

# Alcohol Pre-loading

Survey of Licensing Authorities

August 2016



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## Summary

The House of Lords Select Committee on the Licensing Act 2003 invited the LGA to provide evidence on the scale of alcohol pre-loading as an issue for councils during a hearing for oral evidence in July 2016. The purpose of this survey was to collect that evidence.

There is no formal definition of pre-loading but in essence it is the consumption of alcohol in the home or on transport in advance of visiting, or on the way to, pubs, clubs or other venues. Pre-loading can range from a small glass of wine to a bottle of wine.

The aim of this online survey was to consider the relationship between alcohol consumption through pre-loading and rates of crime and disorder in the evening and night-time economy. Respondents were also asked about the extent to which pre-loading occurs in their local area and whether they had collected any data relating to pre-loading in their locality. The survey also asked about the health impacts of pre-loading and the extent to which respondents felt that councils and also licensing teams have a role in tackling pre-loading and whether they knew of any existing tools or practices that are effectively used to tackle it.

The survey was sent to 336 licensing authorities in England and Wales and was in the field between 9 August 2016 and 25 August 2016. A 42 per cent response rate was achieved.

## Key messages

- **Pre-loading in the local area:** Sixty two per cent of respondents said that pre-loading occurred in their area to either a great or moderate extent.
- **Pre-loading data collection:** The majority of respondents (74 per cent) said that their authority had not collected any specific data or information relating to alcohol pre-loading in the local area. As such, most views are based on anecdotal evidence; some respondents observed that further academic study into this area would be useful.
- **Pre-loading and crime:** Two in in five (39 per cent) felt that there was a correlation between the pre-loading of alcohol and alcohol-related crime and disorder in their local area, to a great or moderate extent; the same proportion of respondents responded that they did not know (39 per cent).
- **Health impacts of pre-loading:** More than half of all respondents (52 per cent) said that the public health team or other local health body had not expressed concerns about the health impacts of pre-loading.
- **Tackling pre-loading:** Nearly half of all respondents (48 per cent) agreed that councils had a role to play in tackling pre-loading, compared to 34 per cent that agreed that licensing teams also have a role.
- **Tools and practices:** The majority of respondents (86 per cent) were not aware of any existing tools or practices that could be effectively used to tackle pre-loading.

## Introduction

This document reports on an LGA survey on alcohol preloading.

The purpose of the survey was to consider the relationship between alcohol consumption through pre-loading and rates of crime and disorder in the evening and night-time economy. Respondents were also asked about the extent to which pre-loading occurs in their local area, and whether they had collected any data relating to pre-loading in their locality. The survey also asked about the health impacts of pre-loading and the extent to which respondents felt that councils and also licensing teams have a role in tackling pre-loading and whether they knew of any existing tools or practices that are effectively used to tackle pre-loading.

The survey was conducted in response to an invitation by the House of Lords Select Committee on the Licensing Act 2003 for the LGA to provide evidence on the scale of alcohol pre-loading as an issue for councils during a hearing for oral evidence in July 2016.

These results will be used to inform the LGA's position on pre-loading and any measures that might be needed to address it. Comments reproduced here are for information and do not necessarily represent the LGA's views.

This report contains a full analysis of the findings.

## Methodology

The online survey was sent via email to 336 licensing authorities in England and Wales. It was in the field between 9 August and 25 August 2016, during which two reminders were sent out.

A total of 140 responses were received – a response rate of 42 per cent.

Whilst this is a standard response rate for a survey such as this, this level of response means that the results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than as representative of heads of policy or performance overall. However, it is fair to say that the results do provide a good indication of the position of the sector more widely.

Five authorities were responsible for more than one licensing mailbox to which the survey was sent – these we invited to provide a joint reply for all their respective authorities<sup>1</sup>.

A breakdown of response rate by authority type is shown in Table 1. There was a fairly consistent response across all authority type with the exception of metropolitan districts who had the lowest response rate at 22 per cent.

	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total authorities</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Districts	80	189	42
Unitary authorities (England and Wales)	36	78	46
Metropolitan districts	8	36	22
London borough	16	33	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>42</b>

Note: The survey was sent to all licensing authorities, therefore, does not include counties.

Table 2 breaks down the response rate by region. The table shows a broadly consistent response rate across regions, with the highest completion rate in the South West (51 per cent) and the lowest completion rate in the North East (25 per cent).

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<sup>1</sup> Adur and Worthing; Chiltern and South Bucks; Rother and Wealden; Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough, Daventry and East Northamptonshire; Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon, Wyre Forest

**Table 2: Breakdown of responses by region**

	Respondents	Total authorities	Response rate
	Count	Count	Per cent
East of England	22	47	47
East Midlands	11	36	31
Greater London	16	33	48
North East	3	12	25
North West	14	39	36
South East	26	64	41
South West	19	37	51
Wales	11	22	50
West Midlands	9	25	36
Yorkshire and Humber	9	21	43
Total	140	336	42

Please note the following when reading the report:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description in brackets refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the number who answered each question. Please note that bases vary throughout the survey.
- Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.
- The following conventions are used in tables: ‘\*’ - less than 0.5 per cent; ‘0’ – no observations; ‘-’ – category not applicable/data not available.



## Full Results

This section outlines the full set of survey results.

### Pre-loading in local area

Respondents were asked the extent to which pre-loading occurred in their local area.

Three in five respondents (62 per cent) said that pre-loading occurred to either a great or moderate extent in their locality (23 per cent and 39 per cent respectively). Fifteen per cent of respondents said pre-loading occurred to a small extent and only one per cent said that this was not the case at all. Twenty-two per cent did not know.

