Use of environmental strategies to tackle alcohol-related harm in nightlife: the UK experience

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1. Introduction

As a region, Europe has the highest per capita levels of alcohol consumption in the world\(^1\) and consequently its citizens suffer disproportionately from alcohol-related harm\(^2\). In many areas the negative impacts of alcohol are increasing\(^3,4\), and alcohol is now estimated to account for 6.1% of all deaths and 10.7% of DALYs (disability adjusted life years) lost in the Region\(^3\). Alcohol can adversely affect the health of individuals at all ages. Thus, in the UK population rates of alcohol-related deaths are escalating (e.g. liver cirrhosis\(^4\)) and while prior to 1996 such deaths were most common in the over-65 age group, 45-64 year olds are now most affected and rates among 25-44 year olds having tripled over the last two decades\(^5\). Such age reductions in alcohol-related disease are just one symptom of not only continued harmful and hazardous drinking at all ages but of a growth in excessive consumption amongst young people. Across Europe young people are increasingly adopting high-risk patterns of alcohol consumption including binge drinking (drinking large amounts of alcohol in one drinking session) and routine drunkenness (i.e. regularly drinking to intoxication)\(^1\). Such drinking is not limited to those legally old enough to buy alcohol but also seen in schoolchildren\(^6\). The risks of these harmful drinking patterns go far beyond long-term damage to health and include acute problems such as overdose, accidents and risky sexual behaviour. Furthermore, such drinking puts at risk not only the drinker but also other individuals injured or killed by drink driving\(^7\) and alcohol-related violence\(^8\). In 2002, among 15-29 year olds in Europe, a third of deaths in males and over one in ten in females were estimated to be alcohol-related\(^9\).

Tackling risky alcohol consumption and related harm among young people is a growing priority across Europe and a wide range of interventions are being developed and implemented to reduce the burden of alcohol on young people and society more broadly. Interventions to reduce alcohol consumption and harm can be universal, for example using powers of taxation and providing alcohol education in schools\(^10\), whilst others are more selective, focusing on high-risk groups and providing tailored interventions (e.g. brief interventions\(^11\)) to reduce the consumption of those already drinking to excess. However, many interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm aim to change the environments in which alcohol is consumed in order to create conditions less conducive to intoxication and reduce opportunities for alcohol-related problems to occur. Many such initiatives in this category are aimed at tackling problems related to youth alcohol consumption in and around nightlife settings such as bars and nightclubs. Such interventions are based on international research showing that the design and management of nightlife environments can influence alcohol consumption and harm\(^12,13,14\). Thus they can include
measures such as bar and security staff training, improvements to management practice, increased enforcement of legislation, provision of late night transport systems and environmental improvements in nightlife areas in order to develop a well managed and safer nightlife.

Within Europe, levels of youth drinking are particularly high in the UK\(^6\). Over recent years, the UK has seen a reduction in the real price of alcohol\(^15\), an expansion of the nightlife economy and a subsequent increase in alcohol-related problems (e.g. violence) in nightlife settings (see Box 1). With taxation on alcohol barely altered and opportunities to buy alcohol (number of licensed premises and opening times) increased, a major part of UK action to control alcohol-related harm has been through environmental interventions in nightlife. Here, we review these interventions, some of which have been introduced nationally and others that have been developed in specific localities but often subsequently adopted on a wider geographical basis.

**Box 1: Alcohol and nightlife in the UK**

Nightlife in the UK has changed dramatically over the last two decades. Nightlife environments have increasingly been characterised by clustering of bars and nightclubs in town and city centres, with many such venues targeting young (18-24 year old) audiences and featuring loud music, minimal seating and sale of predominantly bottled drinks. Such features are thought to contribute to increased alcohol consumption and sales, and correspondingly levels of alcohol use among young people increased over this period. This increase has particularly affected young women, with the proportion of 16-24 year old females exceeding recommended weekly alcohol limits more than doubling between 1988 and 2002\(^16\). Young people now drink on average more than three times the recommended daily limits of alcohol\(^*\) when visiting a nightclub\(^17\). The toll of such heavy alcohol consumption in an expanding nightlife is reflected in health and crime statistics that show: a fifth of all violence to occur in nightlife settings\(^18\) and 80% of such violence to be related to alcohol\(^19\); 70% of attendances at Accident and Emergency departments at weekend nights to be related to alcohol\(^20\); and alcohol-related mortality to be rapidly increasing\(^5\). At a wider community level, alcohol-related anti-social behaviour and violence in nightlife has meant many town and city centres are considered ‘no go’ areas at night by large sections of the population, while the resources of local services including police, local authorities and health services are stretched to deal with the consequences of nightlife\(^21\). Thus reducing the immediate health and social consequences of alcohol has been prioritised at both local and national levels, with environmental prevention measures increasingly having been implemented in nightlife areas throughout the UK.

\(^*\)Recommended daily alcohol limits in the UK are three units for women and four units for men, with a unit defined as 8g of alcohol

2. **Environmental alcohol strategies in the UK**

A wide range of environmental interventions have been developed and implemented in the UK with the aim of reducing alcohol-related harm. Frequently driven by police and multi-agency partnership groups, such interventions typically aim to reduce alcohol-related crime and increase perceptions of safety at night. Measures in place include those aiming to influence access to alcohol in order to reduce consumption levels (see Table
and those aiming to improve management and staff practice within licensed premises or modify the wider night time environment to create nightlife settings less conducive to alcohol-related crime and disorder. Table 1 summarises a range of environmental interventions in use in the UK. The following sections provide more information on these interventions, including examples of local or national practice, and outline what is known about their effectiveness.
Table 1: Environmental strategies used to reduce alcohol-related harm in UK nightlife

