



FACT SHEET 4:

RESTRICTED DRINKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC DRINKING

Public drunkenness and rowdiness were perceived as a problem by a quarter of people in England and Wales in their local area in 2006/07,¹ as they can lead to a range of harms experienced both by individuals and communities:

- **Anti-social, aggressive and violent behaviour:** alcohol is a factor in at least half of street crimes.^{2,3}
- **Decreased perceptions of safety in public places:** increasing levels of anxiety both among the general population and more vulnerable residents such as older people.^{2,4} Half of adults never or rarely

KEY POINTS

- A number of different harms and nuisances are linked with public drinking including violent and anti-social behaviour, as well as environmental harms such as littering and noise. Alcohol is a factor in at least half of street crimes.
- Designated Public Place Orders enable police to confiscate alcohol from members of the public. Over 550 exist across the country but evaluation of their impact is limited and should be expanded.
- The public generally support interventions to reduce public drinking.
- Interventions have also been targeted towards a number of different environments including nightlife settings, football events and on public transport (for example through the Licensing Act and rules surrounding consumption in those areas).
- Evaluations of the effectiveness of these interventions are limited, and problems can still arise if individuals consume excessive alcohol before entering a restricted area.

go into the city centre at night because of alcohol and public disorder issues.⁵

- **Injuries:** those caused by glass can lead to permanent and disfiguring damage (one in ten assaults seen by accident and emergency or A&E departments are caused in this way).²
- **Litter:** tackling litter is a priority for local residents⁶ and drinking in public places can cause litter. In Stockport in 2007, alcohol-related litter was found on 62% of paths inspected under a local campaign to tackle litter.⁶
- **Noise:** over half of street noise complaints are seen as being due to alcohol.⁷
- **Road traffic accidents:** in 2006 25% of those killed in cars and other motor vehicles were over the legal blood alcohol limit. This figure rises to 33% amongst those aged 20-29 years.⁸

Underage drinkers may be particularly involved in public drinking: of those 15-16 year olds who drink in the North West (84.0%), 55.2% drink in public places (in pubs, on the streets and in parks).⁹ Such drinking has been linked with increased aggression,¹⁰ can damage young people's health and disturb communities.¹¹

1.2 GENERAL INTERVENTIONS TO RESTRICT DRINKING

1.2.1 DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACE ORDERS

In 2008, the Home Office reported that 551 Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs; Box 1) had been issued in England and Wales (the West Midlands has the most; Figure 1). They were introduced after Coventry piloted

a byelaw which allowed for designated alcohol-free zones. Surveys showed a decrease in both the proportion of people experiencing verbal abuse (12% to 8%) and the perception that public drinking was a problem (52% to 23%).¹² However, evaluations have been limited (Table 1). Nevertheless, lessons have been learned: for example, rigorous, frequent and high profile uniform enforcement and continuous resources were important in Manchester¹³ and residential support was needed in Three Rivers (Hertfordshire).¹⁴ Evaluation should examine crime reduction as well as appearance and atmosphere (which are important to citizens), and should monitor the impact on marginalised groups (such as rough sleepers) who may be excluded from areas such as town centres by the measures.⁴

BOX 1: DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACE ORDERS

Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) were introduced by the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 to criminalise drinking alcohol in a public area after

being required by a police officer not to do so. If individuals do not surrender the alcohol, they can be arrested. DPPOs enable local authorities to designate places where public drinking restrictions apply and can be used in areas experiencing alcohol-related disorder or nuisance.¹⁴

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACE ORDERS (DPPOS) BY REGION*¹⁴



* Local authorities that have published DPPOs as at February 2008. The list is not exhaustive.

TABLE 1: CASE STUDIES OF DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES ORDERS¹³

Location	Details	Impact
Manchester	Restricted drinking was one of a range of initiatives implemented in Manchester to tackle alcohol-related violent crime as part of City Centre Safe.	The combined impact has been a halt in the increase in violent crime: between 1999/2000 and 2000/01 the number of serious assaults in the City Centre fell by 8.1% and in 2001/02 by another 12.3%.
Newquay	Police patrol DPPO areas and proactively confiscate alcohol from young people. Secure bottle bins and a high profile marketing campaign have also been used.	Since July 2004, there have been 2,067 alcohol seizures from the zones. No formal evaluation has occurred but they may have prevented a rise in alcohol-related crime.
Brighton	DPPOs identify locations and persistent offenders for street drinking. Police target youths buying alcohol and use high-visibility patrols in nightlife areas to confiscate alcohol in public places. Community Support Officers can also confiscate alcohol.	Community Support Officers confiscate about 25 alcohol containers a week. No formal evaluation has taken place.