There was some variation by authority type. Of the Metropolitan and Unitary authorities that responded, 89 per cent and 92 per cent respectively said that pre-loading occurs in their local area to a great or a moderate extent; this is compared to 44 per cent of London boroughs and 49 per cent of districts. Caution should be taken when viewing variance by authority type as there was not an even distribution of respondents, and some groups were particularly small, for example Metropolitans, this can result in differences being magnified. See table 3 for details:

	<b>All respondents</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>London boroughs</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>Unitary</b>
	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
To a great extent	23	15	19	38	39
To a moderate extent	39	34	25	50	53
To a small extent	15	20	25	0	3
Not at all	1	1	0	13	0
Don't know	22	30	31	0	6

Base: All respondents (140)

### Pre-loading and crime

Respondents were asked to what extent they would say that there is a correlation between the pre-loading of alcohol and alcohol related crime and disorder in their local area. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents said that there was a correlation to either a great or to a moderate extent (16 per cent and 23 per cent respectively) however a similar number of respondents (39 per cent) did not know. See table 4 for details:

**Table 4: To what extent would you say there is a correlation between the pre-loading of alcohol and alcohol-related crime and disorder in your local area?**

	<b>Per cent</b>
To a great extent	16
To a moderate extent	23
To a small extent	20
Not at all	2
Don't know	39

Base: All respondents (140)

### Health impacts of pre-loading

Respondents were asked if the public health team or other local health body in their area had expressed concerns about the health impacts of pre-loading. More than half of all respondents (52 per cent) said that concerns had not been expressed. Twenty-four percent of respondents said that concern had been expressed and the same number did not know. See table 5 for details:

**Table 5: In your local area, has the public health team or other local health body, expressed concerns about the health impacts of pre-loading? (For instance, as a 'responsible authority' or in response to ambulance callouts.)**

	<b>Per cent</b>
Yes	24
No	52
Don't know	24

Base: All respondents (140)

### Pre-loading data or information collection

Respondents were asked if their council had collected any specific data or information relating to alcohol pre-loading in the local area. Only six per cent of respondents (eight authorities) said that data had been collected and the majority (74 per cent) said it had not. Twenty-one per cent of respondents did not know. See table 6 for details:

**Table 6: Has your council collected any specific data or information relating to alcohol pre-loading in your local area? (for example, related to policing, town centre management, hospital admissions or residents' quality-of-life.)**

	Per cent
Yes	6
No	74
Don't know	21

Base: All respondents (140 respondents)

Eight respondents described the nature of the data or information that their council had collected. Of those who provided information or data four were willing to share this with the LGA and the select committee and four were not. A summary is provided below:

- In collaboration with the public health team and XXX University an online confidential survey was designed to investigate the pre-loading behaviour of participants in the night-time leisure economy in XXX. It focused on two groups: university students and the members registered with three town centre nightclubs.
- Licensing officers have undertaken observation and surveys relating to specific premises/areas/applications
- XXX University undertook a 6 month study either side of Christmas, of individuals who had been arrested for violence/public order offences. Detainees were asked about their consumption patterns on the night of their arrest. Data also included offence type and demographics.
- Hospital Accident and Emergency admissions.
- Local public health team collated Cardiff-model data on alcohol-related hospital admissions. For one authority this data showed that more admissions derived from domestic addresses than from licensed premises.
- Public Health commissioned a report in 2014 aimed at identifying problem drinking in XXX. One of the categories looked at was 'pre loaders', and evidence was obtained. Two groups were identified – occasional pre loaders and regular pre loaders.
- Street pastor figures on bottles recovered in the streets in the XXX area. Old data from the medical facility run by the council are also held where the staff state 90% of individuals they see pre-load.

## Tackling pre-loading

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that councils have a role in tackling pre-loading. Nearly half (48 per cent) of respondents either strongly or tended to agree (14 per cent and 34 per cent respectively) and 25 per cent of respondents either strongly or tended to disagree (19 per cent and six per cent respectively). Twenty-five per cent neither agreed nor disagreed and one per cent (two respondents) did not know. See table 7 for details:

<b>Table 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that councils have a role in tackling pre-loading?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
Strongly agree	14
Tend to agree	34
Neither agree nor disagree	25
Tend to disagree	19
Strongly disagree	6
Don't know	1

Base: All respondents (140)

Respondents were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that licensing teams should have a role in tackling pre-loading. Thirty-four per cent of respondents agreed (10 per cent 'strongly agree' and 24 per cent 'tend to agree'). Thirty-nine per cent of respondents disagreed (24 per cent 'tend to disagree' and 15 per cent 'strongly disagree'). Twenty-six per cent neither agreed nor disagreed and one per cent (2 respondents) did not know. See table 8 for details:

<b>Table 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that licensing teams have a role in tackling pre-loading?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
Strongly agree	10
Tend to agree	24
Neither agree nor disagree	26
Tend to disagree	24
Strongly disagree	15
Don't know	1

Base: All respondents (140)

When asked if they agreed or disagreed that licensing teams *should* have a role in tackling pre-loading in the future, the majority of respondents (85 per cent) disagreed (48 per cent ‘tend to disagree’ and 37 per cent ‘strongly disagree’). No respondents strongly agreed and only six per cent tended to agree. See table 9 for details:

Table 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that licensing teams should have a role in tackling pre-loading in future?	
	Per cent
Strongly agree	0
Tend to agree	6
Neither agree or disagree	9
Tend to disagree	48
Strongly disagree	37
Don't know	0

Base: All respondents who strongly disagreed or tended to disagree that licensing teams have a role in tackling pre-loading (54)

Respondents were asked if they were aware of any tools or practices that could be used effectively to tackle pre-loading. The majority of respondents (86 per cent) did not know of any. See table 10 for details:

Table 10: Are you aware of any existing tools or practices that can be used effectively to tackle pre-loading?	
	Per cent
Yes	14
No	86

Base: All respondents (140 respondents)

## Details of tools/practices

Those respondents who did know of existing tools and practices provided some examples and a summary is given below. Full examples are listed in Annex B:

- **Use of breathalysers:** in clubs and pubs and to prevent entry to premises
- **Campaigns raising awareness:** amongst parents/schools, #TooDrunk scheme, Night-time Economy Management Group and Drinkaware assisting University Student Union to educate freshers to the risks involved with pre-loading; generally building strong links with local Universities and student union bars to try to change behaviours; pro-active engagement with

educational establishments through public health initiatives delivered by partner agencies.

