way volunteers had become involved in the project.

“We only use Test Purchasers aged 16-17, which does not give us a big timescale so we constantly have to replace them. It takes time to assess and check out if we are able to use them and that they are neither too boisterous nor too quiet, so that also places restrictions on who we get. There are also

problems with time collecting them and using them outwith the areas where they reside in, in case of recognition.” Respondent A

“Initially we had a few names passed to us who were 17 or close to it, which limits the time they can be used. With better liaison that has improved, those who have taken part have been very successful.” Respondent C

Those respondents able to give a view reported that the briefing programme for volunteers had been very successful. As a few of the respondents were actually involved in briefing volunteers this was based on their own experiences of these sessions. In addition, the volunteers themselves were said to have made favourable comments in relation to the training and information they had received. It was also stressed that police officers themselves had to be trained so that they could brief the young volunteers in the most informative and useful ways possible.

“We were briefed first of what was to be required of the test purchasers. We visited them at home and relayed the information to them and what was expected of them to do the job.” Respondent B

“... what the test purchasers are telling me is that they’re completely happy, ... before I could take any part in recruiting a youth, briefing a youth or using a youth for test purchase, I had to be trained and the reason for that was that there has to be a briefing process for the youths and there’s an audit trail for that... I’m happy that the training process for the officers concerned guarantees that the youths are briefed appropriately.” Respondent D

The respondents said that they were all very satisfied with the way the volunteers had participated in the pilot so far. This was based on all stages of the process, from the initial recruitment, through the briefing programme to actual test purchases and discussions held after the visits. The volunteers were praised for their conduct during the project. Most volunteers were viewed as enjoying their participation in such an exercise. It was also said that a few volunteers had pulled out of the pilot, but that this was related to factors outwith the control of the police.

“We have a good recruitment policy, very few are not used on more than one occasion, they have met the criteria of what we have been looking for. Most are very keen and are fully supported by their parents and realise they can make mention of test purchasing in their CVs.” Respondent A

“...I would say very satisfied again. From my own knowledge... I think we’ve only had one or two that asked to be removed and they’ll be automatically contacted... and I’ll say ‘well, are there any issues?’ I usually speak to parents first... and on all occasions it’s been ‘no, everything is fine, it’s just that she’s been getting ribbed at school about it or whatever’... I’m happy that it is okay and anybody who comes off the list is because of age or because there’s some issue that they don’t want to do it but it’s not been in relation to our supervision or our briefing.” Respondent D

The police interviewees reported that the main benefits the volunteers had experienced as a result of taking part in the pilot were that they had gained an insight into police work, had

obtained worthwhile work experience and would be able to include their involvement in their CVs. The fact that they had gained some insight into the issue of alcohol and young people and had also been paid for their time were also viewed as benefits. Most of the interviewees were unable to think of any negative issues that had arisen for volunteers during the pilot, although one respondent thought that there was an air of disappointment that resulted if no premises failed the test purchase test during a series of visits.

“It gives them an inkling of how the police work, most accept alcohol is a major cause of anti-social behaviour problems amongst their peers...Some test purchasers have, by their own admission, been surprised they were able to buy alcohol... Sometimes when they are involved in an operation and all the premises pass, they can get somewhat disappointed.” Respondent A

“I think they'd say the £5 per hour! It also gives them an insight into our job.” Respondent B

All of the interviewees thought that the volunteers would be willing to take part in future test purchase exercises, assuming that they were of an appropriate age. The reasons for this are outlined above; the benefits of involvement were thought to outweigh any disadvantages and volunteers were said to enjoy the challenge of going out on actual test purchase visits. Again, the fact that volunteers did not tend to withdraw from the project until they reached the age of 17 years and were willing to go on a number of different test purchase visits was viewed as evidence that participation in the pilot was something which volunteers welcomed.

4.7.5 Perceptions of success of the test purchase pilot

The consensus was that the pilot had been operating very successfully at the time of interview. This was said to be due to the fact that a lot of groundwork and planning had gone into the pilot exercise – a partnership exercise involving Fife Police Force and the wider pilot steering group. Any logistical problems were thought to have been ironed out in the early phases of the project. As has been seen, the perception was that volunteers had taken part in the pilot as successfully as could have been expected. Also, awareness of both test purchasing and alcohol sales to young people were thought to have increased greatly in licensees and members of the public. As a result it was hoped that the pilot would have an impact on the longer-term practice of licensees.

“As it has went along word gets around that we are testing in premises. The licensee who lost his licence in X raised awareness and it shows it is taken seriously. I have concerns that some premises, once tested, think they are safe but this is a year long pilot and we will re-visit. It has heightened awareness with the public, we are now getting calls from them giving us information about specific premises selling alcohol to underage people and we are acting on that information.” Respondent A

“I think probably because we've put such an effort into it really,... the framework that we've set up in terms of the steering groups who are monitoring the projects... all of the effort we've put in, in terms of front-loading the project before we did any implementation,... everything I think has been positive about it, there's not been anything negative from a police perspective at all because the impact has been significant...” Respondent D

The interviewees were asked if there had been any unexpected positive or negative aspects arising from the pilot. The positive factors mentioned were that the pilot had a more positive reception from the public and licensees than might have been predicted and the public were informing the police if they suspected that any traders were selling alcohol illegally. The main negative feature of the pilot was said to be the time-consuming nature of the work and the demands this made on police officers. It was also said that the licensed trade had some sensitivities related to the pilot and to the results of the evaluation in particular.

