

Lifting the lockdown – we must get this right

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IoL Regions

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Foreword



Words by
Daniel Davies

To use a now repeated term, these are 'unprecedented' times. The COVID-19 pandemic has torn up the rule book on 'normal life', pressed 'pause' or in some cases 'stop' on businesses across the country, and forced a very different approach across personal and business lives in both public and private sectors, with restrictions on movement that have never been seen before.

The virus itself is horrifying. It follows no rules and there is no knowing how individuals will be affected until infection occurs. The lockdown is indeed 'unprecedented' while also necessary and crucial in doing everything possible to ensure that the rate of infection does not overwhelm our NHS leaving them unable to provide the care and support to those who need it most.

Licensing remains a crucial public service, providing critical support to businesses facing the worse existential threat in living memory. Those same businesses in a great many cases are rapidly innovating to remain viable, but also to assist in providing essential community support, including delivery services, supplies and support to key workers and the most vulnerable in our society including those with no

homes. Taxi and private hire drivers, are not themselves key workers but are also playing a key role whether through transporting key workers or innovating to provide a collection and delivery service to those in isolation, including the 1.5 million UK residents now under instruction to isolate for 12 weeks due to their individual health vulnerabilities.

Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Crime and Policing recognised the key role which local authorities are playing (and under enormous pressure) and urged a spirit of 'collaboration, communications and pragmatism' when faced with the many challenges this emergency period presents.

The Institute of Licensing has done everything possible to keep members up to date with the changes which have come through legislation, regulation and guidance, in addition to providing IoL guidance through its protocol. A huge thanks and tribute to all those who have assisted in the drafting and collaboration of the protocol, as well as everyone who has contributed authored articles covering different aspects of COVID-19 licensing issues.

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COVID-19 Licensing Issues

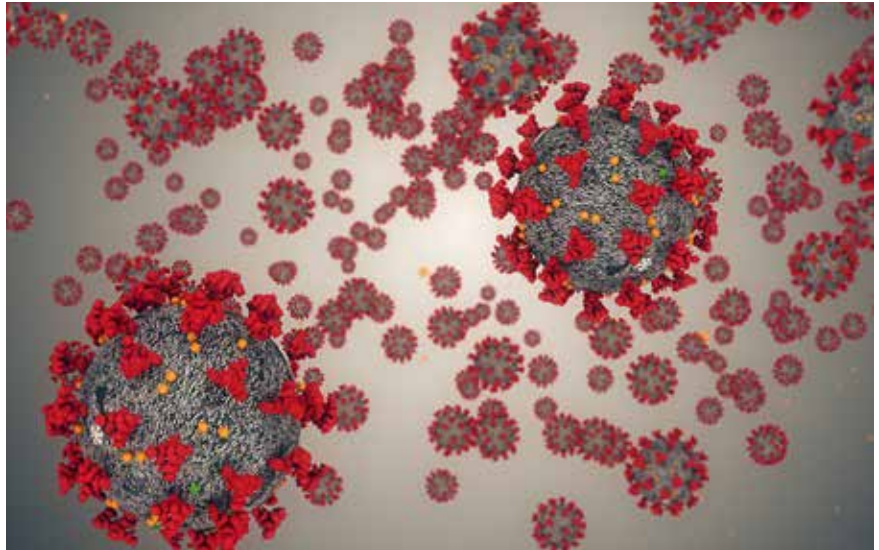


Words by Sue Nelson

On the evening of the 23rd March, Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the nation 'You must stay at home'. In the early days of 'lockdown', government advice and regulations were coming thick and fast, council offices, along with many other businesses and 'non-essential' retail premises closed to the public, office-based employees found themselves working from home wherever possible and many businesses were forced to cease trading or rapidly innovate to continue on some level if possible. In this strange new world, there are previously unseen restrictions on public movement, with exceptions for key workers, and (thankfully) some flexibility (at the time of writing) to allow essential travel and daily exercise.

The pandemic has served as a harsh reminder of the importance of our NHS and front line service workers, including many within the licensed industry, who are essentially putting themselves at risk to do their job, whether that involves saving lives or providing essential services to keep the country going. There has been a welcome and crucial surge of support and appreciation for our key workers (in particular the NHS) as the majority within communities pull together to support each other while respecting the necessary social distancing requirements.