- **Early intervention schemes:** using education, information and enforcement such as police powers to disperse people from town centres; whole-system Night Time Economy (NTE) schemes promoting self-responsibility and consequences of drunken behaviour by individuals.
- **Dispersal powers:** police can undertake early interventions on those who have pre-loaded excessively, turning people away from the NTE if they are already drunk when they arrive in the town
- **License conditions:** strict door policies / **Better training for door staff:** to refuse entry to prevent intoxicated persons entering licensed premises
- **Educational literature:** Working with off-licences and supermarkets
- **Cardiff Model:** hospital admissions data used to monitor trends and localities of incidents due to high levels of intoxication
- **Drinkaware Psychosocial intervention**
- **Minimum pricing legislation**

### Further comments on pre-loading

Respondents were invited to provide any further comments on pre-loading, seventy-five comments were received. Views were split between those who felt that licensing authorities could play a role in controlling, tackling or influencing pre-loading and those who felt that this was less the case and more a social issue, the responsibility of premises serving or selling alcohol or due to central government policy.

Some respondents suggested that pre-loading was either not an issue in their authority or that the extent to which pre-loading was an issue was unknown.

Summary responses have been themed below and full detailed responses are provided in Annex C.

## **Factors for licensing authorities being unable to influence preloading:**

### ***Individual freedom of choice:***

- Individuals have free access to alcohol and therefore the freedom to pre-load.
- Pre-loading is a difficult issue for licensing teams to act upon, influence and control as it usually takes place in people's private homes and often the effects only become apparent when people are actually inside licensed premises.
- Licensing teams can only act within the law and it is not an offence to consume alcohol however premises do commit an offence by serving someone who is drunk but this is very difficult to prove.
- Local authorities cannot be held responsible for what goes on in the domestic environment and are unable to monitor what goes on inside people's homes.

### ***Local Population:***

- A large student population increases the levels and impact of pre-loading on the NTE in some areas.

### ***Cost and availability of alcohol:***

- The 24/7 availability of cheap alcohol in supermarkets and off licenses
- The ability to obtain alcohol cheaply through bulk buy off sales; supermarket and off-license promotions
- The cost of alcohol within clubs compared to that which can be purchased more cheaply from supermarkets therefore young people in particular and people on lower incomes are going to be more inclined to pre-load to ensure that their night out 'goes further'.
- An increasing trend to drink at home socially with friends before coming out into the NTE.
- Alcohol is cheap in the supermarket and readily available and minimum pricing legislation has not proved effective in curbing alcohol consumption or pre-loading.
- Licensing teams could only tackle if mandatory licensing conditions are in place and the number of off-licenses can be restricted.

### ***Limited licensing team resources:***

- Licensing teams already have stretched resources in combating this issue and responsibility lies with Community safety teams and the education departments.
- With ever stretched resources there is already difficulty monitoring and enforcing the night time licensed economy without trying to monitor what goes on inside people's homes.

### ***Central Government responsibility:***

- The Government need to take the leading role in ensuring that licensed premises close earlier to create a reduction in excessive alcohol consumption, a reduction in the number of alcohol related illness and less alcohol related crime and disorder.
- The cost of alcohol needs to be tackled at a national level. Implementing local measures and licensing conditions are only going to scratch the surface with this issue.
- Central government need to resolve via pricing structures, and taxation policies aimed at moving people back into controlled alcohol environments and away from multiple cheap off-licences, where the only real control is age verification.

### ***Multi-agency working:***

- Pre-loading exists across society and any attempts to address it will need to be on a multi-agency basis. Multiple factors may influence pre-loading including bar prices, young people's lack of confidence and social skills in social situations.

### ***Nature of pre-loading:***

- Licensed premises are controlled environments which can control the amount of alcohol that is consumed in that particular premises only. Licensees are expected to refuse entry to persons who are already intoxicated however even when this occurs, the effects of pre-loading can, in some cases not take effect until after that person has entered the club or venue.



## **Suggestions for licensing authorities to influence pre-loading:**

### ***Control at licensed venues:***

- Better door control by those staff monitoring entry to licensed premises.
- Schemes for licensing education on pre-loading and serving customers whilst drunk.
- A form of effective screening at the entrance to bars and clubs may reduce pre-loading such as a 'breathalysed on entry' scheme.
- Stricter admission policies and a more robust approach both in not serving drunks and asking drunks to leave and having this as a collective approach in town centres.

### ***Partnership working:***

- The council and local police working to ensure licensing conditions are observed and the NTE managed.
- The council working with other agencies such as health services with regard to wider alcohol awareness.

### ***Education:***

- Educating broadly on the effects of alcohol- health messages but also educating children and young people about alcohol in a much wider and more relevant sense for them: its impacts on relationships; issues around consent; how it could impact on educational attainment, and finances etc.
- Parental education on the consequences of supplying their children with alcohol; alcohol in the home and increasing awareness of potential harms regarding exposure to alcohol at a young age and pre-loading.
- A public media campaign to highlight the risks of pre-loading.

### ***Cost and availability of alcohol:***

- Supermarket chains should be encouraged to amend their standard operating templates to reflect local issues of concerns.
- Increase alcohol duty
- Off sales should contribute more to local interventions. A levy should be amended to provide an increased contribution from the off trade. Pre-loading is significantly associated with low cost alcohol - a price related intervention may have the most impact.

### ***A review of the Licensing Act:***

- The Licensing Act 2003 currently does not provide any means for controlling consumption of alcohol as this is not a licensable activity, only the supply of alcohol.
- In the absence of a 'public health' licensing objective, local public health teams are limited in the actions they can take against off-licensed premises, as there tends to be no immediate impact at the premises or in its immediate vicinity, which could support sanctions or enforcement action. Introducing such controls and making off-licensed premises responsible for moderating alcohol harms would require a complete rethink of the Act and guidance.
- Consideration should be given to equating the rate of vat on alcohol and food served within the on and off trade making alcohol the same price when drunk at home or in a controlled licensed premises where the consumption and consequent behaviour of drinkers can be controlled .

