

# 1. Introduction

## The Licensing Act 2003

- 1.1 The Licensing Act 2003 (referred to in this Guidance as the 2003 Act), its explanatory notes and any statutory instruments made under it may be viewed online at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). The statutory instruments include regulations setting out the content and format of application forms and notices. The Home Office has responsibility for the 2003 Act. However, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for regulated entertainment, for which there is provision in Schedule 1 to the 2003 Act (see Chapter 16).

## Licensing objectives and aims

- 1.2 The legislation provides a clear focus on the promotion of four statutory objectives which must be addressed when licensing functions are undertaken.
- 1.3 The licensing objectives are:
- The prevention of crime and disorder;
  - Public safety;
  - The prevention of public nuisance; and
  - The protection of children from harm.
- 1.4 Each objective is of equal importance. There are no other statutory licensing objectives, so that the promotion of the four objectives is a paramount consideration at all times.
- 1.5 However, the legislation also supports a number of other key aims and purposes. These are vitally important and should be principal aims for everyone involved in licensing work. They include:
- protecting the public and local residents from crime, anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance caused by irresponsible licensed premises;
  - giving the police and licensing authorities the powers they need to effectively manage and police the night-time economy and take action against those premises that are causing problems;
  - recognising the important role which pubs and other licensed premises play in our local communities by minimising the regulatory burden on business, encouraging innovation and supporting responsible premises;
  - providing a regulatory framework for alcohol which reflects the needs of local communities and empowers local authorities to make and enforce decisions about the most appropriate licensing strategies for their local area; and
  - encouraging greater community involvement in licensing decisions and giving local residents the opportunity to have their say regarding licensing decisions that may affect them.

## The guidance

- 1.6 Section 182 of the 2003 Act provides that the Secretary of State must issue and, from time to time, may revise guidance to licensing authorities on the discharge of their functions under the 2003 Act. This revised guidance takes effect as soon as it is published. Where a licence application was made prior to the publication of the revised

guidance, it should be processed in accordance with the guidance in effect at the time at which the application was made; the revised guidance does not apply retrospectively. However, all applications received by the licensing authority on or after the date the revised guidance was published should be processed in accordance with the revised guidance.

## **Purpose**

- 1.7 This Guidance is provided to licensing authorities in relation to the carrying out of their functions under the 2003 Act. It also provides information to magistrates' courts hearing appeals against licensing decisions and has been made widely available for the benefit of those who run licensed premises, their legal advisers and the general public. It is a key medium for promoting best practice, ensuring consistent application of licensing powers across England and Wales and for promoting fairness, equal treatment and proportionality.
- 1.8 The police remain key enforcers of licensing law. This Guidance does not bind police officers who, within the parameters of their force orders and the law, remain operationally independent. However, this Guidance is provided to support and assist police officers in interpreting and implementing the 2003 Act in the promotion of the four licensing objectives.

## **Legal status**

- 1.9 Section 4 of the 2003 Act provides that, in carrying out its functions, a licensing authority must 'have regard to' guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182. This Guidance is therefore binding on all licensing authorities to that extent. However, this Guidance cannot anticipate every possible scenario or set of circumstances that may arise and, as long as licensing authorities have properly understood this Guidance, they may depart from it if they have good reason to do so and can provide full reasons. Departure from this Guidance could give rise to an appeal or judicial review, and the reasons given will then be a key consideration for the courts when considering the lawfulness and merits of any decision taken.
- 1.10 Nothing in this Guidance should be taken as indicating that any requirement of licensing law or any other law may be overridden (including the obligations placed on any public authorities under human rights legislation). This Guidance does not in any way replace the statutory provisions of the 2003 Act or add to its scope and licensing authorities should note that interpretation of the 2003 Act is a matter for the courts. Licensing authorities and others using this Guidance must take their own professional and legal advice about its implementation.

## **Licensing policies**

- 1.11 Section 5 of the 2003 Act requires a licensing authority to determine and publish a statement of its licensing policy at least once every five years. The policy must be published before it carries out any licensing functions under the 2003 Act.
- 1.12 However, determining and publishing a statement of its policy is a licensing function and as such the authority must have regard to this Guidance when taking this step. A licensing authority may depart from its own policy if the individual circumstances of any case merit such a decision in the interests of the promotion of the licensing objectives.

But once again, it is important that it should be able to give full reasons for departing from its published statement of licensing policy. Where revisions to this Guidance are issued by the Secretary of State, there may be a period of time when the licensing policy statement is inconsistent with the Guidance (for example, during any consultation by the licensing authority). In these circumstances, the licensing authority should have regard, and give appropriate weight, to this Guidance and its own existing licensing policy statement.

## **Licensable activities**

1.13 For the purposes of the 2003 Act, the following are licensable activities:

- The sale by retail of alcohol;
- The supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of, a member of the club;
- The provision of regulated entertainment; and
- The provision of late night refreshment.

Further explanation of these terms is provided in Chapter 3.

## **Authorisations or permissions**

1.14 The 2003 Act provides for four different types of authorisation or permission, as follows:

- Premises licence – to use premises for licensable activities.
- Club premises certificate – to allow a qualifying club to engage in qualifying club activities as set out in Section 1 of the Act.
- Temporary event notice – to carry out licensable activities at a temporary event.
- Personal licence – to sell or authorise the sale of alcohol from premises in respect of which there is a premises licence.

## **General principles**

1.15 If an application for a premises licence or club premises certificate has been made lawfully and there have been no representations from responsible authorities or other persons, the licensing authority must grant the application, subject only to conditions that are consistent with the operating schedule and relevant mandatory conditions. It is recommended that licence applicants contact responsible authorities when preparing their operating schedules.

