

HARM REDUCTION AND THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY.

A guide to best practice - from zero tolerance to harm reduction.

WELCOME

The 6pm-6am economy encompasses the soul of the city after dark. Bristol's pubs, clubs, bars and live music venues are spaces where we all come together as a community, to share experiences, food, drinks, and sometimes a dancefloor.

We are the vibe creators. We engineer environments for enjoyable experiences so our customers have a fun time, and to be safe in each other's company. Our audiences are central to our nightlife community.



A strategic view of harm reduction across the night time economy is long overdue. Bristol is a city that unites over the issues that matter. It's only natural for us to be leading the way in a coordinated, city-wide policy to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol and other substances.

Together, we can build on the successes of multi-venue campaigns around Drink Spiking, taking a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, our Women's Safety Charter, and the student safety campaign "Bristol Rules". Bristol's night time community is stronger together.

Licensed operators, event promoters and festival organisers will all find this harm reduction guidance useful for designing a policy for your venue or event. Nightlife workers who work directly with audiences such as security, bar staff, performers or the wider industry who work at night such as taxi drivers will find the hierarchies of harm useful. Everyone will benefit from knowing what to do in a drug emergency.

I hope that through a coordinated approach across the city to address harm reduction, we can better look out for our patrons, reduce the risk of harm and help save lives.



Carly Heath
Night Time Economy Advisor, Bristol City Council

Nationally, there are competing approaches to drug policy but in Bristol we continue to work with the night time sector to deliver a safe and inclusive night time economy, and take a pioneering, Public Health approach to drug policy and harm reduction.

We have a well-deserved reputation for our diverse, exciting nightlife and we want everyone to be able to enjoy it safely. From the busy bars of the harbourside to our cosy local pubs or our vibrant nightclubs, safety in the night time economy is a priority for all in the sector.

By opening an honest conversation, we can dispel myths and assumptions that prevent people accessing effective and timely care, which ultimately can cost lives.



Councillor Ellie King
Cabinet member for Public Health,
Communities and Bristol One City

This proactive campaign to reduce harm caused by drug and alcohol use is a great example of working with the sector to understand their concerns and give practical support to make Bristol a safe place to enjoy and work in. I am pleased Bristol City Council can support it.

This work will take a big step to establish harm reduction as a key approach across all nightlife businesses. Some premises have references to drugs in their licence requirements but not all, so this will help establish a unifying voice for harm reduction across all nightlife settings.

I would like to thank those partners who have contributed to the work and plan, the Bristol Nights Panel who will champion it, and the staff and volunteers who will deliver it. Together we can reduce harm and make Bristol's nightlife fun for everyone.



By opening an honest conversation, we can dispel myths and assumptions that prevent people accessing effective and timely care, which ultimately can cost lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Bristol is blazing a trail in making positive changes to policy supported by campaigns that make our night time audiences safer.

Our approach to harm reduction is to bring all of our venues, promoters, the police, your team members and our audiences together in one joined up strategy to protect each other from harm. Your actions can help decrease the number of fatal and serious incidents in our city.

This is the first step in setting out a framework to move away from a zero tolerance approach, towards embedding harm reduction as a founding principle of the night time economy.

Harm reduction is a non-judgemental approach to minimising the negative consequences caused by alcohol and other substances.

This practical guide will help make sense of the legislative landscape, set out a framework for embedding harm reduction into nightlife spaces, and help your staff know what to do in an emergency.

As night time operators, part of your role is to keep customers as safe as possible when using alcohol and other drugs. This document covers both legal and illegal substances.

Some of this advice may be a legal requirement as part of conditions attached to your premises licence, and some may be a common-sense approach for dealing with drug and alcohol related harm.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

This guide has been created for licensed operators in the night time economy and every member of your team.

- Pubs
- Nightclubs
- Live Music Venues
- Bars
- Students' Unions
- Universities

Specific roles

- Venue Owners and Venue Managers
- Security / Door Staff
- Bar Staff
- Front of House Staff
- Promoters
- Festival Organisers

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction is a human-centred approach, focusing on providing judgement-free solutions to lower the risks of behaviours surrounding drugs and alcohol. Harm reduction helps our audiences to access support and accurate advice.

Harm reduction is a human right. It is recognised as a vital component of the right to the highest attainable standard of health for people who use drugs. **A harm reduction stance does not mean anti-social or criminal behaviour is acceptable**, any such misconduct should continue to be addressed robustly.

Substance use is not to be regarded as the same as being involved in the supply of illegal drugs. Any person found to be involved in the supply of illegal drugs should be referred to Avon and Somerset Police.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

We aim to increase safety in night time venues for everyone, whether they use drugs or not. Alcohol and drug-related harm causes thousands of hospital admissions and hundreds of deaths across the South West every year.

7,780 Bristol alcohol-related hospital admissions in 2020-21

651 Alcohol-specific deaths in the South West in 2020

223 Bristol drug related deaths 2017-2021

Statistics from ONS, which incorporate the total figures - not all will be directly related to nightlife

The relationship between poor mental health and alcohol and other drug use is widely reported. Mental health conditions can both lead to, and result from, excessive consumption of substances.