In the meantime, we have all grappled with the logistical issues of the COVID-19 lockdown. Businesses have altered focus, sometimes radically to provide takeaway and delivery services, and even innovating to provide PPE and sanitising product. Others have rolled up their sleeves and focused their energies on provision for the homeless and vulnerable. Taxi and private hire operators facing a total downturn of normal business have played their part in transporting key



workers or collecting and delivering supplies to those that need it. Innovation and community spirit is apparent across the country, alongside the devastating impact on businesses facing closure with no means of innovating.

Councils are no different. While many council staff were perhaps set up for occasional home-based working, many were not, and certainly, there have been many challenges to overcome, with some even questioning (in the early days of lockdown) whether the licensing service should be suspended due to staff shortages resulting from illness and redeployment to other services considered 'more frontline'. The answer to that, of course, is that the licensing service must continue to run effectively, and hurdles presented by the lockdown must be overcome.

On 2 April 2020, the IoL published its 'Protocol for Licence Applications & Hearings under the Licensing Act 2003 during the COVID-19 pandemic'. This is a living document, designed to assist licensing authorities in complying with their obligations and duties under the Licensing Act 2003 during this emergency period. Many of the

suggestions within the Protocol will be equally relevant to other areas of licensing, particularly in relation to the need to conduct hearings remotely, and the ability of licensing authorities to take a considered approach to compliance and enforcement given the very real challenges presented by the virus. In this fast-moving and ever-changing emergency situation, the Protocol will be kept updated, and at the time of writing, Update 4 has been published reflecting the recent regulations for Wales. The protocol includes an annex detailing mechanics and procedures for remote hearings (using examples provided by IoL members).

The pandemic has forced us all to do things differently during lockdown – some of these innovations will be invaluable even afterwards. In the meantime, we will continue to do everything possible to support our members with timely and considered news updates, authored articles and remote delivery of training and events where viable.

NLW National Licensing Week

15 - 19 June 2020



Licensing is Everywhere.

Even in times of national emergency and social restrictions. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of licensing and licensed businesses across the country.

There have been some outstanding examples of business innovation and selfless support to the most vulnerable in our society, including taxis transporting patients and key workers on essential trips or delivering supplies to the especially vulnerable or those in self isolation, and pubs providing take-away / delivery services and providing crucial assistance to homeless people.

Regulators have had to innovate quickly and overcome the hurdles presented by the lockdown, while ensuring that the licensing function continue to operate smoothly and effectively.

Online communications through video conferencing have become prevalent in everyday lives, both for daily communications with family and friends, and for business meetings, public hearings (including the courts).



The IoL will use National Licensing Week 2020 to highlight some of these achievements.

We welcome participation from others via social media, so join in a tell us what you have been involved in.

@licensingweek
#licensingiseverywhere
#NLW2020

Responding To Coronavirus – A Hospitality Industry Perspective



Words by Daniel Davies, Chairman of the Institute of Licensing and CEO of Rockpoint Leisure

The hospitality industry is uniquely impacted by novel coronavirus because its existence is predicated on the very opposite of social distancing. Consider this dictionary definition:

Hospitality

Noun

The friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.

So, when the lock-down is lifted and pubs, clubs, bars, restaurants, and hotels reopen it is important for the Government to recognise that if restrictions are placed on their operation that negates that definition then they might as well stay closed. For example, if customers are required to stay two metres apart in these premises, or form an orderly queue so that only one person at a time can get served at the bar, or operate on a 'seated customers only' basis it will be impossible for licensed premises to operate in a commercially viable way.

And then there is the tendency for some to find in this crisis a vindication of everything they have previously believed. For example, there has been a fall in alcohol-related crime and disorder since the night-time economy was closed. I expect there will be those from the temperance lobby, and perhaps from law enforcement, who will predict a crime and disorder tsunami once the night-time economy reopens and will call for the reintroduction of a much more restrictive licensing system. We should not allow the temporary restriction of our freedoms – which is entirely justified in an emergency – to become permanent, just to vindicate the prejudices of those who think a better future can be fashioned if we go back to the past.