“I thought we might get more of a hard time from the failures but they have been very positive about the pilot.” Respondent B

“The time it takes to prepare for test purchasing which takes police officers away from other work.” Respondent C

4.7.6 Measures aimed at stopping alcohol sales to underage young people

All of the interviewees thought alcohol test purchasing should be adopted in the future, albeit in combination with a variety of other measures such as a national proof of age card scheme, increased surveillance and education of licensed trade staff so that a partnership approach could be developed. Test purchasing was viewed as being as a vital component of any future exercise aimed at stopping alcohol sales to young people as it was emphasised that a minority of shop and bar staff were still guilty of selling alcohol illegally. Therefore, a continuous test purchase policy was called for, although it was not thought to be necessary to provide blanket coverage of premises but to base future visits on surveillance operations and calls from the public. A proof of age card scheme was thought to help licensed trade staff get in the habit of asking for the buyer’s age, and the test purchasing visits could then assess how successfully retailers and bar staff were implementing such a policy.

“The test purchasing scheme has worked, there is no trickery involved... If they have a national proof of age card it has to be continually asked for by staff to get the message across... test purchasing to be continuous to keep people on the ball.” Respondent A

“We know it's happening, that some premises constantly sell alcohol to young people, so if we use both together with intelligence acquired, that would be more beneficial. I don't think it is necessary to target all premises... it is embarrassing to go into an ‘old man's pub’ and send in young people to be laughed at.” Respondent B

4.7.7 Ways forward for the test purchasing pilot

As the police respondents were very satisfied with the way the pilot had operated in Fife they had few suggestions for actual modifications and perceived that a similar scheme could be adopted in other areas of Scotland. Some of the suggested changes related to the peculiar demands of the pilot as it was operating in Fife. Thus, there was a call for reduced bureaucracy and future exercises to be targeted towards premises which were thought to be the source of illegal sales to young people in order to make it a less time-consuming process.

It was also suggested that dedicated police teams could carry out test purchases, with teams changing every two months, so that the need for briefing and rebriefing of staff would again be reduced. Future test purchasing exercises were thought to need to address the issues of shop staff below the age of 18 years serving alcohol to young people as they were viewed as being reluctant to ask for proof of age documentation. Similarly, the issue of older people acting as agents and purchasing alcohol for young people was perceived as something which had to be considered as part of future schemes. Finally, it was suggested that a more corporate approach might have to be adopted if test purchasing were to be adopted across Scotland, with funding, possibly provided by the Scottish Executive, perceived as being vital for police forces to implement test purchasing as more of a partnership approach with the licensed trade. It was also questioned whether licensees who were caught selling alcohol to young people should be subject to criminal proceedings when it might be advisable to pass such breaches of practice on to local licensing boards.

“Paperwork should be condensed... some forms are repeated, especially recruitment and deployment forms... There is the problem of older ones acting as agents to purchase alcohol for younger ones. To tackle that means we would have to be more planned and organised. The biggest surprise as I mentioned earlier was the number of under 18 year olds given the responsibility to decide whether a person was of an age to purchase; perhaps a change in legislation is required so a person has to be 18 to sell alcohol.”
Respondent A

“There is also an issue about young people not much more than 16 themselves doing part-time work selling alcohol who may be embarrassed to ask for ID. I think the pilot has been well thought out and if it is to be rolled out would be happy to hand over what is in place already.” Respondent B

“... there has to be a partnership here, it has to be marketed in such a way and promoted in such a way and implemented in such a way that it's a partnership with the licensed trade because that's where we have to make the impact,... but I actually think that it's appropriate that the Licensing Board are the ones who are seen to take the action and actually control what goes on in licensed premises, I don't see that as a criminal responsibility...”
Respondent D

4.8 IMPACT – TEST PURCHASE DATA SHEETS

4.8.1 Background information

The first 600 data sheets completed by police staff who had taken part in test purchase visits were analysed. Table 4.20 demonstrates that about two-thirds of the data sheets covered off sale premises and one-third on sale outlets. It is apparent, though, that the different police divisions had devised different strategies in terms of test purchase visits with, for example, the Eastern Division much more likely to target on sale premises in the earlier phases of the project. About 38% of the data sheets were submitted by Western Division. The data sheets were completed from June to November 2006, although relatively few of the November data sheets had been received by the research team at the time of analysis.

Table 4.20 Test purchase attempts by police divisional area

Type of outlet:	Police Divisional Areas			Frequency N (%)
	East N (%)	West N (%)	Central N (%)	
Off licence	4 (2.6)	6 (2.6)	6 (2.8)	16 (2.7)
Licensed grocer/shop	46 (29.9)	120 (52.6)	140 (64.2)	306 (51.0)
Supermarket	13 (8.4)	35 (15.4)	35 (16.1)	83 (13.8)
Public House	90 (58.4)	56 (24.6)	32 (14.7)	178 (29.7)
Nightclub/'Fun' pub	1 (0.6)	11 (4.8)	5 (2.3)	17 (2.8)
TOTAL	154 (100.0)	228 (100.0)	218 (100.0)	600 (100.0)

This first batch of data sheets related to test purchase attempts in which:

- 11% of outlets (n=64) had been interviewed by ScotCen researchers during the baseline evaluation phase before the test purchase test took place
- About 58% (n=346) of attempts utilised the services of female volunteers
- About 17% (n=104) of licensees said that they had an 'alcohol sales to over 21 year olds' policy.

