



Home Office

Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003

April 2018

1. Introduction

The Licensing Act 2003

1.1 The Licensing Act 2003 (referred to in this Guidance as the 2003 Act), its explanatory notes and any statutory instruments made under it may be viewed online at www.legislation.gov.uk. The statutory instruments include regulations setting out the content and format of application forms and notices. The Home Office has responsibility for the 2003 Act. However, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for regulated entertainment, for which there is provision in Schedule 1 to the 2003 Act (see Chapter 16).

Licensing objectives and aims

1.2 The legislation provides a clear focus on the promotion of four statutory objectives which must be addressed when licensing functions are undertaken.

1.3 The licensing objectives are:

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

1.4 Each objective is of equal importance. There are no other statutory licensing objectives, so that the promotion of the four objectives is a paramount consideration at all times.

1.5 However, the legislation also supports a number of other key aims and purposes. These are vitally important and should be principal aims for everyone involved in licensing work. They include:

- protecting the public and local residents from crime, anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance caused by irresponsible licensed premises;
- giving the police and licensing authorities the powers they need to effectively manage and police the night-time economy and take action against those premises that are causing problems;
- recognising the important role which pubs and other licensed premises play in our local communities by minimising the regulatory burden on business, encouraging innovation and supporting responsible premises;
- providing a regulatory framework for alcohol which reflects the needs of local communities and empowers local authorities to make and enforce decisions about the most appropriate licensing strategies for their local area; and
- encouraging greater community involvement in licensing decisions and giving local residents the opportunity to have their say regarding licensing decisions that may affect them.

The guidance

- 1.6 Section 182 of the 2003 Act provides that the Secretary of State must issue and, from time to time, may revise guidance to licensing authorities on the discharge of their functions under the 2003 Act. This revised guidance takes effect as soon as it is published. Where a licence application was made prior to the publication of the revised guidance, it should be processed in accordance with the guidance in effect at the time at which the application was made; the revised guidance does not apply retrospectively. However, all applications received by the licensing authority on or after the date the revised guidance was published should be processed in accordance with the revised guidance.

Purpose

- 1.7 This Guidance is provided to licensing authorities in relation to the carrying out of their functions under the 2003 Act. It also provides information to magistrates' courts hearing appeals against licensing decisions and has been made widely available for the benefit of those who run licensed premises, their legal advisers and the general public. It is a key medium for promoting best practice, ensuring consistent application of licensing powers across England and Wales and for promoting fairness, equal treatment and proportionality.
- 1.8 The police remain key enforcers of licensing law. This Guidance does not bind police officers who, within the parameters of their force orders and the law, remain operationally independent. However, this Guidance is provided to support and assist police officers in interpreting and implementing the 2003 Act in the promotion of the four licensing objectives.

Legal status

- 1.9 Section 4 of the 2003 Act provides that, in carrying out its functions, a licensing authority must 'have regard to' guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182. This Guidance is therefore binding on all licensing authorities to that extent. However, this Guidance cannot anticipate every possible scenario or set of circumstances that may arise and, as long as licensing authorities have properly understood this Guidance, they may depart from it if they have good reason to do so and can provide full reasons. Departure from this Guidance could give rise to an appeal or judicial review, and the reasons given will then be a key consideration for the courts when considering the lawfulness and merits of any decision taken.
- 1.10 Nothing in this Guidance should be taken as indicating that any requirement of licensing law or any other law may be overridden (including the obligations placed on any public authorities under human rights legislation). This Guidance does not in any way replace the statutory provisions of the 2003 Act or add to its scope and licensing authorities should note that interpretation of the 2003 Act is a matter for the courts. Licensing authorities and others using this Guidance must take their own professional and legal advice about its implementation.

Licensing policies

- 1.11 Section 5 of the 2003 Act requires a licensing authority to determine and publish a statement of its licensing policy at least once every five years. The policy must be published before it carries out any licensing functions under the 2003 Act.
- 1.12 However, determining and publishing a statement of its policy is a licensing function and as such the authority must have regard to this Guidance when taking this step. A licensing authority may depart from its own policy if the individual circumstances of any case merit such a decision in the interests of the promotion of the licensing objectives. But once again, it is important that it should be able to give full reasons for departing from its published statement of licensing policy. Where revisions to this Guidance are issued by the Secretary of State, there may be a period of time when the licensing policy statement is inconsistent with the Guidance (for example, during any consultation by the licensing authority). In these circumstances, the licensing authority should have regard, and give appropriate weight, to this Guidance and its own existing licensing policy statement.

Licensable activities

- 1.13 For the purposes of the 2003 Act, the following are licensable activities:
- The sale by retail of alcohol;
 - The supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of, a member of the club;
 - The provision of regulated entertainment; and
 - The provision of late night refreshment.

Further explanation of these terms is provided in Chapter 3.

Authorisations or permissions

- 1.14 The 2003 Act provides for four different types of authorisation or permission, as follows:
- Premises licence – to use premises for licensable activities.
 - Club premises certificate – to allow a qualifying club to engage in qualifying club activities as set out in Section 1 of the Act.
 - Temporary event notice – to carry out licensable activities at a temporary event.
 - Personal licence – to sell or authorise the sale of alcohol from premises in respect of which there is a premises licence.

General principles

- 1.15 If an application for a premises licence or club premises certificate has been made lawfully and there have been no representations from responsible authorities or other persons, the licensing authority must grant the application, subject only to conditions that are consistent with the operating schedule and relevant mandatory conditions. It is recommended that licence applicants contact responsible authorities when preparing their operating schedules.

Licence conditions – general principles

1.16 Conditions on a premises licence or club premises certificate are important in setting the parameters within which premises can lawfully operate. The use of wording such as “must”, “shall” and “will” is encouraged. Licence conditions:

- must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives;
- must be precise and enforceable;
- must be unambiguous and clear in what they intend to achieve;
- should not duplicate other statutory requirements or other duties or responsibilities placed on the employer by other legislation;
- must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises and events concerned;
- should not be standardised and may be unlawful when it cannot be demonstrated that they are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case;
- should not replicate offences set out in the 2003 Act or other legislation;
- should be proportionate, justifiable and be capable of being met;
- cannot seek to manage the behaviour of customers once they are beyond the direct management of the licence holder and their staff, but may impact on the behaviour of customers in the immediate vicinity of the premises or as they enter or leave; and
- should be written in a prescriptive format.

Each application on its own merits

1.17 Each application must be considered on its own merits and in accordance with the licensing authority’s statement of licensing policy; for example, if the application falls within the scope of a cumulative impact policy. Conditions attached to licences and certificates must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises and events concerned. This is essential to avoid the imposition of disproportionate and overly burdensome conditions on premises where there is no need for such conditions. Standardised conditions should be avoided and indeed may be unlawful where they cannot be shown to be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case.

Additional guidance

1.18 From time to time, the Home Office may issue additional supporting guidance to licensing authorities and other persons on the Gov.uk website. This supporting guidance is good practice guidance and should be viewed as indicative and subject to change. Such supporting guidance will broadly reflect but will not be part of the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the 2003 Act. Licensing authorities may wish to refer to, but are under no statutory duty to have regard to such supporting guidance issued by the Home Office.

