

UPDATE ON THE HEALTH HARMS OF ALCOHOL AND LICENSING POLICY CONSULTATION

Report of the Acting Director Of Public Health

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide Board members with an update on the health harms of alcohol in Sunderland, and ensure the Members are made aware of the Statement of Licensing Policy consultation which is now open to partners until 16th August 2015, in the context of alcohol being identified as one of the Boards priorities.

2. Background

Our ambition is for Sunderland to be a vibrant city with a wide range of experiences on offer for everyone. We want the city to be a good place to do business where businesses operate responsibly; so they don't impact negatively on each other, or on residents and visitors. We want to create the conditions for economic growth while achieving the best possible health and wellbeing for Sunderland.

Although alcohol has been part of our culture for centuries and many people use it sensibly, its misuse has become a serious and worsening public health problem in the England. Alcohol not only poses a threat to the health and wellbeing of the drinker, but also to family, friends, communities and wider society.

Alcohol is a major cause of ill health; it causes and contributes to numerous health problems including obesity, liver and kidney disease; cancers of the mouth and throat, liver, laryngeal, colon and breast cancer; acute and chronic pancreatitis; heart disease; high blood pressure; depression; stroke; foetal alcohol syndrome and mental health problems such as depression and alcohol dependency.

In 2013 Local Authorities assumed responsibility for Public Health. The Public Health Outcomes Framework set out the desired outcomes and included a number of indicators relating to alcohol:

- Alcohol-related admissions to hospital
- Mortality from liver disease
- Successful completion of drug treatment
- People entering prison with substance dependence issues who are previously not known to community treatment
- Take up of the NHS Health Check programme by those eligible (which included screening for alcohol misuse for the first time from 2013)

3. Key messages around alcohol harms

The harm caused by alcohol is extensive. Every year in the UK, there are thousands of deaths, hundreds of hospital admissions and over a million

violent crimes linked to drinking alcohol. This is not a problem of a small minority it is a problem that cuts across the entire population.

Sunderland residents experience significant health problems as a result of alcohol and have some of the highest rates in the country for alcohol-related hospital admissions, premature deaths and ill health caused by alcohol. The rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions among the Sunderland population is the second highest among 326 English local authority populations. These admissions comprise of those that are wholly attributable to alcohol such as alcoholic poisoning or alcoholic liver disease (1,700 people admitted in Sunderland in 2012/13), and those where a proportion of admissions can be attributed to alcohol e.g. type 2 diabetes or stroke (a further 2,700 people admitted in 2012/13). Sunderland is also significantly worse than England for admission for alcohol related alcoholic liver disease and alcohol-specific hospital stays in the under 18 age group. Sunderland's local alcohol profile for 2015 can be found in appendix 1.

The context in which we consume alcohol has changed significantly over recent years, with a rise in levels of consumption, availability and price. Since the 1950s, the average annual intake of alcohol per adult in the UK has risen from 5 litres to 9.65 litres in 2012/ 13, which has contributed to an increase in alcohol-related harms across Sunderland.

For Sunderland to achieve its potential in spite of reducing public resources in the city and we need to address issues which place a burden on the city. Alcohol impacts upon a raft of frontline services from the NHS, to the Police, to the Ambulance Service, Licensing teams and Social Services. It impacts upon the workplace, through lost productivity and absenteeism and on education, through truancy and disruption. It is estimated that the irresponsible use of alcohol costs the city around £92.49 million per year; with the greatest costs being borne by the workplace (£32 million) and our local NHS (£27 million). This does not take account the health and social consequences suffered by individuals, their families, and the wider community. Full details can be found in the Cost of Alcohol in Sunderland 2013/ 14 appendix 2.

Figure 1 Sunderland Cost Breakdown for 2013/ 14

NHS:	£27.34m
CRIME & LICENSING:	£24.21m
SOCIAL SERVICES:	£9.25m
WORKPLACE:	£32.04m
OVERALL COST⁺:	£92.49m

⁺Total cost excludes crime related healthcare costs. The crime cost used for the adjacent pie chart is £23.86m

Recorded crime has been rising slowly for the last couple of years and we are continuing to see a rise in the proportion of total crime that is related to alcohol. As the consumption of alcohol in the home increases then the impact of alcohol is more hidden. We know for example, in Sunderland in 2014/ 15 there was 6,389 domestic abuse incidents, and of these 1,457 were recorded as domestic violence crimes and of these, 50% were alcohol related.

Under current Licensing law, health is not a separate licensing objective and is only relevant where it relates to one of the existing licensing objectives which are:

- the prevention of crime and disorder;
- public safety;
- the prevention of public nuisance;
- the protection of children from harm.

Many Local Authorities use these objectives to curtail the irresponsible supply of alcohol thus reducing alcohol harm. We would recommend that over the next 5 years Sunderland City Council should introduce a sense of measures that will aim to support our vision for the City and enable these new developments to minimise the impact of alcohol on the health of local people and the demand for health services.

4. Statement on Licensing Policy

Every 5 years under the licensing act 2003, the local authority is required to update its licensing policy. The revised statement of licensing policy can be found at http://sunderland-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/chief_executives_1/street_scene/licensing_act_2003 and is open to all partners to review until 16th August 2015. This is an opportunity for Sunderland to review policies and procedures in light of best practice from elsewhere and as such, the Board is recommended to review this paper and forward any comments via letter to Sunderland City Council, Public Protection and Regulatory Services, Licensing Section, Jack Crawford House, Commercial Road, Sunderland, SR2 8QR or via e-mail to licensing@sunderland.gov.uk

5. Recommendations to Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board and their organisations are recommended to:

- Review the revised statement of licensing policy
- Forward any comments on the revised statement of licensing policy as detailed in section 4.

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