

Police Scotland

Appendix A – Spiking Information Toolkit

Introduction

Welcome to the toolkit for spiking awareness. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide consistent messaging and reassurance about Police Scotland's approach to reports of incidents of spiking in pubs and clubs across Scotland.

We would like your support to ensure all licensed premises, including student unions, and all relevant stakeholders have information about spiking and how to prevent it. We hope this will provide reassurance to communities and those who attend licensed premises.

Included in this toolkit is:

- Information about spiking
- Key messages/statement
- Guidance for licensed premises
- Links to further information and guidance
- Suggested police divisional social media posts
- Suggested posts for licensees

Background

This year reports of spiking by injection circulated on social media and were picked up by the media. This resulted in an increase in reports to police forces across the UK, including Police Scotland. This has come in the midst of a national discussion about Violence Against Women and Girls, concerns around women's safety and calls for more to be done to keep women safe.

Police Scotland has a role to play in issuing advice and information around spiking, to provide reassurance and to warn perpetrators that we are taking this criminality seriously. We work in collaboration with partner organisations on prevention. This toolkit supports these objectives.

Our messaging is focused on bystanders and perpetrators. We want people to report if they see something suspicious, to step in if they think someone may be at risk or see someone behaving suspiciously.

Most people reporting incidents of spiking, whether in drinks or by injection, are women, aged between 17 – 27 years of age. Most incidents occur at the weekend. While the number of incidents reported continues to reduce, it is likely that this is an under-reported crime.

National Message

Police Scotland's national, positional statement is:

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie, PPCW, Police Scotland said:

"We continue to investigate reports from people having been "spiked" either with a needle or in their drink. Thankfully there has been a reduction in such instances and at this time we do not believe that any of the reports are linked. We are not always able to determine the reasons why a perpetrator carries out an assault in this way, but would like to reassure you that every report is taken seriously and perpetrators are dealt with swiftly and robustly.

"People, should be able to go out for a night out without fear of being spiked. We are working with a range of partners, both locally and nationally, to ensure licensed premises are safe spaces for all, through the continued delivery of ByStander Awareness training.

"We are also working in partnership with other emergency services, student bodies, Universities/Colleges and Third Sector organisations to raise awareness and provide support for anyone effected.

"We would encourage anyone who believes they have had their drink spiked or been assaulted in this way to contact Police Scotland on 101 or in an emergency 999."

Target Audiences

- Offenders
- Bystanders (including licensees)
- Students: significant concern has been reported by student bodies
- Wider public

This information and messaging will be aimed at bystanders and perpetrators.

We want to support licensees and those who work in pubs and clubs to spot the signs of spiking and ensure their premises are a safe place for all.

We want to reassure communities including student communities, that we take all reports seriously and that we will thoroughly investigate them all.

We want to encourage people to report any incidents of spiking and emphasise to offenders that we are taking all reports very seriously. It is hoped that by working with licensees we will have a deterrent effect on potential perpetrators, if they see that premises are taking real action against spiking.

We want to deter offenders.

Police Scotland Key Messages:

- People should be able to go out for a night out without fear for their safety including being spiked.
- Spiking, whether by adding drugs or alcohol to someone's drink, or by injection, without their consent, is a criminal offence.

- We are not always able to determine the reasons why a perpetrator carries out an assault in this way.
- Spiking can put people at significant risk of harm.
- Police Scotland takes every report of spiking extremely seriously and will investigate robustly.
- We are working with a range of partners, locally and nationally, to ensure pubs and clubs are safe spaces for all.
- We are providing advice and support, working in communities, with licensees, pubs and clubs. We are also offering bystander training to help spot the signs of when someone may be at risk.
- We are reaching out to student communities to offer advice, support and reassurance.
- If you believe you have been targeted or subjected to spiking whether by injection or in your drink, or think that a friend or someone you know has been targeted, then please report to Police Scotland on 101, or in an emergency always call 999.
- Anyone who reports being spiked will be taken seriously. Our investigations are victim-centred, ensuring people who report a crime are supported. Our focus is on investigating the crime being reported and identifying potential offenders.
- We would encourage anyone who believes they have had their drink spiked or been assaulted in this way to contact Police Scotland on 101 or in an emergency 999.