Other relevant legislation

1.19 While licence conditions should not duplicate other statutory provisions, licensing authorities and licensees should be mindful of requirements and responsibilities placed on them by other legislation. Legislation which may be relevant includes:

- The Gambling Act 2005
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Noise Act 1996
- The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Immigration Act 2016
- Regulators' Code under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006

2. The licensing objectives

Crime and disorder

- 2.1 Licensing authorities should look to the police as the main source of advice on crime and disorder. They should also seek to involve the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
- 2.2 In the exercise of their functions, licensing authorities should seek to co-operate with the Security Industry Authority ("SIA") as far as possible and consider adding relevant conditions to licences where appropriate. The SIA also plays an important role in preventing crime and disorder by ensuring that door supervisors are properly licensed and, in partnership with police and other agencies, that security companies are not being used as fronts for serious and organised criminal activity. This may include making specific enquiries or visiting premises through intelligence led operations in conjunction with the police, local authorities and other partner agencies. Similarly, the provision of requirements for door supervision may be appropriate to ensure that people who are drunk, drug dealers or people carrying firearms do not enter the premises and ensuring that the police are kept informed.
- 2.3 Conditions should be targeted on deterrence and preventing crime and disorder including the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises (see paragraph 10.10). For example, where there is good reason to suppose that disorder may take place, the presence of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras both inside and immediately outside the premises can actively deter disorder, nuisance, anti-social behaviour and crime generally. Some licence holders may wish to have cameras on their premises for the prevention of crime directed against the business itself, its staff, or its customers. But any condition may require a broader approach, and it may be appropriate to ensure that the precise location of cameras is set out on plans to ensure that certain areas are properly covered and there is no subsequent dispute over the terms of the condition.
- 2.4 The inclusion of radio links and ring-round phone systems should be considered an appropriate condition for public houses, bars and nightclubs operating in city and town centre leisure areas with a high density of licensed premises. These systems allow managers of licensed premises to communicate instantly with the police and facilitate a rapid response to any disorder which may be endangering the customers and staff on the premises.
- 2.5 Conditions relating to the management competency of designated premises supervisors should not normally be attached to premises licences. It will normally be the responsibility of the premises licence holder as an employer, and not the licensing authority, to ensure that the managers appointed at the premises are competent and appropriately trained. The designated premises supervisor is the key person who will usually be responsible for the day to day management of the premises by the premises licence holder, including the prevention of disorder. A condition of this kind may only be justified as appropriate in rare circumstances where it can be demonstrated that, in the circumstances associated with particular premises, poor management competency could give rise to issues of crime and disorder and public safety.

- 2.6 The prevention of crime includes the prevention of immigration crime including the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises. Licensing authorities should work with Home Office Immigration Enforcement, as well as the police, in respect of these matters. Licence conditions that are considered appropriate for the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises might include requiring a premises licence holder to undertake right to work checks on all staff employed at the licensed premises or requiring that a copy of any document checked as part of a right to work check are retained at the licensed premises.

Public safety

- 2.7 Licence holders have a responsibility to ensure the safety of those using their premises, as a part of their duties under the 2003 Act. This concerns the safety of people using the relevant premises rather than public health which is addressed in other legislation. Physical safety includes the prevention of accidents and injuries and other immediate harms that can result from alcohol consumption such as unconsciousness or alcohol poisoning. Conditions relating to public safety may also promote the crime and disorder objective as noted above. There will of course be occasions when a public safety condition could incidentally benefit a person's health more generally, but it should not be the purpose of the condition as this would be outside the licensing authority's powers (be ultra vires) under the 2003 Act. Conditions should not be imposed on a premises licence or club premises certificate which relate to cleanliness or hygiene.
- 2.8 A number of matters should be considered in relation to public safety. These may include:
- Fire safety;
 - Ensuring appropriate access for emergency services such as ambulances;
 - Good communication with local authorities and emergency services, for example communications networks with the police and signing up for local incident alerts (see paragraph 2.4 above);
 - Ensuring the presence of trained first aiders on the premises and appropriate first aid kits;
 - Ensuring the safety of people when leaving the premises (for example, through the provision of information on late-night transportation);
 - Ensuring appropriate and frequent waste disposal, particularly of glass bottles;
 - Ensuring appropriate limits on the maximum capacity of the premises (see paragraphs 2.12-2.13, and Chapter 10; and
 - Considering the use of CCTV in and around the premises (as noted in paragraph 2.3 above, this may also assist with promoting the crime and disorder objective).
- 2.9 The measures that are appropriate to promote public safety will vary between premises and the matters listed above may not apply in all cases. As set out in Chapter 8 (8.38-8.46), applicants should consider when making their application which steps it is appropriate to take to promote the public safety objective and demonstrate how they achieve that.

Ensuring safe departure of those using the premises

- 2.10 Licence holders should make provision to ensure that premises users safely leave their premises. Measures that may assist include:
- Providing information on the premises of local taxi companies who can provide safe transportation home; and
 - Ensuring adequate lighting outside the premises, particularly on paths leading to and from the premises and in car parks.

Maintenance and repair

- 2.11 Where there is a requirement in other legislation for premises open to the public or for employers to possess certificates attesting to the safety or satisfactory nature of certain equipment or fixtures on the premises, it would be inappropriate for a licensing condition to require possession of such a certificate. However, it would be permissible to require as a condition of a licence or certificate, if appropriate, checks on this equipment to be conducted at specified intervals and for evidence of these checks to be retained by the premises licence holder or club provided this does not duplicate or gold-plate a requirement in other legislation. Similarly, it would be permissible for licensing authorities, if they receive relevant representations from responsible authorities or any other persons, to attach conditions which require equipment of particular standards to be maintained on the premises. Responsible authorities – such as health and safety authorities – should therefore make their expectations clear in this respect to enable prospective licence holders or clubs to prepare effective operating schedules and club operating schedules.

Safe capacities

- 2.12 “Safe capacities” should only be imposed where appropriate for the promotion of public safety or the prevention of disorder on the relevant premises. For example, if a capacity has been imposed through other legislation, it would be inappropriate to reproduce it in a premises licence. Indeed, it would also be wrong to lay down conditions which conflict with other legal requirements. However, if no safe capacity has been imposed through other legislation, a responsible authority may consider it appropriate for a new capacity to be attached to the premises which would apply at any material time when the licensable activities are taking place and make representations to that effect. For example, in certain circumstances, capacity limits may be appropriate in preventing disorder, as overcrowded venues can increase the risks of crowds becoming frustrated and hostile.
- 2.13 The permitted capacity is a limit on the number of persons who may be on the premises at any time, following a recommendation by the relevant fire and rescue authority under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. For any application for a premises licence or club premises certificate for premises without an existing permitted capacity where the applicant wishes to take advantage of the special provisions set out in section 177 of the 2003 Act¹, the applicant should conduct their own risk assessment as to the appropriate capacity of the premises. They should send their recommendation to the fire and rescue authority which will consider it and decide what the “permitted capacity” of

¹ S 177 of the 2003 Act now only applies to performances of dance.

those premises should be.

- 2.14 Public safety may include the safety of performers appearing at any premises, but does not extend to the prevention of injury from participation in a boxing or wrestling entertainment.

