

Sussex Police: Review of Licensing in Brighton & Hove - August 2013 to August 2014.

Public Place Crime Figures

Overall Public Place Violence in the city during the period August 2013 to August 2014 has remained the same compared to the previous year, but with a rise in the following sub groups:

Sexual Offences +29
Robbery +5
Assault on Constable +10

This has been balanced by a decrease in the 'Violence against the Person' subgroup due to less 'Public Order' offences and 'Assault without Injury' offences being recorded.

However, there has been a rise in reported Public Place Violent Crime within Central Brighton since March 2014 with an increase of 32 crimes between March and August. This is in contrast to the decrease in ten crimes during the same period in 2013.

The main increases overall in this subgroup have been on Beat 1 (North Regency Ward), which has seen an increase of 40 crimes. However, Beat 3 (Regency Ward South) has experienced a significant decrease of 72 crimes.

Brighton & Hove Public Place Violent Crime two year statistics relating to licensed premises:

Violent crimes in public houses/bars increased from 109 in 2012-3 to 134 in 2013-4 (+25)
Violent crimes in nightclubs decreased from 186 in 2012-3 to 138 in 2013-4 (-48)
Overall this is a 23 crime decrease in PPVC crimes in pubs and clubs in Brighton Division

- The increase of 29 Sexual Offences is primarily due to an increase in 10 crimes of rape (female aged 16 or over) and an increase in 7 crimes of rape (male aged 16 and over). There has also been a marked increase in reported sexual assaults committed during the night time economy.
- In the last year, 62% of public place violent crimes in Central Brighton were committed in the nine hours of night time economy (20:00hrs – 05:00hrs) and a significant proportion of these incidents are directly linked to licensed premises.
- Regency South still experiences more incidents of public place violent crime; however the reductions here are in contrast to the increases in Regency North and mark a move of this crime-type away from the city centre.
- There is a marked decrease in crimes within nightclubs as opposed to an increase in those committed in pubs and bars. Improved operating procedures and appropriate enforcement action in these venues may have had a causal effect in this decrease. The increase in crime within the pub category highlights where more crime prevention work is necessary.

Summary

Sussex Police experience incidents of public place violent crime throughout the week with an increase in occurrences during the evening/night. Weekend and bank holiday/festive night time economy periods experience significant rises in public place violent crime; as such, the policing coverage, through Operation Marble, is increased in order to respond to this.

We have experienced a shift in peak policing times during Operation Marble, whereby there is an increasing demand for resources well into the early hours of the morning. This may be indicative of individuals coming out later into the night time economy due to changes in

disposable income. This is coupled with the increases in 'pre-loading,' when individuals coming into the night time economy have already consumed alcohol purchased at home. These trends provide obvious challenges to both the licensed on-trade and the police when assessing and responding to levels of drunkenness.

There has also been a perceived increase in the week night economy within the city. This has been partly due to the large student population taking advantage of a more affordable week night economy. Likewise, licensed venues have encouraged a wider customer base by hosting regular themed nights and offering discounted alcohol and entry.

Dispersal from the city centre during the late evening and early morning continues to provide policing challenges. Over recent years, there has been a proliferation of off-licences and late night refreshment venues along the city's arterial routes. This has led to incident 'hot spots' where patrons from the night time economy continue to interact, albeit away from any safety measures afforded by on-licences. As such, Sussex Police support the Council's Special Policy in offering guidance to both applicants and the Licensing Committee in relation to off-licences and late night refreshment licences.

Sussex Police have a growing concern that, despite staff training in age-restricted sales, under age individuals are still being served alcohol in some of the city's licensed premises. As such, regular intelligence-led 'test-purchase' operations are conducted. Between December 2013 and July 2014, 21 off-licences and 13 on-licences were tested. 38% of the off-licences failed in contrast with a 85% failure rate with the on-licences; indicating a considerable risk in this area of the trade. It is anticipated that initiatives, including the introduction of identification scanning machines at premises throughout the city, will go some way to mitigate this risk. Sussex Police also continue to work alongside the Brighton Crime Reduction Partnership to tackle the problem of those who use false identification to enter licensed premises and purchase alcohol.

Policing the night time economy continues to provide a challenge and in the climate of limited resources and newly emerging problems, Sussex Police support maintaining the Council's Special Policy which defines cumulative impact and special stress. Sussex Police also recognise and support businesses which are aware of their social responsibilities and as such, actively contribute towards keeping Brighton and Hove a safe and enjoyable city.