

12.4 Best Bar None

Improvement Project Title: Increase the number of licensed premises awarded Best Bar None status by 2021.

Executive Sponsor

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Aim statement

To increase the number of alcohol on-sales licensed premises in Aberdeen achieving Best Bar None status by 25 % by December 2021.

(Baseline Data – In 2018, 25 premises achieved Best Bar None status)

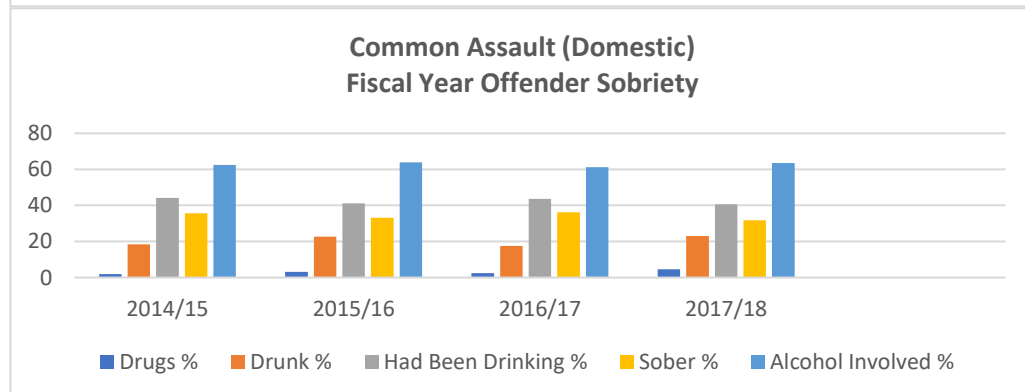
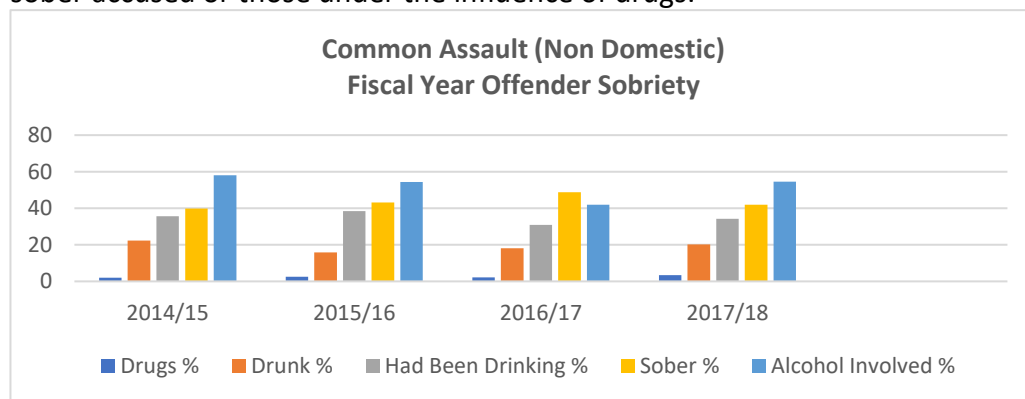
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan

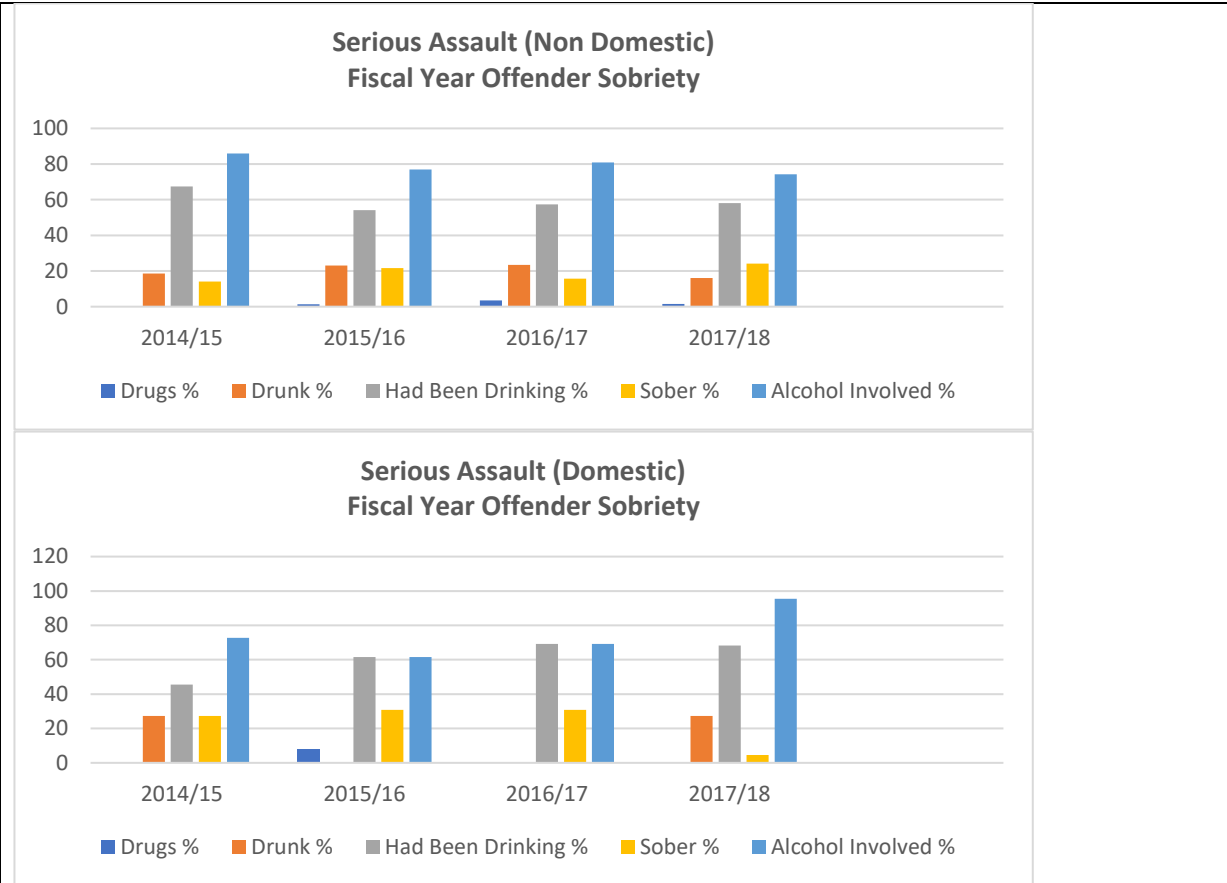
This project comes under Stretch Outcome 12: *Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026.*

The project supports the delivery of this aim by increasing safety standards within licensed premises to reduce the risk of vulnerability and harms associated with alcohol consumption.

Why this is important

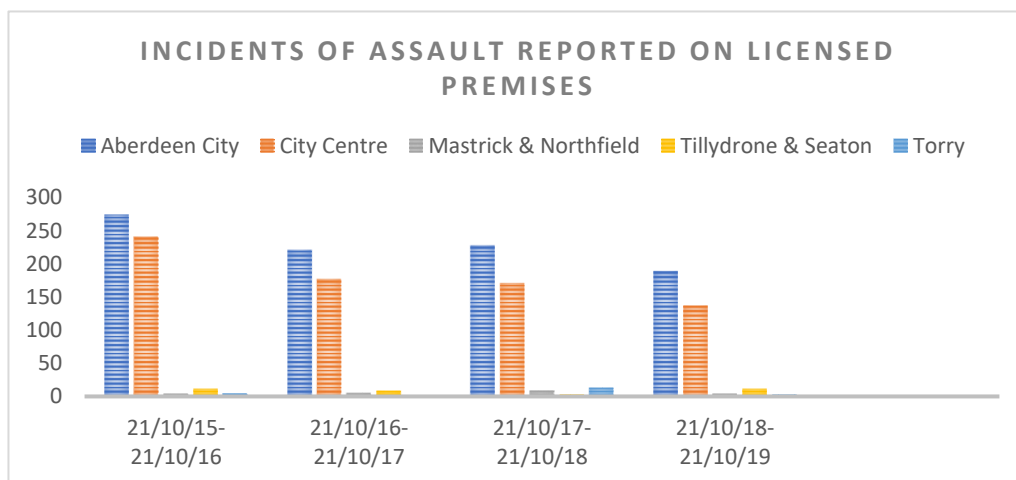
Alcohol and violence are intrinsically linked both within public and private spaces. It is known that an individual is at greater risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence where alcohol is an aggravating factor. According to the British Crime Survey 2017/18, 46% of offenders responsible for a violent crime were believed to be under the influence of alcohol (up from 42% in 2016/17). Figures for Aberdeen between 2014 and 2018 show a similar correlation between sobriety and violent assaults across the City when compared to sober accused or those under the influence of drugs:





The above figures illustrate alcohol being a significant factor in the sobriety of offenders of some of the most harmful violent crime against some of the most vulnerable victims.

The following diagram makes a further connection between the proportion of violent crimes committed on licensed premises in Aberdeen between 2015 and 2019. The diagram illustrates the overwhelming number of violent crimes committed on licensed premises in Aberdeen City Centre when compared to non-commercial districts:



Such a correlation is unsurprising given the density of licensed, particularly on-sales licensed premises is significantly higher in the City Centre than in more outlying residential areas.