For the purposes of this paper, environmental strategies have been classified into those that aim to 1) influence access to alcohol, 2) improve management in bars and nightclubs and 3) improve wider night time environments. However, many interventions function in more than one category. The circles in this table indicate broadly which categories the interventions function in, with the large circle indicating which section of the report the interventions are discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Influencing access to alcohol (Section 2.1)</th>
<th>Improving management in bars and nightclubs (Section 2.2)</th>
<th>Improving wider nightlife environments (Section 2.3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible server training</td>
<td>Training provided to alcohol servers typically to increase knowledge of alcohol issues and develop skills, for example in service refusal and age identification</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test purchasing</td>
<td>Use of underage volunteers to test alcohol vendors’ adherence to legal alcohol service laws</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof of age schemes</td>
<td>Schemes providing young people with age identification and encouraging age verification to prevent of underage sales of alcohol.</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing irresponsible drink promotions</td>
<td>Measures to reduce the use of cheap alcoholic drink sales that are linked to excessive alcohol consumption</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pub Watch schemes</td>
<td>Schemes creating communication and co-operation networks among local licensees and police</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door Supervisor training and registration</td>
<td>Schemes requiring those working as door supervisors (security personnel) in licensed premises to be trained and registered with authorities</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award schemes</td>
<td>Schemes to increase and reward good practice in management of licensed premises</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of safer drinking vessels</td>
<td>Interventions to encourage licensees to use plastic or high impact resistant glassware for alcohol service to reduce glass-related injuries</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-agency and proactive licensing visits</td>
<td>Visits to licensed premises by teams including police, licensing officers, trading standards and other agencies to check adherence to legislation and promote better practice</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving late night transport</td>
<td>Measures to increase and improve safe transport provision during nightlife hours</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street drinking bans</td>
<td>Designation of public places as alcohol free zones</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and security in nightlife areas</td>
<td>Measures to modify the environment around bars and nightclubs to increase safety and security, such as improving street lighting and increasing the presence of security personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fines and banning orders</td>
<td>Use of fines and bans to punish and deter alcohol-related offences</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and information campaigns</td>
<td>Measures to increase awareness of alcohol-related problems and interventions to prevent them, and to promote positive behaviour change</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1 Influencing access to alcohol
High levels of alcohol consumption are linked to a range of problems in nightlife areas, including anti-social behaviour, accidents and violence. At the individual level, young people who drink frequently, drink in large quantities and begin drinking at a young age are at greater risk of being both perpetrators and victims of violence\textsuperscript{25}, whilst intoxication also contributes to other risk behaviour such as regretted and unprotected sexual activity\textsuperscript{23}. Although it is illegal in the UK to serve individuals alcohol when they are already intoxicated, or to serve alcohol to individuals aged under-18, such alcohol service can still regularly occur\textsuperscript{24}. Further, whilst cheap drinks promotions are linked to high alcohol consumption levels and related harm\textsuperscript{25,26}, these are common features in youth-oriented bars and nightclubs. The interventions below are used to various degrees in the UK to attempt to address these issues by reducing illegal and irresponsible alcohol sales.

2.1.1 Responsible server training programmes
Responsible server training programmes aim to improve alcohol service practice, typically by changing attitudes towards alcohol (e.g. promoting the benefits of preventing intoxication among patrons), increasing knowledge (e.g. of the impacts of alcohol and alcohol legislation), developing skills (e.g. in service refusal) and improving practice (e.g. checking age identification)\textsuperscript{10}.

Through the Licensing Act 2003 (see Section 4), individuals who authorise the sale of alcohol (personal license holders, such as managers of licensed premises) must complete an accredited training course, yet for the vast majority of alcohol servers (e.g. bar staff) there is no national requirement to undertake formal training for their role. However a number of organisations in the UK offer responsible server training courses including Servewise (Scotland) and the BII, a professional body for the licensed retail trade in the UK. The BII Awarding Body (BIIAB) provides qualifications for the licensed trade and its Responsible Alcohol Retailing qualification (Level 1) covers issues including the effects of alcohol, licensing laws, social responsibility, recognising drunkenness, refusing service to intoxicated individuals, and strategies to reduce alcohol-related crime. The qualification can be completed in less than a day either through attending a BIIAB training centre or through studying the handbook followed by a telephone examination.

Whilst Responsible server training courses can be undertaken by individuals at their own or their workplace's instigation, in some areas independent funding has been secured for such training among staff in bars, nightclubs and off-licences across local areas. In Manchester, for example, the Drinking Responsibly project has been initiated by the Manchester Public Health Development Service to provide training to local staff in alcohol retail through the BIIAB programme. The initial stage of the project trained 75 alcohol servers, with a pass rate of 93% at a
cost of less than £50 per person. An additional handbook, Calling Time (Figure 1), has been developed to support new staff at induction, to follow-up regular staff, or to reach staff unable to access formal training. This has included reaching personal license holders with learning needs who transferred old licenses to new ones under the new licensing legislation (see Section 4) and thus were not subject to new training requirements. The booklet provides a wide range of information on alcohol-related issues and legislation, as well as tips for practice, risk assessment and questions to test users’ knowledge. Further, point of sale material promoting safer drinking has been developed and distributed to alcohol retail outlets. Whilst evaluation of this scheme is not yet complete, in Cardiff responsible alcohol server training provided to bar staff through the Lion’s Breath project found no effects on blood alcohol levels of patrons in participating bars. Here however training was implemented as part of an ongoing, multi-component project to reduce alcohol-related crime and in many cases was thought to have acted as a refresher to in-house training already received by participating staff. Researchers suggested such training should thus be preceded by a study to identify training needs. Internationally there is evidence that responsible server training can improve staff knowledge and attitudes and some evidence suggesting that it can impact on server practice (e.g. reduce sales to intoxicated individuals) and blood alcohol levels among bar customers.

2.1.2 Test purchasing
Test purchasing involves volunteers below the legal alcohol service age attempting to purchase alcohol in order to test service refusal. In the UK, test purchasing can be conducted by police and Trading Standards officers in both off-licensed and on-licensed premises, yet until recently it was largely limited to off-licensed premises. However use of test purchasing in bars and nightclubs has increased in recent years. Here, underage volunteers access drinking venues usually in the company of a plain clothed police or Trading Standards officer and attempt to purchase alcohol at the bar. Positive sales are a breach of law and licensing conditions, and a range of measures can be used to take action against the offending premises or individual, such as cautions, fines or more severe action such as premises closure. National guidance on test purchasing currently prevents underage volunteers from lying about their age if asked, meaning test purchasing can be unrealistic. Despite this, national data have found between a third and half of bars and nightclubs targeted to have sold alcohol to underage test purchasers.

While test purchasing is conducted across the country at a local level, it is also a key part of the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC), a national campaign led by the Home Office Police Standards Unit to reduce underage drinking and alcohol-related violence. The campaign is funded by the Home Office, which provides additional monies to police forces to increase enforcement activity over specific periods. The

Premises that sell alcohol for consumption elsewhere, such as shops
Premises that sell alcohol for consumption on the premises, such as pubs and bars
AMEC campaigns are widely advertised in the media and amongst licensees, and are focused during key periods such as Christmas and summer holidays. Through the campaigns, information material has been made available to alcohol retailers to remind them of the law regarding sales of alcohol and providing tips on practice (Figure 2).

Although the AMEC scheme has not yet been officially evaluated, during the first campaign (summer 2004), 391 test purchases were conducted in targeted bars and nightclubs with 45% resulting in a positive sale; in the third campaign (with greater participation nationally, including 1674 test purchases in bars and nightclubs during Christmas 2005), the proportion of positive sales had decreased to 29%. During the third campaign, 277 fines (Fixed Penalty Notices, see Section 2.3.5) were issued in on-licensed premises for offences including sales to underage and intoxicated individuals, and five premises were closed.

Internationally, US research has found test purchasing to be successful in reducing underage sales of alcohol, although its effects rapidly decline and thus it should be repeated on a regular basis.

2.1.3 Proof of Age schemes
Proof of age schemes aim to prevent underage purchase of alcohol and entrance to drinking venues by providing individuals with age verification in the form of proof of age cards and promoting age checks by alcohol servers. A range of proof of age schemes have been developed in the UK such as VALIDATE UK, a card which contains a scanned photograph and signature of the holder along with their date of birth and age-attainment boxes showing the dates on which the holder is legally able to purchase age-restricted goods. However, with no single nationally recognised card, the wide variety of cards available can make their use confusing to retailers and young people alike. To help overcome this issue, the government has developed the Proof of Age Standard Scheme (PASS). Card issuers who pass a strict audit undertaken by Trading Standards officers are entitled to display the PASS hologram on their proof of age cards to indicate the card is reliable.