## **Licence conditions – general principles**

1.16 Conditions on a premises licence or club premises certificate are important in setting the parameters within which premises can lawfully operate. The use of wording such as “must”, “shall” and “will” is encouraged. Licence conditions:

- must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives;
- must be precise and enforceable;
- must be unambiguous and clear in what they intend to achieve;
- should not duplicate other statutory requirements or other duties or responsibilities placed on the employer by other legislation;

- must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises and events concerned;
- should not be standardised and may be unlawful when it cannot be demonstrated that they are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case;
- should not replicate offences set out in the 2003 Act or other legislation;
- should be proportionate, justifiable and be capable of being met;
- cannot seek to manage the behaviour of customers once they are beyond the direct management of the licence holder and their staff, but may impact on the behaviour of customers in the immediate vicinity of the premises or as they enter or leave; and
- should be written in a prescriptive format.

## **Each application on its own merits**

- 1.17 Each application must be considered on its own merits and in accordance with the licensing authority's statement of licensing policy; for example, if the application falls within the scope of a cumulative impact policy. Conditions attached to licences and certificates must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises and events concerned. This is essential to avoid the imposition of disproportionate and overly burdensome conditions on premises where there is no need for such conditions. Standardised conditions should be avoided and indeed may be unlawful where they cannot be shown to be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case.
- 1.18 When making licensing decisions, all licensing authorities should consider the need to promote growth and deliver economic benefits

## **Additional guidance**

- 1.19 From time to time, the Home Office may issue additional supporting guidance to licensing authorities and other persons on the Gov.uk website. This supporting guidance is good practice guidance and should be viewed as indicative and subject to change. Such supporting guidance will broadly reflect but will not be part of the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the 2003 Act. Licensing authorities may wish to refer to, but are under no statutory duty to have regard to such supporting guidance issued by the Home Office.

## **Other relevant legislation**

- 1.20 While licence conditions should not duplicate other statutory provisions, licensing authorities and licensees should be mindful of requirements and responsibilities placed on them by other legislation. Legislation which may be relevant includes:
- The Gambling Act 2005
  - The Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - The Noise Act 1996
  - The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005
  - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
  - The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
  - The Equality Act 2010

- The Immigration Act 2016
- Regulators' Code under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006

## 2. The licensing objectives

### Crime and disorder

- 2.1 Licensing authorities should look to the police as the main source of advice on crime and disorder. They should also seek to involve the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
- 2.2 In the exercise of their functions, licensing authorities should seek to co-operate with the Security Industry Authority (“SIA”) as far as possible and consider adding relevant conditions to licences where appropriate. The SIA also plays an important role in preventing crime and disorder by ensuring that door supervisors are properly licensed and, in partnership with police and other agencies, that security companies are not being used as fronts for serious and organised criminal activity. This may include making specific enquiries or visiting premises through intelligence led operations in conjunction with the police, local authorities and other partner agencies. Similarly, the provision of requirements for door supervision may be appropriate to ensure that people who are drunk, drug dealers or people carrying firearms do not enter the premises and ensuring that the police are kept informed.
- 2.3 Conditions should be targeted on deterrence and preventing crime and disorder including the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises (see paragraph 10.10). For example, where there is good reason to suppose that disorder may take place, the presence of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras both inside and immediately outside the premises can actively deter disorder, nuisance, anti-social behaviour and crime generally. Some licence holders may wish to have cameras on their premises for the prevention of crime directed against the business itself, its staff, or its customers. But any condition may require a broader approach, and it may be appropriate to ensure that the precise location of cameras is set out on plans to ensure that certain areas are properly covered and there is no subsequent dispute over the terms of the condition.
- 2.4 The inclusion of radio links and ring-round phone systems should be considered an appropriate condition for public houses, bars and nightclubs operating in city and town centre leisure areas with a high density of licensed premises. These systems allow managers of licensed premises to communicate instantly with the police and facilitate a rapid response to any disorder which may be endangering the customers and staff on the premises.
- 2.5 Conditions relating to the management competency of designated premises supervisors should not normally be attached to premises licences. It will normally be the responsibility of the premises licence holder as an employer, and not the licensing authority, to ensure that the managers appointed at the premises are competent and appropriately trained. The designated premises supervisor is the key person who will usually be responsible for the day to day management of the premises by the premises licence holder, including the prevention of disorder. A condition of this kind may only be justified as appropriate in rare circumstances where it can be demonstrated that, in the circumstances associated with particular premises, poor management competency could give rise to issues of crime and disorder and public safety.
- 2.6 The prevention of crime includes the prevention of immigration crime including the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises. Licensing authorities should work

with Home Office Immigration Enforcement, as well as the police, in respect of these matters. Licence conditions that are considered appropriate for the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises might include requiring a premises licence holder to undertake right to work checks on all staff employed at the licensed premises or requiring that evidence of a right to work check, either physical or digital (e.g. a copy of any document checked as part of a right to work check or a clear copy of the online right to work check) are retained at the licensed premises.

2.7 The objective to crime under the Licensing Act 2003 would include taking measures to prevent incidents of spiking which would usually be prosecuted under section 23 and 24 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, and section 61 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The following examples are within the range of behaviours that would be considered spiking. This list is not exhaustive:

- Putting alcohol into someone's drink without their knowledge or permission
- Putting prescription or illegal drugs into an alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink without their knowledge or permission
- Injecting another person with prescription or illegal drugs without their knowledge or permission
- Putting prescription or illegal drugs into another person's food without their knowledge or permission
- Putting prescription or illegal drugs into another person's cigarette or vape without their knowledge or permission

## Public safety

2.8 Licence holders have a responsibility to ensure the safety of those using their premises, as a part of their duties under the 2003 Act. This concerns the safety of people using the relevant premises rather than public health which is addressed in other legislation. Physical safety includes the prevention of accidents and injuries and other immediate harms that can result from alcohol consumption such as unconsciousness or alcohol poisoning. Conditions relating to public safety may also promote the crime and disorder objective as noted above. There will of course be occasions when a public safety condition could incidentally benefit a person's health more generally, but it should not be the purpose of the condition as this would be outside the licensing authority's powers (be ultra vires) under the 2003 Act. Conditions should not be imposed on a premises licence or club premises certificate which relate to cleanliness or hygiene.