### ***Increase personal accountability:***

- Place more personal accountability on people who drink to extreme levels when out socially for instance penalising them for their behaviour by serving fixed penalty notices to drunks – with an option of attending a 'drink aware course' as opposed to paying the fine.

### ***Creating a cultural shift:***

- Changing the cultural attitude to alcohol - the media depicts a 'cultural norm' of drunkenness and risk taking behaviours.

### **Not an issue/extent of issue unknown:**

Those respondents who suggested that pre-loading was either not an issue or one they knew little about provided the following reasons for this:

- There are no day to day issues in licensed premises except when major events are taking place. At these times the authority increase the welfare and messaging on consuming alcohol responsibly and retailing responsibility.
- Statistical information is needed regarding pre-loading; currently opinions are speculation, general assumptions and there is a general lack of evidence.
- Issues with alcohol consumption as a whole are known, but specifically pre-loading in its own right needs analysis.

- Hospital admissions data is collected in relation to alcohol but it is unknown if the admission is related to preloading or not.
- Most 'evidence' in respect of pre-loading is anecdotal or by way of observation or dialogue with customers at licensed venues or staff at licensed venues. It is one of those activities that everyone knows happens, but there is probably little hard evidence to back up that it does or highlight the negative effect that pre-loading has on health and on late night alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour.
- A small night-time economy so pre-loading is not an issue.

## Annex A: Survey Questions

To what extent would you say that pre-loading occurs in your local area?	
To a great extent	
To a moderate extent	
To a small extent	
Not at all	
Don't know	
Total	

To what extent would you say there is a correlation between the pre-loading of alcohol and alcohol-related crime and disorder in your local area?	
To a great extent	
To a moderate extent	
To a small extent	
Not at all	
Don't know	
Total	

In your local area, has the public health team, or other local health body, expressed concerns about the health impacts of pre-loading? (For instance, as a 'responsible authority' or in response to ambulance callouts.)	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	
Total	

Has your council collected any specific data or information relating to alcohol pre-loading in your local area? (For example, related to policing, town centre management, hospital admissions or residents' quality-of-life.)	
Yes	
No	
Don't know	
Total	

**Are you willing to share this data or information with the LGA and the Select Committee?**

Yes	
No	
Total	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that councils have a role in tackling pre-loading?**

Strongly agree	
Tend to agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Tend to disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	
Total	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that licensing teams have a role in tackling pre-loading?**

Strongly agree	
Tend to agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Tend to disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	
Total	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that licensing teams should have a role in tackling pre-loading in future?**

Strongly agree	
Tend to agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Tend to disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	
Total	

**Are you aware of any existing tools or practices that can be used effectively to tackle pre-loading?**

Yes	
No	
Total	

**Please give brief details of effective tools or practice that you know about**

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**Please use the space below to make any further comments about pre-loading**

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## Annex B: Details of tools/practices:

Police have requested one premises to use a breathalyser on customers upon entry but this was never enforced by the police

In XXXX we have used breathalysers in clubs and pubs as a backup tool to refuse entry to persons already too drunk to enter. I was personally involved in the scheme in XXX #too drunk. In Sweden (I believe) there is a scheme where the staff wear T shirts and have bar mats with faces on them on various scales of intoxication. They can refuse an alcoholic drink to a customer by placing a glass of water on the intoxicated face etc.

Turning people away from the night time economy if they are already in drink when they arrive on the town.

Breathalyse on entry campaigns raising awareness- parents/schools

Dispersal powers - Police can undertake early interventions on those who have pre-loaded excessively. Better training for door staff to refuse entry breathalysers - used successfully in some areas, but research needed to ascertain if the awareness training is more important than the equipment provided.

As part of the Night-time Economy Management Group we are assisting the University Student Union educating their freshers to the risks involved with pre-loading and Drinkaware are giving valuable assistance. The Group consists of local and licensing police, Business Improvement Group, Council Licensing, representatives of the trade (Pubwatch), Street Pastors, Homeless organisations.

Educational literature Work with off-licences including supermarkets

Strong links to local Universities and student union bars to try to change behaviours (students go out at midnight after drinking in halls of residence or homes in the earlier evenings) so already quite drunk before they go out. Also use Cardiff Model hospital admissions data to monitor trends and localities of incidents due to high levels of intoxication

Minimum pricing legislation

Breathalysers used by some premises to prevent intoxicated persons entering licensed premises. Door staff prohibiting entry to intoxicated persons generally not just those who have preloaded at home

We have implemented breathalysers to enable security/door staff to check alcohol levels prior to entry into a licensed premises, if they deem that necessary. This can't 'pick out' pre-loading as obviously alcohol consumption can take place within the evening and night time economy, but it is a tool for security staff and can act as a deterrent (to a degree) for pre-loading.

Condition on licences, not allowing entrance to people who appear to be drunk/pre-loaded

Licence conditions - strict door policies

DrinkAware psychosocial interventions

Early intervention schemes using education, information and enforcement such as police powers to disperse people from town centres; whole-system NTE schemes promoting self-responsibility and consequences of drunken behaviour by individuals.

Breathalysers on doors of pubs

Minimum pricing

Assessment of drunkenness on entering venues by door staff - this seems a key activity. Breathalyser use on doors - uncertain of the benefits.

Pro-active engagement with educational establishments through public health initiatives delivered by partner agencies (of which the Licensing Team at XXX is one) via our Joint Action Group (JAG). Public Health colleagues also directly raise awareness of the potential harms associated with irresponsible alcohol consumption



## Annex C: Further comments on pre-loading:

Licensing team could only try to tackle these issues if mandatory licensing conditions were in place regarding pricing, and the number of off licences could be restricted. As long as people have access to alcohol they can pre-load. Health promotion messages may assist.

It has always been an offence to serve alcohol to a person who appears to be intoxicated. Pub and bar operators cannot afford to be so diligent now. A sale is a sale. They cannot refuse parties of people because one or two are displaying bad behaviour

I believe all responsible authorities have a reasonability towards preloading and having dealt with licensing for 15 + years I am only aware of public health only ever commenting on one application

In my opinion the only way for Local Authorities/Licensing Teams to tackle this issue is through effective conditioning of licences regarding door staff monitoring those entering premises - possibly easier said than done though.