Public nuisance

- 2.15 The 2003 Act enables licensing authorities and responsible authorities, through representations, to consider what constitutes public nuisance and what is appropriate to prevent it in terms of conditions attached to specific premises licences and club premises certificates. It is therefore important that in considering the promotion of this licensing objective, licensing authorities and responsible authorities focus on the effect of the licensable activities at the specific premises on persons living and working (including those carrying on business) in the area around the premises which may be disproportionate and unreasonable. The issues will mainly concern noise nuisance, light pollution, noxious smells and litter.
- 2.16 Public nuisance is given a statutory meaning in many pieces of legislation. It is however not narrowly defined in the 2003 Act and retains its broad common law meaning. It may include in appropriate circumstances the reduction of the living and working amenity and environment of other persons living and working in the area of the licensed premises. Public nuisance may also arise as a result of the adverse effects of artificial light, dust, odour and insects or where its effect is prejudicial to health.
- 2.17 Conditions relating to noise nuisance will usually concern steps appropriate to control the levels of noise emanating from premises. This might be achieved by a simple measure such as ensuring that doors and windows are kept closed after a particular time, or persons are not permitted in garden areas of the premises after a certain time. More sophisticated measures like the installation of acoustic curtains or rubber speaker mounts to mitigate sound escape from the premises may be appropriate. However, conditions in relation to live or recorded music may not be enforceable in circumstances where the entertainment activity itself is not licensable (see chapter 16). Any conditions appropriate to promote the prevention of public nuisance should be tailored to the type, nature and characteristics of the specific premises and its licensable activities. Licensing authorities should avoid inappropriate or disproportionate measures that could deter events that are valuable to the community, such as live music. Noise limiters, for example, are expensive to purchase and install and are likely to be a considerable burden for smaller venues.
- 2.18 As with all conditions, those relating to noise nuisance may not be appropriate in certain circumstances where provisions in other legislation adequately protect those living in the area of the premises. But as stated earlier in this Guidance, the approach of licensing authorities and responsible authorities should be one of prevention and when their powers are engaged, licensing authorities should be aware of the fact that other legislation may not adequately cover concerns raised in relevant representations and additional conditions may be appropriate.
- 2.19 Where applications have given rise to representations, any appropriate conditions should normally focus on the most sensitive periods. For example, the most sensitive period for people being disturbed by unreasonably loud music is at night and into the

early morning when residents in adjacent properties may be attempting to go to sleep or are sleeping. This is why there is still a need for a licence for performances of live music between 11 pm and 8 am. In certain circumstances, conditions relating to noise emanating from the premises may also be appropriate to address any disturbance anticipated as customers enter and leave.

- 2.20 Measures to control light pollution will also require careful thought. Bright lighting outside premises which is considered appropriate to prevent crime and disorder may itself give rise to light pollution for some neighbours. Applicants, licensing authorities and responsible authorities will need to balance these issues.
- 2.21 Beyond the immediate area surrounding the premises, these are matters for the personal responsibility of individuals under the law. An individual who engages in anti-social behaviour is accountable in their own right. However, it would be perfectly reasonable for a licensing authority to impose a condition, following relevant representations, that requires the licence holder or club to place signs at the exits from the building encouraging patrons to be quiet until they leave the area, or that, if they wish to smoke, to do so at designated places on the premises instead of outside, and to respect the rights of people living nearby to a peaceful night.

Protection of children from harm

- 2.22 The protection of children from harm includes the protection of children from moral, psychological and physical harm. This includes not only protecting children from the harms associated directly with alcohol consumption but also wider harms such as exposure to strong language and sexual expletives (for example, in the context of exposure to certain films or adult entertainment). Licensing authorities must also consider the need to protect children from sexual exploitation when undertaking licensing functions.
- 2.23 The Government believes that it is completely unacceptable to sell alcohol to children. Conditions relating to the access of children where alcohol is sold and which are appropriate to protect them from harm should be carefully considered. Moreover, conditions restricting the access of children to premises should be strongly considered in circumstances where:
- adult entertainment is provided;
 - a member or members of the current management have been convicted for serving alcohol to minors or with a reputation for allowing underage drinking (other than in the context of the exemption in the 2003 Act relating to 16 and 17 year olds consuming beer, wine and cider when accompanied by an adult during a table meal);
 - it is known that unaccompanied children have been allowed access;
 - there is a known association with drug taking or dealing; or
 - in some cases, the premises are used exclusively or primarily for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises.
- 2.24 It is also possible that activities, such as adult entertainment, may take place at certain times on premises but not at other times. For example, premises may operate as a café bar during the day providing meals for families but also provide entertainment with a sexual content after 8.00pm. It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of what amounts to entertainment or services of an adult or sexual nature. Applicants, responsible

authorities and licensing authorities will need to consider this point carefully. This would broadly include topless bar staff, striptease, lap-, table- or pole-dancing, performances involving feigned violence or horrific incidents, feigned or actual sexual acts or fetishism, or entertainment involving strong and offensive language.

- 2.25 Applicants must be clear in their operating schedules about the activities and times at which the events would take place to help determine when it is not appropriate for children to enter the premises. Consideration should also be given to the proximity of premises to schools and youth clubs so that applicants take appropriate steps to ensure that advertising relating to their premises, or relating to events at their premises, is not displayed at a time when children are likely to be near the premises.
- 2.26 Licensing authorities and responsible authorities should expect applicants, when preparing an operating schedule or club operating schedule, to set out the steps to be taken to protect children from harm when on the premises.
- 2.27 Conditions, where they are appropriate, should reflect the licensable activities taking place on the premises. In addition to the mandatory condition regarding age verification, other conditions relating to the protection of children from harm can include:
- restrictions on the hours when children may be present;
 - restrictions or exclusions on the presence of children under certain ages when particular specified activities are taking place;
 - restrictions on the parts of the premises to which children may have access;
 - age restrictions (below 18);
 - restrictions or exclusions when certain activities are taking place;
 - requirements for an accompanying adult (including for example, a combination of requirements which provide that children under a particular age must be accompanied by an adult); and
 - full exclusion of people under 18 from the premises when any licensable activities are taking place.
- 2.28 Please see also Chapter 10 for details about the Licensing Act 2003 (Mandatory Licensing Conditions) Order 2010.
- 2.29 Licensing authorities should give considerable weight to representations about child protection matters. In addition to the responsible authority whose functions relate directly to child protection, the Director of Public Health may also have access to relevant evidence to inform such representations. These representations may include, amongst other things, the use of health data about the harms that alcohol can cause to underage drinkers. Where a responsible authority, or other person, presents evidence to the licensing authority linking specific premises with harms to children (such as ambulance data or emergency department attendances by persons under 18 years old with alcohol-related illnesses or injuries) this evidence should be considered, and the licensing authority should also consider what action is appropriate to ensure this licensing objective is effectively enforced. In relation to applications for the grant of a licence in areas where evidence is presented on high levels of alcohol-related harms in persons aged under 18, it is recommended that the licensing authority considers what conditions may be appropriate to ensure that this objective is promoted effectively.
- 2.30 The 2003 Act provides that, where a premises licence or club premises certificate

authorises the exhibition of a film, it must include a condition requiring the admission of children to films to be restricted in accordance with recommendations given either by a body designated under section 4 of the Video Recordings Act 1984 specified in the licence (the British Board of Film Classification is currently the only body which has been so designated) or by the licensing authority itself. Further details are given in Chapter 10.

- 2.31 Theatres may present a range of diverse activities and entertainment including, for example, variety shows incorporating adult entertainment. It is appropriate in these cases for a licensing authority to consider restricting the admission of children in such circumstances. Entertainments may also be presented at theatres specifically for children. It will be appropriate to consider whether a condition should be attached to a premises licence or club premises certificate which requires the presence of a sufficient number of adult staff on the premises to ensure the wellbeing of the children during any emergency.