The use of alcohol and other drugs is a significant factor in violence, sexual violence, intimidation, and anti-social behaviour.

Bristol Nights has made a commitment to tackling harassment in our night time spaces through the Women's Safety Charter. bristolnights.co.uk/WSC

We have a choice in the night time economy on the way in which we treat people who are under the influence of drugs and alcohol. The actions of our staff can either inflame a situation, or control and manage it.

Harm reduction strategies will keep our staff and customers safe from harm.

WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE DRUGS AND DRINK ALCOHOL?

The consumption of alcohol is historically and culturally woven into the very fabric of the night time economy. Pubs, bars, nightclubs, festivals, and other licensed premises are synonymous as spaces to buy and consume alcohol.

As a social space, some customers also choose to consume other substances. The night time economy is not the only place in society where drugs are prevalent, but as a sector we have a duty of care to ensure that our customers are safe.

People use alcohol and other drugs for many different reasons. Their use is often associated with socialising, enhancing people's experiences and for those seeking an escape from stresses of everyday life.

People may use substances when they are unhappy, stressed or trying to cope with personal problems. Some people who experience mental health problems may

use alcohol and other substances to help them cope with their symptoms.

Illicit drug use may begin out of curiosity, rebelliousness, or because an individual's friends are using drugs. Whatever the reason, we want to lower the risks related to drug and alcohol use.

The majority of people using drugs are not dependent on any substances and do not use them problematically. The effects of drug and alcohol use can often manifest as nuisance behaviour, however it is an issue that is not likely to go away, no matter how tough an enforcement policy is implemented.

Whatever your personal opinion about people using drugs, it is important to remember that you don't know why they're using them and communicating in a combative or judgemental way may inflame the situation.

We need to be focussed on immediate matters such as providing assistance and the correct level of medical care required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the intoxicated person.

HIERARCHY OF PRIORITIES REGARDING DRUGS & SAFETY

As a night time economy operator, you have a duty of care to your customers and colleagues. Your first responsibility is to ensure the safe running of the venue or event including the safety of all customers and staff.

Safety should always be prioritised over any enforcement actions.

EXAMPLE

You are working in a nightclub and discover an individual who has passed out in a toilet cubicle. The individual has a wrap of powder on their person and powder around their nasal area suggesting they've snorted the substance. Even though this person is potentially breaking the law (and venue's drug policy), your first priority should always be that person's safety.

POLICY ENFORCEMENT

Similar to alcohol, people intoxicated on drugs may not have the mental or physical capacity to safely get home. Sometimes the best course of action is to confiscate any drugs complying with the law and preventing any further intoxication.

Ejecting the customer from the venue without taking time to consider their wellbeing could have unintended consequences to their personal safety. Consider keeping them close enough to monitor their wellbeing. Once the person's condition improves you can take action accordingly.

REFLECT

How would you feel if your staff had made the decision to eject someone they caught taking drugs, only to discover that person later suffered a fatal reaction to the drugs they had taken? Imagine how different things could have been had you kept the person on site and they had received lifesaving medical assistance.

SECURITY INTERVENTION

Overzealous security and enforcement has the potential to cause unintended harm.

Any intervention for substance use in your venue will always be a balancing act. You must continue to work in line with the law, your premises licence and venue policies. Staff attitude and tone can go a long way to fostering a positive relationship between the venue, such as security staff, and attendees. This in turn will improve the safety and wellbeing of your customers.

EXAMPLE

If attendees perceive door staff to be aggressive or unfriendly, they may be reluctant to seek help from security when they need it. There are a range of harms that can stem from this, from the unnecessary progression of a medical emergency to predatory behaviour going unchecked.

Extreme enforcement from security teams can exacerbate fear and anxiety in customers, especially if they are under the influence. This can create unpredictable and uncharacteristic behaviour (e.g. violence and panic attacks).

HOW TO DEAL WITH OBVIOUSLY INTOXICATED INDIVIDUALS

Hospitality employees should always be kind, supportive and act in a proactive and professional manner.

It is vital that our teams are able to work with people who are intoxicated, free of any preconceptions and without prejudice.

It is our primary role and responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all guests and employees before enforcing any kind of drug related policies.

Hospitality employees will come into contact and communicate with a wide range of people daily. It is important to communicate as effectively as possible, especially when dealing with a person who is heavily intoxicated. Irrespective of their mental and physical condition all guests should be afforded the same level of courtesy and respect.

- **Don't argue with the intoxicated person**
- **Don't embarrass them, especially in front of other people**
- **Invite them to an area away from others, where you can talk**
- **Deal with the situation in a calm, friendly way**
- **Speak to the person directly, and firmly explain that what they are doing is unacceptable at the venue**
- **Listen and empathise**
- **Acknowledge their anger or frustration, but also remind them that you are responsible for the safety of everyone in the venue**
- **Let them know their behaviour is disruptive to the other guests and that you want everyone to have an enjoyable experience**
- **Point out that if they were sober, they would agree that what they are doing is a bad idea**
- **If you cannot calm the guest down or convince them to stop what they are doing, it may be time to switch with a colleague**
- **If they are with others it may be worth asking one of them to explain the situation as they may be more receptive to friends**

If you decide to ask this person to leave, remember that you are still responsible for their safety (call a taxi, get someone they trust to drive them home, or if the situation gets out of control – call the police).