Certain parts of the country have tried many various schemes (mostly led by the Police). We did a conference in June 2015 for licensing educating them on pre-loading and serving customers whilst drunk. This was free of charge and well received. The police tried a voluntary scheme in XXXX to close all premises is 2am bringing customers out earlier preventing some of the pre-loading. This wasn't really a success as customers then went onto the neighbouring towns instead.

Pre-loading is a difficult issue for licensing teams to act upon. It usually takes place in people's private homes and often the effects only become apparent when people are actually inside licensed premises. Possibly some form of effective screening at the entrance to such premises may reduce pre-loading.

We know that pre-loading happens. We have a large student population that have reported anecdotally pre-loading before going out. The crime and disorder statistics we gather for the cumulative impact policies show that the hotspot times are between midnight and 4am, and this is also the time when footfall is at its highest. We have not undertaken specific work around pre-loading as it is difficult to identify where licensed premises can take responsibility as they are not able to control the drinking habits of their customers away from their premises. Pre-loading is entirely a result of off-licence sales and home drinking which is even more difficult, if not impossible to identify and control?

Whilst Public Health and mentioned preloading to be an issue we have no evidence of it actually being an issue in the XXXX. We have major concerts in our main park and also at a 10,000 capacity music venue in the XXXX. We work with the organisers of these events to put out positive messaging around consuming

alcohol. Some young people preload at home others preload whilst in the queue waiting to get into the venue. We discourage those who then want to knock back the entire bottle or can of alcohol because they are not being allowed into the venue with alcohol. We take it from them and place it in bins and they are given warnings about the danger of consuming alcohol quickly in such a manner. We do not have day to day issues in licensed premises in the XXXX. It is only when major events are taking place and we then step up the welfare and messaging on consuming alcohol responsibly and retailing responsibly also.

Pre-loading exists across society and any attempts to address it have to be on a multi-agency basis. We feel that there are multiple factors that might be the root cause of pre-loading including bar prices, lack of confidence and social skills due to increased use of social media meaning that youngsters lack confidence in social situations hence the emphasis on pre-loading. The subject is worthy of intensive academic research.

Without statistical information to support or counter any claims regarding pre-loading, opinions would be speculation.

This may be dealt with in other departments of the council and they may have statistics provided to them by the health authority but the licensing function which I manage does not have this level of detail. We know that people do pre-load, but do not have statistics to confirm this. We deal with licensing premises and so may have a route to increase knowledge among licence holders about pre-loading and action they could take. Teams within the Environmental Health department work with police and ASB coordinators and this could be another possible link.

People who 'pre-load' are no benefit for pubs and clubs as within half an hour of being allowed in they are likely to be drunk, don't spend money at the bar and are more likely to get into trouble. It creates a vicious circle because if venues aren't making money they may be tempted to put on drinks promotions that lead to more drunkenness. I would welcome the use of breathalysers at the entrances of pubs and clubs, if they deter people from trying to gain entry when they are drunk. I believe there is a scheme in operation in XXXX where some venues operate a breathalysed on entry scheme operated by SIA doormen. Individuals who do preload are putting themselves at risk and are more likely to end up in trouble by the end of the night. Therefore it can be much more difficult for licence holders to manage their premises safely, for the benefit of everyone else, if people are drunk when they walk in.

This survey is specific to preloading. The council and local police work well to ensure licensing conditions are kept to and night time economy managed. The council also works with other agencies such as health services with regard to wider alcohol awareness - I am unaware of anything specific to preloading. The ability to obtain alcohol cheaply, but legally, through bulk buy off sales contributes to preloading. There is a great imbalance between the unit cost of on and off sold alcohol which could encourage preloading

Pre loading is in my opinion a person individual decision to drink alcohol, to take away/attempt to regulate this would be a step too far in regulation in licensing in my opinion. It should be dealt with by way of education.

Am not sure how councils (Licensing) can control pre-loading - which usually occurs at home - Licensed premises are controlled environments which can control the amount of alcohol that is consumed on that particular premises only.

We know we have issues with alcohol consumption as a whole, but haven't really looked at pre-loading in its own right as yet.

The consumption of alcohol is not a licensable activity under the Licensing Act 2003. What an individual may or may not do in their private home before going out to licensed premises is not a matter for enforcement. There is provision in the Licensing Act 2003 to deal with persons who are served alcohol while intoxicated, a sections which to the best of my knowledge is seldom used.

We have no evidence to show that pre-loading is a big problem within XXXX although I suspect that it does happen. Licensees do say that people come out later than they used to, and appear to have been drinking but we do not have any information to show us where they had been drinking or where the alcohol was obtained.

You cannot extend laws into people's houses in respect of the licensing act it is the Licence Holders and DPS who should monitor their customers and not serve them if they are in drink

As an XXXX our preloading issue is associated with people visiting the area and buying 'cheap' alcohol from local off licences and supermarkets before going to pubs and clubs. There is also a smaller issue with people leaving pubs, buying cheap alcohol from local supermarkets and shops prior to moving on to the next pub/club. Our control mechanisms have largely been to limit licensing hours of new premises in hot spot areas and use our Late Night Levy funded patrols to assist people who have consumed too much alcohol. S182 guidance suggesting that LA should aim to permit off alcohol sales of alcohol from shops whilst they are open is outdated and should be deleted. Supermarket chains should be encouraged to amend their standard operating templates to reflect local issues of concerns.

I have received no evidence other than general assumptions that it is preloading that gives rise in the main to drunken behaviour later on in the night. Our night time economy is very limited and many of our residents attend larger towns etc. to enjoy what they see as a more vibrant night time economy.

We have no evidence to show that pre-loading is a big problem within XXXX although I suspect that it does happen. Licensees do say that people come out later than they used to, and appear to have been drinking but we do not have any evidence to show us exactly where they had been drinking or where the alcohol was obtained.