Many alcohol retailers across the UK have also signed up to the Challenge 21 scheme, promoted by both the on- and off-licensed trade. This scheme intends to make age identification easier for alcohol retailers and incorporate proof of age requests into routine server practice. Alcohol servers in the scheme ask any person attempting to buy alcohol who appears to be under the age of 21 for proof of age, with posters advertising the policy typically displayed at the point of sale (see Figure 3). With age determination sometimes being difficult for alcohol retailers, raising the age of individuals required to present proof of age to 21 provides legitimacy for servers in asking for age identification and should make it more difficult for under-18s to purchase alcohol unchallenged. Whilst there is little information available on the
effectiveness of proof of age schemes, measures to prevent underage alcohol service are most effective when combined with regular enforcement activity\textsuperscript{31}.

2.1.4 Reducing irresponsible drinks promotions
Many areas have attempted to increase the price of alcohol in nightlife areas by encouraging responsible alcohol retail practice in bars and nightclubs, for example through local licensee agreements (e.g. Blackpool) and award schemes for good practice (e.g. Manchester; see Section 2.2.3). Sustaining higher drinks prices through voluntary measures however can be difficult as such schemes depend upon the continued co-operation between local licensees. In Perth, Scotland, a minimum drinks price was integrated into licensing conditions, preventing late night drinking venues from selling alcoholic drinks for less than £1.50. The minimum price was set by the local authority licensing board, with subsequent correspondence satisfying concerns of the Office for Fair Trading. However, an attempt at replicating the scheme elsewhere in Scotland was legally challenged (with existing legislation not seen as permitting local authorities to set such conditions) and the Perth scheme has since been withdrawn.

The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England (see Section 4) places responsibility for reducing cheap drinks promotions with the alcohol industry, which published Social Responsibility Standards for the Production and Sale of Alcoholic Drinks\textsuperscript{33} in 2005. These standards state alcohol retailers should not market products in a way that would encourage or condone excessive drinking and drunkenness or appeal to underage individuals, and that licensees should consider the impacts of drinks promotions on crime and disorder. No information is currently available on adherence to these Standards by bars and nightclubs. Internationally, there is little evidence to suggest voluntary schemes are effective in reducing alcohol consumption and related problems, with success of schemes typically linked to enforcement\textsuperscript{34,10}. However, there is a vast amount of research linking increased alcohol prices to reductions in alcohol-related harm\textsuperscript{10}. Here, strategies to increase alcohol prices should not be limited to nightlife environments but include all alcohol retail outlets.

2.2 Improving management in licensed premises
A wide range of international research has shown that poorly managed drinking venues are associated with higher levels of anti-social behaviour. For example, drinking venues that are uncomfortable (e.g. hot, noisy, crowded and lacking seating), employ aggressive door supervisors, offer cheap drinks promotions, have a high proportion of intoxicated patrons and a permissive attitude towards anti-social behaviour, have a greater likelihood of experiencing aggression and violence\textsuperscript{12,13,14}. Such risk factors are also considered relevant in the UK. For example, nightclub assaults often cluster within particular licensed premises\textsuperscript{35}, whilst research in Liverpool found 11% of assault patients attending Liverpool’s Accident and Emergency (A&E) department following a nightclub visit had been injured by door supervisors\textsuperscript{36}. Further, alcohol-related violence in nightlife settings can often involve the use of glasses and bottles as weapons. In Liverpool, almost a fifth of assault patients attending the city’s Accident and Emergency department from
nightclubs involved use of glassware as a weapon\(^{36}\), and the injuries sustained in such assaults commonly result in permanent scarring and consequent mental health problems\(^{37}\). The following interventions aim to reduce alcohol-related disorder and increase customer safety by promoting and enforcing improved management practice in bars and nightclubs.

### 2.2.1 Pub Watch schemes

Pub Watch schemes are local partnerships of licensees working to reduce and deter anti-social behaviour in bars and nightclubs. They provide a mechanism for communication and exchange of information between licensed premises and other agencies (particularly police and local authorities), typically incorporating radio links and banning systems through which individuals banned from one venue in the scheme are automatically banned from all. Where all local licensees are Pub Watch members, this effectively bans persistent troublemakers from a given nightlife area, preventing continued involvement in anti-social behaviour in that area, and provides a deterrent to potential disorder among other bar and nightclub users. Meetings between Pub Watch members can also be opportunities for sharing information between local agencies (e.g. police, health services) and licensees, and providing managers and bar staff with training (e.g. drugs awareness).

Pub Watch schemes are in widespread use across the UK. In Burnley, the BAND (Burnley Against Night time Disorder; Figure 4) Pub Watch scheme was set up in 2000 to help reduce crime and perceptions of violence in the town centre at weekend nights. The scheme was developed through a partnership of local licensees, police, town centre management, CCTV controllers and the local authority. Licensees pay a small membership fee and annual subscription, and all members are included in the town’s community radio scheme, which provides a communications network between licensees, police and other night time staff. The BAND scheme operates a banning system, with photographs of banned individuals distributed to all members to assist compliance. The scheme has been extended to include taxi drivers, with individuals who are violent towards taxi drivers in the town being barred from using both taxis and licensed premises. Assessment of the scheme suggested more people were using the town centre following implementation of the scheme, and that the assault rate in the town had reduced\(^{38}\).

### 2.2.2 Door supervisor registration and training

Door supervisor registration and training schemes aim to ensure individuals working as door...
supervisors (security staff in bars and nightclubs) are appropriate (e.g. without a history of violent offending) and suitably trained for the role. The objectives of such schemes are to enable door supervisors to maintain customer safety and assist crime prevention. Throughout the 1990s, growing recognition of the important role of door supervisors in crime prevention, and their potential to contribute to nightlife problems, led many local authorities in the UK to initiate local door registration and training schemes for those working within their areas. Such schemes meant door supervisors required a license to work within the local area, enabling local authorities to vet individuals for previous criminal convictions, while those seeking a license were required to complete a training programme typically including aspects such as conflict resolution, search policies, customer relations and first aid. While such schemes were limited to individual local authority areas, in 2001 the Private Security Industry Act created a national scheme for door supervisors, which superseded all local schemes. This national scheme was implemented in 2005, with all door supervisors working in England and Wales requiring a license (Figure 5). License distribution is managed by the newly formed Security Industry Authority (SIA). Similar to local authority schemes, the national door supervisor scheme requires individuals to take an approved training scheme and to be registered with the SIA, which refuses licenses to individuals with certain criminal convictions in the past five years (e.g. violence and drug dealing).

No official evaluation has yet taken place on the national door supervisor registration and training scheme. Further, many local authority areas reported difficulties in meeting SIA deadlines as too few door supervisors had completed registration procedures and some existing door supervisors were excluded from the scheme for having previous criminal convictions. Prior to the national scheme, however, implementation of a local authority-level door supervisor scheme in Liverpool reportedly reduced the proportion of assault patients at the city’s Accident and Emergency department who had been injured by door supervisors. However, data from 2004/05 show door supervisors in the city still to be responsible for over one in ten assaults occurring in bars that require Accident and Emergency treatment. Internationally, training for door supervisors and other staff combined with workplace environmental risk assessment has reduced severe and moderate aggression within bars. Here, the positive effects of training were moderated by high staff turnover in some participating venues.

