Crime and social impacts of alcohol
Factsheet

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Crime and social impacts: Introduction

Alcohol-related crime and social disorder is estimated to cost the UK taxpayer between £8 and £11bn per year at 2010/11 prices.¹ This supports the public perception of alcohol as one of the major causes of crime in urban Britain today.

Several studies of crime and social disorder in city centres have observed a direct relationship between the density of night time outlets licensed to sell alcohol – otherwise known as “high-risk premises” – and the prevalence of criminal activity, especially violent crimes committed. Successive Governments have been committed to tackling the problem by a variety of legislative means. Policies to combat alcohol-related crime and social disorder include the tightening licensing regulations for night time outlets permitted to sell alcohol, and the imposition of tough custodial penalties for criminal behaviour linked to alcohol.

UK alcohol-related crime statistics

‘Alcohol-related crime’ is a popular rather than a legal term. Normally, it is used to refer to 2 main categories of offences:

- Alcohol-defined offences such as drunkenness offences or driving with excess alcohol
- Offences in which the consumption of alcohol is thought to have played a role of some kind in the committing of the offence, usually in the sense that the offender was under the influence of alcohol at the time. Examples of offences often committed by people under the influence are assault, breach of the peace, criminal damage and other public order offences

It has been estimated that in a community of 100,000 people each year, 1,000 people will be a victim of alcohol-related violent crime. The Coalition Government lists a reduction in alcohol-fuelled violent crime among its core priorities in its Alcohol Strategy.¹

How alcohol-related crime data are counted

The Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard govern police recording practice. Police recorded crime statistics cover all ‘notifiable’ offences recorded by the police for Home Office records.² This does not include most minor summary offences (i.e. driving under the influence of alcohol), antisocial behaviour offences, crimes that have not been reported to the police, or that the police decide not to record. Therefore underreporting is a natural side-effect of this approach to counting. In the case of alcohol related crimes, underreporting is likely to occur as a result of the fact that, except in specific drunk and disorderly cases such as injury caused by drink driving, offenders are rarely tested for the presence of alcohol when caught. In addition to this, the victims of crime incidents may not always be able to detect whether the offender(s) was under the influence of alcohol.

Although they do not record the presence of alcohol on the person, police authorities do acknowledge that alcohol does have a significant role in criminal activity, because its effects on the mind and body are thought to be more likely to induce antisocial behaviour, leading to criminal acts. For most offences, alcohol may affect the perpetrator: for violent crimes, it reduces self-control; for acquisitive crimes, the motivation can be the need to feed a habit.³

The large-scale annual crime surveys conducted in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland complement police recorded crime data by including non-notifiable offences, as well as the detailed responses by victims on the specific nature of the crimes suffered.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales [CSEW] is based on a sample of approximately 50,000 households. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey [SCJS] is based on 16,000 face-to-face interviews conducted with adults (aged 16 or over). The Northern Ireland Crime Survey [NICS] is based on the responses of 4,000 adults. Crime survey statistics were formerly published as part of the British Crime Survey, although it ceased to include Scotland in its sample in the late 1980s. It is important to note that, as household surveys, none of these statistical publications cover crimes committed against businesses.
The National Probation Service advises offenders that ‘alcohol is a factor related to a lot of crimes including many assaults, murder and rape cases (between 50 and 80%).’ Some national crime surveys place a special focus on the influence of alcohol on violent crime by asking victims whether they believe their offender(s) to have been under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident.

Alcohol-related crime in England & Wales

According to the 2011/12 CSEW, there were 917,000 violent incidents where the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol, accounting for 47% of violent offences committed that year. This represents a rise of 3 percentage points on the previous year [2010/11].

Figure 1: Violent incidents where the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol in England & Wales, 2001/02 to 2011/12

![Graph of alcohol-related violent crimes](image)


Figure 1 illustrates little variation in the annual number of alcohol fuelled violent crimes in England and Wales over the past decade. Between 2001/02 and 2006/07, there were roughly just over a million alcohol-related violent crimes committed every year, peaking in 2003/04 at 1.3m, or 51% of all violent crimes. Since then, the annual figure has dipped slightly under the million mark, but alcohol still accounts for over 40% of all violent crimes committed.

