

DRINK SPIKING - INDUSTRY RESOURCES

Everyone has a right to feel safe on a night out, and we as the sector prioritise their safety and welfare, doing everything we can to protect this right. Whilst such incidents are extremely rare, when drink spiking (or other vulnerability issues) occur, we take every case extremely seriously. We work hard to create a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment so that all our customers can enjoy a fun night out.

Many venues within the wider hospitality sector have door staff, established search procedures, staff training to identify problems before they occur and training on how to offer support. Venues also have CCTV, and many of them will have metal detectors and other safeguarding measures in place. Of course, the Licensing Act also allows these to be made legal conditions where appropriate and are in place in many areas (some operators will do so voluntarily as a matter of course).

Our industry takes the safety of our customers extremely seriously and has been enhancing this in recent months. Vulnerability and wider customer safety (including reports of drink spiking) has always been a focus of the sector.

This factsheet is intended to bring together in one place the resources developed and made available by a wide range of organisations, to bolster the work already ongoing and ensure our venues remain the safest places to enjoy a night out.

What is drink spiking?

Drink spiking can be defined as adding a substance to someone's drink without their knowledge. Alcohol is the most common substance to be added, but illegal or legal drugs are other substances that might also be used. This is illegal, and there are a number of different offences that such an action falls under. Any motivation for drink spiking – be it for criminal purposes or any other reason – should not be tolerated as it is a crime.

In addition to drink spiking occurrences, in recent weeks there have been some reports of criminal activity involving needles being used to injure and/or inject customers. Whilst the numbers of such reports remain low, they further underline that the need to ensure the welfare and safety of customers remains a key focus for operators.

What should I do to prevent drink spiking in my premises?

There are many resources available (listed below) and actions that can be taken, as outlined above, that can help you to minimise the likelihood of drink spiking occurring in your premises.

What should I do if drink spiking is reported in my premises?

If a vulnerability issue (such as drink spiking) is reported in your premises, there are three key initial actions that should always take place:

- **Always act on the report** - activate the safeguarding procedures you have in place in your venue, and take steps to identify those suspected, if possible, in the situation.
- **Ensure the health and safety of the customer** – this could be by calling emergency services, ensuring they are with trusted friends who will look after them, offering assistance if needed, and ensuring a safe space for the customer.
- **Logging and recording** the occurrence for emergency services and further internal action.

Many venues will have procedures that go above and beyond those noted above for reported occurrences, plus their ongoing internal procedures to prevent vulnerability crimes occurring in the first place. Some venues offer anti-spiking bottle stoppers and protective drink covers, so you may wish to consider this as an option. In addition, drug testing kits have been made available in some local areas provided by the police or local authorities. However, the main preventive measures will remain well-trained, vigilant and supportive staff that know how to respond to situations that they observe or are reported to them.

Another key factor is to demonstrate your venue is unwelcome to those looking to commit crimes in your premises. This can be achieved in a number of ways such as:

- via communication to your customers as to the signs to look out for (e.g. posters, social media),
- staff training to identify issues before they arise,
- practical and physical measures.

The below list of resources covers all of these actions and much more:

Key resources:

Night Time Industries Association (NTIA)

- [Guidance on drink spiking](#)

BII posters

- Staff Awareness Poster - <https://bit.ly/3cdMXqh>
- Guest Awareness Poster - <https://bit.ly/3F19w9c>

Ask for Angela

- Details about [the scheme](#) and resources

Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement training

- [WAVE Training](#) aims to increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of those working in licensed premises focusing on identifying vulnerability and making appropriate interventions.

CPL Learning

- CPL Learning have provided free access to their online drink spiking awareness course for staff [here](#).

Drinkaware Nightlife Crew

- Details about [available training](#) and more.

National Pubwatch guidance

- A range of [policy documents](#) developed in conjunction with [Best Bar None](#)
- E-learning module on [vulnerability awareness in the night time economy](#)
- ["Supporting Vulnerable People"](#) – short online film

Women's Night Safety Charter

The Mayor of London has developed a [Women's Night Safety Charter](#) for businesses in the night time economy, and we encourage members operating in London to become signatories.