The biggest danger appears to be from those drinking a glass or 2 each night at home

Pre-loading creates a situation where the on trade have to deal with alcohol related disorder which is in part not of their making. Off sales should contribute more to local interventions Levy should be amended to provide an increased contribution from the off trade. Pre-loading is significantly associated with low cost alcohol - a price related intervention may have the most impact

We tried to involve local private hire firms but their response was that they were there to transport people and that included those coming into town when sober or otherwise and then taking them home again at the end of the night when they were anything else but sober.

Licensing teams can only act within the law and it is not an offence to consume alcohol however premises do commit an offence by serving someone who is drunk but this is very difficult to prove. Perhaps the legislation needs to be looked at? how do you define drunk? do you have to breathalyse every customer before they buy a drink? or to gain entry to a premises? More education/ health messages/ nudging on the overconsumption of alcohol is probably needed but it is now socially accepted to have a drink as part of the preparation for going out.

We are a rural XXXX with some parishes on the urban fringe of XXXX and some small market towns. Pre-loading not likely to be a big problem for us.

The Police have commented that people tend to buy cheaper alcohol from the large supermarkets and do not go out to the pubs and clubs until later in the evening

Here in XXXX it is pretty evident that a number of people attend our night time economy in the early hours knowing that clubs are open until 5am or 6 am. It is also evident that some of these people have pre-loaded at home when you see them getting out of the taxi's and trying to gain access into our clubs. We, as the Police Licensing department have spoken with licensees and expect them to refuse entry to persons who are already intoxicated. This is being done, however, the effects of pre-loading can, in some cases not take effect until after that person has entered the club. We intend to publish a public survey to gauge to what extent visitors to our NTE pre-load and what, if any, their experience of violent crime is within the NTE. The issue lies around the cost of alcohol within clubs compared to that which can be purchased from supermarkets. It appears there is an increasing trend to drink at home socially with friends before coming out into the NTE. I believe that a public media campaign would be beneficial highlighting the risks.

Pre-loading will always exist when alcohol is cheap to buy. The answer may not rest entirely with a raise in price of alcohol per unit but it may help somewhat. There will always be inconsistencies regarding responsible retailing and this needs to be tackled through enforcement and also parents need to be educated on the consequences of supplying their children with alcohol.

We have taken steps with premises to mitigate the impact of pre loading through admissions to premises. This work has been undertaken with particular attention to younger drinkers.

Pre-loading or pre-drinks as it is fashionably called is not new. Binge drinking is not new, there is an argument that the old licensing regime created the problem of binge drinking by early closing times and having to drink as much as you can before 11pm. Pre-loading is not also new, albeit the culture has changed. Pre-loading ranges from sharing a couple of bottles of wine whilst getting ready to go out to full scale drinking games involving a variety of alcohol and shots. The difference here is that whilst the older age group enjoy alcohol as a way to relax the younger age groups 18-24+ drink to get drunk and not because they enjoy it. Alcohol is cheap in the supermarket and readily available, minimum pricing legislation has not proved effective in curbing alcohol consumption or pre-loading, however we must not make it so expensive that we penalise those who want to drink at home responsibly. In XXXX crime is very low and cannot be attributed solely to pre-loading. A responsible operator who refuses admission to a pre-loader because they are so drunk may have his premises recorded as the last named location the offender visited if they go and commit crime near the venue. Sensibly our police recognise this. We also have a new culture of 'after parties' where young people will get together at someone's home after a night out to carry on drinking. The objective behind pre-loading is to get drunk, not because the pre-loader enjoys it. I have seen evidence provided to the select committee about banning larger supermarkets from advertising drinks discounts in their windows. This does not have any effect at all and the large chains will agree to this condition just to get their premises licence granted. Large supermarket chains do not have to rely on advertising cheap alcohol. I hope my comments are useful.

XXXX is a diverse XXXX with, in many places, a very elderly population and in some areas a very high student population. It is the latter that subscribe to pre loading before nights out. We also have a high density of young people visiting on holiday and again there is some evidence of pre loading on campsites. I don't see how licensing can utilize their already stretched resources in combating this issue and feel this responsibility lies with Community safety teams and the education departments. I would also comment that it is very difficult to gain evidence of pre loading short of undertaking a night time survey and from experience most persons are too intoxicated to provide adequate responses.

As part of the joint development of the County Wide Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Pre loading and side loading (popping out of the pub to the off licence for a top up )are a significant factor in refusals to licensed premises many of which end up as or result in significant disorder, the committee should look at the significant harm that access to unlimited amounts of alcohol particularly from supermarkets is doing to the on licensed trade

As part of the joint development of the County Wide Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Licensing Act 2003 does not provide any means for controlling consumption of alcohol as this is not a licensable activity, only supply of alcohol. That Act is generally permissive towards off-sales of alcohol, as disorder/health harms are unlikely to occur at those premises. In the absence of a 'public health' licensing objective, local public health teams are stymied in the actions they can take against off-licensed premises, as there tends to be no immediate impact at the premises or in its immediate vicinity which could support sanctions or enforcement action. Introducing such controls and making off-licensed premises responsible for moderating alcohol harms would require a complete rethink of the Act and guidance, and would likely attract significant opposition from major multiple retailers.

This is learnt behaviour and it is now acceptable for people to pre-load. Bars and Clubs that attract people who preload should apply stricter admission policies and be more robust both in not serving drunks and asking drunks to leave. They need to do this collectively in town centres. If all partner agencies then support the licensed trade it is likely that within three months there will be a significant reduction in people 'pre-loading'. The reality is that people want to go out and mix with each other more than they want to 'pre-load'. They only pre-load because they can. It is our acceptance of this behaviour that needs to change; once the authorities declare this behaviour unacceptable and act accordingly we will see an impact. We also need to place more personal accountability on people who drink to extreme levels when out socially, this is the binge drinkers as opposed to people who have an alcohol addiction. If such people were penalised for their behaviour it may lead to them deciding to make changes. This could be achieved by empowering, and motivating, the police into serving fixed penalty notices to drunks - then like speed aware courses, we could introduce an option of attending a 'drink aware course' as opposed to paying the fine. Change will only occur when society collectively deems pre-loading as unacceptable. At the moment we do not - instead we accommodate this unacceptable behaviour, for example 'field hospitals' in town centres for drunks - WHY?

