

## **Alcohol and entertainment statistics bulletin 2010: Frequently asked questions**

**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, such as answering Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information act requests and other correspondence. 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 has proven to be highly valuable up to now (and partly explains why the collection receives such a high response rate from Local Authorities, reflecting how valuable they see this collection) and may also be used to inform any future adjustments to the licensing regime e.g. licence fees review.

**Is this a new exercise?** This is the fourth year DCMS have collected data on 'Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing' following on from the collection in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Last year's bulletin and online tables, reflecting the changes of the Licensing Act 2003, are available on the DCMS website at

[http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/6387.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6387.aspx)

Prior to this collection, statistics for liquor licensing under the Licensing Act 1964 were collected on a three-yearly cycle (prior to 2004 by the Home Office). The most recent Liquor Licensing bulletin was published in 2004, and is available on the DCMS website at

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/research/7138BLiquorReport.pdf>

**Why do you keep asking Local Authorities for data?** We are conscious of the need to minimise demands on local authorities, but this collection can help reduce the burden in the longer term by answering more ad-hoc queries which local authorities would previously have been asked.

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. The questionnaire was piloted to a number of Licensing Authorities in order to make it as relevant and simple to complete as possible.

**Who now holds responsibility for the Licensing Act 2003?** The Prime Minister announced on 20 July that responsibility for the Licensing Act 2003, except for regulated entertainment, was being transferred to the Home Office.

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/statements-and-articles/2010/07/written-ministerial-statement-machinery-of-government-changes-53629>

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

DCMS have collected and produced the latest statistical bulletin (released on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010) as the 2009/10 collection covers the period when DCMS held responsibility for the Act.

The responsibility of future statistical collections on alcohol and late night refreshment licensing, following the 2009/10 release, will be with the Home Office.

**How frequently will the Home Office be collecting this information?** The frequency of the collection is kept under review. The plan is to repeat this exercise, following any forthcoming legislative changes, which may not be until 2011/12, and the review will also consider when to switch from an annual basis to a three year cycle, in line with the previous series.

**How are you reducing the data burden on Licensing Authorities?** DCMS has been committed to reduce the data burden on Local Authorities. Whilst previously it was assumed that only 3 annual collections following implementation of the act would be done (before changing to a triennial collection), it was always our policy to review this after the 3 years. As the Licensing Act was still bedding in and had not reached a steady state of activity, and with new amendments being made to the act we decided to collect this information again this year.

As part of DCMS' commitment to reduce the burden on Local Authorities in completing statistical returns, some questions were removed this year. We removed questions which were either of low importance (as assessed against how frequently data were being requested) or did not vary/change significantly on an annual basis.

This year's questionnaire follows a very similar format to previous years, enabling a consistent data series of the information, and allowing for year on year comparisons. Also it makes it easier for Local Authorities to answer, as they will be aware of which questions were asked before and so are better prepared.

**Which new questions have been added for 2010 and why?** Two new questions have been added to reflect changes to the licensing regime over the last year. This includes the addition of a question on the number of minor variation applications made, granted and refused, as well as applications made, granted and refused on Remove DPS Mandatory Condition (Community Premises). This was also added as an action category following a completed review.

**How will the data be published?** The data for the 2009/10 collection will be published on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010 in the same way as the last collections. It 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 the DCMS website later this year, giving both top-line and individual authority level figures.

**My Local Authority has changed following the local government reorganisation<sup>1</sup> that created nine unitary authorities in England from 1 April 2009. Which Local Authority boundary does this collection require information from?** This collection required information as of 31st March 2010 and the preceding 12 months, therefore Licensing Authorities were asked to respond under newly formed Unitary Authority boundaries. For example, if Caradon LA responded, they were asked to respond as Cornwall Unitary Authority and not Caradon LA.

**What if Licensing Authorities can't provide some of the information?** We asked that licensing authorities provide the most comprehensive and accurate information they could provide.

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. Where there were difficulties completing any of the questions, this was noted in the comments box. If estimates were provided, these have been published in the online tables.

**What if LAs couldn't provide information for the specific dates requested?** If authorities were unable to provide data at 31 March 2010 and the preceding 12 months, we requested that they provide data as close to this date (and the corresponding preceding 12 months) as possible. Authorities indicated this in the comments box when they returned the questionnaire.

**What happens if they didn't respond?** Even if an authority was unable to respond to all of the questions, we asked for them to provide as much information as possible. Data is published by licensing authority area, and there is a blank where information is not provided.

Last year's statistical bulletin secured a 100 percent response rate from LAs, and this year the collection received a 99% response rate (compared with a 99 percent response rate from the courts in the previous series). This meant DCMS received at least a partial return from 344 of the 349 Licensing Authorities in 2010. The greater the number of responses we receive the more accurate and 'true' the overall picture is.

**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

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<sup>1</sup> ONS Guidance on Local Government changes  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/admin\\_areas.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/admin_areas.asp)

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

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 therefore asked for a 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 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](mailto:licensing.statistics@culture.gsi.gov.uk) or calling 020 7211 6188.