Offences relating to the sale and supply of alcohol to children

- 2.32 Licensing authorities are expected to maintain close contact with the police, young offenders' teams and trading standards officers (who can carry out test purchases under section 154 of the 2003 Act) about the extent of unlawful sales and consumption of alcohol by minors and to be involved in the development of any strategies to control or prevent these unlawful activities and to pursue prosecutions. Licensing authorities, alongside the police, are prosecuting authorities for the purposes of these offences, except for the offences under section 147A (persistently selling alcohol to children). Where, as a matter of policy, warnings are given to retailers prior to any decision to prosecute in respect of an offence, it is important that each of the enforcement arms should be aware of the warnings each of them has given.

Table of relevant offences under the 2003 Act

Section	Offence	Prosecuting Authority
Section 145	Unaccompanied children prohibited from certain premises	Police and/or Licensing Authority
Section 146	Sale of alcohol to children	Police, Licensing Authority and/or Local Weights and Measures Authority
Section 147	Allowing the sale of alcohol to children	Police, Licensing Authority and/or Local Weights and Measures Authority
Section 147A	Persistently selling alcohol to children	Police and/or Local Weights and Measures Authority
Section 149	Purchase of alcohol by or on behalf of children	Police and/or Licensing Authority
Section 150	Consumption of alcohol by children	Police and/or Licensing Authority
Section 151	Delivering alcohol to children	Police and/or Licensing Authority
Section 152	Sending a child to obtain alcohol	Police and/or Licensing Authority
Section 153	Prohibition of unsupervised sales by children	Police and/or Licensing Authority

3. Licensable activities

Summary

- 3.1 A premises licence authorises the use of any premises (see Chapter 5) for licensable activities. Licensable activities are defined in section 1 of the 2003 Act, and a fuller description of certain activities is set out in Schedules 1 and 2 to the 2003 Act.
- 3.2 The licensable activities are:
- the sale by retail of alcohol;
 - the supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of, a member of the club;
 - the provision of regulated entertainment; and
 - the provision of late night refreshment.

Wholesale of alcohol

- 3.3 The sale of alcohol to the general public is licensable under the 2003 Act in accordance with the definition of “sale by retail” in section 192 of the 2003 Act. This section makes it clear that, to be excluded from the meaning of “sale by retail”, a sale must be:
- made from premises owned by the person making the sale, or occupied under a lease with security of tenure; and
 - for consumption off the premises.
- 3.4 In addition, to be excluded, the sales must be sales which are made to:
- a trader for the purpose of his trade;
 - to a club for the purposes of that club;
 - to a holder of a premises licence or a personal licence for the purpose of making sales under a premises licence; or
 - a premises user who has given a temporary event notice, for the purpose of making sales authorised by that notice.
- 3.5 If an employee were buying alcohol as an “agent” for their employer and for the purposes of their employer’s trade (i.e. selling alcohol), this could be treated as a sale to a trader. If, however, an employee were buying for the employee’s own consumption, this would be a retail sale, and would require a licence.
- 3.6 The same considerations apply in the case of caterers who supply alcohol to their customers. Where a caterer purchases alcohol and then sells this alcohol to its customer, an authorisation will be required at the location where the retail sale of the alcohol is made (likely to be the caterer’s own premises). If the customer was proposing to sell the alcohol under an authorisation, it is the customer who would need an authorisation under the 2003 Act. In this case, the exemption under the 2003 Act may apply to the sale made by the caterer.
- 3.7 From 1 April 2017, businesses which sell alcohol (for example, retailers of alcohol and trade buyers) will need to ensure that the UK wholesalers that they buy alcohol from have been approved by HMRC under the Alcohol Wholesaler Registration Scheme (AWRS). They will need to check their wholesalers Unique Registration Number (URN)

9. Determining applications

General

- 9.1 When a licensing authority receives an application for a new premises licence or an application to vary an existing premises licence, it must determine whether the application has been made in accordance with section 17 of the 2003 Act, and in accordance with regulations made under sections 17(3) to (6), 34, 42, 54 and 55 of the 2003 Act. It must similarly determine applications for the grant of club premises certificates made in accordance with section 71 of the 2003 Act, and in accordance with regulations made under sections 71(4) to (7), 84, 91 and 92 of the 2003 Act. This means that the licensing authority must consider among other things whether the application has been properly advertised in accordance with those regulations.

Where no representations are made

- 9.2 A hearing is not required where an application has been properly made and no responsible authority or other person has made a relevant representation or where representations are made and subsequently withdrawn. In these cases, the licensing authority must grant the application in the terms sought, subject only to conditions which are consistent with the operating schedule and relevant mandatory conditions under the 2003 Act. This should be undertaken as a simple administrative process by the licensing authority's officials who should replicate the proposals contained in the operating schedule to promote the licensing objectives in the form of clear and enforceable licence conditions. Licensing authorities should not hold hearings for uncontested applications, for example in situations where representations have been made and conditions have subsequently been agreed.

Where representations are made

- 9.3 Where a representation concerning the licensing objectives is made by a responsible authority about a proposed operating schedule and it is relevant (see paragraphs 9.4 to 9.10 below), the licensing authority's discretion will be engaged. It will also be engaged if another person makes relevant representations to the licensing authority, which are also not frivolous or vexatious (see paragraphs 9.4 to 9.10 below). Relevant representations can be made in opposition to, or in support of, an application and can be made by any individual, body or business that has grounds to do so.

Relevant, vexatious and frivolous representations

- 9.4 A representation is "relevant" if it relates to the likely effect of the grant of the licence on the promotion of at least one of the licensing objectives. For example, a representation from a local businessperson about the commercial damage caused by competition from new licensed premises would not be relevant. On the other hand, a representation by a businessperson that nuisance caused by new premises would deter customers from entering the local area, and the steps proposed by the applicant to prevent that nuisance were inadequate, would be relevant. In other words, representations should relate to the impact of licensable activities carried on from premises on the objectives. For representations in relation to variations to be relevant, they should be confined to

the subject matter of the variation. There is no requirement for a responsible authority or other person to produce a recorded history of problems at premises to support their representations, and in fact this would not be possible for new premises.

- 9.5 It is for the licensing authority to determine whether a representation (other than a representation from responsible authority) is frivolous or vexatious on the basis of what might ordinarily be considered to be vexatious or frivolous. A representation may be considered to be vexatious if it appears to be intended to cause aggravation or annoyance, whether to a competitor or other person, without reasonable cause or justification. Vexatious circumstances may arise because of disputes between rival businesses and local knowledge will therefore be invaluable in considering such matters. Licensing authorities can consider the main effect of the representation, and whether any inconvenience or expense caused by it could reasonably be considered to be proportionate.
- 9.6 Frivolous representations would be essentially categorised by a lack of seriousness. Frivolous representations would concern issues which, at most, are minor and in relation to which no remedial steps would be warranted or proportionate.
- 9.7 Any person who is aggrieved by a rejection of their representations on either of these grounds may lodge a complaint through the local authority's corporate complaints procedure. A person may also challenge the authority's decision by way of judicial review.
- 9.8 Licensing authorities should not take decisions about whether representations are frivolous, vexatious or relevant to the licensing objectives on the basis of any political judgement. This may be difficult for councillors who receive complaints from residents within their own wards. If consideration is not to be delegated, contrary to the recommendation in this Guidance, an assessment should be prepared by officials for consideration by the sub-committee before any decision is taken that necessitates a hearing. Any councillor who considers that their own interests are such that they are unable to consider the matter independently should disqualify themselves.
- 9.9 It is recommended that, in borderline cases, the benefit of the doubt about any aspect of a representation should be given to the person making that representation. The subsequent hearing would then provide an opportunity for the person or body making the representation to amplify and clarify it.
- 9.10 Licensing authorities should consider providing advice on their websites about how any person can make representations to them.

