

Alcohol and the law

Buying alcohol for yourself

It is illegal for licensed premises to sell alcohol to someone under 18. It is illegal to sell alcohol to a person who is drunk.

No ID no sale

Even if you are over 18 and you don't have ID, shopkeepers and licensed premises can refuse to serve you if you look younger.

Buying alcohol for someone else

Police have the power to charge someone over 18 knowingly buying alcohol for someone under 18 (buying by proxy). It is illegal to obtain alcohol for a person who is drunk.

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Alcohol restriction zones

It is an arrestable offence to fail to comply with a police officer's request not to drink alcohol in a designated Alcohol Restricted Area. The police also have the power to take away and dispose of any alcohol and containers in the person's possession.

Underage drinking in public places

Police have powers to confiscate alcohol from under 18s drinking in public spaces (e.g. on the street or in parks).

Drinking and driving

It's against the law for an adult to drive with more than 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of their blood. If they break the law, they could face a fine of £5,000, six months in prison and having their licence taken away for at least a year. Causing death through drink-driving can result in a maximum prison sentence of 14 years and a two-year driving ban.

Consuming alcohol in licensed premises

If you are under 18, it is against the law to consume alcohol in a licensed premise, with the exception of 16 and 17 year-olds, who are allowed to drink beer, wine or cider during a meal with adults (but they may not buy the alcohol themselves).