

Alcohol and entertainment statistics bulletin 2007 Frequently asked questions for licensing authorities

What is the purpose of this exercise?

One of the key aims of this exercise is to make some of the most regularly requested information about the number of licensed premises publicly available, and so reduce ad hoc requests both to central and local government. In addition, the consistent information collected will provide an accurate baseline of data to assist in our ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Licensing Act. The data may also be used to inform any future adjustments to the licensing regime.

Is this a new exercise?

This exercise is in line with the previous three-yearly cycle for publishing statistics for liquor licensing under the Licensing Act 1964, and reflects the changes introduced by the Licensing Act 2003. The most recent Liquor Licensing bulletin was published in 2004, and is available on the DCMS website at www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Research/

Why do you keep asking Local Authorities for data?

We are conscious of the need to minimise demands on local authorities and recognise the move to a new licensing regime, together with the implementation of gambling reform, means it is a busy time for most licensing colleagues. This is why we have not undertaken this exercise earlier.

However, it is nearly two years since the new regime came into effect and it is increasingly difficult to justify not having fuller information available.

We have been working with local government colleagues in LACORS and the LGA; software providers; and individual Licensing Authorities before finalising what information we should seek, taking into account the usefulness of particular data and ease with which it can be gathered. We have also tested the questionnaire with a number of Licensing Authorities in order to make it as relevant and simple to complete as possible.

LACORS have just asked us the same questions; why can't you use their data?

Question 1 of this exercise asks for the same information that LACORS and the LGA requested in their recent exercise about licensing fees. This information can simply be transcribed; the remainder of the questionnaire asks for different information.

How will the data be published?

This exercise will be undertaken by DCMS, operating in line with the National Statistics protocols for the collection and release of information. We will publish the results in an online bulletin on this site later this year, giving both top-line and individual authority level figures.

How frequently will you be collecting this information?

In line with the previous series, we intend to publish statistics every three years. However, we would like the collection to be annual, in the first few years, to assist with our ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Act.

Will you be asking the same questions in future?

The questionnaire has been designed with a view to being consistent for future collections. Any additional questions will only reflect changes to the regime and will be kept to a minimum.

What if we can't provide some of the information?

We would ask that licensing authorities provide the most comprehensive and accurate information they can.

However, we recognise that licensing authorities' IT systems are set up differently, and it may be difficult for some authorities to extract some of the information we are requesting, particularly in this first year. The questionnaire identifies information that may be harder to complete this year. We would appreciate authorities' efforts in providing this if at all possible, and this information will be requested in future years.

What if we can't provide information for the specific dates requested?

If authorities are unable to provide data at 31 March 2007 and the preceding 12 months, we would request that they provide data as close to this date (and the corresponding preceding 12 months) as possible. Authorities should indicate where this is the case when they return the questionnaire.

What happens if we don't respond?

Even if an authority is unable to respond to all of the questions, we would appreciate it if as much information as possible is provided. As we will be publishing data by licensing authority area, there will be a gap where information is not provided.

The previous statistical bulletin secured a 99 percent response rate from the courts. We hope to secure a similar rate of returns from licensing authorities.

Why are you asking about 24-hour licences?

We are asking for information about the number of 24-hour licences in force because of continued public interest in this area. We also know that there are very few 24-hour licences, and licensing authorities have generally been able to provide this information easily in the past.

Why do you want hotel bars split between those that are open to guests, and those that are open to the public for 24 hours?

Most hotels will be able to serve alcohol to their guests around the clock. Under the previous licensing laws, all hotels with a "residential licence" under Part IV of the Licensing Act 1964 would have been able to serve alcohol to

their guests for 24 hours. This provision would have been convertible during transition and hotels would have had to vary their licence in order to be able to sell alcohol to members of the public for 24 hours.

We are therefore asking for the breakdown to determine the proportion of premises that are potentially able to open to the general public for 24 hours, as a result of the new Licensing Act.

Where can I get further information?

For further information, please contact the analysis team at DCMS by emailing licensing.statistics@culture.gsi.gov.uk or calling 020 7211 6451.

How do I send the information back?

Please email responses by 31 August 2007 to licensing.statistics@culture.gsi.gov.uk.