The role of responsible authorities

- 9.11 Responsible authorities under the 2003 Act are automatically notified of all new applications. While all responsible authorities may make representations regarding applications for licences and club premises certificates and full variation applications, it is the responsibility of each responsible authority to determine when they have appropriate grounds to do so.

9.12 Each responsible authority will be an expert in their respective field, and in some cases it is likely that a particular responsible authority will be the licensing authority's main source of advice in relation to a particular licensing objective. For example, the police have a key role in managing the night-time economy and should have good working relationships with those operating in their local area⁵. The police should usually therefore be the licensing authority's main source of advice on matters relating to the promotion of the crime and disorder licensing objective. However, any responsible authority under the 2003 Act may make representations with regard to any of the licensing objectives if they have evidence to support such representations. Licensing authorities must therefore consider all relevant representations from responsible authorities carefully, even where the reason for a particular responsible authority's interest or expertise in the promotion of a particular objective may not be immediately apparent. However, it remains incumbent on all responsible authorities to ensure that their representations can withstand the scrutiny to which they would be subject at a hearing.

Licensing authorities acting as responsible authorities

- 9.13 Licensing authorities are included in the list of responsible authorities. A similar framework exists in the Gambling Act 2005. The 2003 Act does not require responsible authorities to make representations about applications for the grant of premises licences or to take any other steps in respect of different licensing processes. It is, therefore, for the licensing authority to determine when it considers it appropriate to act in its capacity as a responsible authority; the licensing authority should make this decision in accordance with its duties under section 4 of the 2003 Act.
- 9.14 Licensing authorities are not expected to act as responsible authorities on behalf of other parties (for example, local residents, local councillors or community groups) although there are occasions where the authority may decide to do so. Such parties can make relevant representations to the licensing authority in their own right, and it is reasonable for the licensing authority to expect them to make representations themselves where they are reasonably able to do so. However, if these parties have failed to take action and the licensing authority is aware of relevant grounds to make a representation, it may choose to act in its capacity as responsible authority.
- 9.15 It is also reasonable for licensing authorities to expect that other responsible authorities should intervene where the basis for the intervention falls within the remit of that other responsible authority. For example, the police should make representations where the representations are based on concerns about crime and disorder. Likewise, it is reasonable to expect the local authority exercising environmental health functions to make representations where there are concerns about noise nuisance. Each responsible authority has equal standing under the 2003 Act and may act independently without waiting for representations from any other responsible authority.
- 9.16 The 2003 Act enables licensing authorities to act as responsible authorities as a means of early intervention; they may do so where they consider it appropriate without having to wait for representations from other responsible authorities. For example, the licensing

⁵ Police and Crime Commissioners are expected to have a central role working in partnership with local authorities, enforcement bodies and other local partners to decide on what action is needed to tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder in their areas. However, the Chief Officer of Police remains the named responsible authority under the 2003 Act.

authority may (in a case where it has applied a cumulative impact policy) consider that granting a new licence application will add to the cumulative impact of licensed premises in its area and therefore decide to make representations to that effect, without waiting for any other person to do so.

- 9.17 In cases where a licensing authority is also acting as responsible authority in relation to the same process, it is important to achieve a separation of responsibilities within the authority to ensure procedural fairness and eliminate conflicts of interest. In such cases licensing determinations will be made by the licensing committee or sub committee comprising elected members of the authority (although they are advised by a licensing officer). Therefore, a separation is achieved by allocating distinct functions (i.e. those of licensing authority and responsible authority) to different officials within the authority.
- 9.18 In these cases, licensing authorities should allocate the different responsibilities to different licensing officers or other officers within the local authority to ensure a proper separation of responsibilities. The officer advising the licensing committee (i.e. the authority acting in its capacity as the licensing authority) must be a different person from the officer who is acting for the responsible authority. The officer acting for the responsible authority should not be involved in the licensing decision process and should not discuss the merits of the case with those involved in making the determination by the licensing authority. For example, discussion should not take place between the officer acting as responsible authority and the officer handling the licence application regarding the merits of the case. Communication between these officers in relation to the case should remain professional and consistent with communication with other responsible authorities. Representations, subject to limited exceptions, must be made in writing. It is for the licensing authority to determine how the separate roles are divided to ensure an appropriate separation of responsibilities. This approach may not be appropriate for all licensing authorities and many authorities may already have processes in place to effectively achieve the same outcome.
- 9.19 Smaller licensing authorities, where such a separation of responsibilities is more difficult, may wish to involve officials from outside the licensing department to ensure a separation of responsibilities. However, these officials should still be officials employed by the authority.

Health bodies acting as responsible authorities

- 9.20 Where a local authority's Director of Public Health in England (DPH)⁶ or Local Health Board (LHB) (in Wales) exercises its functions as a responsible authority, it should have sufficient knowledge of the licensing policy and health issues to ensure it is able to fulfil those functions. If the authority wishes to make representations, the DPH or LHB will need to decide how best to gather and coordinate evidence from other bodies which exercise health functions in the area, such as emergency departments and ambulance services.
- 9.21 Health bodies may hold information which other responsible authorities do not, but which would assist a licensing authority in exercising its functions. This information may

⁶ This change was made as a result of the commencement of measures in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which amended the 2003 Act and further provision in the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

be used by the health body to make representations in its own right or to support representations by other responsible authorities, such as the police. Such representations can potentially be made on the grounds of all four licensing objectives. Perhaps the most obvious example is where drunkenness leads to accidents and injuries from violence, resulting in attendances at emergency departments and the use of ambulance services. Some of these incidents will be reported to the police, but many will not. Such information will often be relevant to the public safety and crime and disorder objectives.

- 9.22 However, health bodies are encouraged to make representations in respect of any of the four licensing objectives without necessarily seeking views from other responsible authorities where they have appropriate evidence to do so. There is also potential for health bodies to participate in the licensing process in relation to the protection of children from harm. This objective not only concerns the physical safety of children, but also their moral and psychological well being.
- 9.23 Evidence relating to under 18s alcohol-related emergency department attendance, hospital admissions and underage sales of alcohol, could potentially have implications for both the protection of children from harm and the crime and disorder objectives. Health bodies can provide evidence to lead or support representations in relation to this objective. In relation to proxy purchases, data collected by health bodies could be used to inform other responsible authorities, including the police and licensing authorities, about a prevalence of proxy purchasing in a particular area. For example, the police could use this data to tackle instances of 'shoulder tapping' (where under 18s approach adults to buy alcohol on their behalf) and to suggest measures which retailers might be able to take to ensure, as far as possible, that they are not knowingly selling alcohol to an adult who is buying on behalf of a person aged under 18. Although less obvious, health bodies may also have a role to play in the prevention of public nuisance where its effect is prejudicial to health and where they hold relevant data.
- 9.24 DPHs and LHBs will need to consider how to collect anonymised information about incidents that relate to specific premises or premises in a particular area (for example, a cumulative impact zone). Many areas have already developed procedures for local information sharing to tackle violence, which could provide useful evidence to support representations. The College of Emergency Medicine has issued guidelines for information sharing to reduce community violence which recommends that data about assault victims should be collected upon admission to emergency departments, including the date, time and location of the assault – i.e. the name of the pub, club or street where the incident occurred. Sometimes, it may be possible to link ambulance callouts or attendances at emergency departments to irresponsible practices at specific premises, such as serving alcohol to people who are intoxicated or targeting promotions involving unlimited or unspecified quantities of alcohol at particular groups.