Alcohol-related crime in Scotland

The estimated number of violent crimes was 220,000 in 2010/11, according to the SCJS of that year; 63% of these incidents were said to have occurred under the influence of
alcohol, a higher proportion than in England.\textsuperscript{5} 22% of violent crimes happened in or around a pub, bar or club and 46% occurred at the weekend between 6pm and 6am.\textsuperscript{6}

**Alcohol-related crime in Northern Ireland**

The NICS does not record alcohol related crime data for Northern Ireland. The Police Service of Northern Ireland [PSNI] began collecting provisional statistics on alcohol-related recorded crime in April 2012. For the 7 month period beginning 1\textsuperscript{st} April – 19\textsuperscript{th} November 2012, 19% of all recorded crime [12,037 incidents] and 11% of all antisocial behaviour recorded by PSNI were alcohol related.

**Figure 2: Violent incidents where the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol in Northern Ireland, 1\textsuperscript{st} April – 19\textsuperscript{th} November 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recorded 1\textsuperscript{st} April – 19\textsuperscript{th} Nov 2012</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Alcohol related</th>
<th>Alcohol as % of all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence with injury</td>
<td>2247</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non domestic violence with injury</td>
<td>6698</td>
<td>3788</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence without injury</td>
<td>9725</td>
<td>5642</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most serious sexual crime</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Damage</td>
<td>13653</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total all crime</td>
<td>62231</td>
<td>12037</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Police Service of Northern Ireland [PSNI]

1 Secretary of State for the Home Department (March 2012), 'The Government’s Alcohol Strategy', HM Government, pp. 8–9
2 Home Office, 'Police recorded crime'
3 Civitas, 'Alcohol and Crime', in Crime Factsheets, p. 3
6 The Scottish Government, 'Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) 2010-11', in News
Public perceptions of crime

Public concern about ‘alcohol-related crime’ often relates to offences involving a combination of criminal damage offences; drunk and disorderly and other public order offences involving young males, typically between 18 and 30 years of age, but increasingly, also young females; and to those often occurring in the entertainment areas of town and city centres.

England & Wales

The most recent National Statistics figures show that “45,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder were issued for non-notifiable offences in the year ending March 2012... around four in five of these were for being drunk and disorderly”.

The high proportion of penalty notices given for drunk and disorderly behaviour aids the perception of almost a quarter [24%] of the public in England and Wales who believe drunk or rowdy behaviour poses a significant problem to their local community. They cite alcohol as the third major cause of criminal activity in Britain today (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Factors considered as causes of crime in Britain today, 2009/10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage perceiving this as a factor:</th>
<th>England &amp; Wales, 2009/10 BCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major causes of crime (^1,^2)</td>
<td>Main cause of crime (^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of discipline from parents</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too lenient sentencing</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown of family</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of discipline from school</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too few police</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not think there is one main cause</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unweighted base                        | 11,003                        | 11,003                         

Source: Flatley, J., Kershaw, C., Smith, K., Chaplin, R., and Moon, D., 'Crime in England & Wales, 2009/10', Table 5a

Scotland

Antisocial Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notices [ASBFPNs] were issued to 54,243 people as a main penalty in 2010-11, down 11% from 61,208 in 2009-10. Almost half [48%] as many offenders were issued ASBFPNs for alcohol-related incidents; 26,235 people were cautioned for consuming alcohol in a public place, being drunk and incapable and/or being drunk and in charge of child.

Qualitative data from the 2010/11 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey [SCJS] further highlights the extent to which alcohol misuse affects the nation’s citizens (see Figure 4). To the question: ‘How much of a problem is alcohol abuse in Scotland today?’, 74% of respondents replied that it was a “big problem”.

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96% of all respondents found alcohol to abuse to be a problem in Scotland today. A greater proportion of females than males found alcohol abuse to be a “big problem” (78% and 69% respectively). This was also the case across all age groups. 45 – 59 year olds were most likely to treat alcohol abuse as a “big problem”.

Northern Ireland

Penalty Notices for Disorder were introduced within Northern Ireland in June 2012. Therefore there are no figures on non-notifiable offences where the offender(s) was believed to have been under the influence of alcohol. However, alcohol is the second most commonly identified cause of crime in Northern Ireland today, according to the 2010/11 NICS (Figure 5).


