

Policing and enforcement approaches in the UK

Targeted enforcement activity in the UK

Targeted enforcement is widely used by police and other authorities in the UK to address alcohol-related problems in nightlife. Typically, this uses data from police, licensing authorities, local authorities and health services to identify premises associated with alcohol-related crime and violence and subject them to increased enforcement activity. Such enforcement provides an opportunity for managers of licensed premises to improve their practice and reduce alcohol-related problems before authorities take official action against them.



In several nightlife areas, targeted policing is implemented through a 'Top Ten' scheme. For example, in Newcastle-Under-Lyme, data on alcohol-related problems in venues are collated on a single licensing database that scores pubs, bars and nightclubs based on the number of problems they experience (e.g. violence, anti-social behaviour, noise complaints). Monthly meetings identify the ten venues with the highest scores, which are subjected to enforcement activity. This involves a meeting between authorities and the venue owners, during which problems are discussed and a formal action plan is developed for the venue to improve its practice.

Examples of measures included in the action plans include developing policies for customer behaviour standards, improving bar and door supervisor practice, installation of CCTV (closed circuit television cameras) in the venue, displaying safety information for customers and establishing a dispersal policy to help patrons get home safely at the end of the night. Police report an average reduction in violence of 85% in venues subjected to action plans through the scheme.¹

In some areas, multi-agency enforcement operations are also used, bringing together a range of different authorities to implement checks in high risk venues. In addition to police, these can include staff from licensing authorities, fire services, environmental health, building control, Trading Standards, Customs and Excise, and benefits agencies. This enables thorough review of the venue's adherence to legislation, including licensing legislation, fire regulations, sales of illegal alcohol or tobacco and staff who may be working illegally (e.g. claiming unemployment benefits).

1. Home Office. Effective practice in the night-time economy (DVD). Jacaranda, 2008.