Home Office Immigration Enforcement acting as a responsible authority

- 9.25 The Immigration Act 2016 made the Secretary of State a responsible authority in respect of premises licensed to sell alcohol or late night refreshment with effect from 6 April 2017. In effect this conveys the role of responsible authority to Home Office Immigration Enforcement who exercises the powers on the Secretary of State's behalf. When Immigration Enforcement exercises its powers as a responsible authority it will do so in respect of the prevention of crime and disorder licensing objective because it is concerned with the prevention of illegal working or immigration offences more broadly.

Disclosure of personal details of persons making representations

- 9.26 Where a notice of a hearing is given to an applicant, the licensing authority is required under the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 to provide the applicant with copies of the relevant representations that have been made.
- 9.27 In exceptional circumstances, persons making representations to the licensing authority may be reluctant to do so because of fears of intimidation or violence if their personal details, such as name and address, are divulged to the applicant.
- 9.28 Where licensing authorities consider that the person has a genuine and well-founded fear of intimidation and may be deterred from making a representation on this basis, they may wish to consider alternative approaches.
- 9.29 For instance, they could advise the persons to provide the relevant responsible authority with details of how they consider that the licensing objectives are being undermined so that the responsible authority can make representations if appropriate and justified.
- 9.30 The licensing authority may also decide to withhold some or all of the person's personal details from the applicant, giving only minimal details (such as street name or general location within a street). However, withholding such details should only be considered where the circumstances justify such action.

Hearings

- 9.31 The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 governing hearings may be found on the www.legislation.gov.uk website. If the licensing authority decides that representations are relevant, it must hold a hearing to consider them. The need for a hearing can only be avoided with the agreement of the licensing authority, where the applicant and all of the persons who made relevant representations have given notice to the authority that they consider a hearing to be unnecessary. Where this is the case and the authority agrees that a hearing is unnecessary, it must forthwith give notice to the parties that the hearing has been dispensed with. Notwithstanding those regulatory provisions, in cases where the licensing authority believes that a hearing is still necessary, it is recommended that the authority should, as soon as possible, provide the parties with reasons in writing for the need to hold the hearing. In cases where only 'positive' representations are received, without qualifications, the licensing authority should consider whether a hearing is required. To this end, it may wish to notify the persons who made representations and give them the opportunity to withdraw those representations. This would need to be done in sufficient time before the hearing to ensure that parties were not put to unnecessary inconvenience.

- 9.32 Responsible authorities should try to conclude any discussions with the applicant in good time before the hearing. The 2005 Hearings Regulations permit licensing authorities to extend a time limit provided for by those Regulations for a specified period where it considers this to be necessary in the public interest. For example, if the application is amended at the last moment, the licensing committee should consider giving other persons time to address the revised application before the hearing commences. Where the authority has extended a time limit it must forthwith give a notice to the parties involved stating the period of the extension and the reasons for it.
- 9.33 The 2005 Hearings Regulations require that representations must be withdrawn 24 hours before the first day of any hearing. If they are withdrawn after this time, the hearing must proceed and the representations may be withdrawn orally at that hearing. However, where discussions between an applicant and those making representations are taking place and it is likely that all parties are on the point of reaching agreement, the licensing authority may wish to use the power given within the hearings regulations to extend time limits, if it considers this to be in the public interest.
- 9.34 Applicants should be encouraged to contact responsible authorities and others, such as local residents, who may be affected by the application before formulating their applications so that the mediation process may begin before the statutory time limits come into effect after submission of an application. The hearing process must meet the requirements of regulations made under the 2003 Act. Where matters arise which are not covered by the regulations, licensing authorities may make arrangements as they see fit as long as they are lawful.
- 9.35 There is no requirement in the 2003 Act for responsible authorities that have made representations to attend, but it is generally good practice and assists committees in reaching more informed decisions. Where several responsible authorities within a local authority have made representations on an application, a single local authority officer may represent them at the hearing if the responsible authorities and the licensing authority agree. This local authority officer representing other responsible authorities may be a licensing officer, but only if this licensing officer is acting as a responsible authority on behalf of the licensing authority and has had no role in the licensing determination process. This is to ensure that the responsible authorities are represented by an independent officer separate from the licensing determination process.
- 9.36 As noted in paragraphs 9.13 to 9.19 above, where the licensing officer is acting as a responsible authority the relevant steps should be followed to ensure that this individual has no role in the decision making process regarding the licensing determination.
- 9.37 As a matter of practice, licensing authorities should seek to focus the hearing on the steps considered appropriate to promote the particular licensing objective or objectives that have given rise to the specific representation and avoid straying into undisputed areas. A responsible authority or other person may choose to rely on their written representation. They may not add further representations to those disclosed to the applicant prior to the hearing, but they may expand on their existing representation and should be allowed sufficient time to do so, within reasonable and practicable limits.
- 9.38 In determining the application with a view to promoting the licensing objectives in the overall interests of the local community, the licensing authority must give appropriate weight to:

- the steps that are appropriate to promote the licensing objectives;
 - the representations (including supporting information) presented by all the parties;
 - this Guidance;
 - its own statement of licensing policy.
- 9.39 The licensing authority should give its decision within five working days of the conclusion of the hearing (or immediately in certain specified cases) and provide reasons to support it. This will be important if there is an appeal by any of the parties. Notification of a decision must be accompanied by information on the right of the party to appeal. After considering all the relevant issues, the licensing authority may grant the application subject to such conditions that are consistent with the operating schedule. Any conditions imposed must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives; there is no power for the licensing authority to attach a condition that is merely aspirational. For example, conditions may not be attached which relate solely to the health of customers rather than their direct physical safety. Any conditions added to the licence must be those imposed at the hearing or those agreed when a hearing has not been necessary.
- 9.40 Alternatively, the licensing authority may refuse the application on the grounds that this is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. It may also refuse to specify a designated premises supervisor and/or only allow certain requested licensable activities. In the interests of transparency, the licensing authority should publish hearings procedures in full on its website to ensure that those involved have the most current information.
- 9.41 In the context of variations or minor variations, which may involve structural alteration to or change of use of a building, the decision of the licensing authority will not exempt an applicant from the need to apply for building control approval, planning permission or both of these where appropriate.