1 Office for National Statistics (October 2012), 'Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending June 2012', p. 80
Driving factors of alcohol-related crime and social disorder

Crime and disorder in the night time economy

In recent years, 2 parallel trends have been evident:

1. The growth of the night time economy and the associated problems of alcohol-related crime and disorder in town and city centres
2. An overall relative decline in the proportion of alcohol consumed in on-licensed premises and a growth in the proportion of alcohol purchased from off-licensed premises and consumed at home

In both cases, the effects of alcohol misuse can impact negatively on the wider society, leading to increased instances of crime and disorder. Research into crime and disorder in urban areas has tended to identify a correlation between the density of licensed premises in a locality and the numbers of people present. A main finding of studies of violence in Cardiff was that serious violence in the city’s entertainment thoroughfare was directly proportional to the capacity of licensed premises in that street. This was partly explained by the simple fact that being in a crowd provides more opportunities for conflict with others, for example in situations where there is competition for scarce resources such as transport to get home.

Additionally, targeted street-based studies suggest that participants in the night time economy drink more than the national average and more significantly, drink at levels which are above average for their age group. The findings appear to suggest that heavy drinkers are disproportionately attracted to the night time economy, and/or that the night time economy encourages heavier alcohol consumption. It is likely that there is an interaction between both occurrences.

In recent years, the possibility that features of the retailing of alcohol – and the night time economy in particular – may positively encourage heavier consumption has been at the heart of the debates around reform of the licensing laws and regulations governing the management of licensed premises. A core premise of the Labour Government’s licensing reforms was that binge drinking was largely the result of artificially early closing times, which encouraged rapid consumption of alcohol in order to “beat the clock”. The proposed solution to the problem, therefore, was to extend drinking hours so as to encourage more leisurely consumption. The expectation was that, provided with longer drinking hours, customers would not drink any more alcohol but that they would drink the same amount more slowly, thus reducing levels of drunkenness.

However, survey data suggest that, contrary to the assumption underlying the new Licensing Act, prolonged stays in premises with extended drinking hours actually result in higher levels of reported consumption (please consult the Licensing factsheet for more information).
Pre-loading and cheap alcohol as a driver for crime and disorder

In addition to the problem of public disorder in and around city centre bars and nightclubs, there is considerable concern over heavily discounted sales of alcohol at off-licensed premises, as this is the source of a recent phenomenon known as “pre-loading”. The act of pre-loading involves groups of drinkers consuming alcohol – purchased from off-licenses – in private settings prior to attending nightlife venues.

The effects of pre-loading are obvious to researchers studying the social environment of the night time economy. One survey of 18 – 35 year olds in the North West region of England found that those who reported pre-loading reported significantly higher total alcohol consumption over a night out than those who waited to drink until reaching the bars and nightclubs. Pre-loaders were also more than twice as likely to have been involved in a fight. The researchers concluded that measures to reduce drunkenness and alcohol-related violence in the night time economy should not be restricted to premises within the nightlife environment but should also tackle disparities in regard to pricing and policing between on and off-licensed premises.3

Vertical drinking establishments and high-risk premises

Other features of the night time economy have also been identified as causes of excessive or otherwise problematic consumption, in particular, the presence of youth orientated "vertical drinking" establishments where drinking is an end in itself rather than an accompaniment to other activities such as having a meal while seated at a table. Specific factors that have been linked to a higher likelihood of aggression in public drinking settings include:4

- crowding
- poor bar layout and traffic flow
- inadequate seating or inconvenient bar access
- dim lighting, noise, poor ventilation or unclean conditions
- discount drinks and promotions that encourage heavy drinking (eg 'happy hours')
- lack of availability of food
- a 'permissive' environment that turns a blind eye to anti-social behaviour
- punters with a history of aggression and who binge drink
- bar workers who don't practice responsible serving
- aggression/intimidation by security staff.