2.2.3 Award schemes
Award schemes aim to raise and maintain practice and management standards in bars and nightclubs to provide safer drinking environments and reduce crime and disorder. They provide a mechanism for rewarding and promoting good practice among licensees. A number of different award schemes have been used in the UK. The Best Bar None award scheme (Figure 6) was developed in 2001 by Greater Manchester police as a response to high levels of crime shown through national and local surveys to be related to poorly managed drinking.
venues. The scheme intends to set minimum safety standards for bars and nightclubs, reward good management practice and raise public awareness of premises that have high regard for customer safety. An application form was developed in partnership with a range of agencies, enquiring about management and venue practice including measures in place in the venue to prevent crime and disorder and ensure customer safety. Applications are verified by multi-agency inspections at the venue and those that meet required standards are judged with awards given at a high profile award ceremony. Manchester Best Bar None was officially launched in 2003 with funding from the alcohol industry. The Best Bar None scheme is promoted by government as good practice and has now been adopted in many towns and cities across the UK. Although the scheme has not yet been officially evaluated, in Manchester its implementation formed part of the wider City Centre Safe initiative (see Section 3.2) to reduce alcohol-related crime, which contributed to a 32.5% reduction in serious assaults between 2003 and 2004. There is little evidence available from elsewhere of the effectiveness of award schemes in reducing alcohol-related problems in nightlife.

2.2.4 Use of safer drinking vessels
Following research in the UK on the devastating injuries caused by the use of glassware as weapons in nightlife violence, authorities in many areas have attempted to encourage the use of high impact resistance glassware in bars and nightclubs. In Cardiff, bars and nightclubs staying open until at least 3am are required through licensing conditions to use plastic glasses and bottles after 11pm. Following the implementation of this requirement, there has been a reduction in numbers of assault patients requiring Accident and Emergency treatment for glass-related injury.

In Glasgow, movement towards use of safer drinking vessels was originally initiated by police and licensing authorities. Here, bars and nightclubs associated with assaults and glass-related violence were informed they must improve conditions in their venues, including changing to use of plastic or tempered glassware, in order to retain alcohol sales licenses. Since this time, a glass ban has been implemented across nightclubs in the city centre using licensing legislation, whereby use of plastic or high impact resistance glassware is a condition of nightclub licenses. The ban was instated in the city’s nightclubs in January 2006, yet the intention to roll it out to other licensed premises across the city has been challenged and now withdrawn. However many venues in Glasgow have recognised the benefits of safer glass, not only in crime reduction but also in accidental injury prevention for staff and customers, and thus choose to use such glass voluntarily.

2.2.5 Multi-agency and proactive licensing visits
Multi-agency licensing visits involve representatives from a range of agencies visiting licensed premises during opening hours to ensure legislation and licensing conditions are not being breached. These typically involve police and licensing officers, yet in many areas are being extended to include, for example, Trading Standards officers, fire services, customs officers, environmental health officers and others. Together, they can check for a wide
range of misdemeanours such as exceeded premise capacity, underage drinking, unregistered door supervisors, illegitimate unemployment benefit claims by staff, blocked fire exits and sales of smuggled alcohol and tobacco. Such visits are usually unannounced and breaches identified can result in penalties ranging from warnings and fines to closure.

In some areas, multi-agency licensing visits are used proactively and involve risk assessments followed by the production of action plans for managed premises to improve management practice. Often such visits are targeted at venues that are associated with high levels of crime and disorder, and action plans are used to help venues improve their performance and avoid prosecution or closure. In Manchester, for example, the police-led Top Ten scheme uses crime and other intelligence to identify the ten licensed premises in the city most associated with crime and focus multi-agency resources on improving practice in these venues. In Carlisle in 2003, licensees funded their own risk assessment exercise, working with the local alcohol and drug service, police, licensing officers and environmental health staff. Here, mystery shoppers (investigators posing as customers) visited the venue and conducted a covert scanning exercise covering issues such as staff practice, lighting provision, suitability of fixtures and fittings, visibility of fire escapes and crowding. Following the visit licensees were presented with a report outlining findings and suggesting improvements for venue design and practice.

There is some evidence from the UK to suggest that enforcement visits at licensed premises can reduce crimes occurring in nightlife settings, and such visits have been accredited with crime reduction successes as part of multi-component schemes (e.g. Glasgow, see Section 3.4). International research also suggests that enforcement is a key factor in alcohol environmental prevention strategies.

2.3 Improving the wider night time environment

In the UK, many of the acute health and social problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption, such as accidents, violence and anti-social behaviour, occur in and around nightlife areas. For example, a fifth of all alcohol-related violence in England and Wales takes place outside pubs and nightclubs (with a further third occurring within pubs and nightclubs and a fifth in other public places). Such alcohol-related disorder among youth in nightlife areas not only damages health but also creates fear of crime and prevents use of town and city centres at night by other population groups and for purposes other than drinking.

Inadequate late night transport provision is thought to be a large contributor to alcohol-related violence and disorder in nightlife areas in the UK. As bars and nightclubs close, large crowds of intoxicated individuals gather in the streets, with competition for taxis leading to confrontation and violence. Further, revellers can be tempted to use unsafe forms of transport (e.g. unlicensed taxis, private cars, drink/drug driving) or walk home where they may be vulnerable to assault or road traffic accidents. Policing nightlife areas places huge demands on police services, and where punishing disorder is time consuming (e.g. requiring police officers to leave nightlife areas with offenders
and complete burdensome paperwork at the police station), low level alcohol-related offences may remain unchecked, creating an atmosphere of permissiveness. The following interventions have been implemented in areas of the UK to address these issues and create safer environments in the vicinity of bars and nightclubs.

2.3.1 Improving late night transport

Interventions to improve late night transport aim to enable revellers to leave nightlife areas quickly and safely after a night out and can include: the introduction or expansion of bus services during nightlife hours; measures to improve safety for taxi users and drivers; additional security measures at transport loading points; and information campaigns promoting personal safety in using late night transport. Such interventions have been implemented at various levels in many nightlife areas throughout the UK.

Many towns and cities have introduced late night bus services to help revellers get home after a night out. Such bus services typically operate using a single fare for any destination to ease use and loading, while safety onboard can be improved through measures such as the installation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras in buses and providing drivers with radio links to CCTV control centres and police. CCTV is also commonly used at bus loading points, while security staff or 'bus loaders' provided at bus stops help maintain order, provide information on services and increase safety for customers. Frequently, the development of late night bus services is hampered by concerns around financial resources, driver safety and bus vandalism, yet such issues can be overcome through partnership working between local authorities, bus companies, the recreation industry and other agencies. In Gloucester, for example, a late night bus service was set up through such a partnership, with the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) agreeing to underwrite any financial losses incurred by the bus company for the first six months of the service. This initial period found the night service to be financially viable and the bus provider has continued to run the night buses as a commercial venture. Although many major cities in the UK (e.g. London, Manchester) have stable commercial night bus services, in smaller cities and towns such services are sometimes less sustainable. In Wolverhampton, for example, a local authority-supported night bus service was withdrawn due to declining passenger numbers, anecdotally as a consequence of long journey times compared with taxis. Here, investment was diverted to improve taxi services and safety.

