

17 November 2021

Licensing Committee

## **Additional Paper - Licensing Act Policy 2019-24 amendment**

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### **Background**

Following increasing national concern surrounding the safety of women, and linked to recent 'Safer Streets' grant funding from the government, members have highlighted a desire to amend our Licensing Act Policy to include details of the expectations of the Licensing Authority, with reference to the safety of women and other vulnerable groups in premises where alcohol for consumption on the premises forms a significant part of the businesses operation.

### **Proposal**

It is therefore planned to present to the January 2022 Licensing Committee a paper proposing an amendment to the Licensing Act Policy 2019-2024, with a short consultation with statutory consultees to occur during December 2021.

This amendment will act to assist applicants and licensees with understanding the expectations of the licensing authority when completing applications or considering the operation of their premises. The policy will also aid Sub-Committee members during relevant licence hearings.

The drafted policy amendment consists of the following additional section;

## **The Safety of Women and Vulnerable Persons**

Ashford Borough Council recognise increasing national concern with reference to the safety of women interacting the late night economy, especially related to harassment, drink spiking, and getting home safely. These concerns also extend to other persons who may be considered vulnerable as a result of drink and drugs, as well as physical and mental health conditions.

It is therefore considered more important than ever for relevant premises put in place measures to protect women and vulnerable customers so that they can remain safe at their premises and also after leaving.

It is consequently expected by the Licensing Authority that any premises with a significant percentage of sales revolving around consumption of alcohol on the premises will;

- Train all front of house staff on being an '*active bystander*' so that they know how to spot and address safety and harassment issues relating to women and vulnerable persons.
- Adopt, and train all staff, to operate the '*Ask for Angela*' scheme, or similar schemes.

- Take every report of harassment and sexual intimidation seriously and take appropriate action, recording these matters within a premises incident book.
- Take active steps to support persons who report harassment or sexual intimidation which might take place in their premises.
- Demonstrate to staff and customers that the business takes women's and vulnerable persons safety seriously, for example through the promotion of the 'Ask for Angela' scheme, by installing suitable posters [*example attached*]
- Make customers aware of the availability of free tap water or other free soft drinks (where offered)
- Take action to ensure women and vulnerable persons leave the venue safely, for example; providing numbers for licensed taxi services, booking such taxis where necessary or requested, and, ensuring that any persons appearing intoxicated are suitably accompanied.
- And all late-night premises, nightclub, or bars are additionally expected to;
  - Prominently display high visibility posters which discourage harassment and promote safety issues, such as the 'Ask for Angela' scheme, anti-drink spiking posters.
  - Prominently display posters highlighting the availability of free drinking water (and other free soft drinks where offered)
  - Provide free anti drink spiking devices to customers, such as bottle stoppers and drink testing strips.

In addition to the expectations placed on licensed premises, the authority is committed to supporting and contributing to relevant programmes and interventions supporting safety in the night time economy in co-operation with internal services such as Community Safety and the Ashford Monitoring Centre, and, external organisations such as Kent Police, the Kent & Medway Licensing Steering Group and Kent County Council Trading Standards.

## **Conclusion**

Whilst consultation will occur during December 2021, and the final proposal will be presented the Licensing Committee in January 2022, it is recommended that the Licensing Committee note the content of the proposal and planned consultation in advance of the January 2022 meeting.

Feedback from the Committee and members on this policy area are gratefully received.

## **Contact**

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# #ASK FOR ANGELA

“ HI I'M ANGELA,

ARE YOU ON A DATE  
THAT ISN'T WORKING OUT?

DO YOU FEEL LIKE  
YOU'RE NOT IN A  
SAFE SITUATION?

IS YOUR TINDER OR  
POF DATE NOT WHO  
THEY SAID THEY WERE  
ON THEIR PROFILE?

DOES IT ALL FEEL  
A BIT WEIRD?

IF YOU GO TO THE BAR AND ASK FOR 'ANGELA'  
THE BAR STAFF WILL KNOW YOU NEED SOME HELP GETTING  
OUT OF YOUR SITUATION AND WILL CALL YOU A TAXI OR  
HELP YOU OUT DISCREETLY - WITHOUT TOO MUCH FUSS



**Kent  
Police**

Supported by the Community Safety  
Partners of Kent and Medway