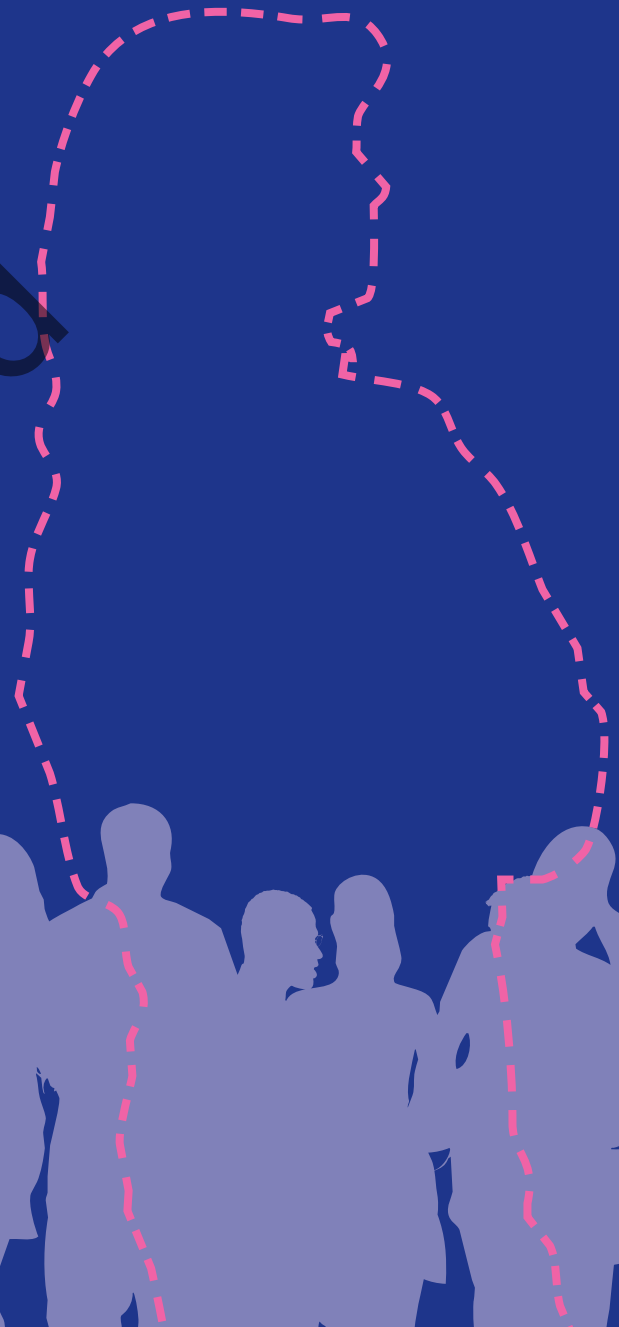


# Have you got what it takes?

Tackling alcohol misuse

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## Tackling alcohol misuse

### Important facts

The Government is determined that alcohol should not be the cause of crime, disorder, and unacceptable social harm that it has become over the past decade. We know that:

- **almost 1 million violent crimes and 1.2 million hospital admissions each year are alcohol-related; and**
- **in a recent study, around two-thirds of 17–30 year olds arrested in a city in England claimed to have ‘pre-loaded’ before a night out ; a further study found ‘pre-loaders’ two-and-a-half times more likely to be involved in violence than other drinkers.**

We estimate that in a community of 100,000 people, each year:

- **2,000 people will be admitted to hospital with an alcohol-related condition;**
- **1,000 people will be a victim of alcohol-related crime;**
- **more than 3,000 will show some signs of alcohol dependence; and**
- **more than 13,000 people will binge drink.**

### The Licensing Act 2003

Businesses, organisations and individuals who want to sell alcohol in England and Wales must have an authorisation to do so. Premises that sell alcohol to the public on an ongoing basis will require a premises licence; sales on an occasional basis can be authorised by a Temporary Event Notice (TEN); and private members’ clubs can operate under club premises certificates. The Licensing Act also regulates the provision of late night refreshment and regulated entertainment in much the same way as it does alcohol.