Mental Health

Sometimes when people take drugs the effects might feel overwhelming or uncomfortable. Some people can take too much of a drug and be okay physically but become worried, scared or anxious. It is important to take them seriously and remember that mental health can be an emergency too.

Always try to stay calm, reassure the person and help them to move somewhere quiet and comfortable. Get help if you need it.

If in doubt, call 999 for an ambulance.

DRUGS & THE LAW

There are two main pieces of legislation that govern illegal drugs. **It's important to note that the use of, or being under the influence of, controlled drugs is not an offence.**

THE MISUSE OF DRUGS ACT 1971

The Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) prohibits the possession, sale and manufacture of 'controlled drugs'. Substances covered by this legislation are placed in three categories:

- **Class A: e.g. cocaine, MDMA and LSD**
- **Class B: e.g. cannabis, ketamine and amphetamine**
- **Class C: e.g. benzodiazepines, GHB/GBL**

For a full list of drugs covered by the MDA, and a description of the potential penalties related to drug offences, can be found on government websites www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing

HOW TO INTERPRET SECTION 8

Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act explains the responsibilities of licensed premises regarding drug-related activities:

Occupiers etc. of premises to be punishable for permitting certain activities to take place there.

A person commits an offence if, being the occupier or concerned in the management of any premises, he **knowingly permits** or suffers any of the following activities to take place on those premises, that is to say—

- a) producing or attempting to produce a controlled drug in contravention of section 4(1) of this Act;
- b) supplying or attempting to supply a controlled drug to another in contravention of section 4(1) of this Act, or offering to supply a controlled drug to another in contravention of section 4(1);
- c) preparing opium for smoking;
- d) smoking cannabis, cannabis resin or prepared opium.

Whilst this section is often interpreted as venues/events being required to operate 'zero tolerance' drug policies, the important phrase is 'knowingly permits'.

As long as a venue/event can demonstrate that they are not turning a blind eye to drug offences on their premises then they are not in contravention of the law by implementing a harm reduction policy.

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL, LICENSING AND HARM REDUCTION

It is worth noting that for businesses operating under premises licences, Bristol City Council's Licensing Policy, sets out the council's position as follows

A proactive approach to the control and management of the use of illegal substances should assist premises licence holders in the prevention of criminal activity, whilst also the premises licence holder shall ensure that, with regard to controlled substances, harm reduction information is displayed within the venue and that there are suitably experienced members of staff, or outreach workers from a local drugs agency, dedicated to providing harm reduction information and to dealing with drug related incidents or emergencies appropriately.

The council's position is that premises licence holders must take a proactive approach to the potential use of illegal substances within their venue, including harm reduction techniques.

THE PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES ACT 2016

The Psychoactive Substances Act bans any substance with a psychoactive effect (with exemptions for alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, caffeine, medicinal products, food and drink). The offences described by the Act are:

- **Production**
- **Supply or offering to supply**
- **Aggravated supply or offering to supply (near schools, prisons etc. or using someone under 18 as a courier)**
- **Possession with the intent to supply**
- **Importation**
- **Exportation**
- **Possession in prisons (and other custodial institutions)**

Importantly, possession for personal use of substances covered by the Psychoactive Substances Act is not an offence.

However, due to the difficulty of differentiating between substances 'in the field', many venues/ events will include substances covered by the PSA in their lists of prohibited items. Please familiarise yourself with the policy for your venue or event.

"DUTY OF CARE" AND THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974.

Legally, business owners have a duty of care over their employees, contractors and visitors to their premises. This is usually related to the Health and Safety at Work Act, but this is also reflected in the Licensing Act 2003 with regard to 'public safety'.

You could face liability if you neglect your duty, specifically for avoiding injury caused by carelessness and neglect. For example, if a venue evicts an intoxicated person in need of medical attention rather than prioritising their safety.

IF YOU HAVE ZERO TOLERANCE ON YOUR PREMISES LICENCE

Previously, it was thought by some officers and operators alike that a 'zero tolerance' approach to drugs was the best means of dealing with the issue. Therefore conditions to this effect are still seen on premises' licences.

Zero tolerance implies that there is very little leeway to introduce policies and procedures that look at harm reduction, simply because it does not allow for recognition that any drug use is taking place or its prevalence in these settings.

Likewise it does not allow for proper safeguarding: if you are caught with drugs or having taken drugs, zero tolerance requires strict action.

It is fair to say that this approach is no longer considered by many to be best practice. We suggest that if you have such a condition on your licence and you wish to put harm reduction at the centre of any policy then you might want to consider agreeing a variation to the condition along the lines of:

EXAMPLE

'The premises licence holder will draw up and implement a drug policy. Staff will receive training in the policy. The policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in line with best practice and any changes observed or intelligence received in relation to drugs at the premises.'

DRUG POSSESSION

Door Searches

Security checks are a vital component of night time safety. Your responsibility for your patrons starts as soon as they join the queue. Door searches can have unpredictable consequences, **particularly the risk of people taking unsafe doses of drugs to avoid detection.** This can result in fatal consequences.