Taxis are commonly the preferred (and sometimes only) form of transport home from nightlife areas, yet limited availability at peak nightlife times means taxi ranks are frequently associated with violence. There are two different types of taxi services in the UK – public taxis (black cabs), which can be hailed in the street, and private hire taxis, which must be pre-booked and cannot be hailed by customers in the street. Many local authorities in the UK have restricted numbers of public taxis that can operate within their areas. However, in 2004 the government
urged local authorities to review their taxi policies and remove these restrictions and many areas are now planning to deregulate taxi services, which should help increase the availability of taxis in nightlife areas. However, regardless of provision, management of taxi services and taxi loading points is important in reducing the potential for conflict, assault and accidents within nightlife areas. In Birmingham, taxi services are being improved through the development of managed taxi ranks serving designated parts of the city. This system helps reduce traffic flow through the main nightlife area, and the location of trained marshals at taxi ranks helps control crowds, maintain fair queuing systems and thus reduce confrontation. In Manchester, a similar taxi marshalling scheme has shown success in increasing perceptions of safety and reducing crime at taxi ranks at night. The Manchester Taxi Safe scheme provides highly visible marshals at taxi ranks, who are linked to police and CCTV controllers via a radio system. Taxi marshals work to a protocol set by licensing officials, police and taxi trade representatives, and extra bins (i.e. for disposal of litter, bottles and glasses) and CCTV cameras have been installed at taxi ranks. Information cards raise awareness of the scheme and the location of marshalled ranks. Evaluation found both taxi drivers and customers felt safer using taxi ranks while police data showed a 50% drop in crime at marshalled ranks compared with the previous year.

Private hire taxis need to be licensed by the local authorities, yet there are problems in some areas with unlicensed or ‘bogus’ taxis operating at night. Whilst these may operate for financial gain, in some cases bogus taxi drivers are targeting lone females for sexual assault. In London for example, 212 women reported sexual assault by illegal taxi drivers in 2002, with a quarter of these assaults involving rape. To address this issue, Transport for London developed the Safe Travel at Night (STAN) campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of using illegal taxis and provide information on safe travel options, with sexual assaults related to illegal taxi use reported to have reduced to 155 in the following year. In addition, a novel text messaging system has been developed, through which individuals can text the word ‘HOME’ to a dedicated text number and receive telephone numbers for registered taxi companies local to the area they send the text message from.

Despite the amount of work underway in the UK to improve late night transport provision in nightlife areas, few evaluations have assessed the success of these schemes independently in reducing alcohol-related problems (see TaxiSafe Manchester above). However, effectively reducing time spent by intoxicated individuals in waiting for transport at the end of the night should reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour to occur. Internationally, research has found good late night transport to be one of the key factors in reducing levels of aggression in nightlife environments.

2.3.2 Street drinking bans
Street drinking bans are local orders preventing the consumption of alcohol in specific public places with the aim of reducing public alcohol consumption and related crime and disorder, and

Figure 8: Street drinking ban sign in Liverpool city centre
increasing public perceptions of safety. Street drinking bans were first implemented in the UK in response to rising levels of alcohol-related disorder in town and city centres. Such bans are implemented at a local level and cover specific designated areas associated with alcohol-related problems, including town and city centres and popular nightlife areas. In the UK, street drinking bans give police powers to confiscate alcohol being consumed within designated areas and to arrest individuals who fail to surrender their alcohol to police upon request. The street drinking ban scheme was initially piloted in a number of local authority areas, before being extended more widely across the country with a model byelaw being provided by the Home Office. The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 formalised the street drinking ban scheme, providing adoptive powers for local authorities to designate street drinking ban zones. These bans are now widely used throughout the UK with signage used to alert people when they are in a designated street drinking ban area (see Figure 8).

During the piloting stage of street drinking bans in the UK, surveys and crime analyses were used to evaluate the impact of one such ban implemented in Coventry city centre. These found the ban had little effect on recorded levels of crime, but did serve to significantly reduce incivilities such as insults and bothering by strangers as well as fear of being a victim of crime in the city. In other countries (e.g. New Zealand), implementation of similar street drinking bans has been linked to reductions in crime as well as the amount of vomit, urine, discarded drinking vessels and broken glass in the streets in the morning following night time entertainment. Here street drinking bans raised some concerns around displacement of drinkers into other areas and movement of young drinkers into the formal criminal justice system, yet proactive enforcement of such bans was considered useful in providing police with greater opportunity to limit opportunistic alcohol-related offending.

2.3.3 Security in the vicinity of bars and nightclubs
A range of measures are in use in nightlife areas across the UK to increase safety and security in streets in popular nightlife areas. For example, vast resources have been used to develop closed circuit television (CCTV) networks in town and city centres. Such cameras are now common features in nightlife areas with the intention of deterring anti-social behaviour and crime and facilitating identification of offenders. The city of Liverpool alone has 240 CCTV cameras in use, with a modern CCTV control centre manned 24 hours a day and in direct contact with police through radio, telephone and image transfer. Many areas have also invested in improved street lighting to increase perceptions of safety and deter crime in town and city centres, whilst some areas have blocked access to potentially dangerous areas such as alleys where crime may be committed through the use of gates (referred to in the UK as alleygating). Other measures include increasing the availability of litter receptacles to reduce street littering, and providing bins specifically designed to prevent removal of contents (e.g. bottles that can be used at weapons). Such environmental improvements are frequently implemented through local multi-agency Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships as part of wider strategies to reduce crime and disorder in town and city centres.
Increasing the presence of police and security staff has also been prioritised in many nightlife areas. High visibility policing is now commonly used, involving the location of a visible presence of police officers, often in bright uniforms, in the vicinity of bars and nightclubs to deter crime and disorder. Such policing is resource intensive and in the UK is typically targeted at crime hotspot areas identified through local intelligence. Other security staff including community support officers and transport marshals (see 2.3.1) are also frequently used in larger nightlife areas. Whilst such resources are targeted in the busiest areas, to increase access to security personnel some areas have provided help points throughout city centres, through which individuals can seek assistance. Help points often feature a voice link to CCTV controllers, who can communicate with an individual whilst also focusing a CCTV camera on them to provide additional security. CCTV operators are then able to inform police if urgent assistance is required.

Available evidence suggests modifications to wider nightlife environments can contribute to reductions in crime. A systematic review of the effects of CCTV in a variety of locations (predominantly UK) found mixed impacts on crime, with no effects seen on violent crime\(^57\). Here, CCTV was found to be most effective in reducing crime in car parks, particularly when combined with other interventions (e.g. improved lighting). However, other research on the effects of CCTV in urban centres found increases in recorded violence, thought to result from increased police detection of such crime, yet decreases in assault-related attendance or severity of injury at accident and emergency departments\(^58\). A systematic review of improved street lighting on crime, including violence, found overall crime reduced by 20% in intervention areas compared with control areas\(^59\). Evaluation of alleygating in residential areas in Liverpool found a 37% reduction in burglary and a cost benefit of £1.86 for every pound spent\(^60\), yet no evidence exists of its effectiveness in nightlife. However, high profile policing in nightlife areas and the presence of security personnel at transport points have been associated with reductions in crime rates\(^49,50\).