Determining actions that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives

- 9.42 Licensing authorities are best placed to determine what actions are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in their areas. All licensing determinations should be considered on a case-by-case basis. They should take into account any representations or objections that have been received from responsible authorities or other persons, and representations made by the applicant or premises user as the case may be.
- 9.43 The authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve.
- 9.44 Determination of whether an action or step is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives requires an assessment of what action or step would be suitable to achieve that end. While this does not therefore require a licensing authority to decide that no lesser step will achieve the aim, the authority should aim to consider the potential burden that the condition would impose on the premises licence holder (such as the financial burden due to restrictions on licensable activities) as well as the potential benefit in terms of the promotion of the licensing objectives. However, it is

imperative that the authority ensures that the factors which form the basis of its determination are limited to consideration of the promotion of the objectives and nothing outside those parameters. As with the consideration of licence variations, the licensing authority should consider wider issues such as other conditions already in place to mitigate potential negative impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives and the track record of the business. Further advice on determining what is appropriate when imposing conditions on a licence or certificate is provided in Chapter 10. The licensing authority is expected to come to its determination based on an assessment of the evidence on both the risks and benefits either for or against making the determination.

Considering cases where licensing and planning applications are made simultaneously

- 9.45 Where businesses have indicated, when applying for a licence under the 2003 Act, that they have also applied for planning permission or that they intend to do so, licensing committees and officers should consider discussion with their planning counterparts prior to determination with the aim of agreeing mutually acceptable operating hours and scheme designs.

11. Reviews

The review process

- 11.1 The proceedings set out in the 2003 Act for reviewing premises licences and club premises certificates represent a key protection for the community where problems associated with the licensing objectives occur after the grant or variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate.
- 11.2 At any stage, following the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate, a responsible authority, or any other person, may ask the licensing authority to review the licence or certificate because of a matter arising at the premises in connection with any of the four licensing objectives.
- 11.3 An application for review may be made electronically, provided that the licensing authority agrees and the applicant submits a subsequent hard copy of the application, if the licensing authority requires one. The licensing authority may also agree in advance that the application need not be given in hard copy. However, these applications are outside the formal electronic application process and may not be submitted via GOV.UK or the licensing authority's electronic facility.
- 11.4 In addition, the licensing authority must review a licence if the premises to which it relates was made the subject of a closure order by the police based on nuisance or disorder and the magistrates' court has sent the authority the relevant notice of its determination, or if the police have made an application for summary review on the basis that premises are associated with serious crime and/or disorder.
- 11.5 Any responsible authority under the 2003 Act may apply for a review of a premises licence or club premises certificate. Therefore, the relevant licensing authority may apply for a review if it is concerned about licensed activities at premises and wants to intervene early without waiting for representations from other persons. However, it is not expected that licensing authorities should normally act as responsible authorities in applying for reviews on behalf of other persons, such as local residents or community groups. These individuals or groups are entitled to apply for a review for a licence or certificate in their own right if they have grounds to do so. It is also reasonable for licensing authorities to expect other responsible authorities to intervene where the basis for the intervention falls within the remit of that other authority. For example, the police should take appropriate steps where the basis for the review is concern about crime and disorder or the sexual exploitation of children. Likewise, where there are concerns about noise nuisance, it is reasonable to expect the local authority exercising environmental health functions for the area in which the premises are situated to make the application for review.
- 11.6 Where the relevant licensing authority does act as a responsible authority and applies for a review, it is important that a separation of responsibilities is still achieved in this process to ensure procedural fairness and eliminate conflicts of interest. As outlined previously in Chapter 9 of this Guidance, the distinct functions of acting as licensing authority and responsible authority should be exercised by different officials to ensure a separation of responsibilities. Further information on how licensing authorities should achieve this separation of responsibilities can be found in Chapter 9, paragraphs 9.13 to 9.19 of this Guidance.

- 11.7 In every case, any application for a review must relate to particular premises in respect of which there is a premises licence or club premises certificate and must be relevant to the promotion of one or more of the licensing objectives. Following the grant or variation of a licence or certificate, a complaint regarding a general issue in the local area relating to the licensing objectives, such as a general (crime and disorder) situation in a town centre, should generally not be regarded as a relevant representation unless it can be positively tied or linked by a causal connection to particular premises, which would allow for a proper review of the licence or certificate. For instance, a geographic cluster of complaints, including along transport routes related to an individual public house and its closing time, could give grounds for a review of an existing licence as well as direct incidents of crime and disorder around a particular public house.
- 11.8 Where a licensing authority receives a geographic cluster of complaints, the authority may consider whether these issues are the result of the cumulative impact of licensed premises within the area concerned. In such circumstances, the authority may also consider whether it would be appropriate to include a special policy relating to cumulative impact within its licensing policy statement. Further guidance on cumulative impact policies can be found in Chapter 14 of this Guidance.
- 11.9 Representations must be made in writing and may be amplified at the subsequent hearing or may stand in their own right. Additional representations which do not amount to an amplification of the original representation may not be made at the hearing. Representations may be made electronically, provided the licensing authority agrees and the applicant submits a subsequent hard copy, unless the licensing authority waives this requirement.
- 11.10 Where authorised persons and responsible authorities have concerns about problems identified at premises, it is good practice for them to give licence holders early warning of their concerns and the need for improvement, and where possible they should advise the licence or certificate holder of the steps they need to take to address those concerns. A failure by the holder to respond to such warnings is expected to lead to a decision to apply for a review. Co-operation at a local level in promoting the licensing objectives should be encouraged and reviews should not be used to undermine this co-operation.
- 11.11 If the application for a review has been made by a person other than a responsible authority (for example, a local resident, residents' association, local business or trade association), before taking action the licensing authority must first consider whether the complaint being made is relevant, frivolous, vexatious or repetitious. Further guidance on determining whether a representation is frivolous or vexatious can be found in Chapter 9 of this Guidance (paragraphs 9.4 to 9.10).

Repetitious grounds of review

- 11.12 A repetitious ground is one that is identical or substantially similar to:
- a ground for review specified in an earlier application for review made in relation to the same premises licence or certificate which has already been determined; or
 - representations considered by the licensing authority when the premises licence or certificate was granted; or
 - representations which would have been made when the application for the premises

licence was first made and which were excluded then by reason of the prior issue of a provisional statement; and, in addition to the above grounds, a reasonable interval has not elapsed since that earlier review or grant.

- 11.13 Licensing authorities are expected to be aware of the need to prevent attempts to review licences merely as a further means of challenging the grant of the licence following the failure of representations to persuade the licensing authority on an earlier occasion. It is for licensing authorities themselves to judge what should be regarded as a reasonable interval in these circumstances. However, it is recommended that more than one review originating from a person other than a responsible authority in relation to a particular premises should not be permitted within a 12 month period on similar grounds save in compelling circumstances or where it arises following a closure order.
- 11.14 The exclusion of a complaint on the grounds that it is repetitious does not apply to responsible authorities which may make more than one application for a review of a licence or certificate within a 12 month period.
- 11.15 When a licensing authority receives an application for a review from a responsible authority or any other person, or in accordance with the closure procedures described in Part 8 of the 2003 Act (for example, closure orders), it must arrange a hearing. The arrangements for the hearing must follow the provisions set out in regulations. These regulations are published on the Government's legislation website (www.legislation.gov.uk). It is particularly important that the premises licence holder is made fully aware of any representations made in respect of the premises, any evidence supporting the representations and that the holder or the holder's legal representative has therefore been able to prepare a response.

