

## Extract of National Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003

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.

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.

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.

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.

2.16 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

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.

2.27 Beyond the immediate area surrounding the premises, these are matters for the personal responsibility of individuals under the law. An individual who engages in antisocial 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.

6.6 A qualifying club will be permitted under the terms of a club premises certificate to sell and supply alcohol to its members and their guests only. Instant membership is not permitted and members must wait at least two days between their application and their admission to the club. A qualifying club may choose to apply for a premises licence if it decides that it wishes to offer its facilities commercially for use by the general public,

including the sale of alcohol to them. However, an individual on behalf of a club may give temporary event notices. See Chapter 7.

6.7 The 2003 Act does not prevent visitors to a qualifying club being supplied with alcohol as long as they are 'guests' of any member of the club, and nothing in the 2003 Act prevents the admission of such people as guests without prior notice. The 2003 Act does not define "guest" and whether or not somebody is a genuine guest would in all cases be a question of fact.

6.8 There is no mandatory requirement under the 2003 Act for guests to be signed in by a member of the club. However, a point may be reached where a club is providing commercial services to the general public in a way that is contrary to its qualifying club status. It is at this point that the club would no longer be conducted in "good faith" and would no longer meet "general condition 3" for qualifying clubs in section 62 of the 2003 Act. Under the 2003 Act, the licensing authority must decide when a club has ceased to operate in "good faith" and give the club a notice withdrawing the club premises certificate. The club is entitled to appeal against such a decision to a magistrates' court. Unless the appeal is successful, the club would need to apply for a premises licence to authorise licensable activities taking place there.

6.13 Club operating schedules prepared by clubs, must include the steps it intends to take to promote the licensing objectives. These will be translated into conditions included in the certificate, unless the conditions have been modified by the licensing authority following consideration of relevant representations. Guidance on these conditions is given in Chapter 10 of this Guidance.

8.13 As well as responsible authorities, any other person can play a role in a number of licensing processes under the 2003 Act. This includes any individual, body or business entitled to make representations to licensing authorities in relation to applications for the grant, variation, minor variation or review of premises licences and club premises certificates, regardless of their geographic proximity to the premises. In addition, these persons may themselves seek a review of a premises licence. Any representations made by these persons must be 'relevant', in that the representation relates to one or more of the licensing objectives. It must also not be considered by the licensing authority to be frivolous or vexatious. In the case of applications for reviews, there is an additional requirement that the grounds for the review should not be considered by the licensing authority to be repetitious. Chapter 9 of this guidance (paragraphs 9.4 to 9.10) provides more detail on the definition of relevant, frivolous and vexatious representations.

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.

8.47 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.

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.

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.

9.9 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.

9.12 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 relationships with those operating in their local area<sup>5</sup>. The police should usually therefore be the licensing authority's main source of advice on matters relating to the promotion of the crime and disorder licensing objective. However, any responsible authority under the 2003 Act may make representations with regard to any of the licensing objectives if they have evidence to support such representations. Licensing authorities must therefore consider all relevant representations from responsible authorities carefully, even where the reason for a particular responsible authority's interest or expertise in the promotion of a particular objective may not be immediately apparent. However, it remains incumbent on all responsible authorities to ensure that their representations can withstand the scrutiny to which they would be subject at a hearing.

9.15 It is also reasonable for licensing authorities to expect that other responsible authorities should intervene where the basis for the intervention falls within the remit of that other responsible authority. For example, the police should make representations where the representations are based on concerns about crime and disorder. Likewise, it is reasonable to expect the local authority exercising environmental health functions to make representations where there are concerns about noise nuisance. Each responsible authority has equal standing under the 2003 Act and may act independently without waiting for representations from any other responsible authority.

9.26 Where a notice of a hearing is given to an applicant, the licensing authority is required under the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 to provide the applicant with copies of the relevant representations that have been made.

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.

9.42 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.

10.13 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.

14.19 There can be confusion about the difference between the “need” for premises and the “cumulative impact” of premises on the licensing objectives, for example, on crime and disorder. “Need” concerns the commercial demand for another pub or restaurant or hotel and is a matter for the planning authority and for the market. This is not a matter for a licensing authority in discharging its licensing functions or for its statement of licensing policy.