Role of the drinks industry

It is argued that the problems of sustained alcohol consumption in social settings go beyond the failings of a minority of high-risk premises in town centres. An expose by one newspaper prior to the relaxation of the licensing laws in 2005 uncovered a concerted attempt by organisations in the drinks industry to “exploit Britain's binge drinking culture”, including offering manager bonuses of up to £20,000 for exceeding sales volume targets, races between bar staff to sell as many 'shots' of spirits as possible within a set time, and constant pressure to 'upsell' singles to doubles.5

The Royal College of Practitioners [RCP] 2005 paper 'Alcohol and violence' coined the extent of the problem of alcohol-fuelled violence in public settings:
Half of all incidents of alcohol-related violence in England and Wales take place in or around pubs and clubs. Amongst 18-24 year olds, twice as many women and nearly three times as many men classified as ‘binge-drinkers’ have participated in a violent crime or group fight in a public place than those classified as ‘regular’ drinkers. Such bingeing is encouraged by irresponsible drinks promotions (e.g. happy hours). Insufficient transport services, poor street lighting and overwhelmed or inappropriately targeted police resources also increase the likelihood of violence.

After encouraging the alcohol industry voluntarily to abandon socially undesirable marketing practices, the New Labour Government of the day then introduced a mandatory code on the retailing of alcohol in 2010.

However, the café culture much promised by the previous administration’s legislative efforts “failed to materialize”. The Coalition Government has since made provision for further regulatory reform in its Alcohol Strategy, accusing the previous administration of failing in its duty to tackle the problem of alcohol fuelled crime and social disorder.

The Alcohol Strategy promises to:

- end the availability of cheap alcohol and irresponsible promotions
- (provide an) extensive range of tools and powers... to local agencies to challenge those people that continue to behave in an unacceptable way
- give stronger powers to control the density of licensed premises and make health a licensing objective for this purpose... give areas the powers to restrict alcohol sales if late opening is causing problems through extended powers to make Early Morning Restriction Orders; introduce a new late night levy so that those businesses that trade into the late night contribute towards the cost of policing; and end the notion that drinking is an unqualified right by piloting sobriety schemes for those people whose offending is linked to excessive alcohol consumption
- build on the Responsibility Deal to drive greater industry responsibility and action to prevent alcohol misuse, including giving consumers a wider choice of lower strength products in both the on-trade and off-trade, taking one billion units out of the market by 2015

In February 2007, the Scottish Government – then a Liberal Democrat/New Labour Coalition – entered into a Partnership Agreement with the alcohol industry. Both sides recognised, among other things, the need for enforcement of licensing legislation to ‘ensure a zero tolerance approach to the illegal purchase of alcohol and the resultant alcohol related disorder’.

However, the proportion of violent crimes committed under the influence of alcohol in Scotland is still significantly higher in Scotland [61%] than in England and Wales. The current executive – led by the Scottish National Party – has since acquired devolved powers to combat alcohol fuelled criminal behaviour, such as the ability to lower the drink driving limit.
A Member’s Bill Consultation was lodged by 2 Labour Members of Scottish Parliament [MSP] (Dr Richard Simpson & Mr Graeme Pearson) ahead of the introduction of the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012. It offered 14 proposals which aimed in part to reduce alcohol-related offending through directing offenders towards treatment or restricting their access to alcohol. One such measure involved expanding on tentative steps taken by the Scottish Government to include General Practitioners in the process of alcohol-related interventions when a patient is convicted of an offence involving alcohol.\(^ {10}\)

As of now, no other specific legislative proposals to combat crime and social disorder in Scotland have been raised.

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2 Hadfield, P., Newton, A (September 2010), ‘Alcohol, crime and disorder in the night time economy’, Alcohol Concern Factsheet, p. 4
5 Hinsliff, Gaby, and Asthana, Anushka (October 2005), ‘Drink giants’ plans to fuel binge Britain’, The Guardian
6 Faculty of Public Health of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom, ‘Alcohol and Violence: Briefing Statement’, p. 2
8 Secretary of State for the Home Department (March 2012), ‘The Government’s Alcohol Strategy’, HM Government, pp. 3–4
9 Scottish Government (February 2007), ‘Scottish Executive and the alcohol industry’, p. 1
Alcohol and prison services

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's [NICE] costing report estimates alcohol-related crime to cost UK taxpayers between £8bn and £11bn at 2010/11 prices.¹ But the wider costs of alcohol-related crime and disorder to society may be even higher, because solutions to the issue focus only on those offenders who admit they have a problem.