The Licensing Act passed the responsibility for licensing to local councils at district or unitary level. They are referred to as licensing authorities. Although the Home Office has national responsibility for alcohol licensing and the Licensing Act, licensing authorities set their own policies in their licensing policy statements (published every five years). They are responsible for making decisions on individual applications for licences or certificates and for conducting hearings to consider those authorisations when, for example, the police make representations or apply for a review of a licence.

Licensing authorities must carry out their responsibilities with a focus on promoting the four statutory licensing objectives. These are:

- **the prevention of crime and disorder;**

- **public safety;**
- **the prevention of public nuisance; and**
- **the protection of children from harm.**

### Rebalancing the Licensing Act

The Government has overhauled the Licensing Act through the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to give local areas the tools and powers they need to manage the night-time economy they want. This includes enhanced powers that enable local areas to:

- **make licensing decisions, including imposing conditions on a licence with a lower evidence threshold than previously, and revoke licences or refuse to grant them;**
- **crack down on irresponsible premises who persistently sell alcohol to children, including through a new maximum fine of £20,000;**
- **impose increased periods of voluntary closure as an alternative to prosecution (from a maximum of 48 hours to 336 hours);**
- **give local residents a greater say by requiring licensing authorities to publish more information online; and**
- **receive representations about licensing decisions from anybody, regardless of whether they live close to the premises concerned.**

From October 2012, the Government will also bring into force:

- **new extended Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Orders (EMROs) so that local areas can stop alcohol sales late at night in the whole or part of their area if they are causing problems; and**
- **a new late night levy so that those premises that sell alcohol late at night contribute to the costs of policing – the introduction of the levy will be a decision for licensing authorities (after consulting with, among others, the Police and Crime Commissioner). The Police and Crime Commissioner will have responsibility for determining how the police portion of the levy (at least 70%) is spent.**

The police have a key role in licensing, including:

- **enforcing the framework of criminal offences under the Licensing Act, including age-restricted sales offences;**
- **exercising powers to close down premises, for example, in areas experiencing disorder or causing public nuisance;**
- **acting as a ‘responsible authority’. Responsible authorities are notified of licence applications and can make representations on them, or seek a review of existing licences based on the licensing objectives; and**
- **scrutinising and, where appropriate, making objections to other authorisations, for example, TENs and personal licence applications.**

The police also have discretionary powers to require a person to stop drinking and to confiscate alcohol or containers of alcohol in areas designated by local authorities under Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs). The police and licensing authorities can also currently apply to the courts for a person convicted of an alcohol-related criminal offence to be made subject to a Drink Banning Order (DBO), although the Government has announced that DPPOs and DBOs are among those powers to be replaced and simplified as part of its package of antisocial behaviour reforms.

### **The Government’s Alcohol Strategy**

On 23 March 2012, the Home Secretary announced the publication of the Government’s Alcohol Strategy. The strategy aims to reshape the approach to alcohol and reduce the numbers of people drinking to excess. The strategy sets out a wide range of action that the Government is taking, including:

- **introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol;**
- **consulting on a ban on multi-buy price promotions in shops;**
- **introducing stronger powers for local areas to control the density of licensed premises, including making the impact on health a consideration for this;**
- **piloting innovative sobriety schemes to challenge alcohol-related offending;**
- **asking the Chief Medical Officer to conduct a review of the current alcohol guidelines for adults; and**
- **providing effective treatment and recovery to help those who need routes out of dependency.**

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The Government’s Alcohol Strategy is available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/alcohol-drugs/alcohol/alcohol-strategy>.

The Government will consult on a number of key proposals in the strategy in the autumn, including on the level of a minimum unit price and a ban on multi-buy discounts in shops and off-licences.

Details of all of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act alcohol measures are available on the Home Office website, where the public consultation on the strategy will also be published: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>.