Previous research shows there to be a link between violent crime and the ease of access and availability of alcohol.

The cost of violent crime is evident not only in terms of physical and emotional harms but also the financial impact on already stretched public services. In relation to the Criminal Justice System alone, the cost of each Serious Assault is £27,278 and for a Common Assault the figure is £7,394. Indeed, in 2012 the cost of alcohol-related violence across Aberdeen's public services was put at £120m.

Best Bar None was launched in 2003 by Greater Manchester Police to address alcohol related crime in the City and since then it has rolled out nationally, launching in Scotland in 2005 and Aberdeen in 2006. It was developed in response to the increase in violent crime across towns and cities in the UK much of which could be attributed to the development of the weekend night time economy but also to the increasing accessibility and availability of alcohol from on and off-sales premises (British Crime Survey). Similar research made the link between violent crime and licensed premises where there were poor management practices and standards. Further links were made between the harms caused by irresponsible sales of and consumption of alcohol, there was increasing recognition of the need to mitigate against those risks.

Best Bar None exemplified the shifting recognition of wider alcohol harms onus onto the licensing industry to adopt more socially responsible practices to promote responsible drinking cultures and attitudes within on-sales premises and reduce the impact of alcohol related crime and associated harms.

In Scotland, Best Bar None has embedded the strategic aims of Scottish Government, Police Scotland, Local Authorities and Licensing Boards and other partners. It supports the National Alcohol Framework by collaborating with the licensing industry to create safer drinking environments and reduce alcohol-related harms.

Best Bar None supports Police Scotland's overarching national priorities of Protecting Vulnerable People and Working with Communities by working with key partners to reduce harms and mitigate the risks of harm and building resilience and preventing crime in local communities.

Best Bar None also promotes innovation, excellence and commitment through collaborative working with the Licensing trade to ensure safer and more socially responsible environments for customers and staff by promoting social responsibility and a duty of care:

- improving knowledge and skills to assist in responsible management;
- investing in premises' policies and procedures to reduce alcohol-related crime;
- promoting partnership working to identify good practice and areas for improvement;
- supporting due diligence, record-keeping and training; and
- rewarding and recognising success at local and national awards.

In so doing, Best Bar None embodies the five objectives of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005:

- Prevention of crime and disorder
- Securing public safety
- Prevention of public nuisance
- Protecting and improving public health
- Protection of children from harm

Licensed premises are encouraged to provide safer drinking and gathering spaces and encourage less hazardous drinking practices through initiatives such as 'Ask for Angela' and 'Who Are You' safety and awareness training for their staff and in so doing promote duty of care, particularly for vulnerable patrons.

By embracing their obligation towards responsible alcohol sales, licensed premises are able to influence safer drinking practices within their premises thereby creating a safer drinking environment. With safer drinking patterns and consequently less alcohol related violence and antisocial behaviour there will likely be reduced demand and costs to the police, justice, health and social care systems.

Best Bar None encourages licensed premises to invest in and deliver quality training for their staff. Training is offered to Best Bar None members to a standard supported by the licensing industry. Moreover, by providing staff increased opportunities for personal and professional development through accredited training, staff within premises get an increased sense of pride, value and responsibility in delivering the core aims of duty of care policies which in due course drives professional standards within the trade.

The introduction of effective Best Bar None Schemes can have a dramatic effect on crime prevention and a reduction in the violent crime. For example, Bolton saw a 33% decrease in violent crimes committed in licensed premises within its first 9 months. Durham saw an increase in sales and footfall and a yearly decrease in violent crime since their scheme commenced in 2008.

Aberdeen currently has an estimated 274 on-sales premises eligible to apply for Best Bar None status across the five national award categories. Figures show that since 2016, the following number of premises have been awarded Best Bar None Status:

2016 - 43

2017 - 48

2018 - 25

2019 – Scheme currently open and estimated to have 34 applicants.

Although Best Bar None has been established in Aberdeen for a number of years, the figures show a limited uptake of applicants and subsequent award winners when compared to the number of premises eligible to apply. It is also observed that the same venues re-apply for Aberdeen Best Bar None year on year suggesting low levels of incentivisation or development of the Scheme to inform, increase or encourage wider participation.

Applications for Aberdeen Best Bar None have overwhelmingly come from venues located in the City Centre and generally along the Union Street corridor. This is unsurprising given they are larger businesses with perhaps greater capacity for such Schemes. Independent community based premises are noticeably under-represented in previous Aberdeen Best Bar None schemes.

The rationale for this Project Charter is therefore not only to increase the number of licensed premises awarded Best Bar None status but also to increase the number of licensed premises awarded Best Bar None in non-City Centre areas (ie. outwith the Aberdeen BID area).