REFLECT

Ask yourself. Are your security policies proportionate to the risk of harm?

Amnesty Bin

Consider having an amnesty bin or box into which visitors can safely discard illicit items without incurring consequences related to those items. Ensure this bin is secure and any volunteered items are catalogued and stored in line with your venue's policy.

What to do if you find someone in possession of drugs

One of the main purposes of searches as a condition of entry to licensed premises is to prevent prohibited substances getting into the venue. If you find someone in possession of what you believe to be a prohibited substance you have two options:

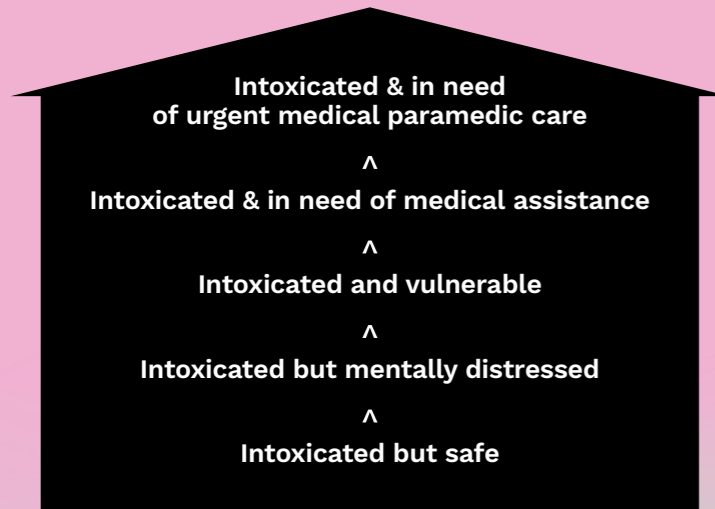
1. Seize the drugs, detain the person in possession of them and call the police. When the police arrive, both the drugs and the person would be handed to the police. Record the incident in accordance with the venue's policies.
2. Seize the drugs and report the incident to a supervisor. Store the substance in a secure place to be retrieved and destroyed by the police at a later date. The person is not reported to the police and will not be charged with a crime.

The venue's search policy may dictate which of these options you follow. However, some venues will leave it to staff discretion. If it is left to your discretion, please consider how a criminal record may negatively impact the person in possession of drugs.

Personal possession is not to be regarded the same as intent to supply. Drug dealers should always be referred to Avon and Somerset Police.

HIERARCHY OF DRUG RELATED HARM

The hierarchy of drug related harm helps you adopt the best course of action when dealing with a person that is;



When we think about alcohol and drug-related harm, it's important to recognise that there are varying levels of severity that will require different interventions from staff.

REMEMBER – this is a sliding scale and if you are in any doubt about an individual's wellbeing always contact emergency services.

Intoxicated but safe

Individual is clearly intoxicated but otherwise safe from experiencing or causing harm.

This person may present as particularly loud, excitable and/or mildly unsteady on their feet. However, they will not be distressed, they might be with friends and their presentation will not be deteriorating. This person may have consumed alcohol and/or other drugs but is safe. No further action is required. Being intoxicated (whether through alcohol or other drugs) is not necessarily grounds for removal from the venue unless their behaviour is disruptive, dangerous or offensive in other ways.

In many cases, it is far safer for intoxicated individuals to stay at the venue where they can be monitored and looked after by trained staff, rather than left by themselves.

Intoxicated and mentally distressed but physically safe

This person could look anxious, scared, upset, lost or angry. This could be the result of intoxication, due to existing mental health issues or be the result of a recent incident. If someone is in distress, it is always worth gently enquiring if there is anything you can do to help, even if the person is with friends. Find a quieter place for the person to calm down or take them to medical services if their behaviour is erratic or does not improve with time.

Intoxicated and vulnerable. (Prevention of future physical harm)

At this point, the person's level of intoxication is making them vulnerable to physical harm. An example of this is a highly intoxicated lone female with a male or an individual who is incapacitated to the point where they can no longer support themselves and are likely to cause themselves physical harm. In this instance you should always check with the vulnerable party if they know who they are with and if necessary, support them to reconnect with their friends or get home safely.

Intoxicated and in need of medical attention from trained medical staff

This person may be intoxicated to the point that they aren't able to communicate properly any more. They may be displaying one or more warning signs that they are dangerously intoxicated. Medical support should be sought immediately, either from onsite medics or emergency services.

Intoxicated and in need of urgent paramedic care

If you come across an individual who is unconscious or otherwise unresponsive you should seek emergency medical care immediately.

Familiarise yourself with what to do in a drugs emergency. Knowing the recovery position and when to administer CPR might save someone's life.

If in doubt, always call 999

DEVELOPING A HARM REDUCTION POLICY

A practical approach to the control and management of the use of substances, both legal and illegal, should assist premises licence holders in the prevention of harm, and be proactive against criminal activity.

Some premises licences will require you to produce a harm reduction policy or drugs and search policies. It is an offence not to comply.

Where a licence is 'silent' on drugs, it is not a legal requirement for the premises to have a drug policy. However, many licensing authorities and local police services consider them invaluable, and Bristol is encouraging a unified voice for harm reduction across the night time economy.