2.9 A number of matters should be considered in relation to public safety. These may include:

- Fire safety;
- Ensuring appropriate access for emergency services such as ambulances;
- Good communication with local authorities and emergency services, for example communications networks with the police and signing up for local incident alerts (see paragraph 2.4 above);
- Ensuring the presence of trained first aiders on the premises and appropriate first aid kits;

- Ensuring the safety of people when leaving the premises (for example, through the provision of information on late-night transportation);
- Ensuring appropriate and frequent waste disposal, particularly of glass bottles;
- Ensuring appropriate limits on the maximum capacity of the premises (see paragraphs 2.12-2.13, and Chapter 10; and
- Considering the use of CCTV in and around the premises (as noted in paragraph 2.3 above, this may also assist with promoting the crime and disorder objective).

- 2.10 The measures that are appropriate to promote public safety will vary between premises and the matters listed above may not apply in all cases. As set out in Chapter 8 (8.38-8.46), applicants should consider when making their application which steps it is appropriate to take to promote the public safety objective and demonstrate how they achieve that.
- 2.11 Counter terrorism and public safety
- 2.12 Licensing committees may wish to give due consideration to appropriate counter-terrorism measures and advice when considering licence applications, for example at high profile or large premises or events or where there are factors which may increase attractiveness to attacks, and in particular when in receipt of relevant advice from police counter terrorist staff.
- 2.13 It is particularly relevant to consider conditions around health care provision in this regard. Any additional licensing conditions should be appropriate and proportionate to the venue as noted in para 1.16. We recommend that all licensing authorities pay particular attention to terrorist threats when making specific licence conditions in relation to security or health care provision at appropriate premises and events applying for a licence.
- 2.14 As noted in para 2.8 licensing authorities can recommend conditions where appropriate to do so, such as ensuring appropriate access for emergency services and vehicles such as ambulances; good communication with local authorities and emergency services, for example communications networks with the police and signing up for local incident alerts (see paragraph 2.4); and ensuring the presence of sufficient trained first aiders on the premises and appropriate first aid kits.
- 2.15 However, in some instances, licensing authorities may wish to tailor their approach, depending on the particular nature of the application, and go further when addressing concerns around possible terrorist or other such risks. We have provided an Annex to help inform and support licensing authorities in their decision making with regards to additional licence conditions for premises and events, that may benefit from further security planning and health care provision in the aftermath of a particular type of incident.

## **Ensuring safe departure of those using the premises**

- 2.16 Licence holders should make provision to ensure that premises users safely leave their premises. Measures that may assist include:
- Providing information on the premises of local taxi companies who can provide safe transportation home; and

- Ensuring adequate lighting outside the premises, particularly on paths leading to and from the premises and in car parks.

## **Maintenance and repair**

2.17 Where there is a requirement in other legislation for premises open to the public or for employers to possess certificates attesting to the safety or satisfactory nature of certain equipment or fixtures on the premises, it would be inappropriate for a licensing condition to require possession of such a certificate. However, it would be permissible to require as a condition of a licence or certificate, if appropriate, checks on this equipment to be conducted at specified intervals and for evidence of these checks to be retained by the premises licence holder or club provided this does not duplicate or gold-plate a requirement in other legislation. Similarly, it would be permissible for licensing authorities, if they receive relevant representations from responsible authorities or any other persons, to attach conditions which require equipment of particular standards to be maintained on the premises. Responsible authorities – such as health and safety authorities – should therefore make their expectations clear in this respect to enable prospective licence holders or clubs to prepare effective operating schedules and club operating schedules.

## **Safe capacities**

2.18 “Safe capacities” should only be imposed where appropriate for the promotion of public safety or the prevention of disorder on the relevant premises. For example, if a capacity has been imposed through other legislation, it would be inappropriate to reproduce it in a premises licence. Indeed, it would also be wrong to lay down conditions which conflict with other legal requirements. However, if no safe capacity has been imposed through other legislation, a responsible authority may consider it appropriate for a new capacity to be attached to the premises which would apply at any material time when the licensable activities are taking place and make representations to that effect. For example, in certain circumstances, capacity limits may be appropriate in preventing disorder, as overcrowded venues can increase the risks of crowds becoming frustrated and hostile.

2.19 The permitted capacity is a limit on the number of persons who may be on the premises at any time, following a recommendation by the relevant fire and rescue authority under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. For any application for a premises licence or club premises certificate for premises without an existing permitted capacity where the applicant wishes to take advantage of the special provisions set out in section 177 of the 2003 Act<sup>1</sup>, the applicant should conduct their own risk assessment as to the appropriate capacity of the premises. They should send their recommendation to the fire and rescue authority which will consider it and decide what the “permitted capacity” of those premises should be.

2.20 Public safety may include the safety of performers appearing at any premises, but does not extend to the prevention of injury from participation in a boxing or wrestling

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<sup>1</sup> S 177 of the 2003 Act now only applies to performances of dance.