Powers of a licensing authority on the determination of a review

- 11.16 The 2003 Act provides a range of powers for the licensing authority which it may exercise on determining a review where it considers them appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.
- 11.17 The licensing authority may decide that the review does not require it to take any further steps appropriate to promoting the licensing objectives. In addition, there is nothing to prevent a licensing authority issuing an informal warning to the licence holder and/or to recommend improvement within a particular period of time. It is expected that licensing authorities will regard such informal warnings as an important mechanism for ensuring that the licensing objectives are effectively promoted and that warnings should be issued in writing to the licence holder.
- 11.18 However, where responsible authorities such as the police or environmental health officers have already issued warnings requiring improvement – either orally or in writing – that have failed as part of their own stepped approach to address concerns, licensing authorities should not merely repeat that approach and should take this into account when considering what further action is appropriate. Similarly, licensing authorities may take into account any civil immigration penalties which a licence holder has been required to pay for employing an illegal worker.
- 11.19 Where the licensing authority considers that action under its statutory powers is appropriate, it may take any of the following steps:

- modify the conditions of the premises licence (which includes adding new conditions or any alteration or omission of an existing condition), for example, by reducing the hours of opening or by requiring door supervisors at particular times;
- exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence, for example, to exclude the performance of live music or playing of recorded music (where it is not within the incidental live and recorded music exemption)¹⁰;
- remove the designated premises supervisor, for example, because they consider that the problems are the result of poor management;
- suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
- revoke the licence.

11.20 In deciding which of these powers to invoke, it is expected that licensing authorities should so far as possible seek to establish the cause or causes of the concerns that the representations identify. The remedial action taken should generally be directed at these causes and should always be no more than an appropriate and proportionate response to address the causes of concern that instigated the review.

11.21 For example, licensing authorities should be alive to the possibility that the removal and replacement of the designated premises supervisor may be sufficient to remedy a problem where the cause of the identified problem directly relates to poor management decisions made by that individual.

11.22 Equally, it may emerge that poor management is a direct reflection of poor company practice or policy and the mere removal of the designated premises supervisor may be an inadequate response to the problems presented. Indeed, where subsequent review hearings are generated by representations, it should be rare merely to remove a succession of designated premises supervisors as this would be a clear indication of deeper problems that impact upon the licensing objectives.

11.23 Licensing authorities should also note that modifications of conditions and exclusions of licensable activities may be imposed either permanently or for a temporary period of up to three months. Temporary changes or suspension of the licence for up to three months could impact on the business holding the licence financially and would only be expected to be pursued as an appropriate means of promoting the licensing objectives or preventing illegal working. So, for instance, a licence could be suspended for a weekend as a means of deterring the holder from allowing the problems that gave rise to the review to happen again. However, it will always be important that any detrimental financial impact that may result from a licensing authority's decision is appropriate and proportionate to the promotion of the licensing objectives and for the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises. But where premises are found to be trading irresponsibly, the licensing authority should not hesitate, where appropriate to do so, to take tough action to tackle the problems at the premises and, where other measures are deemed insufficient, to revoke the licence.

¹⁰ See chapter 15 in relation to the licensing of live and recorded music.

Reviews arising in connection with crime

- 11.24 A number of reviews may arise in connection with crime that is not directly connected with licensable activities. For example, reviews may arise because of drugs problems at the premises, money laundering by criminal gangs, the sale of contraband or stolen goods, the sale of firearms, or the sexual exploitation of children. Licensing authorities do not have the power to judge the criminality or otherwise of any issue. This is a matter for the courts. The licensing authority's role when determining such a review is not therefore to establish the guilt or innocence of any individual but to ensure the promotion of the crime prevention objective.
- 11.25 Reviews are part of the regulatory process introduced by the 2003 Act and they are not part of criminal law and procedure. There is, therefore, no reason why representations giving rise to a review of a premises licence need be delayed pending the outcome of any criminal proceedings. Some reviews will arise after the conviction in the criminal courts of certain individuals, but not all. In any case, it is for the licensing authority to determine whether the problems associated with the alleged crimes are taking place on the premises and affecting the promotion of the licensing objectives. Where a review follows a conviction, it would also not be for the licensing authority to attempt to go beyond any finding by the courts, which should be treated as a matter of undisputed evidence before them.
- 11.26 Where the licensing authority is conducting a review on the grounds that the premises have been used for criminal purposes, its role is solely to determine what steps should be taken in connection with the premises licence, for the promotion of the crime prevention objective. It is important to recognise that certain criminal activity or associated problems may be taking place or have taken place despite the best efforts of the licence holder and the staff working at the premises and despite full compliance with the conditions attached to the licence. In such circumstances, the licensing authority is still empowered to take any appropriate steps to remedy the problems. The licensing authority's duty is to take steps with a view to the promotion of the licensing objectives and the prevention of illegal working in the interests of the wider community and not those of the individual licence holder.
- 11.27 There is certain criminal activity that may arise in connection with licensed premises which should be treated particularly seriously. These are the use of the licensed premises:
- for the sale and distribution of drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the laundering of the proceeds of drugs crime;
 - for the sale and distribution of illegal firearms;
 - for the evasion of copyright in respect of pirated or unlicensed films and music, which does considerable damage to the industries affected;
 - for the illegal purchase and consumption of alcohol by minors which impacts on the health, educational attainment, employment prospects and propensity for crime of young people;
 - for prostitution or the sale of unlawful pornography;
 - by organised groups of paedophiles to groom children;
 - as the base for the organisation of criminal activity, particularly by gangs;

- for the organisation of racist activity or the promotion of racist attacks;
- for employing a person who is disqualified from that work by reason of their immigration status in the UK;
- for unlawful gambling; and
- for the sale or storage of smuggled tobacco and alcohol.

11.28 It is envisaged that licensing authorities, the police, the Home Office (Immigration Enforcement) and other law enforcement agencies, which are responsible authorities, will use the review procedures effectively to deter such activities and crime. Where reviews arise and the licensing authority determines that the crime prevention objective is being undermined through the premises being used to further crimes, it is expected that revocation of the licence – even in the first instance – should be seriously considered.

Review of a premises licence following closure order or illegal working compliance order

11.29 Licensing authorities are subject to certain timescales, set out in the legislation, for the review of a premises licence following a closure order under section 80 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 or an illegal working compliance order under section 38 of and Schedule 6 to the Immigration Act 2016. The relevant time periods run concurrently and are as follows:

- when the licensing authority receives notice that a magistrates' court has made a closure order it has 28 days to determine the licence review – the determination must be made before the expiry of the 28th day after the day on which the notice is received;
- the hearing must be held within ten working days, the first of which is the day after the day the notice from the magistrates' court is received;
- notice of the hearing must be given no later than five working days before the first hearing day (there must be five clear working days between the giving of the notice and the start of the hearing).

Review of a premises licence following persistent sales of alcohol to children

11.29 The Government recognises that the majority of licensed premises operate responsibly and undertake due diligence checks on those who appear to be under the age of 18 at the point of sale (or 21 and 25 where they operate a Challenge 21 or 25 scheme). Where these systems are in place, licensing authorities may wish to take a proportionate approach in cases where there have been two sales of alcohol within very quick succession of one another (e.g., where a new cashier has not followed policy and conformed with a store's age verification procedures). However, where persistent sales of alcohol to children have occurred at premises, and it is apparent that those managing the premises do not operate a responsible policy or have not exercised appropriate due diligence, responsible authorities should consider taking steps to ensure that a review of the licence is the norm in these circumstances. This is particularly the case where there has been a prosecution for the offence under section 147A or a closure notice has been given under section 169A of the 2003 Act. In determining the review, the licensing authority should consider revoking the licence if it considers this appropriate.