This step-by-step guidance is to help night time businesses in Bristol to create a harm-reduction focussed drugs policy. We do not provide a model policy for a number of reasons:

Every venue is different. Your organisation needs to develop a policy which is appropriate and relevant to you. A harm reduction policy for a weekend festival would look very different to one for a small nightclub or local pub.

The process is as important as the policy itself. We encourage managers and key staff members to carefully consider issues of concern and the best ways of their business responding to them.

A harm reduction policy is only one part of the response. Staff need good information, training, supervision, and support to implement any policy, ensuring a safe working environment for staff.

A drug and alcohol harm reduction policy should be seen as a working document, continuously amended, and improved in response to new developments in substance use or health and safety legislation. It should be formally reviewed on an annual basis.

The involvement of police and licensing officers in the development of a drug policy can greatly enhance its worth and strengthen working relationships.

WHAT DOES MY HARM REDUCTION POLICY NEED TO DO?

- **Clearly communicate the business' views to all staff, and ensure that everyone understands procedures and works to them**
- **Demonstrate that the business is committed to safeguarding the welfare of its customers**
- **Ensure that the business operates within the law**

- **Help employers comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) by safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of employees**
- **Serve as a checklist to ensure all areas of concern are addressed.**

WHAT DOES MY HARM REDUCTION POLICY NEED TO CONTAIN?

As a model framework your policy could contain the following sections.

- **Purpose and scope**
- **Staff and the policy**
- **Customers and the policy**
- **Preventing illegal substances and weapons from entering the venue**
- **Finding drugs and weapons**
- **Preventing drug dealing at the venue**
- **Harm reduction and keeping customers safe**
- **Dealing with emergencies**
- **Training**
- **Communicating your policy to customers and the team**
- **Review.**

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Clearly state why you have this policy, and what you hope to do. Start by setting out the purpose and scope of a Harm Reduction Drug and Alcohol Policy.

EXAMPLE

This policy relates to the use of illegal drugs and misuse of alcohol or other harmful substances on our premises.

Clearly state the main aims of the policy.

EXAMPLE

Aim of the policy

- Comply with the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 by ensuring that the venue does not knowingly permit use or supply of controlled drugs on its premises
- Provide a safe working environment for staff and customers
- Minimise drug use at the venue
- Prevent drug dealing on the premises
- Safeguard customers who have used drugs or misused alcohol and other substances.

Include within this section reference to any conditions on your premises licence that are required to form all or part of your policy, and how harm reduction factors into this.

EXAMPLE

Policy Statement

- The venue will not condone the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs, nor the misuse of alcohol or other substances
- The venue will promote supportive and caring harm minimisation strategies which reduce the risks associated with drug use/misuse
- The venues will provide a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for staff and customers.

STAFF AND POLICY

The policy should clearly state how staff will be informed about the Policy, provided with drug training, and supervised and supported in its implementation. The Policy should pay attention to the health and safety of staff as well as customers.

EXAMPLE

All key staff working at our events will receive training on this policy as part of their induction process.

CUSTOMERS AND POLICY

It is vital to communicate your commitment to harm reduction to customers. Set out how different practices and procedures will be communicated, e.g. clearly advertising the search policy, signposting customers how and where to get help. Some of these will be stipulated in your premises licence.

Although the policy should ensure that customers' health and wellbeing is safeguarded to the best of the licence holder's ability, it is also fair to say that customers should take responsibility for their own welfare.

EXAMPLE

The premises will have the following procedures in place to communicate the policy to customers:

- Our communications will be human-centred and encourage customers to ask for help
- Drinking Water will be freely available and signposted
- Our venue's search policy will be clearly displayed at the point of entry
- Signage shall also be placed in the toilet areas advising patrons that checks are conducted regularly
- Harm reduction information is clearly displayed within the venue, on our website, and social media. We will work with outreach workers from a local drugs agency such as BDP to provide relevant harm reduction information.

PREVENTING ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES FROM ENTERING THE VENUE

Set out your procedures to minimise the amount of illegal substances and weapons that come into the venue. A search policy should be formulated and should cover the form and regularity of searches, the provision of amnesty boxes, a complaints procedure, and the procedure when drugs or weapons are found. Separate attention may need to be given to searching for firearms, knives and corrosive substances such as acid.

Dedicate time to checking your own biases when creating a search policy. Also remember that extreme security and enforcement policies may cause harm.

EXAMPLE

It will be a condition of entry to the venue that customers acknowledge the venue's right to conduct searches prior to entry.

- Searches will be undertaken in a polite and respectful manner by SIA trained members of staff of the same sex as the customer
- Where this is refused, the customer will not be allowed entry to the venue
- Drugs and weapons seized will be placed in a locked receptacle set aside for this purpose, and the appropriate action taken.

FINDING DRUGS AND WEAPONS

Be very clear on what staff should do if they find drugs or weapons in order to minimise any legal risk. Many of these actions might be specified in your licence. The policy should include the following:

- The recording of suspected drug and weapon finds in an incident book
- Procedures for the safe and secure storage of drugs and weapons
- Procedures for emptying amnesty boxes
- Actions to be taken against any customer found with drugs
- A clear definition between drug use and drug supply, and pathways for action from both
- Actions to be taken against any customer found with weapons
- The process for handing over drugs and weapons to police
- A clear procedure agreed with the local police service about the circumstances in which they expect to be called.