## Public nuisance

- 2.21 The 2003 Act enables licensing authorities and responsible authorities, through representations, to consider what constitutes public nuisance and what is appropriate to prevent it in terms of conditions attached to specific premises licences and club premises certificates. It is therefore important that in considering the promotion of this licensing objective, licensing authorities and responsible authorities focus on the effect of the licensable activities at the specific premises on persons living and working (including those carrying on business) in the area around the premises which may be disproportionate and unreasonable. The issues will mainly concern noise nuisance, light pollution, noxious smells and litter.
- 2.22 Public nuisance is given a statutory meaning in many pieces of legislation. It is however not narrowly defined in the 2003 Act and retains its broad common law meaning. It may include in appropriate circumstances the reduction of the living and working amenity and environment of other persons living and working in the area of the licensed premises. Public nuisance may also arise as a result of the adverse effects of artificial light, dust, odour and insects or where its effect is prejudicial to health.
- 2.23 Conditions relating to noise nuisance will usually concern steps appropriate to control the levels of noise emanating from premises. This might be achieved by a simple measure such as ensuring that doors and windows are kept closed after a particular time, or persons are not permitted in garden areas of the premises after a certain time. More sophisticated measures like the installation of acoustic curtains or rubber speaker mounts to mitigate sound escape from the premises may be appropriate. However, conditions in relation to live or recorded music may not be enforceable in circumstances where the entertainment activity itself is not licensable (see chapter 16). Any conditions appropriate to promote the prevention of public nuisance should be tailored to the type, nature and characteristics of the specific premises and its licensable activities. Licensing authorities should avoid inappropriate or disproportionate measures that could deter events that are valuable to the community, such as live music. Noise limiters, for example, are expensive to purchase and install and are likely to be a considerable burden for smaller venues.
- 2.24 As with all conditions, those relating to noise nuisance may not be appropriate in certain circumstances where provisions in other legislation adequately protect those living in the area of the premises. But as stated earlier in this Guidance, the approach of licensing authorities and responsible authorities should be one of prevention and when their powers are engaged, licensing authorities should be aware of the fact that other legislation may not adequately cover concerns raised in relevant representations and additional conditions may be appropriate.
- 2.25 Where applications have given rise to representations, any appropriate conditions should normally focus on the most sensitive periods. For example, the most sensitive period for people being disturbed by unreasonably loud music is at night and into the early morning when residents in adjacent properties may be attempting to go to sleep or are sleeping. This is why there is still a need for a licence for performances of live music between 11 pm and 8 am. In certain circumstances, conditions relating to noise

emanating from the premises may also be appropriate to address any disturbance anticipated as customers enter and leave.

- 2.26 Measures to control light pollution will also require careful thought. Bright lighting outside premises which is considered appropriate to prevent crime and disorder may itself give rise to light pollution for some neighbours. Applicants, licensing authorities and responsible authorities will need to balance these issues.
- 2.27 Beyond the immediate area surrounding the premises, these are matters for the personal responsibility of individuals under the law. An individual who engages in anti-social behaviour is accountable in their own right. However, it would be perfectly reasonable for a licensing authority to impose a condition, following relevant representations, that requires the licence holder or club to place signs at the exits from the building encouraging patrons to be quiet until they leave the area, or that, if they wish to smoke, to do so at designated places on the premises instead of outside, and to respect the rights of people living nearby to a peaceful night.

## **Protection of children from harm**

- 2.28 The protection of children from harm includes the protection of children from moral, psychological and physical harm. This includes not only protecting children from the harms associated directly with alcohol consumption but also wider harms such as exposure to strong language and sexual expletives (for example, in the context of exposure to certain films or adult entertainment). Licensing authorities must also consider the need to protect children from sexual exploitation when undertaking licensing functions.
- 2.29 The Government believes that it is completely unacceptable to sell alcohol to children. Conditions relating to the access of children where alcohol is sold and which are appropriate to protect them from harm should be carefully considered. Moreover, conditions restricting the access of children to premises should be strongly considered in circumstances where:
- adult entertainment is provided;
  - a member or members of the current management have been convicted for serving alcohol to minors or with a reputation for allowing underage drinking (other than in the context of the exemption in the 2003 Act relating to 16 and 17 year olds consuming beer, wine and cider when accompanied by an adult during a table meal);
  - it is known that unaccompanied children have been allowed access;
  - there is a known association with drug taking or dealing; or
  - in some cases, the premises are used exclusively or primarily for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises.
- 2.30 It is also possible that activities, such as adult entertainment, may take place at certain times on premises but not at other times. For example, premises may operate as a café bar during the day providing meals for families but also provide entertainment with a sexual content after 8.00pm. It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of what amounts to entertainment or services of an adult or sexual nature. Applicants, responsible authorities and licensing authorities will need to consider this point carefully. This would broadly include topless bar staff, striptease, lap-, table- or pole-dancing, performances involving feigned violence or horrific incidents, feigned or actual sexual acts or fetishism,

or entertainment involving strong and offensive language.

- 2.31 Applicants must be clear in their operating schedules about the activities and times at which the events would take place to help determine when it is not appropriate for children to enter the premises. Consideration should also be given to the proximity of premises to schools and youth clubs so that applicants take appropriate steps to ensure that advertising relating to their premises, or relating to events at their premises, is not displayed at a time when children are likely to be near the premises.
- 2.32 Licensing authorities and responsible authorities should expect applicants, when preparing an operating schedule or club operating schedule, to set out the steps to be taken to protect children from harm when on the premises.
- 2.33 Conditions, where they are appropriate, should reflect the licensable activities taking place on the premises. In addition to the mandatory condition regarding age verification, other conditions relating to the protection of children from harm can include:
- restrictions on the hours when children may be present;
  - restrictions or exclusions on the presence of children under certain ages when particular specified activities are taking place;
  - restrictions on the parts of the premises to which children may have access;
  - age restrictions (below 18);
  - restrictions or exclusions when certain activities are taking place;
  - requirements for an accompanying adult (including for example, a combination of requirements which provide that children under a particular age must be accompanied by an adult); and
  - full exclusion of people under 18 from the premises when any licensable activities are taking place.
- 2.34 Please see also Chapter 10 for details about the Licensing Act 2003 (Mandatory Licensing Conditions) Order 2010.
- 2.35 Licensing authorities should give considerable weight to representations about child protection matters. In addition to the responsible authority whose functions relate directly to child protection, the Director of Public Health may also have access to relevant evidence to inform such representations. These representations may include, amongst other things, the use of health data about the harms that alcohol can cause to underage drinkers. Where a responsible authority, or other person, presents evidence to the licensing authority linking specific premises with harms to children (such as ambulance data or emergency department attendances by persons under 18 years old with alcohol-related illnesses or injuries) this evidence should be considered, and the licensing authority should also consider what action is appropriate to ensure this licensing objective is effectively enforced. In relation to applications for the grant of a licence in areas where evidence is presented on high levels of alcohol-related harms in persons aged under 18, it is recommended that the licensing authority considers what conditions may be appropriate to ensure that this objective is promoted effectively.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## 8. Applications for premises licences

### Relevant licensing authority

- 8.1 Premises licences are issued by the licensing authority in which the premises are situated or, in the case of premises straddling an area boundary, the licensing authority where the greater part of the premises is situated. Where the premises is located equally in two or more areas, the applicant may choose but, in these rare cases, it is important that each of the licensing authorities involved maintain close contact.
- 8.2 Section 13 of the 2003 Act defines the parties holding important roles in the context of applications, inspection, monitoring and reviews of premises licences.

