

Drink and Needle Spiking

The Home Office has been working closely with cross government partners to ensure there is a joined-up and effective response to reports of drink and needle spiking across a range of settings, including festivals, events and the wider night-time economy.

Reports, particularly those related to needle spiking, first emerged in September 2021 and were understood to be strongly connected to students returning to university after the summer break.

What is Drink spiking and Needle spiking?

Drink spiking can be defined as adding a substance to someone's drink without their knowledge. Alcohol is the most common substance to be added, but illegal or legal drugs are other substances that might also be used.

This is illegal, and there are a number of different offences that such an action falls under. Any motivation for drink spiking – be it for criminal purposes or any other reason – should not be tolerated as it is a crime.

In addition to drink spiking occurrences, there have been some reports of criminal activity involving needles being used to injure and/or inject customers.

The home office would like to see licenced venue have sufficient plans in place to deal with drink or needle spiking, this can be achieved in a number of ways such as:

- via communication to your customers as to the signs to look out for (e.g. posters, social media),
- staff training to identify issues before they arise,
- practical and physical measures.

To assist you in drawing up plans please see links:

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/staying-safe-while-drinking/drink-spiking-and-date-rape-drugs>

Pubwatch also has an e-learning course free for all members

<https://goodpracticepub.nationalpubwatch.org.uk/product/drinkaware-support-course/>

There is also a free course run by CPL learning which can be accessed by using the link

<https://cpllearning.com/online-courses/drink-spiking-awareness/>

and

<https://stampoutspiking.org> which has training and materials on offer.