### 2.3.4 Fines and banning orders for alcohol-related crime

In busy nightlife areas where police resources are stretched, low level anti-social behaviour related to alcohol use may be tolerated if the bureaucracy involved in dealing with offenders is time-consuming and removes police from the streets. Further, while additional security staff can be located in nightlife areas to assist police, without powers to apprehend anti-social behaviour this can remain unchecked. Such issues can create perceptions that anti-social behaviour is acceptable.

To address these problems, the Home Office has introduced one-off penalties, which operate similar to parking tickets, to enable offenders of anti-social behaviour to be apprehended with minimal disruption to police resources and to increase the powers of support staff. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) deal with environmental offences such as littering and noise disturbance, and can be issued by local authority officers, police community support officers and other accredited individuals. These fines range from £50-£100 and recipients must pay the fine within 14 days or request a hearing to
appeal against it, with failure to comply resulting in a higher fine or imprisonment. Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) can be issued by police and other accredited individuals for offences such as being drunk or disorderly, vandalism or serving alcohol to an intoxicated person. These fines range from £50-£80 and must be addressed by recipients within 21 days, again with failure to comply resulting in a higher fine or imprisonment. Neither penalty is classed as a criminal conviction, meaning low level offenders are not drawn into the formal criminal justice system. PNDs were introduced in 2001 and piloted in several areas before being rolled out in 2003 and 2004; in 2004 over 63,000 PNDs were issued in England and Wales, 87% of which were for offences of ‘causing harassment, alarm or distress’ or ‘drunk and disorderly’. For more persistent offenders, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been introduced. ABCs are voluntary agreements between perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, police and other authorities that individuals will not partake in specific anti-social behaviour, such as underage drinking, assault and criminal damage. Breach of contract can lead to more formal proceedings including implementation of an ASBO. ASBOs are court orders that ban a person from committing specified anti-social behaviour, from spending time with a particular group of friends or from visiting certain areas. They are issued for a minimum of two years, and while an ASBO is a civil order rather than a criminal penalty, breach of ASBO conditions is a criminal offence. In some areas ASBOs have been issued through Pub Watch schemes working with local ASBO co-ordinators, whereby individuals persistently causing problems in licensed premises can be formally banned from all Pub Watch premises. Whilst there is little evidence of the impact of ASBOs on nightlife problems, they have been associated with reduced anti-social behaviour in other settings.

2.3.5 Media and information campaigns

Whilst media and information campaigns can be universal or targeted prevention interventions, they are often used alongside environmental prevention strategies to provide information about campaigns and reinforce messages about, for example, the dangers of excessive drinking and personal safety. In Manchester, the Greater Manchester Police City Centre Safe team (see Section 3.2) has developed the Think Safe, Drink Safe social marketing branding which uses consistent imagery to provide simple messages relating to alcohol use and nightlife safety through posters (e.g. on billboards, public transport and litter bins) and other information materials distributed in licensed premises. The Think Safe, Drink Safe branding is incorporated into all Manchester City Centre Safe initiatives and has been adopted in other areas of the UK.

In Liverpool, the Crystal Clear campaign aimed to reduce glass-related violence through an awareness campaign targeting drinkers and licensees and comprising various forms of media delivered throughout the city and licensed premises (e.g. posters (Figure 9).
radio advertising and beer mats\textsuperscript{63}). The campaign sought to deliver information on the consequences of glass-related violence and risk reduction measures (e.g. disposing of drinking vessels safely), and built on a previous police operation that worked with licensees to prevent removal of bottles and glasses from licensed premises and promoted the use of safer glassware (see Section 2.2.4). Evaluation of the awareness campaign found reductions in glass-related injuries presenting at Liverpool Accident and Emergency department over the campaign period\textsuperscript{64}.

3. Integrated environmental alcohol schemes

Whilst some of the environmental interventions discussed in this campaign are implemented as standalone measures, frequently these interventions form part of wider community based schemes to address alcohol-related problems in nightlife settings. This section provides four examples of such schemes in place in the UK.

3.1 Belfast: The Get Home Safe campaign

The Get Home Safe campaign in Belfast, Northern Ireland, was developed to address rising levels of alcohol-related crime associated with increased numbers of pubs and clubs in the city; in 2001 assaults and anti-social behaviour accounted for almost a fifth of all crime in the South Belfast area, with 80% estimated to be alcohol-related, while the number of licensed premises in the city increased by 13.5% between 2001 and 2002. The Get Home Safe scheme was initiated by a partnership involving police, the city council, the city centre management, the licensed trade, public transport providers and victim support services and includes the implementation of a raft of complementary initiatives to create safer night time environments, reduce assaults and increase feelings of safety in the city at night. Initiatives implemented through the scheme include:

- Door supervisor training and registration
- Responsible server training
- Strict enforcement of street drinking bans
- Radio communication scheme linking licensed premises with police and CCTV controllers
- An agreement between police, breweries and local licensees to use safer drinking vessels
- Improvements to late night transport
- An alcohol arrest referral scheme
- A marketing campaign comprising posters, radio and press advertisements and information leaflets to raise awareness of the consequences of alcohol-related violence (Figure 10)
- Improved data sharing between health and criminal justice agencies
Evaluation of the Get Home Safe campaign found high levels of awareness of and support for the campaign among local young people and a reduction in assaults compared with the previous year.

3.2 Manchester: City Centre Safe
The City Centre Safe scheme in Manchester, England, was initiated in 1999 by Greater Manchester police in partnership with a range of other agencies in the city. The scheme was devised to respond to increasing capacity in the city’s bars and clubs (an increase of 250% between 1996 and 2000), and a corresponding increase in alcohol-related violence. The scheme incorporates a range of innovative interventions to promote better management in pubs and clubs in the city and to modify the night time environment to reduce alcohol-related crime, developed through funding from local and national agencies and the alcohol industry. They include:

- Improvements to late night transport systems
- Targeted late night policing
- The Best Bar None award scheme for good management practice (see 2.2.3)
- The ‘top ten’ initiative identifying premises most associated with crime and disorder for additional support and policing
- Structured multi-agency visits to licensed premises
- Think Safe Drink Safe social marketing awareness campaigns (Figure 11)
- Environmental improvements to nightlife areas, including additional lighting, CCTV and increased provision of litter bins.

Crime figures indicate the scheme has contributed to sustained reductions in levels of reported violence in Manchester city centre, with serious assaults having reduced by 32.5% between 2004 and 2005. The City Centre Safe scheme is promoted nationally as good practice and Greater Manchester police have a national role in facilitating the development of safer nightlife initiatives in other areas.

3.3 Cardiff: The TASC Project
In Cardiff (Wales), the TASC (Tackling Alcohol-related Street Crime) project was launched in 2000 to reduce alcohol-related crime and disorder related to the city’s developing night time economy. The project was a police-led multi-agency scheme funded by the Home Office, comprising a range of initiatives including:

- The development of a Licensees’ forum facilitating regular dialogue between local licensees and police
- Staff and door supervisor training schemes
- Media campaigns promoting awareness of the problem of alcohol-related violence
- Identification of crime hotspots through combined Accident and Emergency (A&E) department and police data, and targeted policing
- Increased care for victims of alcohol-related violence through links between A&E and victim support services, and a nurse-led mental health needs assessment and referral service.