The Government is faced with a very difficult dilemma: how to manage a trade-off between public health and economic health that will command broad public support. But a trade-off must surely be found. If it is going to take at least a year for an effective vaccine to be tried, tested, manufactured and distributed across the whole population, we need to recognise the immutable economic fact: we can't stay locked down with a third of the economy closed for a year.

Over the coming weeks, our government needs to draw lessons from how other countries are emerging from lock-down. A six-week programme that begins with opening shops and relaxing restrictions on freedom of movement could commence once the hospitalisation and mortality data show a persistent downward trend. Other parts of the economy can then begin to reopen – schools, offices and factories could be next. The government has already indicated that hospitality venues like pubs and bars will be the last to reopen. Our industry obviously wants to get back to serving its customers as quickly as possible. But only when it is safe enough to do so and when its reopening is sustainable. Hospitality operators need to know that once open they will not suddenly be closed again. That kind of start-stop approach would be a disaster for our industry.



So, the Government needs to develop a two-pronged strategy: a programme for reopening the economy once there is evidence that we've 'flattened the curve'; and a communications strategy that explains to the public that there may be a second, and hopefully smaller, wave of infections once we begin to loosen the lock-down, but that not to do so will cost lives too. Mental ill-health, deaths of cancer patients and victims of stroke, increases in suicide rates are all consequences of keeping people in lock-down for too long. So, maintaining or lifting restrictions is not a zero-sum game.

Once the doors of the pub, bar or restaurant reopen we should not expect people to come flooding in and things instantly to return to normal. People will make judgements - not about whether going out to socialise is safe, but whether it is safe enough for them. Probably young people will be the first to venture out. People with families to support and older people will make more cautious judgements and are less likely to return to our premises in the immediate aftermath of this crisis.

As we emerge from lock-down the hospitality industry will need ongoing and tapered support from the Government. I support the efforts being made by trade bodies like UK Hospitality and the British Beer and Pub Association to provide further support when it comes to furloughed staff, claims for business interruption insurance, grants, rent relief and loans. We will also need to see an extended rent moratorium if we are to avoid serious damage to the sector when rents are next due. Government support needs to be carried over after the worst of this crisis has passed. If it is abruptly switched off, then a lot of the good work that has been done will be undone. Business support needs to be boosted to make sure every business that needs it can access it. Scrapping thresholds for grants and support with rents will keep businesses alive and people in jobs. This is an unprecedented crisis and the Government needs to ensure there isn't a gap between their strategy of support for our industry and the delivery of that support.

We take safety seriously

We believe that technology can bring added accountability and transparency to every trip. Validated accounts, driver photos, and a two-way rating system all help build trust. Every trip is tracked by GPS, meaning you can share a live map of your journey with loved ones. And every driver is licensed by a local council and has been through an enhanced background check.

Driver hours

A well-rested driver is a safe driver. That's why we limit the number of hours a driver partner can be on the road without taking a break. After ten hours 'on trip,' the app now prompts drivers to take 6 hours away from the app. So the next time they log on, they're refreshed and alert.

Driver licence details

Every driver partner in the UK has been through the licensing process with their local authority, including a background check. Your driver's name, photo, rating, and the registration/model of the car will appear in the app. And now their private hire licence number and licensing authority details will be included as well.

'Share my ETA'

You can travel with extra peace of mind by sharing your trip details with friends and loved ones. They'll be able to follow your trip with a map of your route and the expected time of arrival—letting them know when you've arrived at your destination safely.

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Approaches to Licensing during COVID-19



Words by Clare Eames

In a matter of a few short weeks, the hospitality trade has been turned on its head following the Government's directive for licensed premises to close on 23rd March. Hospitality represents 10% of UK employment and 5% of GDP [source: UK Hospitality], and to use the recent words of UK Hospitality and over 200 CEOs in a letter to the Prime Minister "The shockwaves of a sector-wide failure would be socially, culturally and economically devastating".

The impact though, ultimately, is not just on the hospitality trade; the effects are being felt by all of those who work in associated roles, which includes all professional advisors to the hospitality trade and local authorities and police licensing teams. If ever there was a time for partnership working with honesty and transparency it is now. While some businesses have found ways to trade with take-away and delivery options, the majority are closed.