According to estimates from the National Offender Management Service, based on completed Offender Assessment System [OASys] assessments, 25,153 offenders on supervision by the probation service had alcohol misuse issues in the 2011/12 financial year (see Figure 6). Although this represents a significant drop in the annual number of offenders who have experienced problems with alcohol, it must be noted that a full OASys assessment is not required with all offenders, and therefore the actual number of offenders with alcohol misuse problems is almost certainly higher than the recorded figures suggest.

Figure 6: Offenders on supervision by the probation service with alcohol misuse issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial year</th>
<th>Alcohol Misuse Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>46,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>38,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>30,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>25,153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A thematic review published in 2010 by the HM Inspectorate of Prisons highlighted the failure of the Prison Service adequately to address the problems of alcohol misuse in prisons, despite repeated warnings by the Prison Reform Trust about its harmful effect on reoffending rates and the growing prevalence of alcohol-related crime.²

The review, drawing on inspection surveys of 13,000 prisoners, 72 inspection reports and surveys of drug coordinators in 68 prisons, revealed that in 2008/09, 19% of prisoners reported having an alcohol problem when they entered the prison, rising to 30% for young adults and 29% for women.³

Yet, at every stage in prison, prisoners' needs were less likely to be either assessed or met than those with illicit drug problems. Alcohol problems were not consistently or reliably identified and few prisons even had an alcohol strategy based on a current needs analysis.⁴

A 2009 review conducted by the National Probation Service into alcohol-related interventions in prisons established that their effective commissioning and delivery had been hampered at a national level by a lack of resources and dedicated funding for the provision of alcohol interventions and treatment, guidance and protocols to inform the targeting of available interventions, appropriate and accessible alcohol treatment provision, probation staff confidence, skills and knowledge around alcohol-related issues, and success engaging and influencing local commissioners to afford greater priority and resources to work with alcohol-misusing offenders.
The report concluded that the resulting shortage of British research evidence means there is currently limited scope for developing empirically informed guidance to instruct senior probation managers and practitioners on key issues.5

The current Government acknowledges the importance of prisons as places for rehabilitation and tackling dependency on alcohol. In its Alcohol Strategy, there are plans to develop an alcohol interventions pathway and outcome framework in 4 prisons, to inform the commissioning of a range of effective interventions in all types of prison. From April 2013, the Government also proposed to grant responsibility for commissioning health services and facilities for those in prisons and other places of prescribed detention to the NHS Commissioning Board [NHSCB].6

1 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (June 2010), 'Alcohol-use disorders – preventing harmful drinking: costing report', p. 12
2 Community Justice Portal (February 2010), 'Prison Service Failing to Address Growing Problem of Alcohol Misuse in Prisons', from HM Inspectorate of Prisons (February 2010), 'Alcohol services in prisons: an unmet need'
3 Community Justice Portal, 'Prison Service Failing to Address Growing Problem of Alcohol Misuse in Prisons'
4 Community Justice Portal, 'Prison Service Failing to Address Growing Problem of Alcohol Misuse in Prisons'
Policies to reduce crime and social disorder

A number of policies aiming to reduce alcohol-related crime and social disorder exist at both a national and local level in the UK. These range from licensing regulations to tough custodial penalties for criminal behaviour linked to alcohol.

Price

Evidence from both natural experiments and modelling studies support a link between alcohol pricing and overall crime, where increases in tax/price were associated with reductions in overall crime and decreases in tax/price were associated with an increase in overall crime. One study examining the influence of the price of beer on injuries suffered in England and Wales suggested that increased alcohol prices would result in substantially fewer violent injuries.

The Home Office also acknowledged the relationship between price and harm in its review of the research literature:

When considering individual crime types rather than overall crime, there is a larger evidence base for a link between alcohol price and violence than for other crime types. The balance of this evidence tends to support an association between increasing alcohol price and decreasing levels of violence.