4.8.2 Test purchase visits

Although 600 data sheets were submitted to the research team, it is important to note that no test purchase visit took place on 27 of these occasions for a variety of reasons including:

- The outlet concerned no longer sold alcohol or had closed down
- The police officers decided that there was a possible risk for the safety of the volunteers (e.g. gangs of youths at the door of shop or bar)
- The licensee recognised one of the police officers conducting the visit.

The 573 test purchase visits that ended up with an attempted purchase of alcohol are outlined in Table 4.21. It can be seen that the vast majority of attempts (83%) were first visits to shops and bars, with 78 premises being subject to a revisit at the time of data analysis. The ‘other’ category was mostly comprised of premises that were reported as selling alcohol to young people as a result of intelligence received by the police. These were often revisits, but in this instance a failed first test was not the major reason for the repeated test purchase test. Most of the analysis below will focus on the first test purchase visits, as these are arguably the best assessment of the pilot exercise. Obviously, once an outlet has failed a test it tends to have an impact on the retail practice of the staff and they are much less likely to fail the follow-up test purchase visit.

Table 4.21 Test purchase visits by type of licensed premises

Type of test purchase test:	Type of outlet		Frequency N (%)
	Off sales N (%)	On sales N (%)	
First visit	322 (81.7)	153 (85.5)	475 (82.9)
Revisit	52 (13.2)	26 (14.5)	78 (13.6)
‘Other’ visit	20 (5.1)	-	20 (3.5)
TOTAL	394 (100.0)	179 (100.0)	573 (100.0)

4.8.3 Outcome of test purchase visits

Table 4.22 demonstrates that in total 17% of all test purchase visits resulted in volunteers being sold alcohol. As would be expected the percentage of outlets that failed the first test purchase visit was slightly higher, with almost 19% of shops or bars selling alcohol to volunteers.

Table 4.22 Outcome of test purchase by type of visit

Type of visit:	Result of Test Purchase		Frequency N (%)
	Purchase made N (%)	Purchase refused N (%)	
First visit	89 (18.7)	386 (81.3)	475 (100.0)
Revisit	6 (7.7)	72 (92.3)	78 (100.0)
‘Other’ visit	3 (15.0)	17 (85.0)	20 (100.0)
TOTAL	98 (17.1)	475 (82.9)	573 (100.0)

During the first visits a slightly higher percentage of on sale outlets sold alcohol to young people, although this was not statistically significant (see Figure 4-H). Six shops sold alcohol to volunteers during the revisit, and three other shops failed the test when they were targeted as a result of intelligence received during the pilot, but the small sample sizes mean that these results have to be treated with caution. In total, when all types of visit are considered, 17.9% and 16.8% of on and off sale premises respectively failed the test purchase tests. It is also worth noting that there was variation in the levels of sales occurring within the off and on sale categories. For example, all off-licences passed the test (n=16), whereas 25% of supermarkets failed the first test purchase visit.

Figure 4-H Percentage of premises failing test purchase tests by type of outlet

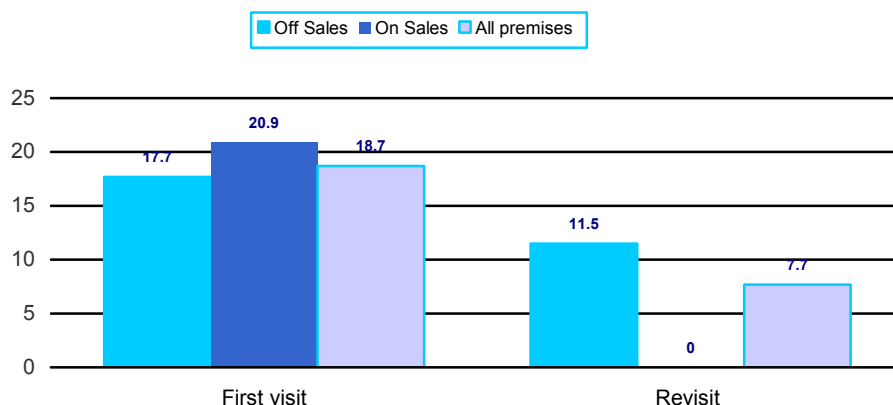


Table 4.23 demonstrates that sales of alcohol to volunteers during the first tests and revisits were lower in the eastern area of Fife as opposed to the other two areas combined (first test only: 12.6% vs 21.2%; $P < 0.05$: *i.e. the probability that the difference observed is real is greater than 95%*). It should also be noted that in East Fife no outlet sold alcohol to volunteers during test purchase revisits, although 11% and 7% of revisits in West and Central Fife respectively resulted in revisit test failures.

Table 4.23 Licensed premises failing first test purchase by police divisional area

Area of Fife:	Result of Test Purchase		Frequency N (%)
	Purchase made N (%)	Purchase refused N (%)	
East	17 (12.6)	118 (87.4)	135 (100.0)
West	38 (22.5)	131 (77.5)	169 (100.0)
Central	34 (19.9)	137 (80.1)	171 (100.0)
TOTAL	89 (100.0)	386 (100.0)	475 (100.0)

The pattern of sales to volunteers varied greatly in each area when the results of both on and off sale premises are examined (see Figure 4-I). The on sale sector was much more likely to sell alcohol to volunteers in East and Central Fife, whereas off sale premises yielded more sales in the Western area. Some caution must be taken when analysing these results as, for example, only 22 bars had been visited in Central Fife at the time of reporting, even if eight of these premises failed the test. Obviously the different targeting strategies employed by the different police divisions might have an effect on these results (see Table 4.20). Also, the fact that a majority of first visits were carried out with female volunteers in East and West Fife, whereas male volunteers were involved in the majority of Central Fife visits might have impacted on the preliminary results (see below). It will be interesting to see whether this pattern of sales is maintained at the outcome of the evaluation.

