

LATE NIGHT LEVY: REVIEW OF FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION

January 2016

BACKGROUND

Islington Council adopted the Late Night Levy to come into effect on 1st November 2014 and from that date any licence holder permitted sell alcohol after midnight was required to pay the levy. All income raised by the levy must fund activities that benefit the late night economy

From the very outset the Council's intention has been to use the levy to fund additional uniformed night time patrols and this has been achieved through funding a dedicated multiagency team called Operation Nightsafe.

The overall aim of Operation Nightsafe is to support and promote the late night economy in Islington by:

- providing a safe, welcoming night time environment for residents, workers and visitors
- reducing late night alcohol related crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour and nuisance
- minimising negative impacts on local residents.

Operation Nightsafe has two distinct complementary strands

- The deployment of both a rapid response and intelligence lead policing capability at night and day time follow up action
- The provision of a street based patrolling service, operated by Parkguard, with capacity to support to the licensed trade as well as providing police and medical support

LATE NIGHT LEVY FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Operation Nightsafe – Police

The Late Night Levy funds:

- a dedicated police sergeant to act as a Night Time Economy Coordinator
- a dedicated police constable to work on operational night time activities, and lead on day time follow up and engagement activities

Night time policing is carried out by officers drawn from neighbourhood, emergency and special police constabulary teams. The Night Time Economy Coordinator is responsible for collating intelligence and using this information task and brief officers prior to deployment ensuring that resources target hotspot areas, problem-solving activities and call response. The police utilise various tactics including high visibility pulse patrolling, visiting licenced premises, using of passive drugs dog, taxi-touting operations and CCTV targeted patrols. Funding the Night Time Economy Manager has enabled capacity building resulting in improved consistency and effectiveness of policing the night-time economy particularly in relation to investigation, linking in with CID and reporting issues of concern for day time follow up by Police Licensing Officers.

During the day the dedicate police officers focus on:

- preparing night time briefings
- working with licenced premises to promote and share best practice
- dealing with problematic premises using a range of tools from action planning to reviews
- briefing staff working in late night venues or matters that can reduce crime and improve criminal detection rates for example, crime scene preservation, best practice in door supervision management, providing witness statements, CCTV management

Alcohol Related Domestic Violence

Whilst outside the scope of the Late Night Levy the introduction of the Levy has resulted in the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime match funding the portion of the levy allocated to additional policing. The police have used this funding to recruit an additional two police officers to work in Islington on alcohol related domestic violence.

Operation Nightsafe- Parkguard Night Safe Patrol Team

The Late Night Levy funds the Nightsafe Patrol Team, a four person, police accredited, street based tasking team provided by Parkguard. The team operates four nights per week, usually Thursdays to Sundays and covers the whole borough

with locations of work being determined on a nightly basis by intelligence lead tasking, call response and police lead briefings. The Nightsafe Patrol provides:

- a rapid response to requests for assistance from licence holders paying the late night levy
- an early intervention style of approach to minimise demands on the emergency services
- medical and police support where needed
- assistance to members of the public in need
- enforcement action against offenders
- high visibility patrols

The service is unique in that it has filled significant gaps in the management of the night time economy in Islington. The dedicated street based patrol team, resourced by 4 regular officers, provides an early intervention style approach by responding to low level, potential or emerging problems. By engaging with people on the street, supporting door staff dealing with difficult customers and providing a rapid response to licence holder requests for assistance the Nightsafe Patrol Officers interventions invariably prevent escalation requiring emergency services support.

Another gap filled by Nightsafe Patrol officers is their ability to help vulnerable people, many of whom are temporarily vulnerable due to the effects of alcohol. Typical activities have included providing welfare checks and personal safety advice, calling taxis, providing a temporary safe haven, first aid or medical assistance. One officer per shift is trained in first aid to 'first on the scene level' and their skills have been utilised on many occasions to assist a casualty until the ambulance service arrives.