### Authorised persons

- 8.3 The first group –“authorised persons”– are bodies empowered by the 2003 Act to carry out inspection and enforcement roles. The police and immigration officers are not included because they are separately empowered by the 2003 Act to carry out their duties.
- 8.4 For all premises, the authorised persons include:
- officers of the licensing authority;
  - fire inspectors;
  - inspectors with responsibility in the licensing authority’s area for the enforcement of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974;
  - officers of the local authority exercising environmental health functions
- 8.5 Local authority officers will most commonly have responsibility for the enforcement of health and safety legislation, but the Health and Safety Executive is responsible for certain premises. In relation to vessels, authorised persons also include an inspector or a surveyor of ships appointed under section 256 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. These would normally be officers acting on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. The Secretary of State may prescribe other authorised persons by means of regulations, but has not currently prescribed any additional bodies. If any are prescribed, details will be made available on the GOV.UK website.
- 8.6 Where an immigration officer has reason to believe that any premises are being used for a licensable activity, the officer may enter the premises with a view to seeing whether an offence under any of the Immigration Acts is being committed in connection with the licensable activity.

## Responsible authorities

- 8.7 The second group –“responsible authorities”– are public bodies that must be fully notified of applications and that are entitled to make representations to the licensing authority in relation to the application for the grant, variation or review of a premises licence. These representations must still be considered ‘relevant’ by the licensing authority and relate to one or more of the licensing objectives. For all premises, responsible authorities include:
- the relevant licensing authority and any other licensing authority in whose area part of the premises is situated;
  - the chief officer of police;
  - the local fire and rescue authority;
  - the relevant enforcing authority under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974;
  - the local authority with responsibility for environmental health;
  - the local planning authority;
  - a body that represents those who are responsible for, or interested in, matters relating to the protection of children from harm;
  - each local authority’s Director of Public Health (DPH) in England<sup>4</sup> and Local Health Boards (in Wales);
  - the local weights and measures authority (trading standards); and
  - Home Office Immigration Enforcement (on behalf of the Secretary of State).
- 8.8 The licensing authority should indicate in its statement of licensing policy which body it recognises to be competent to advise it on the protection of children from harm. This may be the local authority social services department, the Local Safeguarding Children Board or another competent body. This is important as applications for premises licences have to be copied to the responsible authorities in order for them to make any representations they think are relevant.
- 8.9 In relation to a vessel, responsible authorities also include navigation authorities within the meaning of section 221(1) of the Water Resources Act 1991 that have statutory functions in relation to the waters where the vessel is usually moored or berthed, or any waters where it is proposed to be navigated when being used for licensable activities; the Environment Agency; the Canal and River Trust; and the Secretary of State (who in practice acts through the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)). In practice, the Environment Agency and the Canal and River Trust only have responsibility in relation to vessels on waters for which they are the navigation statutory authority.
- 8.10 The MCA is the lead responsible authority for public safety, including fire safety, affecting passenger ships (those carrying more than 12 passengers) wherever they operate and small commercial vessels (carrying no more than 12 passengers) which go to sea. The safety regime for passenger ships is enforced under the Merchant Shipping Acts by the MCA which operates certification schemes for these vessels. Fire and rescue authorities, the Health and Safety Executive and local authority health and safety

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<sup>4</sup> This change was made as a result of the commencement of measures in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which amended the 2003 Act and further provision in the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.



## Steps to promote the licensing objectives

- 8.41 In completing an operating schedule, applicants are expected to have regard to the statement of licensing policy for their area. They must also be aware of the expectations of the licensing authority and the responsible authorities as to the steps that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives, and to demonstrate knowledge of their local area when describing the steps they propose to take to promote the licensing objectives. Licensing authorities and responsible authorities are expected to publish information about what is meant by the promotion of the licensing objectives and to ensure that applicants can readily access advice about these matters. However, applicants are also expected to undertake their own enquiries about the area in which the premises are situated to inform the content of the application.
- 8.42 Applicants are, in particular, expected to obtain sufficient information to enable them to demonstrate, when setting out the steps they propose to take to promote the licensing objectives, that they understand:
- the layout of the local area and physical environment including crime and disorder hotspots, proximity to residential premises and proximity to areas where children may congregate;
  - any risk posed to the local area by the applicants' proposed licensable activities; and
  - any local initiatives (for example, local crime reduction initiatives or voluntary schemes including local taxi-marshalling schemes, street pastors and other schemes) which may help to mitigate potential risks.
- 8.43 Applicants are expected to include positive proposals in their application on how they will manage any potential risks. Where specific policies apply in the area (for example, a cumulative impact assessment), applicants are also expected to demonstrate an understanding of how the policy impacts on their application; any measures they will take to mitigate the impact; and why they consider the application should be an exception to the policy.
- 8.44 It is expected that enquiries about the locality will assist applicants when determining the steps that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. For example, premises with close proximity to residential premises should consider what effect this will have on their smoking, noise management and dispersal policies to ensure the promotion of the public nuisance objective. Applicants must consider all factors which may be relevant to the promotion of the licensing objectives, and where there are no known concerns, acknowledge this in their application.
- 8.45 The majority of information which applicants will require should be available in the licensing policy statement in the area. Other publicly available sources which may be of use to applicants include:
- the Crime Mapping website;
  - Neighbourhood Statistics websites;
  - websites or publications by local responsible authorities;
  - websites or publications by local voluntary schemes and initiatives; and

- on-line mapping tools.

