

If the shop owner sells a restricted product, does this mean the volunteer will have to attend court?

We have procedures in place to reduce the risk of a volunteer making a court appearance. We follow a strict code of practice and do everything possible to avoid the volunteer attending court, but there is always a chance that a volunteer may be called to give evidence. If the volunteer is called to give evidence they are helped and supported throughout the whole process.

How old should the volunteer be?

We usually use volunteers between 14 to up to their 16th birthday, but if you're nearly 14, get in touch.

We aim to give the businesses a fair test, so volunteers who look a lot older than their age may not be suitable. We will assess this during the home visit.

Do I need parental consent?

Yes – before we register our volunteers we meet with parents and explain the process in detail. Before every test purchase operation we also seek written consent from a parent. Without this we are unable to work with a volunteer.

Will the volunteer be sent into their local shop?

We will not ask volunteers to take part in operations where they are likely to be recognised. For this reason, it is important to specify any areas where this may be the case during the application process.

How do volunteers sign up?

Please email us at: trading.standards@croydon.gov.uk
or call us on **020 8407 1311**



■ CROYDON TRADING STANDARDS ■ VOLUNTEER test purchasers

We use young people to monitor the sales of age-restricted products. This involves a young person under strictly controlled conditions trying to buy knives, alcohol, fireworks and cigarettes from shops in the borough.

We are looking for volunteers, aged between 14-16 years to help us carry out test purchasing activities.

It is a criminal offence for a business to sell an age restricted product to a person under the legal age limit. Trading standards enforce the law relating to the sale of some age restricted products. These products include alcohol, knives, tobacco and fireworks. We offer training to businesses to help them comply with the law and we also carry out test purchases to ensure compliance.

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What does the volunteer have to do?

The volunteer needs to enter a certain shop and attempt to buy a specified age-restricted product whilst supervised by an officer from Trading Standards.

We will usually pair up volunteers for operations, but there may be occasions when volunteers are asked to take part in an operation on their own.

How long do operations last and how often do they occur?

The operations usually last around 5 or 6 hours. It depends on whether the operation is undertaken during an evening or daytime (weekends or school holidays). They take place throughout the year but are not a regular occurrence. We would normally visit a number of shops during an operation.

What do the volunteers get out of it?

The scheme is unpaid but will lead to a certificate that participants can use as a record of achievement.

The nature of the activity will also help with improving a volunteer's confidence and give them valuable experience in an operational environment.

Refreshments will be also provided.

CROYDON TRADING STANDARDS

14-16 YEARS OLD?

**WE
WANT
YOU**



What are the transport arrangements?

The volunteer will always be collected by appropriate officers, from home or an agreed location. The officers will then return the volunteer to home or the agreed location.