In the face of such evidence, minimum unit pricing [MUP] presents itself as one such policy tool designed among other things to reduce the level of crime and social disorder. Modelling estimates produced by the University of Sheffield indicates that the proposed level of 45 pence per unit would see a reduction of 28,900 crimes a year in England & Wales. This is broken down as follows:

**Figure 7: Estimated effects of MUP on crimes committed, England & Wales and Scotland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Violent crimes</th>
<th>Criminal damage</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales (45p)</td>
<td>-28,900</td>
<td>-6,200</td>
<td>-10,300</td>
<td>-12,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland (50p)</td>
<td>-3,500</td>
<td>-500</td>
<td>-1,100</td>
<td>-1,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This would save roughly £31 million in costs to the criminal justice system in the first year, rising to nearly £260m over a 10 year period. Figure 6.X includes modelling figures for Scotland, which show a predicted fall of 3,500 crimes committed throughout the population if the proposed 50 pence per unit minimum level was introduced. This would save the Scottish criminal justice system £2.9m in costs in the first year, rising to £24m over a 10 year period.
Density of Premises

There is also evidence that indicates a correlation between the density of outlets licensed to sell alcoholic beverages and the occurrence of alcohol-related crime and social disorder. This can be explained by the combination of licensed outlets clustered in close proximity to one another – especially in town centres – with the high crowd density that occurs at night time, which can lead to acts of aggression fuelled by the intoxication of alcohol.

US based research on the relationship between alcohol and violence in the local vicinity found that:7

- In a study of Camden, New Jersey, neighborhoods with alcohol outlet density had more violent crime (including homicide, rape, assault, and robbery). This association was strong even when other neighborhood characteristics such as poverty and age of residents were taken into account
- In a study of 74 cities in Los Angeles County, California, a higher density of alcohol outlets was associated with more violence, even when levels of unemployment, age, ethnic and racial characteristics and other community characteristics were taken into account
- In a 6 year study of changes in numbers of alcohol outlets in 551 urban and rural zip code areas in California, an increase in the number of bars and off-premise places (e.g., liquor, convenience and grocery stores) was related to an increase in the rate of violence

From this, one report drew the following conclusions:8

- In neighborhoods where there are many outlets that sell high-alcohol beer and spirits, more violent assaults occur
- Large taverns and nightclubs and similar establishments that are primarily devoted to drinking have higher rates of assaults among customers

A recent study on female alcohol consumption in and around licensed premises also found that a significant relationship between both factors, with acts of aggression most commonly motivated by an emotional reaction or to address a grievance.9

In the UK, there has been a rapid increase in the capacity of licensed premises in city centres nationwide. In Manchester, for example, the number of people who could fit into all the city centre's pubs and clubs rose by 240% between 1997 and 2001.10

Central Cardiff has more licensing capacity per square metre any other city centre in the UK. Their night time economy is estimated to be worth £413m a year, employing over 11,000 people.11 But the city has also become a case study for explaining the rise in alcohol-related crime and social disorder on Britain's streets.

The introduction of Cumulative Impact Policies [CIP] was intended to reduce the level of crime and social disorder occurring in the night time economy. CIPs prevent the proliferation of licensed premises concentrating in a designated area by refusing applications to set up licensed businesses selling alcoholic goods in close proximity to one another.
In addition to this, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 gave local agencies a set of powers which would enable them to counter the most damaging effects of the 2003 Licensing Act, most notably flexible opening hours for licensed premises. For instance, by strengthening local authority control over opening and closing hours – as signalled by the creation of the Late Night Levy and Early Morning Restriction Orders [EMRO] – the new law allows them to target specific trouble zones in the night time economy in an attempt to stop crime and social disorder occurring into the early hours of the morning (more on licensing solutions can be found in the Licensing factsheet).  

Place of sale

Evidence suggests that the aesthetic environment of drinking establishments can have an influence on the prevalence of alcohol-related violence and social disorder. Research has identified specific factors that can cause violent incidents to occur in pubs, clubs and bars. These include:  

- low comfort levels (due, for instance, to limited seating availability or crowding caused by intersecting traffic flows resulting from inappropriate locations of entries, exits, bar serving areas, dance floors and toilets)
- poorly trained staff
- permissiveness towards deviant behaviours
- poor access to late night transport

In Canada, the Safer Bars training programme has shown success in reducing aggression by developing staff skills in managing and reducing aggressive behaviour. A randomised trial showed that the programme reduced severe and moderate aggression in intervention premises; these effects were moderated by the turnover of managers and door staff in bars, with higher staff turnover associated with higher aggression post-intervention.  