Notify police immediately if:

- > For drugs, if you suspect intent to supply and you have detained the person
- > For weapons, lock knives and knives with a fixed blade. Police will attend to recover the weapon and deal with the person found in possession of it.

Arrange with police for retrieval at a convenient time:

- > If drugs are being retained for disposal, follow the procedure for your amnesty box
- > For other bladed articles (small pen knives etc). Confiscate the article, record and keep locked away for future retrieval.

PREVENTING DRUG DEALING ON YOUR PREMISES

All staff should be vigilant to drug dealing. Make sure they know the procedure and how to respond.

Several key issues should be covered including expectations of door supervisors, the regular supervision and monitoring of the building, particularly any key areas where drug use or dealing may take place, the use of CCTV and monitoring suspicious activity in toilets.

There should be a system for logging and pursuing information from staff members, customers or outside agencies about any suspected drug dealing.

Make use of tools such as the Bristol Nights venue heatmap guide to visualise potential hotspots to staff as part of your safety briefings.

As an alternative to reporting to police, you can always confidentially report information about drug dealing to Crimestoppers on 0800-555-111

EXAMPLE

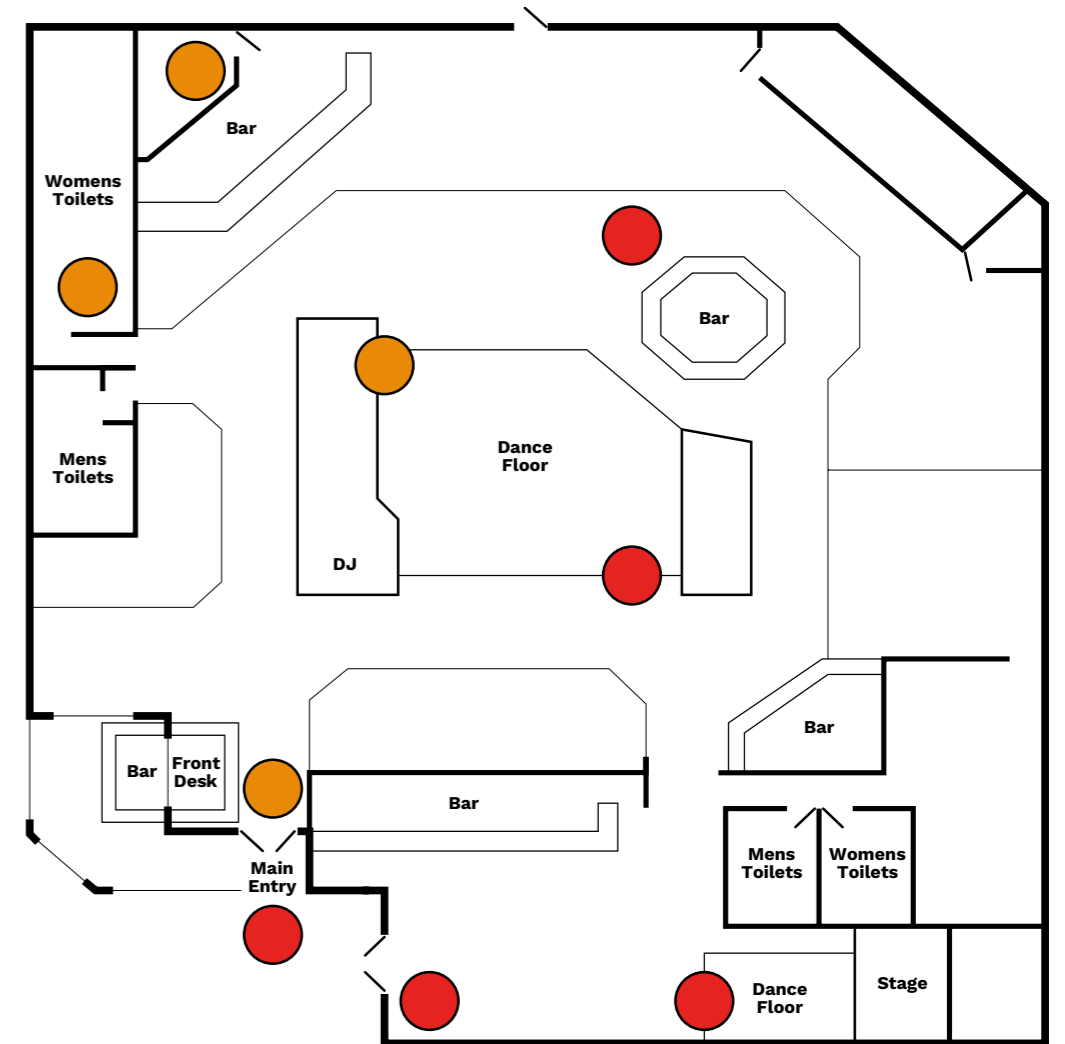
All staff working at events will be vigilant in monitoring activity. Security staff will regularly monitor key areas within the premises for suspicious activity

- Where staff suspect dealing may be taking place, customers will be asked to undergo a search
- This will be conducted in the presence of another member of staff in a discreet area following the procedures outlined above
- Anyone refusing to be searched will be asked to leave the premises.