I am aware from our Licensing Police Officer that it is a concern in the wider XXXX area.

The price of alcohol supplied from supermarkets and off licences needs to be centrally controlled. Impossible to monitor what is consumed in domestic properties. Even if off licence outlets could be limited in an area, there are already sufficient outlets to supply those that wish to pre-load alcohol at the low prices that supermarkets can afford to retail their products at.

This is an issue that can make it difficult for on-licensed premises, as they may not be aware of the intoxication level of customers on arrival, and there is anecdotal evidence that just one drink can tip someone over the edge if they were on the brink of intoxication on arrival due to pre-loading

We find it very difficult to engage with the off-trade for a number of reasons: - Major supermarkets do not want to engage on a local level (on for example pricing, promotions etc.) - A lot of the independent supermarkets/off licences operate differently from on sales in that staff are normally on minimum wage, poorly trained

and cultural/language barriers exist - Unlike premises licensed for on sales, we struggle to get supermarkets/off licences to see the bigger picture in terms of social responsibility (i.e. beyond just their own store). We have funded some academic reached to look at the issues of off preloading etc. but no outcomes yet. Early days.

A number of Licensees point to preloading by customers as a root cause of intoxication of their clientele and / or incidents that take place at their respective premises. All licensees will distance themselves from having sold alcohol to these persons.

The Council collects data with respect to hospital admissions related to alcohol but we do not know if the admission is related to preloading or not. In XXXX we have undertaken breath testing prior enter at certain night clubs etc. which assists in tackling pre-loading. Students can be a particular problem they pre-load on cheap wine cider and lager and then go out. How this can be stopped is a difficult problem to solve, but I do feel the breathalyser is a good indication of pre-loading

For me the questions in this survey are perhaps missing some key points. Whilst I support from a community safety partnership and licensing perspective, the need to support this agenda, at a local level we can only ever hope to achieve a certain degree of change. In terms of pre-loading there are issues we have control of, influence of and no control/influence of. To generate real/tangible change the issues that require tackling at a national level are: Cost of alcohol. Alcohol in supermarkets is inexpensive but conversely alcohol in licensed premises is more expensive. Young people in particular and people on lower incomes are going to be more inclined to pre-load to ensure that their night out 'goes further'. Implementing local measures and licensing conditions are only going to scratch the surface with this issue. Cultural attitude to alcohol - the media (particularly television) is now littered with 'reality shows' that depict (and some may argue encourage) risk taking behaviours. This has created a 'cultural norm' of drunkenness. Cigarette advertising does not take place, however alcohol advertising is still glamorised in many media forms including television. Product placement - supermarket alcohol sections are now the same size, if not larger than the section of their premises dedicated to fresh fruit and vegetables. Alcohol products are often placed as offers directly at the front of (and throughout) stores. On a national level there appears to be little accountability across that trade/industry in terms of how alcohol is being product placed. If some supermarkets took the stance to remove sweets from their till-points in an effort to reduce consumption of sugar in children, it seems remarkable that alcohol can be stacked at the entrances/exits within the same stores. Government stance on alcohol when compared with other issues - the changes due to the implementation of smoke-free legislation have been on-going and demonstrated a dedicated commitment to eradicating (or attempting to) smoking within the UK. The changes have been robust (no smoking in premises, no smoking in vehicles, hidden from view cigarette packaging, and a suite of other measures on the horizon) however activity around alcohol does not appear to have the same degree of robustness and yet arguably causes more health, community safety and societal harm. Alcohol education - in terms of preventing issues, much alcohol education within

schools still appears to be focused around purely 'health needs'. In my view we need to be educating children and young people about alcohol in a much wider and more relevant sense for them: its impacts on our relationships; issues around consent; how it could impact on educational attainment, and finances etc. Alcohol in the home - as far as I know we have not completed any full scale research into pre-loading in our area, however from activity I'm involved in (CSE prevention for example) we know that many children and young people are consuming alcohol not purchased from premises, but taken from home. So I think in terms of community safety when we're considering pre-loading we do also need to consider safeguarding issues.

Whilst it is possible to buy 4 cans or a bottle of wine in the supermarket for less than the price of one beer or glass of wine in a pub, pre-loading will continue to be a problem. Do supermarkets really need to sell alcohol 24/7? I appreciate that there has to be consumer choice, but we appear to have gone too far where alcohol is concerned. Whilst drinking in pubs is supervised and carefully controlled, drinking at home or anywhere else is not and this is where the problem lies.

In the main, pre-loading occurs because of two reasons; a) it is more affordable than paying higher prices in on-licensed premises and b) the terminal hours for licensed premises are far too late. This encourages people to pre-load in the knowledge that they can visit late night venues until 4am or later. The Government urgently need to take the leading role in ensuring that licensed premises close earlier. Then, and only then, will we see a reduction in excessive alcohol consumption, a reduction in the number of alcohol related illness and less alcohol related crime and disorder.

The relaxation in off sales legislation has seen a huge swing from drinking alcohol in a controlled environment to drinking away from a controlled environment. It is a flaw in the legislation that has allowed this, a tax on off sales might assist

Clearly individuals pre-load as it is cheaper; the difference between the price of off & on sales is too great.

I agree that pre-loading is a problem, but I feel it is one for central government to resolve via pricing structures, and taxation policies aimed at moving people back into controlled alcohol environments and away from multiple cheap off-licence type premises, where the only real control is age verification.

We have a vibrant night time economy, and a large student population, however, we have no evidence to say that pre-loading is occurring or that it is causing problems in any of our towns if it is taking place.

The only truly effective way to deal with pre-loading is to increase alcohol duty; but that requires a government with an appetite to do so and I cannot see that happening soon.

As the majority of pre-loading is carried out in a home environment this would be regulating when and how people consume alcohol in their homes. How would you ever be able to regulate if the sale of alcohol purchased at a supermarket on a



Thursday evening was for moderate consumption by a responsible adult at home on Saturday night or brought with the sole purpose of pre-loading by an adult before going out for the evening?

