

Embedding public health in Coventry's licensing policy statement



Case in brief

Coventry City Council has a duty under the [Licensing Act 2003](#) to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the alcohol licensing objectives and operate in line with the Council's statement of licensing policy (SLP). Under the terms of the Act, the Council's SLP must be renewed every 5 years.

Coventry focused the principles of their SLP on the Licensing Act's 4 licensing objectives:

1. The prevention of crime and disorder.
2. Ensuring public safety.
3. The prevention of public nuisance.
4. The protection of children from harm.

The approach used

The Licensing Act 2003 allows the scrutiny of licence applications by people working or living near licensed premises, interested parties and several public bodies. Directors of public health (DsPH) are also considered responsible authorities.

In Coventry, a public health practitioner represents the directors of public health on all licensing matters. All responsible authorities, including public health, meet regularly to review applications and share intelligence. This is used, for example, to trigger operations to seize illegal alcohol or identify premises selling alcohol to under-18s.

The resulting partnership provides an opportunity for the Council to consider health and wellbeing issues during the refresh of the SLP. So, Coventry has now embedded public health and health equality issues throughout the policy.

Outcome

Coventry added several new paragraphs to the SLP acknowledging that public health is now a responsible authority.

The policy recognises that Coventry's directors of public health will:

- explore the impact of alcohol-related incidents on emergency services, such as the West Midlands Ambulance Service
- consider the proximity of licensed premises to schools, youth centres, playgroups, and family centres
- share anonymised A&E data with other responsible authorities relating to young people and alcohol-related incidents
- analyse data on attendance at A&E and the use of ambulance services following alcohol-related incidents
- collate anonymised data on incidents relating to specific premises and present them to licensing sub-committees when representations are made
- support the police by making it easier to access health information such as anonymised A&E data for alcohol-related admissions, for example, as part of a licence review application
- provide Trading Standards with evidence of the health impact of illicit or counterfeit alcohol
- support the sharing of health information such as anonymised A&E data with other responsible authorities where it links to public safety
- provide evidence on the impact of the health and wellbeing of vulnerable groups such as street drinkers, and the effect this has on antisocial behaviour
- engage with Coventry Safeguarding Children Board to share relevant information such as data on young people accessing substance misuse services
- investigate links between ambulance callouts and attendance to irresponsible practices at specific licensed premises

Other important principles considered

[Fair Society, Healthy Lives \(the Marmot Review\)](#) found people from more deprived areas who drink alcohol are more likely to have problematic drinking patterns and dependence than those from more affluent areas. Also, binge drinking in under-18s is associated with deprivation, and unemployment is associated with alcohol consumption.

In line with the principles of the Marmot Review, Coventry City Council agreed to develop common policies to reduce the scale and impact of health inequalities across the city. Coventry's [statement of licensing policy](#) came into effect in January 2016.

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1. 12 August 2019 Updated information.
2. 8 March 2017 First published.