Following the TASC project period these interventions have been maintained by the Cardiff Community Safety Partnership (Figure 12), facilitated through closer working between health and criminal justice agencies. Routine questioning of Accident and Emergency department assault patients and data sharing with the Partnership enable identification of hotspot areas and targeted interventions at high risk drinking venues. Thus bars and nightclubs with high levels of assaults reported at A&E are targeted by increased police enforcement and environmental management strategies to identify and address problem areas. Analysis of A&E data show assaults occurring in most such premises to reduce following intervention, with decreases in A&E assault attendance from targeted premises of up to 70%. Police visits to particularly high risk venues were combined with visits by A&E staff to discuss assault cases stemming from their premises and monitoring of such assaults by A&E. The combined police and A&E intervention was associated with significantly greater reductions in assaults. Although increases in street assaults were seen over the same period, these were associated with increases in the number and capacity of licensed premises (with the assault rate increasing from 0.8 per 100 capacity to 1.02 over the intervention period). Between 2000 and 2004, total assault-related attendance at Cardiff Accident and Emergency department decreased by a quarter.

3.4 Glasgow: Nite Zone

The Nite Zone project in Glasgow (Scotland) aimed to develop one of the city’s major nightlife areas to facilitate safe and quick journeys home for revellers after a night out and reduce crime and fear of crime in the city at night. The project utilised a range of environmental initiatives including:

- Improvements to street lighting, through replacing existing sodium street lights with white lighting
- Increased numbers and monitoring of CCTV cameras in the area
- Increased numbers of help points in the city centre, enabling communication between the public, CCTV controllers and police
- Widespread marketing of late night transport options, through the distribution of leaflets containing bus timetables and taxi information (e.g. location of late night ranks)
- Employment of marshals at bus and taxi ranks to facilitate queuing
- Additional litter bins provided at transport loading points
- The location of signs containing the Nitezone logo (Figure 11) throughout the city centre to raise awareness of the project.

Evaluation of the scheme found total violent crime to have dropped by 19.1%, with serious assault reduced by 4.4% and robbery by 21.5% (comparing a three month period during the intervention with the same three months in the previous year\(^49\)). Additional policing and security in the area was also linked to an increase in arrests for disorder and the possession of drugs or knives. Improvements to taxi services meant estimated waiting times at taxi ranks (over the Christmas period) reduced from one hour to fifteen minutes. Further, widespread and supportive media coverage of the project helped increase public perceptions of safety in the city at night. Following the success of Nite Zone, the scheme is currently being extended across Glasgow and has also been adopted in neighbouring areas.

### 4. Environmental alcohol strategies in national policy

Many environmental alcohol strategies in place in the UK begin as local initiatives before being promoted (e.g. Manchester City Centre Safe scheme components) or rolled out nationally (e.g. street drinking bans) or being incorporated into national policy (e.g. door supervisor registration and training). England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have separate strategies for tackling alcohol and related harm, all of which incorporate environmental measures to some degree, with the responsibility for implementing such measures typically lying with multi-agency partnership teams focusing on crime reduction and community safety. The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England\(^68\) published in 2004, for example, includes measures such as: greater enforcement of alcohol-related offending by police; a voluntary code of good practice for licensees; the provision of guidance on managing the night time economy and resources on tackling alcohol-related violence; unit labelling of drinks containers; tackling underage drinking; and seeking resources from the licensed trade to implement environmental prevention measures. Whilst many local interventions already in place in the UK are highlighted in the document as good practice, much of the onus to improve management of licensed premises is given to licensees themselves through the voluntary code. There is little evidence for the effectiveness of such voluntary codes in reducing alcohol-related problems, with the small amount of evidence available suggesting such codes require strong leadership and enforcement from criminal justice agencies.

In England and Wales, the Licensing Act 2003 brought major changes to the licensing of bars and nightclubs. The Act came into force in 2005 and had four key objectives of: preventing crime and disorder; protecting public safety; preventing public nuisance; and protecting children from harm. The Act devolved responsibility for licensing to local authorities and created a single...
licensing system for all alcohol retailers. Here, premises can propose and negotiate their own opening hours and operating policies, with local authorities able to include conditions on specific premises when these are seen as necessary for meeting the Act’s objectives. Police, other authorities and the public can object against a premise’s licensing policy if the venue is thought to contribute to crime, disorder and public nuisance. However to do so, they require measurable evidence that such problems stem from the venue in question.

A key component of the Licensing Act was its provision for extended licensing hours in bars, nightclubs and other alcohol retail outlets across England and Wales, with the stated objective of reducing the pressures placed on town and city centres and public services through fixed closing times. Here, it was intended that permitting licensed premises greater flexibility over opening hours would lead to a more gradual departure from nightlife areas and thus reduce the numbers of intoxicated individuals gathering in nightlife areas at the end of the night and requiring transport home. This policy conflicts with evidence showing increased alcohol service hours to increase consumption and related problems such as violence. While the impact of the Act on crime and disorder have yet to be fully measured, however, what data currently exists shows little evidence for increases in crime following its implementation. In Merseyside for example, both recorded violent crimes and Accident and Emergency department assault attendances appear to have declined since the introduction of the licensing act (compared with similar periods in the last year).

Implementation of the Licensing Act was combined with increased police enforcement activity through a national AMEC campaign, helping to limit any immediate consequences of increased alcohol service times. The Home Office led AMEC scheme is a major part of government policy to reduce alcohol-related (and domestic) violence, and in addition to test purchasing operations (see Section 2.1.2) the programme has invested resources in other largely environmental measures to reduce crime. Targeted at areas with high volumes of violent crime, the campaign provides additional funding to police to implement prevention and has involved expert visits to AMEC areas to identify innovative working and share information on good practice. The scheme has also promoted partnership working at local, regional and national levels, particularly between health and criminal justice agencies in sharing data and implementing joint initiatives. Both the Home Office and the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister have provided a range of guidance to local agencies working to reduce crime and improve safety on environmental nightlife interventions. These include a tool-kit on preventing Alcohol-Related Crime (Home Office) and guidance on good practice in managing the evening and night time economy.

At both national and local levels, there has been an increasing awareness of the need for partnership working in prevention of alcohol-related harm, and

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iii Previously, all premises wishing to sell alcohol later than 11pm (10.30pm Sunday) required an additional Public Entertainment License.

iv http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/
increasingly of the necessary links between environmental and other types of prevention strategies. Thus the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England promotes the provision of measures such as brief interventions for individuals arrested for alcohol-related offences and such schemes have been combined with increased enforcement measures at a local level in some areas. Using international research evidence, the government is also exploring the integration of environmental measures with school drug (including alcohol) education through the Blueprint research programme. Whilst Blueprint is aimed at 11-13 year olds who are largely excluded from nightlife entertainment, this represents a recognition by government of the importance of integrating environmental interventions into wider efforts to prevent risky alcohol consumption and its consequences.

