



## **POLICE LICENSING REPORT 2025**

Sir/Madam,

In response to your request, the Devon and Cornwall Police Alcohol Licensing Department can provide you with the following details regarding our activities in Plymouth over the last Twelve months.

- 43 applications to grant Premises Licence and negotiated appropriate conditions with 25.
- 63 applications to transfer premises licenses.
- 8 variations of Premises Licences – and negotiated appropriate conditions with 4.
- 28 minor variations were received, 1 was objected too.
- 0 new club premises certificates
- 158 variations of DPS.
- 265 Temporary Event Notices.
- 80 Late Temporary Event Notices.
- 1 Application for Review to Licensing Sub Committee.

In addition to the above, during the reporting period Plymouth's police licensing officers have made 515 visits to licensed premises, 110 of those relate to an incident where further intervention or clarification was needed during this reporting period

*for information, across Devon and Cornwall we process circa. 9,000 Temporary Event Notices per year.*

All Police Licensing Officers throughout Devon and Cornwall are now accredited with a ProQual Level 4 Certificate for Police Alcohol Licensing Officers. This qualification has been created on behalf of and in consultation with the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) portfolio for alcohol licensing and harm reduction. This follows the designation by the NPCC of the Police Alcohol Licensing Officer role as being a professional policing role. The qualification will form part of an annual continuous professional development programme that underpins a licensing officer's competence and currency.



The Cumulative Impact Area has been used as an effective tool to ensure new licences are appropriately controlled. The re-gentrification of the city centre along with its change of use has required a more considered approach to the use of vacant units and in turn support the regeneration.

Also, we still need to have a control on the number of licensed venues retailing high-strength alcohol which directly contributes to the number of street drinking issues. The use of the CIA allows the authorities to insist on new applications to include measures to mitigate the risk of street drinking thereby minimising the impact of related anti-social behaviour. We have found that new businesses opening in these areas rarely need further visits once open as the standard of application is high.

Police have, continued to support the hospitality trade with the seizing of drugs at their venues.

In conjunction with Best Bar None and Plymouth Pubwatch, we have created a policy for those premises that do not need a drug safe with a clear stepped process for having drugs collected from the venue. This policy protects those venues where a safe is not appropriate and removes these substances from venues in a safe, approved manner.

We can submit the drugs we collect for testing should it look out of the ordinary. This has enabled trends to be observed, such as an increase in ketamine and identifying new strains of drugs. We are also able to message those venues and let them know the results. Predominantly though, we are picking up cocaine and ketamine, with ketamine being commonly found drug in the safes.

Police licensing has developed a tried and tested method in the collection of drugs along with sharing of information. In this reporting period, 630 items have been confiscated by Evening Nighttime Economy staff. This work feeds into building the intelligence picture around what type of drugs are circulating in the nighttime economy.

Ongoing Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement training continues to be delivered in conjunction with Best Bar None which includes the current picture around drink spiking and Project Nighteye. This is open to venues and door staff (delivered online and in person) and is very well received. The training is delivered at key points of the year to maximise coverage.

Police Licensing, alongside Local Authority and Best Bar None have undertaken training in the areas of vulnerability, Ask for Angela, and anti-drink spiking. This is even more important than ever due to the high turnover of staff in the ENTE venues. This training was well received and is beneficial to making the ENTE staff more effective in protecting the public during their work and this year Police Licensing did a drug awareness session which was well attended by venues.



Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls is a priority both nationally and for the force. Devon and Cornwall Police is a large and diverse force geographically and demographically, there is no “one size fits all” response to policing the Evening Nighttime Economy. ENTE patrols offer an opportunity to prevent and detect VAWG related offences and tackle harmful sexualised behaviour in the pre-offending stage.

Project Nighteye is the Police response involving Perpetrator Pursuit. To create safe spaces, the Police want Devon and Cornwall to be a hostile environment for perpetrators. The ENTE in Plymouth is, compared against national standards a safe place to be, there is a lot of good work that goes on through Community Safety Partnerships. We have found an increase in intelligence submissions from door staff who are a key part of the ENTE. This is partly due to a new app (SentrySIS) that was introduced this year.

Within Project Nighteye there is a facility for our partners to submit intelligence direct to the police, there have been some excellent submissions from venue staff and door staff, that have led to interventions e.g. spotting suspicious vehicles or individuals where predatory behaviour has been seen, allowing police to intervene where necessary.

Devon and Cornwall Police in conjunction with Best Bar None attended the student fresher's fayres and handed out information regarding staying safe on a night out. This was delivered as a joint approach this year using Devon and Cornwall police website and joint messaging.

Police licensing supported Devon and Cornwall Police “Lift Legend” campaign, and venues have been encouraged via Best Bar None and the Pubwatch scheme to sign up for this campaign which aims to encourage venues to promote free soft drinks to a designated driver.

There has been a bigger uptake in participation during this reporting period and work continues to explore different approaches that we as police can engage effectively with the hospitality trade.

Significant developments during this report period included the national concern over needle stick spiking incidents throughout the country. Our anti drink spiking policy is well established, having begun in Plymouth in 2019. Devon and Cornwall Police, led by the Alcohol Licensing Department adopted the same working practice and operation throughout the whole force area. Plymouth follows the national trend of less than 4.5% of positive samples.



As Devon and Cornwall Police had the scheme in place, the force licensing teams ran training and supplied written guidance along with testing kits to the larger city venues to test drinks and to advise businesses on our policy to ensure potential needle stick victims got the support and care they required.