- 8.46 While applicants are not required to seek the views of responsible authorities before formally submitting their application, they may find them to be a useful source of expert advice on local issues that should be taken into consideration when making an application. Licensing authorities may wish to encourage co-operation between applicants, responsible authorities and, where relevant, local residents and businesses before applications are submitted in order to minimise the scope for disputes to arise.
- 8.47 Applicants are expected to provide licensing authorities with sufficient information in this section to determine the extent to which their proposed steps are appropriate to promote the licensing objectives in the local area. Applications must not be based on providing a set of standard conditions to promote the licensing objectives and applicants are expected to make it clear why the steps they are proposing are appropriate for the premises.
- 8.48 All parties are expected to work together in partnership to ensure that the licensing objectives are promoted collectively. Where there are no disputes, the steps that applicants propose to take to promote the licensing objectives, as set out in the operating schedule, will very often translate directly into conditions that will be attached to premises licences with the minimum of fuss.
- 8.49 For some premises, it is possible that no measures will be appropriate to promote one or more of the licensing objectives, for example, because they are adequately covered by other existing legislation. It is however important that all operating schedules should be precise and clear about the consideration given to the licensing objectives and any measures that are proposed to promote them.

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# 9. Determining applications

## General

- 9.1 When a licensing authority receives an application for a new premises licence or an application to vary an existing premises licence, it must determine whether the application has been made in accordance with section 17 of the 2003 Act, and in accordance with regulations made under sections 17(3) to (6), 34, 42, 54 and 55 of the 2003 Act. It must similarly determine applications for the grant of club premises certificates made in accordance with section 71 of the 2003 Act, and in accordance with regulations made under sections 71(4) to (7), 84, 91 and 92 of the 2003 Act. This means that the licensing authority must consider among other things whether the application has been properly advertised in accordance with those regulations.

## Where no representations are made

- 9.2 A hearing is not required where an application has been properly made and no responsible authority or other person has made a relevant representation or where representations are made and subsequently withdrawn. In these cases, the licensing authority must grant the application in the terms sought, subject only to conditions which are consistent with the operating schedule and relevant mandatory conditions under the 2003 Act. This should be undertaken as a simple administrative process by the licensing authority's officials who may replicate some of the proposals contained in the operating schedule to promote the licensing objectives in the form of clear and enforceable licence conditions. Licensing authorities should not hold hearings for uncontested applications, for example in situations where representations have been made and conditions have subsequently been agreed.

## Where representations are made

- 9.3 Where a representation concerning the licensing objectives is made by a responsible authority about a proposed operating schedule and it is relevant (see paragraphs 9.4 to 9.10 below), the licensing authority's discretion will be engaged. It will also be engaged if another person makes relevant representations to the licensing authority, which are also not frivolous or vexatious (see paragraphs 9.4 to 9.10 below). Relevant representations can be made in opposition to, or in support of, an application and can be made by any individual, body or business that has grounds to do so.

## Relevant, vexatious and frivolous representations

- 9.4 A representation is "relevant" if it relates to the likely effect of the grant of the licence on the promotion of at least one of the licensing objectives. For example, a representation from a local businessperson about the commercial damage caused by competition from new licensed premises would not be relevant. On the other hand, a representation by a businessperson that nuisance caused by new premises would deter customers from entering the local area, and the steps proposed by the applicant to prevent that nuisance were inadequate, would be relevant. In other words, representations should relate to the impact of licensable activities carried on from premises on the objectives. For representations in relation to variations to be relevant, they should be confined to

the subject matter of the variation. There is no requirement for a responsible authority or other person to produce a recorded history of problems at premises to support their representations, and in fact this would not be possible for new premises.

- 9.5 It is for the licensing authority to determine whether a representation (other than a representation from a responsible authority) is frivolous or vexatious on the basis of what might ordinarily be considered to be vexatious or frivolous. A representation may be considered to be vexatious if it appears to be intended to cause aggravation or annoyance, whether to a competitor or other person, without reasonable cause or justification. Vexatious circumstances may arise because of disputes between rival businesses and local knowledge will therefore be invaluable in considering such matters. Licensing authorities can consider the main effect of the representation, and whether any inconvenience or expense caused by it could reasonably be considered to be proportionate.
- 9.6 Frivolous representations would be essentially categorised by a lack of seriousness. Frivolous representations would concern issues which, at most, are minor and in relation to which no remedial steps would be warranted or proportionate.
- 9.7 Any person who is aggrieved by a rejection of their representations on either of these grounds may lodge a complaint through the local authority's corporate complaints procedure. A person may also challenge the authority's decision by way of judicial review.
- 9.8 Licensing authorities should not take decisions about whether representations are frivolous, vexatious or relevant to the licensing objectives on the basis of any political judgement. This may be difficult for councillors who receive complaints from residents within their own wards. If consideration is not to be delegated, contrary to the recommendation in this Guidance, an assessment should be prepared by officials for consideration by the sub- committee before any decision is taken that necessitates a hearing. Any councillor who considers that their own interests are such that they are unable to consider the matter independently should disqualify themselves.
- 9.9 It is recommended that, in borderline cases, the benefit of the doubt about any aspect of a representation should be given to the person making that representation. The subsequent hearing would then provide an opportunity for the person or body making the representation to amplify and clarify it.
- 9.10 Licensing authorities should consider providing advice on their websites about how any person can make representations to them.

## **The role of responsible authorities**

- 9.11 Responsible authorities under the 2003 Act are automatically notified of all new applications. While all responsible authorities may make representations regarding applications for licences and club premises certificates and full variation applications, it is the responsibility of each responsible authority to determine when they have appropriate grounds to do so.
- 9.12 Each responsible authority will be an expert in their respective field, and in some cases it is likely that a particular responsible authority will be the licensing authority's main source of advice in relation to a particular licensing objective. For example, the police have a key role in managing the night-time economy and should have good working

The image displays a horizontal bar chart with 10 distinct groups of data. Each group is identified by a small black square marker on the left. Within each group, there are 8 horizontal bars of varying lengths, representing different values. The bars are black and set against a white background. The lengths of the bars vary significantly between groups and within each group, suggesting a comparison of multiple metrics across 10 categories.