Although not specifically aimed at alcohol prevention, public health and the protection of workers’ health in bars and nightclubs in the UK is also being tackled through smoke-free legislation (see Box 2). Whilst such legislation is undoubtedly desirable, it may have unintended impacts on nightlife requiring increased enforcement of environmental strategies. For example, individuals leaving licensed premises to smoke outside may attempt to take drinks with them, thus breaching street drinking bans or leading to greater littering of glasses and bottles on the streets where they can be used as weapons. Further, the need to prevent individuals from smoking may increase confrontation between intoxicated customers and bar staff or door supervisors. Although little evidence exists of these effects in areas where bans have been enforced\textsuperscript{71}, environmental measures to train staff, enforce street drinking bans and prevent the removal of drinking vessels from licensed

\textbf{Box 2: Smoke-free nightlife in the UK}

Concerns around the effects of smoking in public places on public and occupational health have prompted debate and legislation throughout the UK, with Scotland already having legislated against smoking in public places and Northern Ireland to follow suit in 2007. Scotland became smoke free in March 2006, making it illegal to smoke in bars, nightclubs, restaurants and all other public places throughout the country. All premises are required to display no smoking signs and the law is being enforced by environmental health officers; breach of the law results in a fixed penalty fine of £50 with non-payment leading to possible prosecution and a maximum fine of £1000. Penalties for premises permitting smoking or neglecting to display non-smoking signs are higher at £200, with a maximum fine of £2500 for non-payment. In England and Wales, similar legislation is expected yet the Regulations giving detail have still to be agreed. Initial proposals included exemptions for premises that did not serve prepared food and private members’ clubs but MPs voted for an outright ban on smoking in public places. The legislation remains under debate yet is likely to be implemented in 2007/8. The Scottish ban on public smoking has not been in place long enough for its impacts to have been evaluated, although surveys suggest people are more likely to use bars since its implementation\textsuperscript{72}. Evaluation of a similar ban implemented in Ireland in 2004 found levels of reported smoking in bars to have decreased from 98% to 5%, and increased public support for the ban following implementation. Furthermore, the majority of those who had quit smoking since implementation reported that the ban had helped them both to quit and to prevent relapse to smoking\textsuperscript{73}. 
premises may be particularly relevant during the implementation of such legislation.

5. Summary

The burden of alcohol on health and crime can be immense, and in many parts of Europe is increasing. Much of this burden is related to risky alcohol consumption among young people, a large part of which occurs within bars and nightclubs. Consequently, nightlife environments are the scenes of many acute problems related to alcohol such as anti-social behaviour, violence and accidents. The UK is particularly affected by risky drinking patterns and associated harm, and as a result has invested heavily in environmental strategies to prevent alcohol-related problems in nightlife areas. Such interventions are frequently led by police and multi-agency crime and disorder reduction partnerships with the aims of reducing crime related to alcohol and increasing public perceptions of safety. Often initiated at the local level, interventions considered successful (although evaluations are often poor) are rapidly adopted in other nightlife areas and often later promoted nationally or integrated into national legislation.

Despite relatively poor evaluation, there are a number of reasons why environmental strategies are considered particularly useful in reducing alcohol-related harm:

- Research has shown that factors within drinking environments can influence levels of alcohol-related harms and that modifying such environments can have visible results on these harms. Unlike many other behavioural health risk behaviours (e.g. smoking and poor diet), alcohol has immediate effects that impact not only on the drinker, but also on the wider community (e.g. anti-social behaviour, violence and road traffic accidents). Thus community support for environmental measures that aim to reduce alcohol-related harms may be more easily mobilised than measures targeting behaviours that impact predominantly upon individuals.

- Similarly, the immediate consequences of risky drinking and related problems impact not only on health services, but also on criminal justice services, local authorities, businesses, emergency services, and environmental health. Thus strategic support may be greater as all agencies can see the benefits to their own work in reducing alcohol-related problems.

- The impacts of environmental strategies can be more rapid and visible than those of other forms of intervention such as school-based alcohol education and alcohol treatment provision. This can again increase strategic support and attract funding from agencies that have set targets to meet.

- The alcohol environment is often highly regulated, providing opportunities to intervene through legislation.

The wide range of environmental interventions in place in the UK include those that seek to reduce access to alcohol and those that aim to modify
management and environments within both licensed premises and their surrounding areas. Whilst few of the measures implemented in the UK have been rigorously evaluated, analyses of crime and Accident and Emergency department data do show successes in reducing alcohol-related problems, particularly violence. Whilst some interventions have been shown to be effective in isolation (e.g. taxi marshalling in reducing violence around taxi ranks), in many cases the success of environmental strategies is seen through the integration of a range of different measures combined with increased enforcement.

Although environmental strategies can be effective in reducing the problems associated with high levels of alcohol consumption, there is little evidence to show such interventions work to reduce alcohol consumption at individual or community levels. Thus environmental alcohol prevention strategies are not an alternative to other forms of intervention such as appropriate taxation and motivational interviewing but should be seen as part of an integrated suite of measures available to reduce alcohol-related harms. In the UK, investment in environmental strategies now needs to be matched by investment in measures to reduce risky and problematic drinking among those already affected by alcohol-related harms and to prevent the development of such risky drinking behaviours among children and adolescents.

In virtually all European countries (regardless of taxation) alcohol consumption is likely to remain a central part of night time activities. Consequently, alcohol users, like users of other drugs, will continue to be prone to accidents, vulnerable to assault, inclined to take other risks (e.g. sexual) and at least some users will consume to excess and be inclined to violence. In countries where economic and employment interests mean interventions through taxation and legislation fall short of public health expectations, improving safety in nightlife becomes an even greater imperative. However, the opportunities and success of environmental initiatives to reduce alcohol-related harm can be limited by national legislation (e.g. price fixing locally, Section 2.1.4, or insisting on use safer drinking vessels, see Section 2.2.4). In fact opportunities for local government to control alcohol sales hours, promote sales of alcohol free drinks, limit numbers of licensed premises, raise money from alcohol retailers for transport or policing initiatives, influence and inspect bar design or to ensure that staff are appropriately trained can all be facilitated or inhibited by national legislation. In general, national legislation has protected the alcohol industry at the expense of public health and there is a real danger that locally developed environmental initiatives could also be inhibited without national support.

In many UK city and town centres, dramatic increases in licensed premise capacity were permitted without provision for additional resources to manage greater numbers of people in nightlife (e.g. better nightlife transport) or to prevent cheap drinks promotions offered in response to increased competition. Consequently, out of necessity the UK has now begun to invest in environmental prevention measures in order to tackle increasing levels of intoxication, disorder and violence experienced in rapidly expanding night time economies. Many of the environmental measures implemented in the UK
could be usefully adopted in other European nightlife areas, particularly those to promote and enforce good management, prevent underage sales and provide safety and security in wider night time environments (e.g. safe late night transport). However, for those countries with fewer alcohol problems in night time environments, a key lesson from the UK is that the development of nightlife should follow (not precede) a multi-disciplinary environmental nightlife strategy which restrains the growth of licensed premises in town and city centres to that which health, police, travel and other services can accommodate. In the long term such planning will not only help protect the health of nightlife patrons but is also likely to protect the sustainability of the nightlife economy.
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