Not only have the Nightsafe Patrol Officers developed a good working relationship with licence holders and their door staff the team have acquired excellent working knowledge of the night-time economy in Islington and made a significant contribution to information gathered by the police and Local Authority.

During the year Parkguard have strived to improve the service offered through investment in staff and equipment for example in the summer the company invested

in a new radio system to allow the Nightsafe Patrol officers to communicate directly with Parkguard operatives working on activities in the borough providing the team more resilience when dealing with situations requiring additional resources.

Late Night Levy Board

The Late Night Board was set up in August 2014 to oversee operation of the Late Night Levy. The Board, chaired jointly by Police Borough Commander and LBI Chair of Licensing, meets four times per year. Businesses paying late night levy were represented by eight licence holders nominated by our pubwatches. There are currently vacancies for licence holders representing late night off licences and food lead venues.

As well as reviewing the previous quarter's Operation Nightsafe activities the Late Night Board provides a useful opportunity for the licence trade to engage with the Police and Council at strategic level on night time economy issues and discussions this year have included:

- Exploring communication options
- Working together to embed the early intervention strategy
- Sharing best practice on selecting and managing contracted door staff
- Balloon seller enforcement strategy

LATE NIGHT LEVY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Late Night Levy has enabled us to strengthening the partnership between the late night licenced trade, police and local authority through the support services provide by Parkguard and the targeted deployment of additional police resources at night.

Feedback from licence holders indicate that they welcome the creation of the late Night Levy Board as this has given them an opportunity to contribute to strategic discussions regarding the management of the late night economy with senior police and local authority officers and councillors as well as monitoring activities funded by the Late Night Levy.

Prior to the introduction of the Levy there was no capacity to adopt an early intervention approach. Parkguard has filled this gap by helping vulnerable people in the street and by working collaboratively with licence holder to demonstrate the benefits of providing a reactive response to potential or low impact issues of concern.

Levy funding has resulted in improved intelligence gathering through the collation of information from the Police, Parkguard, Local Authority Antisocial Behaviour, CCTV and Licensing Teams as well as licence holders reporting issues of concern. This information feeds into the nightly police lead briefing and tasking process.

Police

- Targeted deployment of dedicated police night time economy teams
Thursdays to Sundays
- 178 arrests for various offences including GBH, ABH, Affray Possession of Drugs, Taxi Touting and other Public Order offences
- Responded to 410 calls to 999 or 101 from licenced premises regarding violence, public order, drugs, weapons, theft
- Responded to 72 minor variation applications to amend licence terms and conditions
- Audited medical facilities of 7 late night venues in conjunction with the London Ambulance Service
- Conducted 20 multi-agency licence premises visits
- Executed 2 warrants for misuse of drugs
- Carried out enforcement activities in 7 dispersal zones
- Applied for and enforced 3 closure orders
- Called in 32 premises to the Licensing Officer Panel for action planning purposes
- Utilised the review process with respect to 10 licenced premises to either revoke the premises licence or impose additional licence conditions.

Parkguard

Appendix 2 contains Parkguard's comprehensive review of Operation Night Safe Patrols activities during the first 11 months of operation to 31 October 2015

Key headline achievements are:

- Health and welfare checks of 316 people found vulnerable due to excess alcohol or drug use resulting in ill health or incapacity
- Provided medical assistance on 161 occasions preventing 54 ambulance callouts and 72 attendances at A&E
- Dealt with 365 incidents involving violent or aggressive behaviour preventing assault occurring on 207 occasions
- Generated 59 arrests, which is a significantly high figure considering that the primary focus of the patrol is prevention, supporting levy payers, police and local authority
- Requested/directed/ dispersed 451 to leave an area and warned or advised 738 about conduct
- Liaised on 2295 occasions with door staff/DPS/licence holders to provide support and advise on operational effectiveness
- Engaged with 90 taxi touts
- Visited all premises paying the late night levy to promote the service provided by Parkguard and received 98% satisfaction rate for the service
- Responded to 226 calls for assistance from door staff/DPS/licence holders

Balloon Sellers

Since Nov 2014, there has been a steady rise in the reports of nitrous oxide balloon sellers operating in several key areas of the borough, The initial control strategy tasked Parkguard Nightsafe Patrol Officers to disrupt and deter balloon sellers through patrolling hotspots and engagement. Although initially this approach appeared to be successful, dispersal was only temporary as balloon sellers became more confident and started returning to the area as soon as the Patrol Officers left.