In the UK, the Home Office has produced a summary of the various strategies available to owners/managers of licensed premises to help reduce violence in and around their businesses, including a set of interventions on the layout and management of bars and clubs as alcohol vendor venues in the night time economy.
Figure 8: Summary of strategies for reducing violence in and around licensed premises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of intervention</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Manipulation of the physical environment of pubs/clubs | • No ‘hidden’ alcoves that prevent the easy monitoring of behaviour  
  • Attention to the spacing of furniture, including, tables, chairs, stools and pool tables to avoid customer crowding  
  • Raised bar areas to permit staff monitoring of customer behaviour |
| Controlling the social atmosphere      | • Attractive, well-maintained premises  
  • Registered door-staff schemes and employment of well-trained staff who discourage anti-social behaviour in a manner that does not escalate violence  
  • The reduction of excessively loud music |
| Alcohol control                        | • No ‘happy hours’/drinks promotions  
  • Serving of food and soft beverages |
| Control of drinkers                    | • Well ventilated premises with controls over the number of customers entering  
  • Well trained and socially skilled door staff and bar staff experienced at dealing with aggressive or violent individuals (see also above)  
  • Refusal of alcohol to already intoxicated customers  
  • ‘Pubwatch’ schemes  
  • The use of CCTV to monitor disorder and violence  
  • Staggered closing times to avoid large numbers of individuals gathering in the same area together  
  • Regular and reliable transportation away from pubs and clubs |
| Injury reduction                       | • Use of toughened glass  
  • Use of plastic cups  
  • The banning of bottle served alcohol  
  • Swift removal of any glassware used  
  • Weapons searches on entry to public houses and clubs |
| Criminal justice policy                | • Heavier penalties for breaches of licensing laws such as serving to under-age drinkers (relevant to both ‘on’ and ‘off’ licences)  
  • Courts to divert alcohol-offenders to treatment and education programmes  
  • Monitoring of ‘problem/violent’ premises  
  • Alcohol education schemes |


It has also been acknowledged how:

... schemes such as Best Bar None, Purple Flag, Community Alcohol Partnerships, Pubwatch and Business Improvement Districts across the country have shown that a thriving and growing night time economy can operate where excessive drinking is tackled consistently and robustly by business, the police and local authorities working together.15

Transport

Some policies relate specifically to alcohol-related crime and social disorder on public transport. For example, in London, an alcohol ban was introduced on all TfL services from 1 June 2008 by Mayor Boris Johnson, under the claim that it would reduce crime in the capital.16

The ban has so far proved popular with commuters; research carried out by the Greater London Authority found that 87% of Londoners were in support. It is also said to have had
a significant influence on the 15% fall in the number of assaults on Tube staff between 2008 and 2011.17

Anonymous data sharing: the Cardiff Model

Research has shown that the dissemination of information via the emergency services is key when dealing with social problems, crime and violent assault. The College of Emergency Medicine has produced guidance, which is based on the 'Cardiff model for Violence Prevention', that sets out the importance of sharing non-personal data with the police, particularly core information on the date, location and type of assault.

Findings from a study conducted by the University of Cardiff highlight the important role of senior clinical, police and local authority leadership in promoting active use of the intelligence to target policing and tackle problem premises.16 Data sharing and local advocacy on the part of trauma surgeons has prompted the formation of local police task forces responsible for targeting city street crime, and overt and covert police interventions, targeted at violence hotspots such as particular licensed premises, and the use of injury data to oppose drinks/entertainment license applications by the alcohol industry.19

Implementation of these measures in Cardiff has been followed by:
- an overall decrease of 35% in numbers of assault patients seeking Emergency Department [ED] treatment (2000-5), compared with an overall 18% decrease in England and Wales over the same period
- a 31% decrease in assaults inside licensed premises in Cardiff city centre (1999–2001)
- lower levels of violence than all (but 4 of the) 55 towns and cities in England and Wales with a population greater than 100,000 (by 2005)

In its Home Office ‘family’ of 15 similar cities (based on socio-economic and demographic variables) the Welsh capital was safest of the group for 3 years (2003–6). On the basis of such evidence, the Coalition Government intends to encourage all hospitals to share non-confidential information on alcohol-related injuries with the police, by granting licensing and local health bodies the status of ‘responsible authorities' under the Licensing Act 2003.20

DPPOs

In England, provisions for dealing with alcohol-related crime disorder were created in the Police & Criminal Justice Act 2001.21 These permitted the introduction of Designated Public Place Orders [DPPOs] at a local authority level.

