Assaults up by 100 per cent in Aber

Police to target ‘hot spots’ within the town centre in a bid to crack down on the violence occurring. Story: Norman Williams

The number of assaults in Aberystwyth has increased 100 per cent in the three-month period April to June 2003, compared to the same period last year, a senior police officer confirmed this week.

And in a bid to curb violence in the streets, police have launched a campaign targeting hot spots in the town, and have appealed to licensees for help in identifying trouble-makers - before incidents occur.

Temporary Inspector Kevin Davies, based at Aberystwyth police station, said: “We held a meeting with local licensees on 26 July, which was also attended by representatives of Ceredigion’s environmental health department, who will have responsibility for the issue of licences.

“We discussed the increase in assaults, and licensees were asked to support the police in identifying potential trouble-makers in the early evenings.

“A large proportion of violent crime is alcohol-related, and we discussed licencees’ response towards serving drinkers and disorderly people.

“We asked for their support in ensuring that such people are not served.”

It is an offence to serve alcohol to anyone who is drunk, or who are noisy or boisterous. And we are encouraging them to tell their fellow-licensees of prospective trouble-makers.

The number of assaults from April to June has increased by 70 crimes. But it is a figure that now also includes domestic violence.

And a new system of recording crimes introduced this year means that some figures are a statistical increase only.

TI Davies said: “Across Ceredigion division as a whole, there has been an increase of 92 assaults, taking the figure for three months up to 205.

“And because much of that increase relates to Aberystwyth, we are targeting our resources, particularly in the evenings and at night, on known ‘hot spots’ in the town.

“And we are trying to identify potential trouble-makers early in the evening, so we can take preventative action at an early stage.

“This campaign highlights our determination to clamp down on such offences.”

For the period April to June 2003, compared to the similar period in 2002, Ceredigion has seen a 27 per cent increase in all crime.

And the figure for all violent crimes covering the spectrum from murder, rape, indecent assaults, robbery and Public Order offences are up by 64 per cent, to 314 crimes.

Thefts across the division are up by 13 per cent, to 257 crimes, while criminal damage is up eight per cent to 596 offences.

Burglaries are up by 16 per cent, or 43 crimes, to 77 offences.

But the 47 per cent detection rate compares to 17 per cent in the equivalent period in 2002.

The overall detection rate for the three months is 55.1 per cent.

TI Davies said: “We are determined to make Aberystwyth a town in which everyone can enjoy a social evening out.

“The only persons who should worry are those who obstruct the enjoyment by others. And anyone arrested can expect to have strict bail conditions imposed upon them, particularly if crimes are drink-related.”

...and a campaign to stop under-age drinkers in the county is underway

Under-age drinking is being targeted in Ceredigion, after figures revealed that youngsters between 10 and 18 years are committing 20 per cent of all alcohol-related crime in Dyfed Powys.

And worrying health statistics show that children aged 13 are the peak age for emergency hospital admissions attributable to alcohol.

Ceredigion police division is leading a campaign against under-age drinking, and is being supported by Cyngor Sir Ceredigion’s county's trading standards service, to tackle the problem during the summer months.

Temporary Inspector Kevin Davies, based at Aberystwyth police station, said: “Under-age drinking in a growing problem and impacts on all agencies, contributing to anti-social behaviour and health risks.

“And during the six-month period between April and September 2002, young people between the ages of 10 and 18 committed 20 per cent of the alcohol-related crimes in the Dyfed Powys force area.

“This represents a nearly 50 per cent increase over the previous three years.

TI Davies said: “There is also a clear link between alcohol consumption and the increase in anti-social behaviour by some young people.”

The under-age drinking campaign will include a poster distribution to licensed premises, warning offenders that the maximum fine for selling or purchasing alcohol can amount to £1,000.