

EVALUATING LATER OR EXPANDED PREMISES HOURS FOR ALCOHOL IN THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY (ELEPHANT)

Study update for the Aberdeen Local Licensing Forum - June 2022

We are now in month 21 of this three year study, all aspects of the study are progressing well. We held our first local public involvement groups with venue-goers and residents from Glasgow in January 2022, and from Aberdeen in June 2022. Both groups inputted to the development and finalisation of materials for focus groups that will soon be conducted with members of the public within Workpackage 2.

Workpackage 1: We have finalised our strategy for selecting stakeholders for interviews/discussion groups and began recruiting in March 2022 and will continue to recruit over the summer. This strand of the fieldwork aims to understand why the changes to opening hours came about, what effects were expected, and any ways in which public services/businesses were affected. Our interviews/discussion groups will also explore views on a range of possible policy options that could reduce alcohol-related harms without adversely affecting recovery of the night-time economy post COVID-19. We have currently conducted 16 interviews with a range of stakeholders in Aberdeen and Glasgow including police staff, street pastors, A&E staff, Licensing Board members and Licensing Standards Officers.

Our next phase of recruitment is with venue owners/managers in both cities. We have identified precise changes in opening hours over time for licensed premises in Aberdeen and Glasgow, using public registers, local authority websites and social media analysis. We have conducted initial scoping work to develop an initial list of over 80 venues in Aberdeen which applied for extended opening hours over the past ~5 years. We plan to interview 14 venue owners/managers in Aberdeen and we are currently finalising our short-list of venues in both cities before approaching individuals with an invitation to participate. We wish to ensure that the interviews we conduct are with the widest possible range of venue types, and in a range of locations, and will include owners/managers who are currently making regular use of extended hours, those who are making occasional use of extended hours, and those who are not using any extra hours. We will include nightclubs in our interviews.

Workpackage 2: Ethical approval has been sought and secured for 'deliberative' focus groups with the public which will take place in Glasgow and Aberdeen. In this process, participants are given a balanced range of evidence to consider before being asked questions about their views. Ethical approval has been obtained and the final plans and questions for the focus groups are being worked up. This method is innovative in how it seeks to help the public reflect on their views and opinions about the pros and cons of later opening hours as part of the focus group process. We are currently exploring recruitment options in each city and preparing to recruit participants.

Our social media analysis work to establish precise changes in opening hours over time is now completed for all ten Glasgow venues, and for 30 venues in Aberdeen. We are now in the initial stages of planning fieldwork visits to later opening venues.

Workpackage 3: We have held meetings with representatives from the Scottish Ambulance Service and have agreed how they will share data with us on alcohol-related ambulance callouts in Scotland. We have received an initial batch of data and are awaiting progress on a second request. We have completed main and subgroup statistical modelling analyses for Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh and these analyses are now being repeated using a different statistical package. We have also held meetings with Police Scotland to discuss our data research request for crime data late at night and expect to receive a comprehensive dataset later this year.

Workpackage 4: We have finished drafting our Health Economics Analysis Plan and we are making good progress on scoping work on the availability of various data sources to identify potential economic benefits or costs of later hours, to assist us in developing the economic evaluation.

Workpackage 5: We have drafted questions for the survey of local authorities on their approach to late night trading, which will be finalised in August 2022. We have begun a review of the links between alcohol consumption and harm outcomes in specific situations including ambulance call outs and assaults to help us develop new models. These models will help us to assess the potential impacts of late night licensing hour changes on different subgroups of the population.

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