1.2.2 REDUCING LITTER

In 2007, Stockport held a campaign to reduce alcohol-related litter using promotional material in local shops, housing offices, community centres, and schools; signs to indicate alcohol-free zones; and underage test purchasing exercises.⁶ As a result, six fixed penalty notices were issued to people over 16 years for street drinking, two more to adults for buying alcohol for under-18s, and over 400 unopened alcohol containers were confiscated from street drinkers. Litter in Stockport is now in decline.

2. RESTRICTING DRINKING IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS OR LOCATIONS

2.1 NIGHTLIFE

2.1.1 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC DRINKING IN THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Public drinking in nightlife can become a problem when nightlife users leave a venue to go home and when they walk between and to nightlife venues (including takeaways), and areas such as taxi ranks or bus stops. The new smoking legislation may heighten problems further since patrons who smoke must do so outside the premises. As well as the other impacts described in Section 1.1, violence is particularly associated with night-time street drinking. Assaults presenting to A&E typically peak over weekend nights, with streets being a significant location for assaults,³ and alcohol being consumed by 58% of assault patients presenting, for instance, at a Liverpool A&E.³ Such crimes have increased substantially: from 2003 to 2004, serious

violence and murder increased by 127% in 18 police regions in city centre locations or near pubs and clubs between 3am and 6am.¹⁵

2.1.2 INTERVENTIONS TO RESTRICT DRINKING IN PUBLIC IN THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

The Licensing Act 2003 (implemented in 2005) aimed to tackle assaults and other problems such as noise and public nuisance at night through initiatives such as staggered closing times (intending to discourage large numbers exiting venues simultaneously trying to access the same resources such as food and transport).^{11,16} It also enabled authorities to place operating conditions on specific venues' licences such as the use of plastic drinking containers (generally, during specific times or for outside drinking), operating hours for beer gardens, preventative measures for reducing noise and so on. However, there is conflicting evidence as to whether the Licensing Act is effectively reducing levels of violence.¹⁷ Some areas have seen a reduction in noise: residents are less likely to think that drink and rowdy behaviour was a problem after the implementation of the legislation.¹⁸ Other evidence shows that the percentage perceiving people being drunk and rowdy in public places in their local area to be a big or a fairly big problem has remained stable (26% in 2006/07).²⁰ Yet, such developments may have been compromised by the smoking legislation, which requires people to go outside to smoke. This has the potential to increase drinking, alcohol-related incidents and noise on the streets unless licensing conditions are properly imposed.

A number of DPPOs have been established specifically to tackle issues of night-time public drinking (Table 1). Further, the Crystal Clear campaign raised awareness of the links between alcohol and glass related violence, and encouraged people to take responsibility for their actions.¹⁹ However, although such campaigns can increase knowledge, this knowledge is not always put into practice.²⁰

2.2 SPORTS EVENTS

2.2.1 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC DRINKING SURROUNDING SPORTS EVENTS

Levels of alcohol consumption typically increase surrounding big sporting events such as football, rugby or cricket.²¹⁻²³ Football in particular has been associated with excessive alcohol consumption: in 2000/01, 27% of all arrests in League football in England and Wales were for alcohol-related offences.²⁴ In addition, football hooliganism is linked with excessive alcohol consumption.²⁵ The impacts of excessive consumption at sporting events can lead to violence and associated injuries, verbal abuse, drink-driving and a decrease in attendance particularly by children and women.²⁶⁻²⁸ Although incidents of football hooliganism have decreased since this time (Section 2.2.2), excessive consumption surrounding sports events amongst spectators may occur before or after the event.