The powers – which replaced the old drinking byelaws – were introduced to help the police deal with the problems of anti-social drinking in the public space. DPPOs make it easier for local authorities to designate places where restrictions on public drinking will apply and can be used in areas that have experienced alcohol-related disorder or nuisance.22

DPPOs – also termed Alcohol Controlled Areas (London Borough of Southwark), or Controlled Drinking Zones (London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham) – have since been updated to reflect changes in subsequent licensing legislation, with Home Office guidance regularly issued to local authorities on DPPOs (it was last updated in November 2009).23 By July 2012, 824 DPPOs had been issued nationally since their introduction.24
No formal evaluation has yet been conducted of these schemes. However, some reports suggest that in Hammersmith and Fulham, street drinking in problematic hot-spots was reduced by up to 62% after the control zone was brought in, and that in Southwark an overall reduction of 27% was recorded in observed street drinking levels and anti-social behaviour. Brighton & Hove has had a city-wide DPPO in place since 2003, as part of a wider strategy to deal with street drinkers. This includes regular police patrols in hot spot areas and outreach workers who assist street drinkers into accommodation and treatment.25

**Compulsory Alcohol Monitoring**

There are also initiatives that deal with the issue of compulsory alcohol monitoring within current UK sentencing guidelines:

1) Drink Banning Order [DBO]: This is a specific order from a civil court – sometimes made at the request of the police or local authority – imposed on an individual aged at least 16 years of age who has behaved in a disorderly manner or who has committed a criminal offence while under the influence of alcohol. A DBO may impose any prohibition on a person that the court considers necessary to protect others from alcohol-related crime, or disorderly conduct committed while they were under the influence of alcohol. This could include exclusion from purchasing and consuming alcohol in public and entrance into licensed premises in a geographically defined area.

DBOs came into force in August 2009. They can last for any specified period of time between 2 months and 2 years. Offenders who breach a DBO are liable to pay a penalty of up to £2,500.26

2) Alcohol Treatment Requirement [ATR]: This is imposed either as part of a community sentence of up to 3 years, or attached to a suspended sentence order of up to 2 years, to offenders who present serious problems with alcohol and where it is identified as a significant factor in the person's offending. Once an ATR order is issued by the courts, the individual must agree to a treatment plan with probation and the treatment provider. S/he will have access to a tailored treatment programme with the aim of reducing or eliminating alcohol dependency. This requires a high level of intervention, including prescribed treatment including detoxification, 1-to-1 contact or interventions, care planned counselling and assistance to obtain Residential Rehab subject to Community Care funding and general waiting lists.

Breaching an ATR will result in a return to court for more onerous conditions to be applied, or a substituted prison term.

**Alcohol Arrest Referral [AAR]**

In England, the police have also had the opportunity to trial Alcohol Arrest Referral [AAR] pilots. These were piloted in 2007 in 4 constabularies, then phased in across 8 others the following year.

AAR involves offering a brief intervention to individuals arrested and deemed by a police officer to be under the influence of alcohol and typically involves a brief intervention
session with an AAR worker, with a view to 'follow-up' sessions in some cases. A Home Office evaluation report on the AAR scheme, published shortly before the 2012 Alcohol Strategy, concluded that there was no strong evidence to suggest that AAR had a criminal justice impact in terms of reducing re-arrest, although there was some limited evidence of reduced alcohol consumption among the intervention groups.27

Streamlining: The future of alcohol policy?

Shortly after the release of the Alcohol Strategy, the Home Office presented to Parliament a document titled 'Putting victims first: more effective responses to antisocial behaviour', a white paper setting out plans to replace 19 existing powers to tackle antisocial behaviour with 6 new ones. It aims to “give frontline professionals a handful of faster, more effective powers” and to “enhance agencies' ability to deal with anti-social individuals and anti-social behaviour in public places” (see Figure 9).28

Figure 9: Simplification of existing antisocial orders

Source: Secretary of State for the Home Department, 'Putting victims first: more effective responses to antisocial behaviour'

As the above illustration demonstrates, the effect of this proposal is to streamline the categorisation of orders available to courts when sentencing offenders, including the reclassification of Drink Banning Orders to Criminal Behaviour Orders, and Designated Public Place Orders to Community Protection Orders (public space). The current government has since held a consultation on the matter with the possibility of putting forward a Bill in future.

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