It cannot be a surprise to anyone reading this that many businesses will struggle to make payments for annual fees or renewals of pavement licences and, at the same time, that perhaps only the brave will continue to make licensing applications.

However, what is clear from the response of the IoL, comments made by Kit Malthouse MP in his letter to Chairs of Licensing Committees on 8th April 2020, and the LGA advice is that supporting business is a central theme. With references to open and honest engagement, flexibility progressing licence applications and considering the issue of deferment of fees or refunds there is no doubt we all have to adapt to this new landscape.

Over recent days and weeks, we have encountered many helpful and pragmatic authorities who are rapidly adjusting how they do business in order to support the trade. It has been reassuring to see many authorities, for example, allow renewal of pavement licences to be submitted, but for payment of the fees to be deferred. Others are embracing remote hearings and deferring other fees, recognising the serious cash flow issues for operators while the doors are mostly closed. Phone calls and emails are being answered quickly and helpfully and an open mind to minor variations, as opposed to full, varies.

Equally though, there are still some examples where a less pragmatic and supportive approach is being taken. There has been what can be described as perhaps overzealous enforcement where it has turned out that premises are indeed closed but have a live-in licensee; or suspecting that people outside closed premises means it is open, rather than that members of the public just happened to be standing outside a closed business. We have seen some refusals to process applications – including shadow licences and very quick action to suspend premises licence for non-payment of the annual fee. Hopefully, these are teething problems as we all adjust.

Whilst we are still in the midst of lockdown, and the future for all of us is uncertain, the one thing that we can be certain of is that a team effort across everyone involved in the trade will ensure that all of us come out as unscathed as possible.

Events - What's Online?

We are delighted to offer the following training courses which will be delivered remotely via video conferencing/webinar. Book Online or email the team via events@instituteoflicensing.org
<https://www.instituteoflicensing.org/events>



Scrap Metal

22nd May 2020

This course is a timely refresher for delegates involved in the day today administration of licences for scrap metal dealers licences regulated under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013.



Acupuncture, Tattoo & Skin Piercing

**11th June 2020
8th July 2020**

Tattoo's, cosmetic piercing, electrolysis, acupuncture, micro blading and micro pigmentation all pose a potential risk of infection and allergic reaction.

To keep up to speed with the new trends, caselaw and methodology, the Institute of Licensing has updated this course to consolidate best practice and include new advice and explain the current trends found in many salons and parlours across England and Wales.



Taxi Licensing - Basic

in association with Button Training Ltd

**11th June 2020
9th July 2020**

This one day course provides an outline of the hackney carriage and private hire licensing regime and the role and functions of the licensing authority. The course will provide an excellent overview for new practitioners or as a refresher for established practitioners. The course will be suitable for licensing authority officers, councillors, police officers and taxi licensees.

The course will take account of current Best Practice Guidance and any revisions to it, as well as emerging statutory Guidance (s 177), official reports, current and recent consultations and all relevant case law.

Contact the IoL team

Email: events@instituteoflicensing.org
or telephone us on 0151 6506940

Summer Training Conference - 17th June 2020 To be delivered online via virtual conferencing



Members Fee: £70.00 +VAT
Non-Members Fee: £70.00 +VAT

The aim of the day is to provide a valuable learning and discussion opportunity for licensing practitioners to increase understanding and to promote discussion in relation to the subject areas and the impact of forthcoming changes and recent case law. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact sponsorship@instituteoflicensing.org for more details.

The Summer Training Conference will be an excellent opportunity to hear from our expert speakers about licensing in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Confirmed speakers include:

Daniel Davies, IoL Chairman and CEO of Rockpoint Leisure

Michael Kill, NTIA

Sarah Clover, Kings Chambers

James Button, James Button & Co

Gary Grant, Francis Taylor Building

Other speakers and the full programme details will be confirmed shortly.

With thanks to our sponsors



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To keep up to date on our training and events, including our online courses, subscribe to receive our regular updates (licensing flashes). The subscription link can be found on the Home page of our website. or you can email the team via training@instituteoflicensing.org

Look out for announcements soon in relation to webinar conferences, further online courses and events.

We are very happy to receive requests from members and customers for additional training courses. If you have a course request or suggestion, please let us know.