Figure 4-I Percentage of premises failing first test purchase by police divisional area

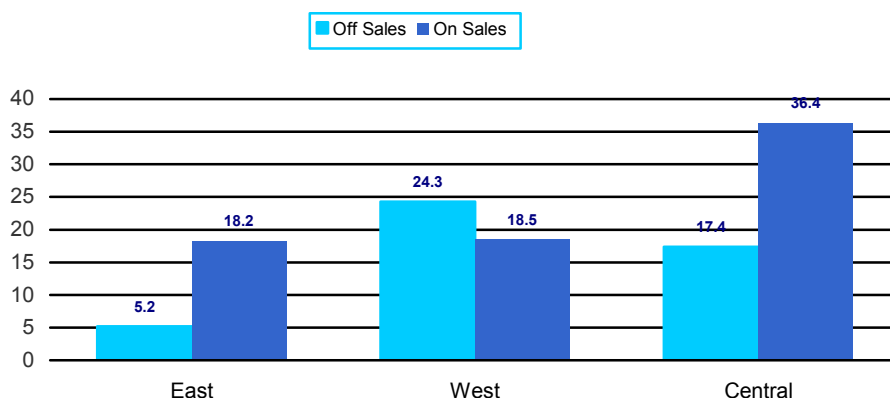


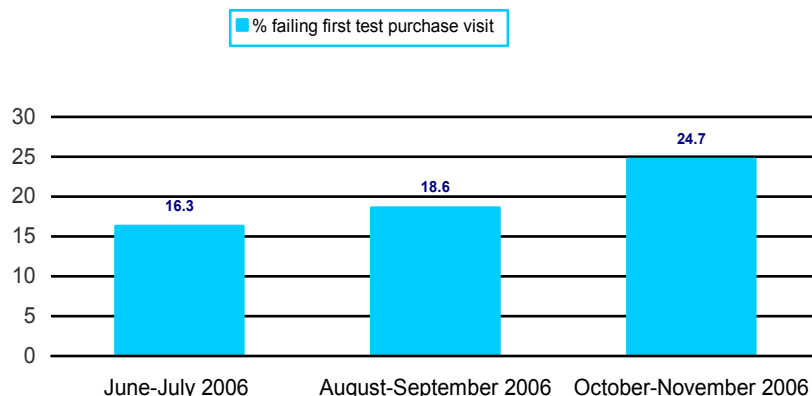
Table 4.24 shows that male volunteers were more likely to be sold alcohol during the first test purchase visit when compared with their female counterparts (23.2% vs 15.5%, $P < 0.05$). It should be noted, though, that when revisit sales were taken into account this difference was no longer significant. Also, although male volunteers achieved higher level of sales in every area of Fife, the major reason for the difference observed was the higher rate of sales to male volunteers in Central area (27.5% male vs 11.3% female; $P < 0.01$; *i.e. the probability that the difference observed is real is greater than 99%*). As has been mentioned, female volunteers carried out most attempts in East and West Fife, but male volunteers had been utilised most frequently in Central Fife.

Table 4.24 Premises failing first test purchase visit by sex of volunteer

Sex of volunteer:	Result of Test Purchase		Frequency N (%)
	Purchase made N (%)	Purchase refused N (%)	
Male	46 (23.2)	152 (76.8)	198 (100.0)
Female	43 (15.5)	234 (84.5)	277 (100.0)
TOTAL	89 (18.7)	386 (81.3)	475 (100.0)

At impact there is some evidence that there is a trend towards increasing sales to volunteers during first test purchases as the pilot is progressing (see Figure 4-J). However, only 93 of the 475 first visits had taken place in October and November 2006 at the time of analysis, and again it will be important to observe this trend in more detail at outcome. It is possible, though, that after the first wave of publicity licensees have not been as prepared for the test purchase pilot as they were at baseline.

Figure 4-J Percentage of premises failing first test purchase by date of visit



It can be seen in Table 4.25 that junior sales or bar staff were more likely to sell alcohol to volunteers than more senior staff. Indeed, they were twice as likely to fail the first test purchase test when compared with the licence holders themselves ($P < 0.05$). The ‘other’ category tended to be family members or cases in which the officers concerned were unsure as to the level of seniority of the staff.

Table 4.25 Premises failing first test purchase visit by status of shop or bar staff

Person at selling point:	Result of Test Purchase		Frequency N (%)
	Purchase made N (%)	Purchase refused N (%)	
Sales/bar assistant	66 (21.1)	247 (78.9)	313 (100.0)
Manager	7 (14.9)	40 (85.1)	47 (100.0)
Licence holder	11 (10.5)	94 (89.5)	105 (100.0)
Other	4 (100.0)	-	4 (100.0)
TOTAL	88 (18.8)	381 (81.2)	469 (100.0)

Notes to table *Don't know/Can't say = 6.

At impact, there was little variation noted in the level of test purchase failures occurring in premises which had ‘over 18’ or ‘over 21’ policies. Similarly, premises which had been interviewed by researchers prior to test purchase visits had a similar level of sales to those which were not part of the baseline interview phase.