During the summer, balloon sellers were linked to an increase in reported violence with intent and theft offences in the Charterhouse Street area. The Police responded by using dispersal order powers and organising a 2 week operation to identify and prosecute balloon sellers which, although a number of offenders have been identified

for prosecution, again resulted in only a temporary disruption as the number of balloon sellers increased once the operation ended.

A further joint enforcement operation, lead by Islington Street Trading Team, has been set up to take place during December 2015 and January 2016 to deal with a new wave of balloon sellers with the intention to collect sufficient evidence to apply for injunctions to ban offenders from the area.

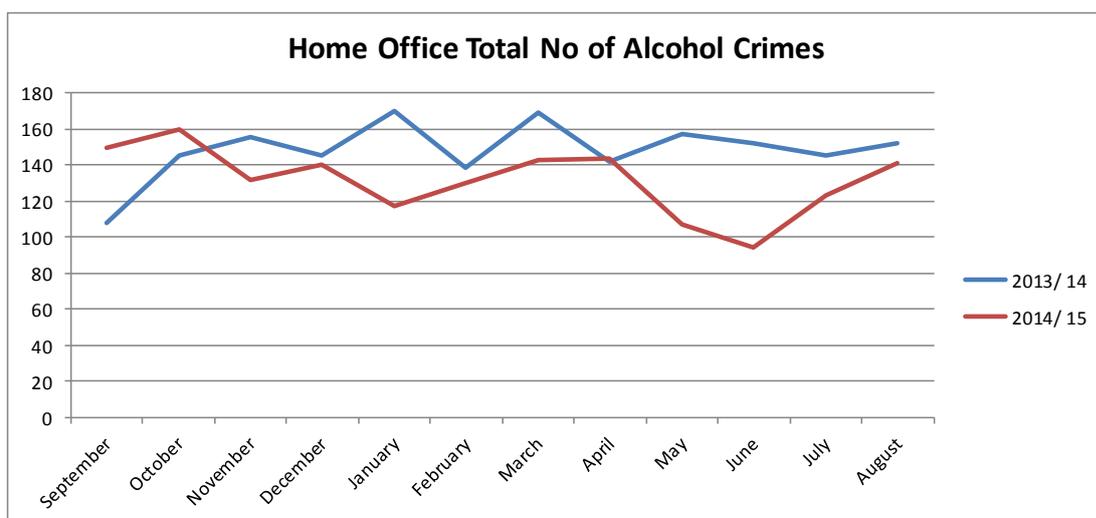
IMPACT ON ALCOHOL RELATED CRIME AND DISORDER

Islington's Crime Data Analysts have examined the data for alcohol related crime and disorder for the first year of the Levy and compared this with the previous 12 months.

Overall there has been a 17% reduction in alcohol related crime since November 2014 and a 17% reduction in alcohol related crime between the hours of midnight and 8am. Violence continues to be the most frequently recorded crime type associated with alcohol; however levels have reduced by 14.4% over the last year.

Although there will be other factors that have contributed to this reduction Operation Night Safe has played an important part.

The chart below compares alcohol related crime by month for the period September 2013 to August 2015.



Source: Islington Alcohol Crime Profile Sept 2014 to Aug 2015, LBI Community Safety Unit

The chart shows that

- since October 2014 alcohol crime levels have consistently been below the previous year's monthly figures
- the traditional seasonal peak in alcohol crime levels during December/January and May did not occur in 2014/5.