2.2.2 INTERVENTIONS TO RESTRICT DRINKING SURROUNDING SPORTS EVENTS

Both legislation and governing bodies have introduced rules regarding the consumption and sale of alcohol at sports events, particularly surrounding football (Box 2). However, consumption has also been banned at some cricket matches.²⁷ For large events, restrictions can extend into the city: at a World Cup qualifying game in 2005, alcohol consumption or carrying alcohol was prohibited in Manchester and Trafford.²⁹ Non-compliance could lead to arrest. Other interventions have also been influential such as season ticket bans, use of CCTV (which can identify disruptive individuals), use of seated stadia, banning hooligans from grounds and targeted police operations.³⁰ Thus, the number of football-related arrests has decreased significantly since the 1980s,²⁹ and continues to do so: between 2003/04 and 2005/06, football-related arrests decreased by 22%.³¹ However, issues have arisen:

- Restrictions are extremely unpopular with fans;³²
- Venues may still have bars that are open until the game starts (Cardiff's Millenium stadium has 23 bars);
- Drinking occurs before the game, so fans arrive drunk (the rules in Box 2 ban this but it is not strictly enforced).²⁹ This can lead to violence away from the event and away from security officers who could address the problem;^{29,33}
- Organised violence may occur away from the venue between two sets of fans (again away from security officers who could address the situation);²⁹
- Fans may substitute illegal drugs for alcohol;³⁴ and
- The numbers of more serious violent incidents are not decreasing.²⁹

BOX 2: RULES SURROUNDING ALCOHOL AT FOOTBALL MATCHES

For football matches where at least one team is from one of the top five divisions, it is a criminal offence to enter the ground drunk, be drunk in the ground, or drink alcohol in sight of the pitch.³⁵ Clubs can apply for an

exemption for hospitality areas (not including areas which are in view of the pitch). For matches below the top five divisions, there are no Football Association (FA) rules regarding the sale and consumption of alcohol but they do recommend that clubs should not allow consumption on the terraces (some County FAs dictate that clubs must not allow this).



2.2.3 INTERVENTIONS OUTSIDE ENGLAND

Restrictions on alcohol in and around stadiums can be seen outside England:

- Lens in France banned the sale of all alcohol and public drinking for 24 hours when England played Colombia in order to prevent football hooliganism and reduce fear in the town.³⁶ Large numbers of police were present; however, there were still some violent incidents.
- In 1996, the University of Colorado banned beer sales at American football games. This dramatically decreased the number of arrests, assaults, removal of spectators from the stadium, and referrals to the judicial affairs.³⁷ Although the ban was not widely supported, all fans reported that they were likely to renew their tickets.
- The fan projects in Germany were established in 1981.³⁸ Here, youth and social workers work to enhance fans' personal and social skills in managing confrontation. The impact of these projects has yet to be evaluated.
- The Sydney Cricket Ground operates a low alcohol policy whereby individuals can only buy a maximum quantity of alcohol (four low alcohol beers, two mid-strength spirits or two mid strength wine coolers).^a

2.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

2.3.1 PROBLEMS SURROUNDING PUBLIC DRINKING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

A survey of Liverpool nightlife users aged 18 to 35 showed that 41% of respondents use trains and buses to arrive in the city centre for a night out and 19% use them to leave.³⁹ For both directions, individuals may be under the influence of alcohol: 57% of those surveyed drink alcohol before going on a night out and 77% always consume alcohol on a night out. This is important because excessive consumption by even a small number of people on public transport can lead to alcohol-related violence that discourages other individuals from using this service.⁴⁰

2.3.2 INTERVENTIONS TO RESTRICT DRINKING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Conservative Government introduced powers to enable alcohol to be controlled on trains used by football supporters.⁴¹ Thus, during the FA Cup Final

between Manchester United and Millwall in May 2004, alcohol was not permitted on applicable services.⁴² In 2005, action against drunken behaviour on public transport was considered for the "Respect Agenda".⁴¹ Yet, there were concerns that such a move would be highly inconsistent with plans to allow extended licensing hours, and perceptions that alcohol-fuelled violence on public transport is caused by people drinking too much in pubs and clubs rather than on the transport itself making such a ban ineffective. Further, large train stations such as Liverpool Lime Street or Manchester Piccadilly house at least one venue selling alcohol, where fans could purchase alcohol before boarding.^b Thus, the Government did not implement such a ban.