Lockdown in Guildford



Mike Smith, Licensing Manager at Guildford reflects on his experiences in Guildford's licensing service during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

If the sheer rate of change over recent weeks could be measured by the content of Guildford Council's taxi newsletter sent out to our local taxi trade, the unprecedented changes are apparent. Looking back on February's newsletter, (sent towards the end of the month), there was minimal mention of Coronavirus, advising the trade to keep an eye on the gov.uk sites and reiterating that the risk to the general population was 'low' (as was the position at the time).

Fast forward to March and the country was in 'lockdown'. Covid19 featured predominantly in the March newsletter, updating the trade on the government assistance available and advising them on how to make applications in view of the closure of council offices and staff working remotely (with ensuing issues around plates and badges being produced and the testing station closures).

Back in February, it was perhaps inconceivable how rapidly and remarkably the county would have to change and for potentially a considerable time. This crisis has made life incredibly difficult for very many people, including many in the licensed trade who have either been forced to close or who are in situations where they are not closed but where there is

very little work at the moment meaning their livelihoods are under threat.

It is only when one considers how dire it is for some that those of us who are working safely at home can appreciate how lucky we are and perhaps consider how licensing can aim to support the many businesses under its remit where possible.

That said, the council in its role as the Licensing Authority still has a primary duty to maintain public safety in respect of many of the licensing regimes under its remit and must still act within the law. The emergency Coronavirus legislation (at the time of writing) has not changed licensing legislation, with the exception of MOT testing for vehicles, meaning councils must still process licence applications which includes carrying out the necessary checks to ensure that taxi drivers are 'fit and proper', licensed vehicles are safe and roadworthy, and that others provide services lawfully and safely in line with the licensing objectives and with a valid licence.

Guildford Council received its first coronavirus related complaint in mid-March, at the beginning of the social distancing 'advice' (prior to lockdown) when a member of the taxi trade complained about the lack of work on the taxi rank.

From then on, it was all downhill, as many licence holders faced difficult times and wanted to know what the licensing authority can / will do to help. Unsurprisingly, many enquiries relate to the payment of licensing and application fees. Similar questions from neighbouring local authorities have also been raised as many officers seek consistent answers as to what they could be doing.

As events were cancelled, as were several Temporary Event Notices and we received a number of requests to refund the fee. As fees must accompany applications (which the authority has dealt with) and legislation does not make provision for refunds, these were not refunded.

Then on 20 March pubs were required to close and a small number of requests for suspension of fees were made. Under the Licensing Act, the Licensing Act 2003 (Fees) Regulations 2005 clearly set out in regulation 5 that the annual fee is payable by the licence holder and "shall become due and payable each year on the anniversary of the date of the grant of the premises licence". Furthermore, under section 55a of the 2003 Act itself, the local authority must suspend the premises licence (there is similar wording for a club certificate in section 92A) if the

annual fee is not paid. There are similar provisions under the Gambling Act 2005 at section 193 where the local authority is advised that it shall revoke a premises licence if the licence holder does not pay the annual fee.

Under other legislation including 'Taxi' licensing and animal activity licensing, fees are paid for the grant of the licence, as such, a considerable element of the work will be done to grant the licence, whilst the authority still has administrative duties which are still being completed, albeit remotely, in the duration of the licence.

For licensing authorities used to making difficult decisions which potentially impact on a person's livelihood, how to respond to these challenges are just part of the normal business role we have in regulating and supporting businesses.

But what measures are there which can support licence holders?

Firstly, with respect of finance, the government has announced a considerable range of financial assistance and it is probably helpful to make sure the licensed trade knows about this, so communication to the trade is vital. Additionally, maintaining a presence to answer questions and offer advice is probably invaluable for licence holders who do not know which way to turn.

Whilst financial assistance from the government has been given to businesses, there have not been any specific announcements relating to licence fees, so unless the authority wishes to subsidise these from central funds then these will still need to be paid. However, where fees are set locally, these should be calculated using time recording data and if less time is spent on a particular function this year, then this should be reflected in next year's fees.