Attachments:

- Guidance for the licensed trade
- Links to further advice and information
- Social Media messaging

Relevant campaign messaging

Guidance for the Licensed Trade/Student Union

Spiking is when someone adds alcohol or drugs to another person's drink without their knowledge or consent and is a criminal offence.

Spiking by injection is when a needle is used to inject drugs into a person without their knowledge or consent and is also a criminal offence.

As a licensee you will want to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your customers when they are within, and around, your premises.

There are a number of steps you can take to help avoid incidents occurring:

- Train your staff to be aware of the possibility of drinks being spiked and encourage them to monitor unattended drinks

- Train your staff to recognise the signs of a person who may have had their drink spiked - this includes suddenly appearing intoxicated, drowsiness, vomiting or being disorientated.
- If anyone is acting suspiciously around unattended drinks challenge them or ask them to leave the premises immediately
- If a customer reports that their drink tastes or smells unusual, don't hesitate to replace the drink. If there is suspicion that the drink may have been spiked seize the drink and report it to the police immediately
- If a customer reports having their drink spiked be mindful they may not be the only one. Alert all staff, increase vigilance and consider patrols, CCTV monitoring and lighting of your premises
- If a customer appears drowsy, disorientated or showing signs of intoxication take action and assist - particularly those who may have become isolated or separated
- Don't hesitate to assist customers who appear suddenly intoxicated or disorientated - even if they are in the company of others
- Be vigilant and prepared to intervene when strangers offer assistance to anyone within, or outside, your premises
- Door stewards should be alert to persons loitering outside premises for no apparent reason and be prepared to challenge them
- Consider adopting a policy of personal search as a condition of entry to your premises
- Display clear signage informing customers that refusal to be searched will result in refusal of entry
- Consider increased numbers of door stewards to ensure thorough searches of customers
- Stewards should be encouraged to pay attention to items within wallets/purses/small pockets that could easily be missed. All searches should be carried out in a polite and professional manner.
- All incidents of drink spiking or spiking by injection should be reported to the police at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure all investigative opportunities are maximised, evidence is preserved and the likelihood of bringing offenders to justice is increased
- Licensed premises are in a position to make a significant contribution to the safety of their customers and enhance the experience for customers and staff through education and engagement.

Useful Links:

Crew2000 [Updates \(crew.scot\)](#)

Fearless [Home - Fearless](#)

Victim Support Scotland [Home - Victim Support Scotland](#)

Scottish Alcohol Industry Partnership [Scottish Alcohol Industry Partnership \(saip.org.uk\)](#)

Institute of Licensing Scotland [Region: Scotland | Institute of Licensing](#)

Security Industry Authority [Security Industry Authority - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix B – What to expect when you make a report of spiking

Police Scotland takes all reports of spiking seriously and your report will be fully investigated.

The most important concern at the time of the report is the welfare of the person who may have been spiked. Your safety and welfare is our priority and medical assistance will be requested if necessary.

Our investigation will focus on the crime reported and on identifying those responsible for potential spiking offences. Officers will want to maximise all opportunities to fully investigate your report, so once your welfare is taken care of, they will ask you to provide an account of what has happened. They may also want to speak to your friends or people you were with, as they may be able to provide additional and important detail. This will allow officers to understand what has happened and to put an appropriate plan in place.

You may be asked to provide a urine and/or blood sample for analysis at our laboratory. These will only be taken with your full consent.

You will never be forced to provide these, but they will assist the investigation. These may be taken at a Police Station or other appropriate place.

You will also be advised of partner agencies who may be able to support you.