When first test purchase visits are considered, proof of age documentation was requested on about 79% of visits ($n=374$). As would be expected, no sales resulted when shop or bar staff asked for proof of age documentation. In 88% of cases ($n=89$) sales of alcohol to volunteers resulted when proof of age materials were not requested. Presumably, in the remaining 12% of cases the person serving took the view that the volunteer was either under the age of 18 years or asked the volunteer directly for their age.

It would appear that shop and bar staff who had heard the radio adverts providing information about the alcohol pilot in Fife were much less likely to sell alcohol to volunteers compared with staff members who were unaware of the radio features (see Table 4.26: 14% vs 33%; $P < 0.001$: *i.e. the probability that this difference is real is 99.9%*). However, about 23% of the staff members in premises in which initial visits took place were unsure as to whether they had heard the adverts or not. Although over 55% of shop and bar staff targeted during the early phase of the pilot for a first visit said that they had heard the adverts, this ranged from 44% of staff in east Fife to 61% of staff in central Fife ($P < 0.01$).

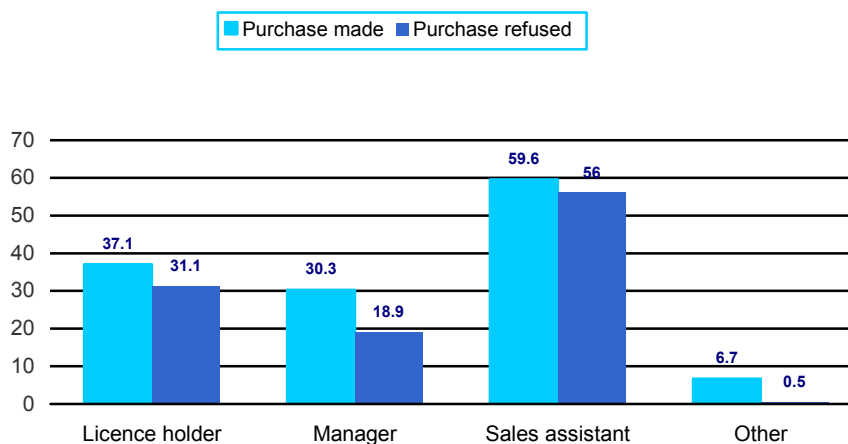
Table 4.26 Premises failing first test purchase visit by awareness of radio advert

Heard radio adverts?:	Result of Test Purchase		Frequency N (%)
	Purchase made N (%)	Purchase refused N (%)	
Yes	37 (14.1)	225 (85.9)	262 (100.0)
No	35 (33.0)	71 (67.0)	106 (100.0)
Don't know/Can't say	17 (15.9)	90 (84.1)	107 (100.0)
TOTAL	89 (18.7)	386 (81.3)	475 (100.0)

4.8.4 Aftermath of test purchase visits

After the test purchase had been completed, the police officers involved either charged staff if a test failure had resulted or informed staff members that they had passed the test purchase test. Figure 4-K shows that junior assistants or bar staff were most likely to be informed, as they were most commonly at the point of sale, but that more senior members of staff were informed if they were available when a test failure resulted. However, the impact interviews with licensees, even allowing for the small sample size, would tend to suggest that licence holders were aware of the test purchase visits and that junior staff had passed on the information as the two interviewees who were unaware of the visits had only recently taken charge of the relevant outlet.

Figure 4-K Premises failing first test purchase by persons informed by police



5. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

5.1 VIEWS OF LICENSEES

In total, 130 licensees were interviewed during the baseline and impact phases of the evaluation. Sixty-seven interviews were carried out with on sale staff, and 63 licensees working in shops gave their views. All areas of Fife were represented in both research phases. Also, almost all of the licensees interviewed at baseline had not yet been targeted by the test purchase pilot, whereas the 30 interviewees at impact had all been subject to a recent test purchase visit. Twenty of the interviewees at impact were based in shops or bars that had failed the initial test purchase visit.

At baseline, off sale respondents seemed to be more likely to report that they had knowledge of test purchasing and the alcohol test purchase pilot than was the case with their on-sale counterparts. Indeed, one-half of on sale licensees said that they had little knowledge of test purchasing at baseline. As would be expected, awareness of test purchasing and the pilot increased at impact after the premises concerned had been subject to an actual test purchase visit, although only 30 impact interviews were carried out with licensees. At baseline 62% of licensees stated that test purchasing was a very good idea, with only four individuals arguing that it was a bad idea. At impact the majority of licensees still perceived that test purchasing was at least quite a good idea.

The licensees were asked how likely it would be that their outlets would be targeted during the test purchase pilot. At baseline, about three-quarters of respondents thought it likely that a test purchase visit would take place in their bar or shop. At impact, all 30 of the licensees said that it was likely that they would be subject to a test purchase visit in the future as part of the pilot exercise.

Although the majority of respondents also reported that proof of age card schemes were a good idea, they did not appear to be viewed as positively as test purchasing by the licensees. For example, over one-quarter of licensees working in the on sale sector viewed such schemes negatively at baseline. Not surprisingly, almost all of the licensees interviewed as part of both research phases said that they would act for proof of age documentation if they suspected that the person attempting to purchase alcohol might be under the legal age.

About two-thirds of licensees at baseline and impact stated that they gave their staff at least quite a lot of training in relation to alcohol sales to young people. Levels of reported training seemed to be lower in the on sales sector. There was some evidence that training levels increased at impact, which might have been expected as two-thirds of the outlets had recently failed a test purchase test. Even licensees who said that they only gave a little training at impact tended to say that the staff were now much more vigilant and aware of the procedures they should be following.