Secondly, 'business as usual' must be maintained. Licence holders will still wish to apply to renew, vary etc licences and as legislation to this

effect has not changed, then this still must continue. For some regimes, for example, the taxi trade where a number of checks are required to establish safety these may be difficult where for example, doctors' surgeries will not undertake a medical or garages are not open to undertake vehicle testing. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures and there are a number of alternatives, for example, limited time self-declarations can be used, on the assumption that the routine examination will take place again when the time permits.

Technology can have a role to play where for example applicants can show copies of documents via video link, or whole hearings can take place. In the Coronavirus Act, under section 78 the government legislated for authorities to hold hearings remotely. In Guildford, in the early couple of weeks of 'lockdown', we held a licensing sub-committee hearing for an outdoor event using a video link application with members of the committee, legal advisor, committee clerk, applicant and objector all dialling in remotely. The hearing worked well with everyone able to make their case and answer any questions as they would normally do, with no party coming away from the process upset that they did not have a fair hearing.

In terms of practical measures, for the taxi trade, we have also been pragmatic in terms of offering declarations as a short term, temporary replacement for checks such as medicals and vehicle tests. We have also allowed the taxi trade to delay a renewal application for a period of up to 3 months. This means that licences can expire (obviously if a licence has expired it cannot be used again until it is renewed) and provided we would have granted the renewal application when the licence expired, we will then accept a late renewal application, for a period of up to three months. This will mean that the trade are not 'forced' to renew if they do not intend to operate or cannot operate due to self-isolation during the period where movement is restricted.

It has not escaped local authorities that they are in part, along with the



police, responsible for ensuring business closures are complied with. With the police likely to be busy with ensuring 'social distancing' in addition to their usual role at a time when they may find resources stretched, officers of local authorities, which may include licensing officers may find themselves too 'on the front line' of ensuring that the public are protected and businesses are complying. This particularly important for a fair-trading environment, when the majority of businesses will have heeded the law and be suffering as a result.

Although the continuation of 'business as usual' will not seem like 'assistance' to many members of the trade, as legislation has not changed it must continue. Authorities who do not renew licences meaning holders cannot work, or do not deal with applications to vary licences so that operators cannot diversify are likely to be challenged.

One final point is only to praise and thank the millions of NHS and front line key workers, many of whom are in the licensed industry, for continuing to work at risk to their own health to save lives and maintain essential services for everyone – we are forever in your debt.

SORRY
WE ARE
CLOSED

COVID-19

Licensing in the wake of the 'Coronavirus, Business Closure' regulations



Words by Tom Cockcroft & Stephen Garbett

An overview of the pre-existing regime in place under the 2003 Licensing Act

The 2003 Licensing Act radically changed the premises licensing regime in England and Wales making Local Authorities responsible for the issuing, enforcement and review of premises licences. Local Authorities must formulate licensing policy in their local area, balancing the competing interests of commercial entities with the social interests of residents and giving effect to the four licensing objectives set

out in the act, namely:

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

A premises-holder undertaking licensable activity under this regime is required to have a premises licence in place as well as a designated premises supervisor ('the DPS') who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the premises operated in accordance with the licence and licensing objectives.

Under the enforcement and review function, the Local Authority has the power and duty to review the licence of any premises where the licence-holder is deemed to be breaching the specific conditions of the licence or otherwise not adhering to any of the four licensing objectives cited above. A licence review can be initiated by the Local Authority of its own accord or at the request of a responsible authority or interested party. A 'responsible authority' can include a wide range of bodies, including the police, environmental health, fire service, or child protection authorities. An 'interested

person' can be any member of the public with a relevant concern about the activity of licensed premises.

Following licensing reviews, a variety of sanctions are available to the local authority, including:

- modified licensing conditions, such as reducing the operating time of the licensable activity;
- the removal of a licensing activity, such as the right to sell alcohol;
- the removal of the DPS;
- suspending the licence for up to three months; or
- revoking the licence.

Premises licence reviews will also be triggered where premises have been instructed to close for a breach of licensing law.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Business Closure) (England) Regulations 2020

Under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Business Closure) (England) Regulations 2020 ['the 2020 regulations'], regulation 2(1), all premises listed in Part 1 of the schedule are prohibited from selling food or drink for consumption on the premises from the close of business on 23 March 2020. This prohibition was initially intended to last for 3 weeks but is subject to review by the Secretary of State every 28 days and whenever otherwise necessary. The 2020 regulations are set to expire after six months from the date they came into force.

