

Spiking - Advice for Licenced Premises



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Pub and club staff should be aware of their responsibility for customers regarding spiking.

All staff should be trained on how to help customers who may have been spiked.

The licensingsavi.com self-assessment includes drink spiking and the use of 'date rape drugs' in licensed venues and gives advice on reducing risk.

Spiking advice for night-time economy venues

This document provides guidance and advice to venue owners, licensees and staff to help deal with incidents of potential drink spiking.

Reports of spiking by injection or needle stick can potentially fuel public concern and anxiety.

It's important to recognise that this is part of a national picture and not just solely confined to Suffolk.

Police, local authorities, and licensed premises need to work together to reassure the public and support the night-time economy industry.

Spiking of any nature, be it by adding to a person's drink or by administering of injection is an offence under Section 24 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 (administer poison or other noxious substance with intent to

injure, aggrieve or annoy a person.) This is an indictable only offence, meaning a case can only be heard in the crown court and carries a potential custodial sentence of five years in prison. If the victim's life becomes endangered, they receive significant injuries or become a victim of sexual offences or robbery the maximum sentence is increased to 10 years or more. This offence is not limited to illicit drugs, the offence occurs if alcohol or another legal substance (e.g. sleeping tablets) is added to a person's drink.

This type of crime can be traumatic for victims, who feel personally targeted, invaded and often suffer memory loss.

A pro-active approach to drink spiking will increase the level of awareness and support available for those who believe they may have been targeted and give them the confidence to report such instances, knowing that their

allegations would be treated seriously and reassure them that they are safe within our night-time economy venues.

Licensees should train their staff to spot the signs of both potential vulnerable victims and those who are potentially suffering the effects of spiking and how to deal with the situation.

Staff should also be trained in handling of evidence (securing glasses and drinks used by potential victims and/or suspects) and securing other evidence, such as CCTV. CCTV should be routinely checked to ensure it is in good working order and reliable.

Venues should promote #Spikeaware by displaying posters and other literature within their premises.

Licensees can obtain preventative tools, to highlight their commitment to prevent incidents of drink spiking. The purchase

and application of screening kits can be used to test potentially spiked drinks. A negative result may reassure a potential victim and a positive result can be referred to the police.

Maintaining a stock of suitable urine sampling pots, will assist the police by securing early evidence for later testing.

Policies should be introduced to ensure a safeguarding approach is taken in all incidents of spiking and embed a culture of believe, reassure and request assistance for victims. Creating "safe zones" where potential victims can be looked after by staff will show genuine customers you care about their wellbeing.

Spotting the Signs

Depending on whether a drug was used, the signs that someone has been 'spiked' can appear in as

little as 15 minutes and can, potentially, last for several hours.

Several of the symptoms mirror the effects of alcohol and that can make it difficult to know if someone has had their drink 'spiked' – however, the main difference is how severe the symptoms are. While alcohol can severely affect someone, it often takes numerous drinks before that occurs. Drugs, on the other hand, can start affecting someone within a few minutes.

If someone is displaying the below symptoms and you're concerned about them, check they are safe, reassure them, request assistance from colleagues and the ambulance service. If they believe they have been spiked, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, contact the police.

There are a range of things to look out for, which include:

- Confusion
- Nausea or vomiting
- Hallucinations
- Disorientation
- Loss of ability to communicate properly
- Paranoia
- Poor coordination
- Unconsciousness

Evidence & Forensic Advice

The Victim – It is important to remember the victim is a potential crime scene. Whilst the victim's safety and security are paramount, consideration should always be given to potentially available evidence. Key points to consider are:

- Injuries or puncture wounds – These areas potentially hold evidential forensic opportunities. Where possible avoid contact with these areas of the victim's body and consider if the area can be protected by the victim's clothing, prevent the victim

washing or cleaning these areas if possible.

- Consensual contact areas – as above, if the likely perpetrator has been in contact with victim prior to the spiking, prevent washing or cleaning of these areas. (These are likely to be areas of exposed skin such as the face neck or hands.)
- Drink – if the victim is still in possession of their drink, keep it secure. Consider placing it in an unused, clean container (e.g. a sealable sandwich bag). Place the bag containing the glass in a secure location and prevent it from spilling. Where possible, wear latex gloves and handle the glass by the least obvious areas (e.g. the very bottom of the glass), this will assist in preventing contamination or loss of evidence.
- Where possible ask the victim to provide a urine specimen in a suitable sample pot.
- Do not ask the victim questions about the perpetrator. If a

member of staff believes they can identify the perpetrator, make sure they tell the police at the time.

Wherever possible, one member of staff should deal with the victim to ensure continuity of evidence and reassurance for the victim.

The perpetrator – Remember, every contact leaves a trace, therefore the perpetrator may have forensic evidence from the victim on their person. If you believe you know who the perpetrator is and they are still in the premises/area, do not confront them, make sure the police are aware when you call. If you can identify the perpetrator:

- Consider securing any glass/bottle they may have used. (Only do this if the glass/bottle is no longer in the possession of the potential perpetrator.) As with the victim's glass, secure this in an unused, clean bag (a sealable sandwich bag is ideal). DO

NOT MIX THE VICTIM'S AND SUSPECTS GLASSES OR PLACE IN THE SAME BAG. A different person should deal with each glass and they should not come into contact with each other during the process.

- Secure CCTV of the perpetrator entering/leaving the premises and any footage of the perpetrator and victim together within the premises.
- Consider how the perpetrator has paid for entry or drinks. Is this via a credit/debit card? If so, can you identify times of payments made.

Promotion & Prevention

Literature will be made available to be placed within premises to highlight that the premises is aware of incidents of spiking and is working with the police & local authority to prevent and deter such incidents. #Spikeaware is widely used across the country and Suffolk will follow suit.

Where possible, premises should provide other literature to signpost customers to helpful advice regarding alcohol and drugs, eg:

Talk to Frank **Drinkaware**

Venues may increase searching as a condition of entry. While not fool proof, use of a "metal detector wand" will increase the chances of perpetrators with needles being caught and prevent other dangerous objects entering your venue.

There are many products on the market designed as preventative measure to stop drink spiking. Items such as "NightCap", "StopTopps" and "Spikey" are just a few products available for purchase on the open market. None of these products are endorsed or promoted by police services. However, each licensee may wish to conduct their own research and conclusions as to

which product may work best in their premises.

In addition, screening tests can be purchased, these tests that can provide an early indication if a drink has been spiked. This provides reassurance to customers and reflects positively on venues. If a venue chooses to employ this tactic, it is important to continue to support and reassure a potential victim, even if a test result is negative. A record of each screening test should be made. This record should include the date and time of the test, the result, who completed the test and, where available, the name of the potential victim. There are a variety of drugs used for spiking and no screening product has been found to be 100% effective in all eventualities. No specific product is endorsed by the police service and each licensee may wish to complete their own research and drawn their own conclusion as to what will work for their venue.

Safe Zones

It is recommended that an area is set aside, which allows potential victims a safe area in which to recover and/or await assistance from the ambulance service, family, friends or the police. These areas will ideally be away from large crowds, loud noise and interference from potential perpetrators. A quiet area will also assist emergency responders to communicate with potential victims, while still at the venue.

Employing all or some of these measures will have a positive impact on your reputation, prevent potential crimes and show genuine customers that you care about their wellbeing.