At baseline the majority of licensees perceived that the pilot would have little impact on their own retail practice. However, a slight majority of respondents also went on to say that the pilot would affect the practice of other bar and shop staff in the area who were viewed as knowingly selling alcohol to those under the age of 18 years. This pattern was also observed during the tobacco pilot evaluation, with interviewees arguing that there were unscrupulous traders operating within the same neighbourhoods. At impact, though, most licensees

reported that the pilot had resulted in changes being made to their premises or retail practice, which is again to be expected given that most of the respondents during this phase had failed the initial test purchase visit.

The most popular measure among licensed staff at baseline and impact to reduce sales of alcohol to those under the age of 18 years was for test purchasing to be utilised in combination with other procedures, in most cases a robust, nationally-accepted proof of age card scheme. One-quarter of respondents thought that a national proof of age card scheme alone was the best way forward. However, at baseline 58% of licensees called for test purchasing to be utilised along with a proof of age card scheme, increased surveillance and education of licensed trade staff. At impact, 15 of the licensees who represented outlets that had failed the test purchase visit wanted test purchasing and a national proof of age card scheme to be adopted. It is also worth noting, though, that there was very little support for either the status quo or for test purchasing to operate in isolation from other measures. A few respondents felt that the police could offer more support to the licensed trade, and that the underlying problem of adults buying alcohol for younger people would not be affected by the pilot. These general findings, though, support the views of traders who were interviewed during the tobacco test purchase pilot. In this project the most popular measure called for by the retailers was for test purchasing to be implemented in tandem with a national proof of age card scheme. Therefore, it would appear that the negative views in relation to test purchasing are held by a minority of licensed trade and retail staff.

At impact, in the sample of premises which sold alcohol to volunteers, a slight majority had junior members of staff at the point of sale during the test purchase visit. Most of the licensees also said that the test purchase visit was not obvious to staff, regardless of the outcome of the test purchase. However, it is important to note that the majority of licensees in premises which failed or passed the initial test visit perceived that it had been conducted at least quite fairly. In the instances when alcohol was sold to volunteers the view was expressed that staff had not been vigilant enough and had not followed procedures. However, a few interviewees who represented establishments that failed the test thought that the volunteers had looked over the age of 18 years and that the police had arguably acted in an overly heavy-handed and indiscrete manner when charging the staff members. Again, the majority of traders interviewed during the tobacco pilot shared the view that the test purchase visits had been conducted fairly.

5.2 VIEWS OF VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTS

Six volunteers and their parents were interviewed at baseline and impact. At impact they had either turned 17 years or were just about to become 17 years old, and therefore their time in the pilot was at an end. Three male and 3 female volunteers and their mothers participated in both research phases. All three police divisional areas of Fife were represented by the volunteers and parents. (At impact another group of five volunteers and parents were recruited for the study; their views will be represented in the outcome report.)

At the time of recruitment to the pilot exercise most of the respondents had little knowledge of test purchasing or, indeed, the pilot in Fife. The volunteers were mostly recruited via local schools and the police also carried out home visits to inform the volunteers and parents fully about the test purchase pilot and to brief volunteers in readiness for going out on actual visits to shops and bars.

At impact, all of the volunteers stated that they had been sold alcohol during test purchase attempts. In total, the six volunteers said that they had been sold alcohol on 17 occasions. They also emphasised that the briefing and training organised by the police had prepared them for every eventuality, and no suggested improvements for the briefing were given. The parents also gave positive views in relation to the briefing carried out by police.

The volunteers tended to say that they liked working with the police, raising awareness of the issue of underage alcohol sales when they were actually sold alcohol, the excitement of participating in actual visits and receiving payment for the work. Their parents echoed these views, as well as stressing that the volunteers thoroughly enjoyed the insight they had gained into police operations. On the other hand, test purchase visits were also viewed as being both nerve-racking and in contrast relatively tedious – the volunteers did not enjoy having to wait for police to charge staff and complete the paperwork after a sale had occurred. Again, these features of test purchase visits were all noted during the tobacco pilot. As the volunteers had enjoyed taking part in the pilot the only reason given for no longer being involved in visits was that the age restrictions were now applying that they had turned 17 years of age.

All of the volunteers indicated that they would be willing and would have no concerns about taking part in future test purchase exercises if they were of an appropriate age. A few modifications for future test purchase activities were suggested. These suggestions included the fact that the police officers should be less obtrusive during test purchase visits, more police should be employed on exercises so that volunteers would not have to wait for licensees to be charged and for test purchase visits to utilise volunteers who are not known in particular neighbourhoods (as indeed the volunteers acknowledged was the norm within this pilot). The parents were also willing to allow their sons and daughters to take part in future test purchase schemes. Indeed, most of the parents were unable to give any suggestions as to how the alcohol test purchase pilot might be improved if it were to be rolled out in other areas of Scotland, and they were very positive about the way the police had worked with the volunteers. Two respondents did have minor complaints about the communication from police officers, for example, in terms of officially informing volunteers that their involvement in the pilot was at an end. As has been pointed out, though, few negative insights into involvement in the pilot were given and it was clear that the parents and volunteers were favourably impressed by their participation in the pilot.

5.3 VIEWS OF POLICE RESPONDENTS

Four members of police staff were interviewed at impact. They were selected in order to reflect both strategic and operational viewpoints of the pilot, as well as to cover the different police divisional areas in Fife.