Under regulation 3(1), any person contravening regulation 2(1), commits an offence. This is punishable on summary

conviction with a fine (regulation 3(3)). Both the business and any responsible officer of the business are liable to prosecution under the regulations.

Under regulation 4, a person designated by the Secretary of State may take any action necessary to enforce the closure of premises or the restriction of any prohibited activity. All police constables and any officers appointed by local authorities are authorised to undertake this action and to bring proceedings for any offence contrary to the regulations.

The licensing impact of any breach of the 2020 regulations

A conviction under the 2020 regulations is clearly a serious matter, but the long-term impact on any individual or business could undoubtedly be far worse. Any enforced closure of a licensed premises triggers a review of the premises licence with the potential for further sanctions. An enforced closure or conviction under the 2020 regulations would in all likelihood lead to a review of the premises licence and the actions of the DPS on the grounds of the public health and prevention of crime and disorder licensing objectives.

Following a licensing review, any of the sanctions cited above would be available to the Local Authority. While any sanction would need to be proportionate to and commensurate with the severity of the breach, it is likely to have a long-term commercial impact on the business. It may also have adverse effects on business owners looking to renew or change their

licensing conditions or take on new premises and on the DPS if they are removed and seeking future employment elsewhere, not to mention the impact any proceedings and/or sanctions could have on public opinion.

The 2020 regulations have yet to be tested in the courts, so there is no indication as to what action Local Authorities may take if any offence is proven. However, it is important to note that even if legal proceedings are not pursued, such as where premises are simply forced to close or cease any prohibited activity, these premises and officers still expose themselves to the possibility of a licence review. It is not a prerequisite of the review process that a criminal offence has been committed, and as mentioned above, any interested party can trigger a review, including a concerned member of the public. The consequences could prove dramatic and long-lasting.



May 2019 saw the launch of the Safer Sounds Partnership

- a new partnership aimed at making London's events safer.



Words by Phillippe Chiarella

Background

A review of the Metropolitan Police Form 696 in early 2019 concluded that businesses operating in the events and music industry wanted a new approach - a partnership with venues, promoters, artists, local authorities and the Metropolitan Police working together to drive up standards and increase safety in venues and at events across the capital.

Safer Business Network (SBN), an umbrella organisation for a number of London Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRP), was approached by the Metropolitan Police (MPS) and Greater London Authority (GLA) to adapt its local model

for this purpose. SBN successfully operates across four London Boroughs – Westminster, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark - with the aim of reducing business crime and the impact it has on local areas.

As a result, the Safer Sounds Partnership was born - the vision was to become a working partnership spanning all London Boroughs to create safer events for all, by promoting consistency of operations, sharing best practice and facilitating information sharing whilst supporting venues, promoters and artists.

“

'The training offered by Safer Business Network is expertly delivered and highly beneficial to any hospitality venue.'

'The delivery style is relaxed and informal yet helps to get the essential points across in a manner that promotes safety, responsibility and accountability.'

'I would highly recommend these courses to any hospitality venue considering them. They will go a long way in safeguarding against any potential incidents.'

”

Ryan Hatrick, Security Manager, Treehouse Hotel

How does Safer Sounds work?

The key theme that runs through all of the work that Safer Sounds does is Strong Partnership. Safer Sounds brings together venues, promoters and artists with police, councils, the GLA, the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and the Night Czar. The work of the group is overseen by a Steering Group which is made up of a range of industry representatives.

Sharing Intelligence is key to increasing safety in venues and at events. Safer Sounds, via its mailing list and twitter feed, disseminates a range of intelligence – from information on dangerous drugs in circulation to images and videos of concealed weapons. These intelligence alerts are circulated amongst all partners, providing important information to businesses and authorities alike. Safer Sounds are currently exploring a secure intelligence platform which will allow it to securely share images of offenders targeting venues and events.

In consultation with industry partners, it was agreed that venues needed more support to plan, deliver and evaluate events. With this in mind, the Event Operations Plan was developed. A document designed to support venues throughout the process of running events. Key to this is the risk assessment of events – it is important that organisers appreciate that there is risk at all events, but in order to satisfy relevant authorities and make events safer, they must conduct their own due diligence and mitigate identified risk.