The training of venues enabled businesses to show their clientele that they are working hard to support the reduction in spiking and that they want to support and keep customers safe.

The fact Devon and Cornwall Police could test reported victims' urine immediately and reassure people they had not been spiked or targeted was a great success and reduce the fear of crime. Nationally a lot of work is going into how to effectively reassure victims of crime that action will be taken. This year we have worked with Derriford Hospital to offer a testing service. This has been well received, and work continues in this area.

Plymouth's Alcohol Harm Reduction Group continues to meet regularly. This group has some of the major partners and stakeholders included such as Pubwatch, Best Bar None, and Street Pastors, it is centered around the licensing industry. The group can identify trends and take a collaborative approach to think of ways to reduce harm. This group feeds back into the Safer Communities Plymouth group for a wider inclusion of city-wide partners.

Police licensing has dealt with several premises where concerns have been raised and will always try to rectify and through intervention at an early stage. The insistence of a formulated action plan from the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) and Premises Licence Holders means that changes have been made to the venues, which have removed those concerns. This has on occasion required specific visits to premises by the team and required the DPS and/or area managers to attend Charles Cross Police station to discuss those issues.

We continue to be actively engaged and effectively working in partnership with Plymouth Pubwatch and Best Bar None. Through the different groups meeting on a regular basis, our partnership working with other authorities and agencies has strengthened and widened, making the partnership work much stronger.

Our excellent partnership has been clearly demonstrated through the retaining of the prestigious Purple Flag award for the city and highlighted as best practice. This identified Plymouth as having a safe, vibrant and diverse ENTE and is a great benefit to the city for marketing purposes, demonstrating that Plymouth is a safe city.



We regularly engage with door supervisor companies and have a well-established routine where we visit and check Security Industry Authority (SIA) door staff. No enforcement by the SIA has been needed this year. It is very important that regular checks are completed to ensure compliance. We have also offered conflict management awareness to security companies.

We continue to regularly review CCTV evidence of interactions with door staff where there has been a complaint made. Most of these incidents show good conflict management and resolution, often in difficult circumstances. We have seen a drop in incidents where inappropriate force has been used and has required intervention by the SIA. Having a good partnership with the SIA has led to an effective working arrangement whereby an early intervention can be used where the involved door supervisor can be educated and receive additional training, with support from their relevant companies.

There are times when this method is not appropriate and we have seen 5 SIA licences revoked during this report timeline, which sends a message that the high standards set by the SIA are always expected. There has been good support and engagement from the door supervisor companies in reviewing these actions.

Throughout the year we have seen a reduction in “glassing” incidents. 2 premises were issued letters, which did not need to be escalated further. Adopting a stepped approach is the accepted way of dealing with these incidents.

As part of our tools for dealing with premises we can utilise a Section 19 Notice of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001. These are used, where appropriate, when it is found that a premises may not be operating in accordance with the premises licence and once issued gives that premises time to rectify what they were not doing. During this report time 2 notices were issued, and the 2 premises engaged with the process and rectified the issues within the time frame given.

The low number of cases brought before the licensing committee demonstrates the pro-active work which the Police and Local Authority Licensing departments undertake in order to work with venues and licensees in creating a safer and more professional licensing and hospitality community. Guidance and advice were offered through many meetings and visits to venues which resulted in compliance, development of good working practices and higher standards being achieved. There will be occasions when we do have to apply for a review as no other enforcement action can be taken.

The NHS continue to support the safe bus, and it is now a permanent fixture in Plymouth’s ENTE. This includes 6 medical staff and an ambulance, as well as the provision for SIA security and taxi marshals for the nearby taxi rank. This is being supported by a variety of organisations including Victim support, Best Bar None, Street Pastors, and Plymouth Night Patrol team.



The safe bus is a multi-agency supported resource; it offers a safe haven for users of the ENTE. And has had some very positive interventions.

The Safe Bus provision has prevented over 80% of people treated there for minor injuries and welfare issues from needing further medical help, reducing the demand on the ambulance service, emergency departments, and police.

There has been extremely positive feedback from all partners and there has been an increased awareness of the service with customers using Plymouth's ENTE. The bus is in place every Saturday night as well as an extra 15 'red' nights throughout the year including Halloween, Fridays in December, Freshers' Week, and other large events in the city.

The Barbican also benefits from taxi marshals who are seen as a vital tool to help with the dispersal from this area, they have been equipped for CSAS powers to assist them in their role.

This year has also seen the introduction of a Night Bus run by Stagecoach and funded by the Police Crime Commissioner, Plymouth Waterfront Bid, Cornwall Council, Devon County Council and Cornwall Air Ambulance. The service has run every Saturday since the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025, using the existing routes of the Number 1 service to Tavistock and the Number 2 service to Saltash, both departing from Royal Parade. We are pleased to report that the service will run again throughout 2026. For the reporting period the buses have carried 2,942 passengers. Over this period there has been an early indication that across the force drink driving figures are down.

Police licensing and Best Bar None have worked effectively with the Plymouth Night Patrol, a society set up within Plymouth University which provides medical first responder and welfare patrols on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights during term time. Again, over 80% of people dealt with needed no ongoing support. With the excellent continued work of the street pastors, Plymouth has an extra medical and welfare provision for three nights of the week. The Night Patrol has continued to grow and has a current team of over 70 members.

I submit this report for your information and consideration.

David Adams-Leach

Plymouth Licensing Team  
Devon and Cornwall Police