In the main the police respondents thought that the licensees had reacted very positively to the pilot, even if they had been caught selling alcohol to volunteers during visits. However, the interviewees had also received criticism of the pilot from a minority of licensees who had failed the test purchase visit. The licensee interviews also demonstrated that up to the point of the impact phase the negative views of test purchasing as an enforcement tool were expressed by only a small proportion of licensees.

The police interviewees were all very satisfied with the way the volunteers had participated in the pilot. The initial recruitment of volunteers, the briefing programme, the test purchase

outings and the debriefings conducted after the visits were all perceived to have operated as smoothly as possible. Although it was said that a few volunteers had stopped participating in the pilot the interviewees were confident that this was due to factors outwith the control of the police. According to the interviewees, the main benefits the volunteers had gained were valuable work experience, an insight into both the work of the police force and the issue of alcohol sales to young people. All of the respondents reported that the volunteers they had worked with would be willing to take part in future test purchase activities, assuming that they were of an appropriate age.

The view of the police interviewees was that the pilot had been operating very successfully. This was thought to be due to the groundwork and planning that had gone into the pilot exercise from both Fife Police Force and members of the wider steering group. Any logistical problems, and few were mentioned, were thought to have been dealt with as the pilot progressed. The interviewees also viewed positively the fact that the pilot had received a better reception from the public and licensees than might have been predicted and the public were also informing the police if they suspected that any traders were selling alcohol to underage youths. However, the time-consuming nature of the work and the demands this made on the time of police officers were not viewed as positively by the respondents. Of course, the fact that this was a pilot exercise had an impact on the workload of the police, and it is unlikely that if test purchasing were to be adopted more widely other police forces would attempt blanket test purchase coverage across all licensed premises or would have to deal with the same level of bureaucracy.

All of the interviewees thought alcohol test purchasing should be adopted in the future, albeit in combination with a variety of other measures such as a national proof of age card scheme, increased surveillance and education of licensed trade staff. It was emphasised that such approaches would work best if a partnership approach could be developed between the police and licensees. A continuous test purchase strategy was called for, as opposed to a pilot exercise, although as has been mentioned above it was not thought to be necessary to provide blanket coverage of premises but to target future visits on surveillance operations and information received from the public. A national proof of age card scheme was viewed as helping licensed trade staff become accustomed to ask for the buyer's age, and test purchasing visits could then assess how successfully retailers and bar staff were implementing such a policy.

The police respondents had few additional suggestions for modifications to be made if the pilot were to be rolled out across other areas of Scotland. Suggested changes included the need for reduced bureaucracy and for dedicated police teams to carry out test purchases, in order that the need for the continual briefing and rebriefing of staff would decrease. One factor which the interviewees wanted addressed was for the issue of shop staff below the age of 18 years serving alcohol to young people to be clarified, and possibly for this practice to be made illegal, as this group was viewed as being reluctant to ask for proof of age from their peers. A number of licensees agreed with the view that younger members of staff were loathe to ask for the age of those buying alcohol. Similarly, the issue of older people acting as agents and purchasing alcohol for young people was thought to be something which future schemes had to consider. Finally, calls were made for a more corporate approach to be developed and for funding, possibly from the Scottish Executive, to be made available for police forces to assist them implement test purchasing schemes as a partnership approach with the licensed trade. It must be emphasised again that some of the suggested changes related to the peculiar demands of the pilot as it was operating in Fife, and it is likely that the

bureaucracy and blanket targeting of premises would not occur if the pilot were to be adopted across Scotland.

5.4 TEST PURCHASE VISITS

At impact the first 600 data sheets completed by police staff who had taken part in test purchase visits were analysed. About two-thirds of the data sheets covered off sale premises and one-third on sale outlets. This varied by area, with Eastern Division being much more likely to target on sale premises in the earlier phases of the project. About 38% of the data sheets were submitted by Western Division.

Test purchase attempts did not occur on 27 occasions for a variety of reasons including:

- The outlet concerned no longer sold alcohol or had closed down
- The police officers decided that there was a possible risk for the safety of the volunteers (e.g. gangs of youths at the door of shop or bar)
- The licensee recognised one of the police officers conducting the visit.

The vast majority of the remaining visits (83%, n=475) were first visits to shops and bars, with 78 premises being subject to a test purchase revisit at impact. The 'other' category (n=20 visits) consisted of premises that were reported as selling alcohol to young people as a result of intelligence received by the police, and were often revisits.

In total, 17% of all test purchase visits resulted in volunteers being sold alcohol. As would be expected the percentage of outlets that failed the first test purchase visit was slightly higher, with 19% of shops or bars selling alcohol to volunteers. During the first visits a slightly higher percentage of on sale premises sold alcohol to young people, although this increased level of sale did not reach statistical significance. Six shops sold alcohol to volunteers during the revisit after failing the first test, and three other shops failed the test when they were targeted as a result of intelligence received during the pilot. In total, when all types of visit are considered, 17.9% and 16.8% of on and off sale premises respectively failed the test purchase tests. There was, though, variation in the levels of sales occurring within the different off and on sale categories. For example, all off-licences passed the tests (n=16), whereas 25% of supermarkets failed the first test purchase visit.

The eastern area of Fife reported the lowest level of sales when compared with the other two areas (first test only: 12.6% vs 21.2%; $P < 0.05$). It should also be noted that in eastern Fife no outlet sold alcohol to volunteers during test purchase revisits, although 11% and 7% of revisits in West and Central Fife respectively resulted in revisit test failures. The pattern of sales to volunteers varied greatly in each area by type of outlet. The on sale sector was much more likely to sell alcohol to volunteers in East and Central Fife, whereas off sale premises yielded more sales in the Western area. However, the different targeting strategies employed by the different police divisions might be impacting on these results, as might be the different gender profile of test purchasers, and therefore this pattern of sales might not still be observed at outcome.