Call levels to the both the police (999 and 101) and the council's ASB reporting line regarding alcohol related incident have increased by 29-30% over the last year, particularly in relation to calls coded as rowdy / drunken behaviour, which increased by nearly 100%. This indicates that the demand on night time response services in Islington has increased over that last 12 months and provides further evidence to use levy funding to support Operation Nightsafe.

LATE NIGHT LEVY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

At the start of the levy year on 1 November 2014 it was estimated that 386 premises would be liable to pay the levy raising an estimated income of £441,966

At the end of the levy year (31 October 2015)

352 licenced premises were liable for paying the levy

338 had paid the levy raising an income of £397,278

Of the 14 that have not paid the levy yet 8 premises have had their premises licence suspended for non-payment of licence fees and 6 are the subject of administrative queries that are in the process of being resolved.

Thirty five licence holders operated businesses that were compliant with the Best Practice Scheme and received a 30% reduction in their levy payment.

The cost of Policing and Parkguard was £368,000. Included in this figure is an underspend on the Parkguard contract. We have agreed that this underspend will be carried over to the second year of the levy allowing us to fund additional patrols and the deployment of an dedicated medical support team during December 2015. The remaining under spend will be used to support other targeted activities during 2016.

The Council is permitted to deduct late Night Levy administrative costs from Levy income however, it was decided that these costs will be absorbed in its mainstream

budget and this approach was been endorsed by the late Night Levy Board on 3 November 2014.

At the end of the levy year there was surplus of £24,278.

The surplus will be carried over and used to funded any additional activities that the Late Night Levy Board believe will benefit the night-time economy.

Late Night Levy income and expenditure is summarised in Appendix 1

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2016

Year 2 of the levy runs from 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016 and for this period we estimate that 352 licence holders will be eligible for paying the levy raising £397,278 in income.

The strategic objectives set for year 1 will continue through to year 2 but proposed operational improvements include:

1. Extending shift pattern of police officers working on the balloon sellers operation during December 2015 and January 2016 (Police)
2. Introducing targeted use of Police drug dog patrols (Police)
3. Targeted deployment of specialist Parkguard support services (including the mobile office as a safe haven during the lead up to Christmas) (Parkguard)
4. Establishing a network of night time safe havens (Police)
5. Further develop knowledge and skills of all Operation Night Safe Officers through briefing and training (Police and Parkguard)
6. Support the licenced trade by developing an intelligence bulletin to be delivered by Police Officers (Police)

APPENDIX 1

Late Night Levy Year 1: Income and Expenditure

1. Income

On 20 January 2016 338 premises licence holders had paid the LNL providing an income of £397,272.

2. Expenditure

1 Nov 2014 to 31 Oct 2015

Local Authority Administrative costs (waivered)	£0
Nightsafe Operation Police and Parkguard committed expenditure*	£368,000
Surplus to be carried over to 2016/7	£24,278

*NB this figure includes underspend of £43,000 committed expenditure on Parkguard contact that will be used to pay for additional Patrols during December 2015- Oct 2016

3. Reconciliation of projected income with actual income

At start of levy year on 1 November 2014, we identified 386 premises as selling alcohol beyond midnight giving us a projected maximum income of £441,966.

Difference between actual and projected

The shortfall of 48 premises and £44,694 income is due to:

Reason	Number of premises	Income
Administrative errors- data extraction and inclusion of exempt hotels	6	£6783
Minor Variation applications to reduce hours received after 1/10/14 deadline	8	£7360
Premises no longer trading – licence revoked, surrendered, lapsed and unlikely to reopen	20	£17346
Licence suspended for non-payment of LNL and subject to follow up enforcement action and debt recovery	8	£6144*
Administrative queries that should result in LNL being paid once resolved	6	£7061*
Total	48	£44,694

*some of this lost income is recoverable