74 | Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003

| Row | Bar Length (approx. % of total width) |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 1   | 100%                                  |
| 2   | 100%                                  |
| 3   | 70%                                   |
| 4   | 100%                                  |
| 5   | 100%                                  |
| 6   | 85%                                   |
| 7   | 100%                                  |
| 8   | 100%                                  |
| 9   | 100%                                  |
| 10  | 60%                                   |
| 11  | 100%                                  |
| 12  | 100%                                  |

9.31 The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 governing hearings may be found on the [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) website. If the licensing authority decides that representations are relevant, it must hold a hearing to consider them. The need for a hearing can only be avoided with the agreement of the licensing authority, where the applicant and all of the persons who made relevant representations have given notice to the authority that they consider a hearing to be unnecessary. Where this is the case and the authority agrees that a hearing is unnecessary, it must forthwith give notice to the parties that the hearing has been dispensed with. Notwithstanding those regulatory provisions, in cases where the licensing authority believes that a hearing is still necessary, it is recommended that the authority should, as soon as possible, provide the parties with reasons in writing for the need to hold the hearing. In cases where only 'positive' representations are received, without qualifications, the licensing authority should consider whether a hearing is required. To this end, it may wish to notify the persons who made representations and give them the opportunity to withdraw those representations. This would need to be done in sufficient time before the hearing to ensure that parties were not put to unnecessary inconvenience.

- 9.33 The 2005 Hearings Regulations require that representations must be withdrawn 24 hours before the first day of any hearing. If they are withdrawn after this time, the hearing must proceed and the representations may be withdrawn orally at that hearing. However, where discussions between an applicant and those making representations are taking place and it is likely that all parties are on the point of reaching agreement, the licensing authority may wish to use the power given within the hearings regulations to extend time limits, if it considers this to be in the public interest.
- 9.34 Applicants should be encouraged to contact responsible authorities and others, such as local residents, who may be affected by the application before formulating their applications so that the mediation process may begin before the statutory time limits come into effect after submission of an application. The hearing process must meet the requirements of regulations made under the 2003 Act. Where matters arise which are not covered by the regulations, licensing authorities may make arrangements as they see fit as long as they are lawful.
- 9.35 There is no requirement in the 2003 Act for responsible authorities that have made representations to attend, but it is generally good practice and assists committees in reaching more informed decisions. Where several responsible authorities within a local authority have made representations on an application, a single local authority officer may represent them at the hearing if the responsible authorities and the licensing authority agree. This local authority officer representing other responsible authorities may be a licensing officer, but only if this licensing officer is acting as a responsible authority on behalf of the licensing authority and has had no role in the licensing determination process. This is to ensure that the responsible authorities are represented by an independent officer separate from the licensing determination process.
- 9.36 As noted in paragraphs 9.13 to 9.19 above, where the licensing officer is acting as a responsible authority the relevant steps should be followed to ensure that this individual has no role in the decision making process regarding the licensing determination.
- 9.37 As a matter of practice, licensing authorities should seek to focus the hearing on the steps considered appropriate to promote the particular licensing objective or objectives that have given rise to the specific representation and avoid straying into undisputed areas. A responsible authority or other person may choose to rely on their written representation. They may not add further representations to those disclosed to the applicant prior to the hearing, but they may expand on their existing representation and should be allowed sufficient time to do so, within reasonable and practicable limits.
- 9.38 In determining the application with a view to promoting the licensing objectives in the overall interests of the local community, the licensing authority must give appropriate weight to:
- the steps that are appropriate to promote the licensing objectives;
  - the representations (including supporting information) presented by all the parties; •
- this Guidance;
- its own statement of licensing policy.
- 9.39 The licensing authority should give its decision within five working days of the conclusion of the hearing (or immediately in certain specified cases) and provide reasons to support it. This will be important if there is an appeal by any of the parties. Notification of a decision must be accompanied by information on the right of the party

to appeal. After considering all the relevant issues, the licensing authority may grant the application subject to the relevant mandatory conditions and any conditions that are consistent with the operating schedule. Any additional conditions imposed must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives; there is no power for the licensing authority to attach a condition that is merely aspirational. For example, conditions may not be attached which relate solely to the health of customers rather than their direct physical safety. Any conditions added to the licence must be those imposed at the hearing or those agreed when a hearing has not been necessary.

- 9.40 Alternatively, the licensing authority may refuse the application on the grounds that this is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. It may also refuse to specify a designated premises supervisor and/or only allow certain requested licensable activities. In the interests of transparency, the licensing authority should publish hearings procedures in full on its website to ensure that those involved have the most current information.
- 9.41 In the context of variations or minor variations, which may involve structural alteration to or change of use of a building, the decision of the licensing authority will not exempt an applicant from the need to apply for building control approval, planning permission or both of these where appropriate.

## **Determining actions that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives**

- 9.42 Licensing authorities are best placed to determine what actions are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in their areas. All licensing determinations should be considered on a case-by-case basis. They should take into account any representations or objections that have been received from responsible authorities or other persons, and representations made by the applicant or premises user as the case may be.
- 9.43 The authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve.
- 9.44 Determination of whether an action or step is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives requires an assessment of what action or step would be suitable to achieve that end. While this does not therefore require a licensing authority to decide that no lesser step will achieve the aim, the authority should aim to consider the potential burden that any condition would impose on the premises licence holder (such as the financial burden due to restrictions on licensable activities) as well as the potential benefit in terms of the promotion of the licensing objectives. However, it is imperative that the authority ensures that the factors which form the basis of its determination are limited to consideration of the promotion of the objectives and nothing outside those parameters. As with the consideration of licence variations, the licensing authority should consider wider issues such as other conditions already in place to mitigate potential negative impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives and the track record of the business. Further advice on determining what is appropriate when imposing conditions on a licence or certificate is provided in Chapter 10. The licensing authority is expected to come to its determination based on an assessment of the evidence on both the risks and benefits either for or against making the determination.