2.4 MUSIC EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

2.4.1 IMPORTANCE OF RESTRICTING CONSUMPTION AT MUSIC EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Music events often lead to the congregation of a large number of people in a relatively confined space with the availability of alcohol. Such events have been associated with violence between attendees and security staff, and between attendees and the police.⁴³ Those events with 'R and B' acts have also experienced shootings at concerts but while gang rivalry plays a part in these, the role of alcohol is unclear.³⁴ Other problems associated with public drinking at such events may include the potential for accidents and injuries, underage drinking, litter and excessive noise.^{44,45}

2.4.2 INTERVENTIONS TO RESTRICT PUBLIC DRINKING AT MUSIC EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Strategies to regulate the consumption of alcohol at public music events concentrate on curbing or controlling the supply of alcohol (for example by limiting the time and location of where it is sold and consumed).³⁴ A number of festivals have had alcohol banned or do not allow festival-goers to bring their own alcohol because of noise and underage drinking.^{44,45} The Licensing Act 2003 can help local authorities to improve proceedings at music events through the use of licensing conditions (whereby the authorities can stipulate, for example, hours when alcohol can be sold, presence of those with first aid training, use of door

^a For more information, please see www.scgt.nsw.gov.au.

^b For more information, please see www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations.

supervisors and so on). However, if the organisers have applied for Temporary Event Notices (which provide licences for occasional events), conditions cannot be attached. Nevertheless, in one case, organisers have been persuaded to use a normal licence instead.⁴⁶ CCTV and lighting systems can greatly assist organising events and identify potential problems as they arise.³⁸

2.5 OTHER PUBLIC AREAS

2.5.1 IMPORTANCE OF RESTRICTING CONSUMPTION IN OTHER PUBLIC AREAS

Other public areas where drinking could cause problems include beaches and parks, particularly as such areas are used in the summer and on public holidays for relaxing and socialising. Because some individuals consume alcohol excessively in these locations, problems can arise: on San Diego beaches on a public holiday, riot police arrested 16 people after beer cans were thrown at them.⁴⁷ Public drinking in areas such as parks and beaches are also particularly associated with underage consumption.⁴⁸ Public buildings such as cinemas, theatres and Houses of Parliament may also allow alcohol consumption on their premises. However, there is little information on the impact of this.

2.5.2 INTERVENTIONS TO RESTRICT PUBLIC DRINKING IN OTHER PUBLIC AREAS

A number of areas have restricted drinking on public beaches:

- In the Isles of Scilly, concern about alcohol-related crime and disorder led to the creation of non-drinking areas on some beaches and in some parts of Hugh Town.⁴⁹ In 2006, there was a reduction in rates of violence, wounding offences, and common assault compared with 2005.⁵⁰
- In January 2008 a one-year ban on alcohol at San Diego's beaches and coastal parks was introduced.⁴⁷ Non-compliance can lead to a \$250 fine and/or a six-month jail sentence.
- DPPOs have been established in parks to tackle issues such as underage drinking but evaluation is limited (Section 1.2.1).⁵¹

3. PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR RESTRICTIONS

There are high levels of support for restricting drinking in public places for example among high-ranking police officials and local residents.^{4,52} Support is highest amongst women, older adults, parents, and infrequent or non-drinkers.⁴ This support is echoed in America, where adults are likely to be in favour because they do not believe that they will be affected by such restrictions.⁵⁴ In Lancaster, attitudes towards CCTV surveillance were more positive than attitudes towards street drinking legislation (such as DPPOs). Support for street drinking bans and CCTV surveillance was higher for city centre than for residential locations.⁴ This was because public drinking measures in residential areas were seen to have little impact on public safety and can intrude on civil liberties.

4. SUMMARY

The perceived link between alcohol and anti-social behaviour in public places can discourage groups from attending football or music events, entering city centres at night, or using public transport. Thus, a number of interventions to restrict public drinking have been established such as Designated Public Place Orders, the Licensing Act, restrictions surrounding drinking at sports events. In some cases (such as surrounding violence at football matches) impacts have been seen, but generally evidence is limited.³⁴ However, issues can still arise through consumption before entering the restricted zone. Therefore, it is important to consider multiple interventions to tackle drinking in general and address displacement of alcohol-related problems in to neighbouring areas.

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