As a test of change, in collaboration with the Woodside, Tillydrone and Seaton Locality Partnership, the Aberdeen Best Bar None Partnership is to establish Best Bar None in on-sales premises along the Woodside / Great Northern Road and King Street corridors to increase scheme membership and representation from smaller community based venues.

Currently there are no on-sales premises in the Woodside, Tillydrone and Seaton areas active or previously active in Best Bar None. These premises are characteristically traditional bars embedded in their respective communities whose patrons are very local to the venue. Reported violent crime and antisocial behaviour are low relative to City Centre premises probably because of relatively lower footfall numbers but also possibly due to a characteristic level of in-house management. An aim of the Project is therefore to have 50% of on-sales premises in these communities to apply for and be awarded Best Bar None status.

A Project aim of introducing Best Bar None in to the Woodside, Tillydrone and Seaton Locality area is to increase the profile of socially responsible practices of alcohol sales and consumption within local on-sales premises in these communities. By increasing management standards and staff awareness, it is anticipated there will be a reduction in instances of violence and antisocial behaviour in and around these venues and hopefully the more harmful levels of drinking.

It is also hoped the holistic approach of Best Bar None will increase the preventative strategies of staff and management at venues to manage drunken behaviour at a far earlier time thereby reducing the risk of more serious violence and disorder either at the premises or nearby.

In attempting to understand the reasons for the relatively low levels of applicants to the Best Bar None scheme over recent years, consultation has been carried out with all on-sales licensed premises in Aberdeen.

All premises were sent a short questionnaire and invited to comment on their experience and perception of the Aberdeen Best Bar None Scheme. Although only a small number of responses were returned, feedback was consistent:

- Lack of awareness and understanding of the Best Bar None Scheme and its aims.
- Perceived bias towards larger commercial City Centre premises.

- No knowledge of the Scheme's existence.

With this background information, a focus group comprising members of the Project Team and representatives from across the licensing trade has been formed with the intention of identifying barriers to entry, best practice and opportunities to develop the Aberdeen Best Bar None awards through the lead up to and duration of the Best Bar None 2020 Awards process.

Measures

- Total number of applications for Best Bar None
- Percentage of applications as % of eligible premises
- Number of premises awarded Best Bar None Bronze, Silver and Gold awards
- Number of premises nominated for national awards
- Number of premises within test area awarded Best Bar None awards
- Number of reported violent crimes on licensed premises.

Change ideas

- New guaranteed Best Bar None bronze award for all on-sales premises applicants who demonstrate they are achieving minimum standard.
- Aberdeen Best Bar None Scheme to be overseen / managed by the Aberdeen Best Bar None Partnership Group rather than one individual.
- Introduce local award categories to specifically target smaller community based venues
- Best Bar None initiative to be focussed on a specific community (Woodside, Tillydrone and Seaton Locality Partnership)
- Communications / publicity of Best Bar None on social media and wider platforms.
- Introduction of an application fee.
- Utilise a team of national assessors to carry out local assessments to ensure transparency, consistency and integrity of process.
- Introduce data system to manage performance information.

Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these

Lack of engagement from eligible premises
 Lack of communication from local Best Bar None partnership
 Lack of training and awareness about Best Bar None scheme
 Perceived biased of BBN assessors

Project Team:

Project Manager – Inspector Megan Heathershaw, Police Scotland
 Assistant Project Manager – Sergeant Trish Maclean, Police Scotland
 Subject Matter Expert – Sergeant Robert Hogg, Scottish Business Resilience Centre
 Improvement Advisor – Michelle Cochlan, Community Planning Manager
 Improvement Advisor – Marie-Louise Shaw, AADP
 Data Manager – Sergeant Trish Maclean, Police Scotland
 Practitioner - Tara-Erin Gilchrist, LSO, Aberdeen City Council
 Practitioner - Simon Robertson, SFRS
 Practitioner - Shamini Omnes, GNHS, Public Health

Practitioner - Mark Wilson, Aberdeen City Council
 Practitioner - Madelene Macsween, Locality Planner, Woodside, Tillydrone & Seaton
 Locality Group
 Customer / Client – Tim Young (Trade Rep)

Outline Project Plan		
Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project team established • Initial baseline established • Draft charter developed • Charter submitted to CPA Board 	Sep 2019 Sep 2019 Oct 2019 Dec 2019
Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design changes for initial testing • Marketing campaign • Engagement with licensed premises • Deadline for applications • Evaluate overall achievement to date and plan further PDSAs or move to implementation 	Oct 2019 Jan – April 2020 Oct 2019 - ongoing July 2020 August 2020
Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement (Project Score 7-9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree which change ideas tested are proven to work that we will seek to embed permanently • Continue to gather data • Assess whether improvement levels are sustained 	Nov 2020 Ongoing August 2021
Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)	Assess opportunities to spread change	August 2021