# 10. Conditions attached to premises licences and club premises certificates

## General

- 10.1 This chapter provides further guidance in relation to conditions attached to premises licences and club premises certificates. General principles on licence conditions are set out in Chapter 1 (see paragraph 1.16).
- 10.2 Conditions include any limitations or restrictions attached to a licence or certificate and essentially are the steps or actions that the holder of the premises licence or the club premises certificate will be required to take or refrain from taking in relation to the carrying on of licensable activities at the premises in question. Failure to comply with any condition attached to a licence or certificate is a criminal offence, which on conviction is punishable by an unlimited fine or up to six months' imprisonment. The courts have made clear that it is particularly important that conditions which are imprecise or difficult for a licence holder to observe should be avoided.
- 10.3 There are three types of condition that may be attached to a licence or certificate: proposed, imposed and mandatory. Each of these categories is described in more detail below.

## Proposed conditions

- 10.4 The conditions that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives should emerge initially from the risk assessment carried out by a prospective licence or certificate holder, which they should carry out before making their application for a premises licence or club premises certificate. This would be translated into the steps recorded in the operating schedule or club operating schedule, which must also set out the proposed hours during which licensable activities will be conducted and any other hours during which the premises will be open to the public.
- 10.5 It is not acceptable for licensing authorities to simply replicate the wording from an applicant's operating schedule. A condition should be interpreted in accordance with the applicant's intention and be appropriate and proportionate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

## Consistency with steps described in operating schedule

- 10.6 The 2003 Act provides that where an operating schedule or club operating schedule has been submitted with an application and there have been no relevant representations made by responsible authorities or any other person, the licence or certificate must be granted subject only to such conditions as are consistent with the schedule accompanying the application and any mandatory conditions required under the 2003 Act.
- 10.7 Consistency means that the effect of the condition should be substantially the same as that intended by the terms of the operating schedule. If conditions are broken, this may lead to a criminal prosecution or an application for a review and it is extremely important therefore that they should be expressed on the licence or certificate in unequivocal and unambiguous terms. The duty imposed by conditions on the licence holder or club must

be clear to the licence holder, club, enforcement officers and the courts.

## **Imposed conditions**

- 10.8 The licensing authority may not impose any conditions unless its discretion has been exercised following receipt of relevant representations and it is satisfied as a result of a hearing (unless all parties agree a hearing is not necessary) that it is appropriate to impose conditions to promote one or more of the four licensing objectives. In order to promote the crime prevention licensing objective conditions may be included that are aimed at preventing illegal working in licensed premises. This provision also applies to minor variations.
- 10.9 It is possible that in some cases no additional conditions will be appropriate to promote the licensing objectives.

## **Proportionality**

- 10.10 The 2003 Act requires that licensing conditions should be tailored to the size, type, location and characteristics and activities taking place at the premises concerned. Conditions should be determined on a case-by-case basis and standardised conditions which ignore these individual aspects should be avoided. For example, conditions should not be used to implement a general policy in a given area such as the use of CCTV, polycarbonate drinking vessels or identity scanners where they would not be appropriate to the specific premises. Conditions that are considered appropriate for the prevention of illegal working in premises licensed to sell alcohol or late night refreshment might include requiring a premises licence holder to undertake right to work checks on all staff employed at the licensed premises or requiring that evidence of a right to work check, either physical or digital (e.g. copy of any document checked or a clear copy of the online right to work check) is retained at the licensed premises. Licensing authorities may also wish to consider placing additional conditions on licences to safeguard patrons against spiking, if deemed appropriate and proportionate for a specific venue where there is evidence to justify such action (a definition of spiking can be found in para 2.7). Licensing authorities and other responsible authorities should be alive to the indirect costs that can arise because of conditions. These could be a deterrent to holding events that are valuable to the community or for the funding of good and important causes. Licensing authorities should therefore ensure that any conditions they impose are only those which are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

## **Naming, packing and promotion in retail premises**

- 10.11 The Government acknowledges that the irresponsible naming, packing or promotion of alcoholic drinks may contribute to alcohol related harms. Where there is direct evidence of specific incidents of irresponsible naming, packing or promotion of alcoholic drinks linked to the undermining of one of the licensing objectives, licensing authorities should, in the exercise of their licensing functions (in particular, in relation to an application for the grant, variation or review of a premises licence), consider whether it is appropriate to impose conditions on licences that require the licence holder to comply with the Portman Group's Retailer Alert Bulletins. This condition should be considered on a case by case basis and in the context of the promotion of the licensing objectives.

10.12 The Portman Group operates, on behalf of the alcohol industry, a Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks. The Code seeks to ensure that drinks are packaged and promoted in a socially responsible manner and only to those who are 18 years old or older. Complaints about products under the Code are considered by an Independent Complaints Panel and the Panel's decisions are published on the Portman Group's website, in the trade press and in an annual report. If a product's packaging or point-of-sale advertising is found to be in breach of the Code, the Portman Group may issue a Retailer Alert Bulletin to notify retailers of the decision and ask them not to replenish stocks of any such product or to display such point-of-sale material, until there has been compliance with the decision.

## Hours of trading

10.13 The Government acknowledges that different licensing strategies may be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in different areas. The 2003 Act gives the licensing authority power to make decisions about the hours during which premises can conduct licensable activities as part of the implementation of its licensing policy statement. Licensing authorities are best placed to make decisions about appropriate opening hours in their areas based on their local knowledge and in consultation with responsible authorities. However, licensing authorities must always consider each application and must not impose predetermined licensed opening hours, without giving individual consideration to the merits of each application.

10.14 Where there are objections to an application to extend the hours during which licensable activities are to be carried on and the licensing authority determines that this would undermine the licensing objectives, it may reject the application or grant it with appropriate conditions and/or different hours from those requested.

10.15 Shops, stores and supermarkets should normally be free to provide sales of alcohol for consumption off the premises at any times when the retail outlet is open for shopping unless there are good reasons, based on the licensing objectives, for restricting those hours.

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 16 for when a performance of a play is licensable.