VENUE HEATMAP GUIDE

GRADE INCIDENTS

- High Intensity
-
-
-
-
- Low Intensity



HARM REDUCTION AND KEEPING CUSTOMERS SAFE

Set out the expectations of all staff in being vigilant in identifying customers who are suffering from the negative effects of drug and alcohol use. Clearly state the roles of those providing any medical/welfare service, bar staff and door supervisors. It should be clearly identified who has the responsibility for helping customers in distress.

Make it clear that the business will do its best to safeguard customers from the point at which they join the queue to ensuring that they are safe to travel home. The policy should explicitly state that door supervisors must not eject customers in distress without ensuring they have the means to get home safely and a companion they trust to help them do so.

HARBOUR SAFETY

As a harbour town, there have been tragic incidents in Bristol where ejected patrons have fallen in the waterways and met an untimely death. If the customer is in an inebriated state and is unable to practise their own self-care, make sure your policy clearly states how you are going to manage this situation. **Harm Reduction is not just about reducing risk from drugs and alcohol, but also reducing the risks of how those customers move through the city.**

APPOINT HARM REDUCTION REPRESENTATIVES

The premises' licence holder shall ensure that there are suitably experienced members of staff, or outreach workers from a local drugs agency, dedicated to providing harm reduction information and to dealing with drug related incidents or emergencies appropriately.

EXAMPLE

The venue will do all it can to keep customers safe

- Drinking water will be offered free of charge and clearly signposted
- Harm reduction advice will be displayed within the venue, including encouraging patrons to come forward if they or a friend feel unwell, and signposting for non-judgemental advice from the local drugs service (e.g. Bristol Drugs Project)
- We will provide rest facilities which are cooler and quieter from the main dance areas, with adequate seating
- Staff will be vigilant in identifying anyone who is suffering from the effects of consuming an excessive amount of alcohol or from suspected drug use
- In these circumstances, staff will reserve the right to refuse further alcohol
- Where staff believe a customer's wellbeing is at risk, that customer will be monitored and if necessary arrangements made either for their safe return home or for appropriate medical treatment
- Staff will be trained for what to do in an emergency. Sufficiently trained staff will be present at all events. In an emergency staff will call an ambulance and notify the security staff as appropriate
- Drugs Emergency advice will be clearly displayed back of house for staff to familiarise themselves with the symptoms to be aware of
- In all such circumstances an incident report form will be completed
- Bristol Drug Project (BDP) will attend events regularly and act as consultants for the continuing monitoring of this policy.

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

Be prepared for every eventuality, whether a serious medical emergency, or fatal incident. It is better to plan from a place of calm for how to respond to a critical or tragic incident.

The Policy should contain clear instructions to staff on how to deal with emergencies. It should cover arrangements for the training of medical, welfare, or first aid staff and for ensuring that enough trained staff are always present. It should specify where any medical treatment should take place and in what circumstances an ambulance should be called. City centre venues may have access to pop-up emergency centre, the ARC, at the weekend.

Procedures for dealing with heat stroke and customers who are disoriented, and hallucinating should be clear for all staff. A system for keeping staff up-to-date with new trends and patterns of drug use and any common medical consequences should be instituted.

EXAMPLE

“Please be aware that we have received reports of a substance circulating which is causing dangerous reactions. If you feel unwell, please seek medical assistance, or speak to staff / security who can help you without judgement”.

Prepare a statement to use in the case of an emergency where patrons are rushed to hospital.

It is important to support this message by alerting the front of house staff so that they are aware, and can be extra vigilant for signs of distress.

If your venue has a serious incident related to drugs harm, consider informing relevant agencies such as the police, Bristol City Council, your business improvement district, the Night Time Economy Advisor or Bristol Drugs Project. We are here to help.

Bristol Nights have created a poster for what to do in a drugs emergency. This should be displayed where your staff can regularly see it and familiarise themselves with the warning signs of an emergency.

New copies can be downloaded from www.bristolnights.co.uk/drugs-emergency

If the worst happens...

If there is a tragic incident with your venue, allocate a spokesperson from your venue to be ready to answer questions quickly over the coming days. Be sure to liaise with police before saying anything publicly. It is vital to be mindful of any ongoing investigations, and to be respectful of friends and family members.

You may need to temporarily close your venue to assist with the police investigation. Some venues may wish to close temporarily as a mark of respect following such incidents.

There is support available for staff who witness traumatic incidents.

www.bristolnights.co.uk/thrive-at-night or contact NTEadvisor@bristol.gov.uk



TRAINING

Training is a core tool when considering night time safety and harm reduction. A drug and alcohol policy is most effective when all staff have adequate and regular training.

Consider training with a coordinated approach to the key issues night time staff face, including drink spiking, sexual harassment and dealing with drunkenness.

Bristol Nights has a range of eLearning modules on tackling sexual harassment and drink spiking, with more in the pipeline. Check www.bristolnights.co.uk for more information.