Unfortunately most 'evidence' in respect of pre-loading is anecdotal or by way of observation or dialogue with customers at licensed venues or staff at licensed venues. In other words it is one of those activities that everyone knows happens, but there is probably little hard evidence to back up that it does or highlight the negative effect that pre-loading has on health and on late night alcohol related crime and anti- social behaviour. Later licensing hours, high alcohol prices in Clubs and bars and cheap alcohol to buy in bulk from supermarkets has seen an exceptional growth of this problem/trend and which does not look like decreasing anytime soon. A minimum unit price for alcohol would help to control and eventually reduce this problem. Most people enjoy a drink, but there is no real way to control, regulate or monitor the consumption of alcohol other than when it takes places in responsible and well managed licensed premises. Personally I have some degree of sympathy and understanding for late night club and bar owners in particular who often suffer the fallout from incidents that have occurred through and because of pre-loading, but which get statistically linked to such late night clubs and bars simply because that is where the customer has ended up and may not have been feeling the full effects of at the time they entered the venue. That having been said, many late night clubs and bars could do more to deny access to customers already the worse for wear. Many don't however for fear of losing custom and revenue to other late night venues, or because they are concerned that they will be do not feel confident of not being blamed for something happening to an individual customer if they get turned away from the venue. Town's that have 'SOS' Buses/Facilities that can provide a safe space and low level medical care to drunk or vulnerable persons are invaluable to helping mitigate some of these issues and also relieve pressure on hard pressed A&E departments.

Best people to ask about this would be the licensed trade. Endemic amongst student populations

As far as I'm aware this authority has had no notification from any responsible body that there is a problem of pre-loading in this area

Not subject of any specification by this council at this time

Very low crime levels in XXXX. Tend to be related to activity around pubs, not necessarily an influence of pre-loading. The phrase 'pre-loading' gives impression of intention to over-consume and potentially pejorative. It is a frequent activity but predominantly as part of social behaviour either at home or outside. There are obvious public health issues around alcohol consumption and impact on health and social care services, regardless of pre-loading. It is in the interests of licensing departments to issue licences and generate income. It is the duty of licensees to act responsibly.

The consumption of alcohol is not a licensable activity as defined under the Licensing Act 2003. There is existing control measures in place for dealing with persons who are drunk and serving persons who are drunk while on licensed premises.

Pre-loading allows consumers to consume more alcohol for their money (off-sales being considerably cheaper than on-sales). In many cases, it is a consequence of the longer hours for on-licensed premises, as there is now a longer period time to stay at home and drink before going out. Most late on-licensees in my area have confirmed that consumers are arriving into the NTE already drunk - they purchase very little extra alcohol and just make use of the facilities. XXXX has seen a significant reduction in the number of on-licensed premises in its NTE area and this is largely being blamed on the consequences of pre-loading.

XXX licensing have weekly meetings with the local police to discuss the previous weekend and plan for the next. Anecdotally it has been noted that drunkenness has increased. Speaking to licensees they consistently cite pre-loading as the reason. In addition and only exacerbating the situation the clubs offer drink promotions to attract customers earlier. It should be the aspiration that licensed premises are safe places to consume alcohol. Pre-loading and subsequent drink offers does need tackling.

How do you stop people lawfully purchasing alcohol and consuming it before they go out for an evening? Unenforceable!

As a University City, I am aware of issues relating to pre-loading but have not had the opportunity to obtain information from the University. I understand that the University would be happy to provide details of their experience/concerns, if required.

It's a wider question that needs to be addressed and at the heart of it would seem to be the freedoms of a society almost. Most pre-loading takes place in the home, and to legislate against that would be draconian. Methods such as breathalysing everyone entering into a pub would also be draconian and would hurt the pub trade. Ultimately it's a culture thing, people have been driven to drink more at home before going out simply because it is now too expensive to sit in a bar or club or night drinking.

Local authorities cannot be held responsible for what goes on in the domestic environment. With ever stretched resources and 12 years of stagnant fees we can barely get out to monitor and enforce the night time licensed economy without trying to monitor what goes on inside people's homes. Off sale prices could be increased but that penalises the much larger majority of people who wish to drink socially at home and who do not go out into the night time economy. Education from a reasonable age may help.

Consideration should be given to equating the rate of VAT on alcohol and food served within the on and off trade - make alcohol the same price drunk at home or in a controlled licensed premises where the consumption and consequent behaviour of drinkers can be controlled

Management at licensed venues can and should tackle this problem to an extent by better door control.

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In my experience Local Authorities strive to raise awareness of the potential harms regarding exposure to alcohol at a young age and pre-loading however it is not always easy to engage with parents/guardians and/or 'responsible' adults regarding the subject matter.

Pre-loading appears to be a particular issue for the late night premises in our area with many premises stating that customers are only attending late at night and appear to be under the influence of alcohol with some instances of disorder occurring as a result, this 'unsupervised' drinking having a potential negative impact.

In XXXX we have a very small night time economy as our area is made up of a collection of small towns villages together, our neighbouring XXXX have a large night time economy. There are no night clubs in our borough and most pubs close around 1am so "pre-loading" is not an issue due to the closing times, of the handful of larger more popular pubs that have licences till around 2am most do have door staff in place, which counter acts the "Pre loading" if people are too intoxicated to enter the pubs later on in the evening.

Specifically referencing the Licensing Act 2003 and the role of the Licensing Authority I think it will be particularly hard to control the sale of alcohol to people who are pre-loading, as it will not be apparent what the purchaser will do with their alcohol. Other parts of the council may have a role to play, but I don't see that the legislation provides licensing officers with powers to affect it.

I am aware to some extent that pre-loading does occur, and we have seen it here in the XXXX during festivals where younger persons tend to pre-load on the way to festivals.

Pre-loading usually occurs at home before going out, it might be necessary to have a national campaign or through education at high schools and colleges. Introduction of the MUP but how effective this would be is debatable because youths prefer Vodka.

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