A key achievement of the Safer Sounds Partnership since its launch in May 2019 has been its engaging and cost-effective Training Programme which aims to increase skills within the workforce, which in turn makes events safer. The objective is to empower businesses to build the capability to respond to a range of eventualities that may affect them, whilst also building confidence in the way that venues operate.

Safer Sounds training is developed in consultation with the industry and is bespoke as a result of consultation with businesses prior to training to ensure that training delivery is tailored to reflect the company's policy and procedures.

The training programme was launched in September 2019 and already over 1,000 people have been trained in a range of subjects including vulnerability, crime scene preservation,

age verification and conflict resolution techniques and use of force, through partners including the Hippodrome Casino, Novus Leisure, Capital Arches Group and a McDonald's franchisee.

“London's live music scene makes a huge contribution to our capital after dark. I'm delighted that the Safer Sounds Partnership enables venues and promoters to work together with police and councils to help London's music scene thrive.”

Amy Lamé, Night Czar to the Mayor of London

An inaugural conference in October 2019, 'Stay Safe in London', brought together a range of venues, promoters and security professionals with the police and local authorities. The conference explored in detail key themes such as vulnerability, counter-terrorism and issues facing the security industry. This model was so successful that in March 2020 Safer Sounds coordinated 'Stay Safe on the River' - the first-ever conference aimed at people organising and operating events on the River Thames.

Recent training projects also include a partnership with Waltham Forest Council that focuses on safety and vulnerability on the high street. Safer Sounds has also developed and delivered its first training programme with a security company, Professional Security - where core security teams for Boxpark Croydon and Wembley, were upskilled and refreshed on key security issues.

“Safer Business Network is proud to oversee the Safer Sounds Partnership, which signifies a shift to a more partnership focused approach to licensing across London. It gives businesses access to a wealth of knowledge, best practice and intelligence from a range of operators and promoters and has the potential to become a nationwide initiative.”

Rita King, Interim CEO, Safer Business Network

Going forward, Safer Sounds will be working with the Association for Independent Promoters to produce a Promoter Checklist to assist promoters in planning, delivering and evaluating events. Plans for 2020 include a specific workstream with LGBTQ+ venues in London to support them to operate safer events and deal with the issues which face the LGBTQ+ community. A security conference is planned in partnership with the SIA in 2020, and an event looking at the issues that affect LGBTQ+ venues within communities.

The Safer Sounds Partnership is currently supporting venues during the COVID-19 health crisis. Providing a range of information, including how to access government support and maintaining security during closures.

As we build our capacity going forward, we will also be offering our services outside of London as we continue to work with the industry and build partnerships with police forces and local authorities across the UK.



UKVI-approved tests for visa applications

Trinity has once again been appointed by the Home Office to deliver Secure English Language Tests (SELTs) in the UK.

We're looking forward to expanding our test centre network and to building upon our high standards of customer service for people who need to demonstrate knowledge of language to the UKVI for the purpose of settling, working or studying in the UK.

- ▶ We are the UK's leading provider of SELT speaking and listening tests
- ▶ Trinity has a proven track record of providing Home Office-approved secure English language testing services in the UK since 2011
- ▶ Trinity GESE speaking and listening and ISE reading, writing, speaking and listening SELTs are available at Trinity SELT Centres across the UK

See what test takers typically say about their Trinity SELT experience on social media:



" Staff were very professional – explained everything. Makes you feel calm and welcomed. Thank you! "

Elina, Facebook 2.10.19

" 100% positive experience. What amazing staff! Thank you! "

Henriett, Facebook 3.10.19

" I am very happy and grateful for their dedication, time, consideration, professionalism and humanity! "

Valentina, Facebook 29.10.19

Find out more about Trinity SELTs and about becoming a Trinity Listed SELT Course Provider at trinitycollege.com/SELT

“WHERE’S MUM?”

From the 6th April 2020, anyone looking to buy or adopt a puppy or kitten under six months, must either deal directly with the breeder or with an Animal Rescue/Rehoming Centre.

#LucysLaw



Thank you for reading!



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