Your policy should signpost the details of training expectations for different groups of staff. We have listed a few below. Take time to consider who is in your team and make sure to include all front-of-house staff.

Training for door supervisors

All door supervisors are required to be licensed. To attain their licence, candidates complete a compulsory training course which covers searching, first aid and drugs awareness. Details of relevant training are provided by the SIA.

Make sure that your door supervisors are briefed on your harm reduction policy. Your security

team are often the first responders, and how they manage a situation can either inflame it or control and manage it.

Adequate onboarding of your front of house teams is vital to embed a sense of care for your customers.

Training for medical/welfare staff

This may be provided by one of the specialist organisations who provide medical and welfare services at festivals, pubs and clubs. Ensure that your policy highlights how medical or welfare staff are made aware of your harm reduction approach.

EXAMPLE

All new medically trained welfare staff will be briefed at the beginning of the event on our harm reduction approach.

This is important, if your customers are assured of your harm reduction approach, you need to ensure that your medical and welfare staff meet them with a non-judgemental response.

Training for cleaners

Cleaning staff should receive training in safe methods for the handling of any drugs in line and disposal of any drug paraphernalia found.

EXAMPLE

If cleaning staff discover drugs on their shift, they will notify the duty manager who will make a record in the incident book and secure the substances for later disposal, in line with the amnesty box procedure.

Any drug paraphernalia discovered by cleaning staff will be discarded in a hygienic manner, using gloves and washing hands afterwards.

Training for all staff

Ensure all of your staff are aware of your Harm Reduction Policy, including where to signpost customers for further support (e.g. through BDP) and that they know where to find out more information about different drugs and the symptoms or dangers to look out for. Consider incorporating this as part of your onboarding process.

Vitality... ensure all staff are trained in what to do in a drugs emergency.

Adequate onboarding of your front of house teams is vital to embed a sense of care for your customers.

COMMUNICATING THE POLICY TO CUSTOMERS

Communication is key. Ensure your policy highlights your strategy for letting your consumers know your approach to harm reduction. Consider displaying posters within the venue, on your website and social media channels. Think about where best to display these messages so that customers feel safe in coming forward to venue staff should they need help. Also consider any changes in harm reduction messages, for example if an alert is issued by drugs checking agencies.

EXAMPLE

We will print Bristol Nights harm reduction posters and display them in high traffic areas, such as the entry hall or back of toilet doors

- Harm reduction will be regularly communicated through our social media channels
- We will work with local drugs organisations such as Bristol Drugs Project and amplify their messaging
- When alerts are issued from drug checking agency The Loop, we will share these on our social media and display them in high traffic areas.

Bristol Nights assets

Bristol Nights have created a suite of assets with front-of-house harm reduction messaging. These have been created as a citywide response to harm reduction, and tested amongst the audience. The assets are free to download at www.bristolnights.co.uk/harm-reduction

REVIEWING YOUR POLICY

The policy should be a working document. Be sure to state when the policy is in effect from, when you intend to review it, and who is responsible. Consider updating on an annual basis. Make use of your incident book and feedback from staff as to how the policy is implemented, and incorporate any new techniques or advice.

Crucially, if you have any parts of the policy which are ineffective, consider updating them.

Be sure to share your best practice with the wider Bristol Night Time Economy.

EXAMPLE

This policy is effective from [date], and will be reviewed annually.

The policy will be reviewed by the General Manager, who will reflect on feedback from staff and entries in our incident book to update or amend the policy where appropriate.



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Living document

This is designed to be a living document and we welcome any feedback. Our collective understanding of harm reduction, safety, adversity and trauma, is constantly evolving, and this document is designed to be developed alongside this ever-growing body of evidence. If you have any feedback on this document, or any other Bristol Nights initiative, please email us at: NTEadvisor@bristol.gov.uk

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FURTHER READING

- **BDP - The Drop** <https://www.bdp.org.uk/harm-reduction-advice/>
- **The Loop** <https://wearetheloop.org/>
- **Crew 2000** <https://www.crew.scot/drugs-information/get-our-stuff/>
- **Safer Nightlife** <https://www.safernightlife.info/>
- **The Global State of Harm Reduction** <https://hri.global/flagship-research/the-global-state-of-harm-reduction/the-global-state-of-harm-reduction-2022/>
- **Drugs Wise – Promoting evidence based information on drugs, alcohol and tobacco** <https://www.drugwise.org.uk/harm-reduction-drugs/>
- **National Harm Reduction Coalition (USA based)** <https://harmreduction.org/>
- **Talking to a young person about drugs and alcohol** <https://www.changegrowlive.org/advice-info/family-friends/parents-carers-talking-about-drugs-alcohol-with-your-child>
- **Principles for Trauma Informed Practice** <https://bristolsafeguarding.org/media/rmlbpe2u/bnssg-principles-for-trauma-informed-practice-march-2021-web-version.pdf>
- **How drugs affect the body** <https://www.priorygroup.com/effects-of-drugs-on-the-body>
- **The Drugs Wheel by Mark Adley** www.thedrugswheel.com



Scan for more information or visit:
www.bristolnights.co.uk

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bristolnights.co.uk/harm-reduction

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