Male volunteers were more likely to be sold alcohol during the first test purchase visit when compared with their female counterparts (23.2% vs 15.5%, $P < 0.05$). It is important to note, though, that when revisit sales were taken into account this difference was no longer statistically significant. Also, the major reason for the difference observed between the sales

achieved by the different sexes was the higher rate of sales to male volunteers in Central area (27.5% male vs 11.3% female; $P < 0.01$).

At impact there was some evidence of a trend towards increasing sales to volunteers during first test purchase visits as time progressed. However, relatively few first visits included in the analysis had taken place in November 2006. If this trend is maintained at outcome it is likely that licensees were on their guard in the summer of 2006 after the first wave of publicity but were not as vigilant as the test purchase pilot progressed.

As was suggested by the result of the licensee interviews at impact, junior sales or bar staff were more likely to sell alcohol to volunteers when compared with more senior staff. In fact, they were twice as likely to fail the first test purchase test when compared with the licence holders themselves ($P < 0.05$). The police were only able to inform the licensee directly that a sale had occurred in 37% of cases, presumably as the licensees were not at the premises at the time of sale. It is possible that junior staff were not always passing on the information that test purchasing had taken place, particularly if the relevant outlet passed the test, although the results of the impact phase (with an admittedly small sample of licensees) suggest that licensees were aware that their premises had been visited as part of the pilot. Nevertheless, if awareness of test purchasing or the pilot is still relatively low at outcome, when it is likely that the vast majority of premises will have been subject to a test purchase visit, it might suggest that police officers will have to contact licensees directly to inform them that their premises have been targeted as part of the pilot.

At impact, there was little variation noted in the level of test purchase failures occurring in premises which had 'over 18' or 'over 21' policies. Similarly, premises which had been interviewed by researchers prior to test purchase visits had a similar level of sales to those which were not part of the baseline interview phase.

Shop and bar staff who reported hearing the radio adverts about the alcohol pilot in Fife were much less likely to sell alcohol to volunteers when compared with their counterparts who were unaware of the radio features (14% vs 33%; $P < 0.001$). However, about 23% of the staff members in premises in which initial visits took place were unsure as to whether they had heard the adverts or not. Also, it might be argued that those who fail the test are more likely to deny previous knowledge of the pilot, from whatever source. In total, over 55% of shop and bar staff targeted during the early phase of the pilot for a first visit said that they had heard the adverts, but this ranged from 44% of staff in east Fife to 61% of staff in central Fife ($P < 0.01$).

6. CONCLUSIONS

At impact, the views of all the respondents suggest that the alcohol test purchase pilot has progressed very smoothly and with very little difficulties. There is also evidence that there is a greater level of support for alcohol test purchasing to be adopted than was the case during even the tobacco pilot, with a majority of licensees arguing that test purchasing should be implemented more widely, although in tandem with a national proof of age card scheme, and possibly other measures such as increased surveillance and education of retail staff. As was the case during the tobacco pilot there was little enthusiasm for either the status quo or for test purchasing to be implemented in isolation.

The licensees tended to react favourably to the pilot, even if they were caught selling alcohol to young people. In most of these cases it was admitted that staff had not been sufficiently vigilant and that lessons had been learned. A minority of licensees, especially among those who had failed the first test purchase visit, did complain that the volunteers did not look 16 years of age and the police had reacted in a heavy-handed manner to the members of on or off sale staff. This was very much the minority view, though, and it is worth noting that the majority of the licensees who represented premises that passed or failed the test visit perceived that test purchasing should be adopted in the future, in combination with other measures.

About 19% of premises failed the initial test purchase visit; this percentage was slightly higher in the on sale category at impact. During the first phase of the tobacco pilot about 14% of premises sold tobacco to volunteers. The level of test failures might potentially be related to a number of factors including the area of Fife (eastern Fife yielded a lower level of sales to volunteers), the sex of the volunteer, junior staff being at the point of sale and reported awareness of the test purchase radio adverts. It will be important to see whether these factors are still significant when all premises have been visited at outcome.

The volunteers and their parents were very positive about their involvement in the pilot. Few could think of any difficulties that had arisen and all of the volunteers indicated their willingness to take part in test purchase exercises in the future. The parents perceived that the police had looked after the volunteers with great care throughout the pilot. Although the volunteers also stated that test purchasing could be at times both nerve-racking during attempts and tedious when the police were charging staff and completing paperwork, they argued that the positive factors involved in participating in such a project greatly outweighed any negative factors.

The police interviewees shared the views of the other key informants above in relation to the smooth progress of the pilot and the fact that test purchasing should be rolled out in other areas, again in combination with other measures and with reduced bureaucracy and intelligence-led targeting of premises. Issues such as those under the age of 18 years being in the position of selling alcohol and restricting sales to their peers, as well as adults purchasing alcohol and acting as agents for those under the age of 18 years, were reported as ones which needed to be addressed in the future. It was also hoped that a partnership approach might be developed between the police and the licensed trade.

Therefore, at impact the general consensus was that the pilot had been operating as well as could be expected, and that test purchasing combined with other measures was the favoured future strategy for restricting sales to those under the age of 18 years. Whether this will still

be the case at outcome, when the views of Procurators Fiscal, Licensing Board representatives, Community councils and Alcohol and Drug Action Teams will also be represented, remains to be seen.