

# Taking Stock:

## Views and experiences of alcohol licensing in Scotland in 2016/17

Read the Taking Stock report and summary at [www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)

### KEY THEME

### RECOMMENDATIONS



#### Joint working and collaboration

Relationships between different stakeholders in licensing are improving.

- ✓ Support mutual learning and understanding.



#### Inconsistency in policy and practice

Inconsistency in the interpretation and application of the law is apparent across Scotland.

- ✓ Introduce a national licensing policy, and update the guidance on the Licensing (Scotland) Act.



#### Transparency, accountability and public participation

There is a distinct lack of public participation. Barriers to participation can relate to poor accessibility of licensing processes, but inconsistencies in policy and practice can also prevent meaningful engagement.

- ✓ Ensure that policies and processes provide for greater, accessibility, transparency and accountability.
- ✓ Review mechanisms for public participation, such as Local Licensing Forums.
- ✓ Create a publicly accessible, national licensing database.



#### Legislative complexity and litigation

The complexity of licensing legislation is creating difficulties. Many stakeholders have encountered difficulties administering or navigating the system. Changing patterns of alcohol sales and consumption are creating new challenges, as the law struggles to match the pace of change.

- ✓ Consolidate licensing legislation.
- ✓ Hold licensing boards and local authorities to account where they fail to fulfil their statutory obligations.
- ✓ Time limit appeals against an adopted licensing policy statement.
- ✓ Review the use of occasional licences, and commission research into online and telephone sales of alcohol.



#### Adequate resourcing of the licensing system

Across the country stakeholders report a decrease in the resources available to support licensing work. Undertaking licensing work effectively can be time consuming and resource intensive.

- ✓ Licensing fees should be subject to a full-cost recovery analysis, and fees revised accordingly.
- ✓ Local authorities and health authorities should ensure sufficient investment of resources.

Reducing harm caused by alcohol  
[www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)