

ABERDEEN CITY LOCAL LICENSING FORUM
UPDATE FOR LICENSING BOARD 2ND December 2025

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the key matters discussed at the meeting of the Aberdeen Local Licensing Forum held on 4 November 2025. It highlights issues of relevance to the Licensing Board, with particular focus on student safety initiatives, the ongoing ELEPHANT Study, and Forum membership updates. The meeting was chaired by William Rae (Vice-Chairperson) in the absence of the Chairperson.

2. Presentation on “Ask for Angela” and the Safe Taxi Scheme

Representatives Karen Scaife and Christina Schmid (University of Aberdeen) presented updates on the Ask for Angela initiative and the Safe Taxi Scheme. These initiatives aim to enhance student safety in the night-time economy.

Key objectives included:

- Active Communication with students through digital platforms.
- Building Confidence and awareness around safety resources.
- Improved Access to Support via the Safe Zone app and third-party reporting.
- Cross-Institution Collaboration between the University of Aberdeen, RGU, and NESCOL on wellbeing and suicide prevention protocols.
- Student Representation on safety and licensing forums.

Key concerns raised:

- Transport accessibility: Limited night bus services (especially midweek) and difficulties securing taxis discourage students from visiting licensed premises.
- Spiking prevention: A call for stronger preventative measures and safer venue messaging.
- Effectiveness of safety initiatives: Some inconsistency in implementation across venues undermines public confidence.
- Safety on weekdays: Risks associated with midweek social nights (particularly Wednesdays) need specific attention.
- Safe Zone app functionality: The app provides global emergency access, ensuring safety coverage beyond the immediate “safe zone”.

The Forum noted these findings and the need for continued partnership working between education providers, the Licensing Board, and licensed premises to ensure consistent safety standards across the city.

3. ELEPHANT Study Update

An update was received via Elaine Mottram from Professor Niamh Fitzgerald, who is leading the ELEPHANT Study. The research will inform future approaches to alcohol licensing, with findings relevant to both England/Wales and Scotland.

Professor Fitzgerald offered to:

- Present the findings at a Licensing Board meeting in early 2026; and
- Participate in a joint stakeholder event to discuss implications for Aberdeen.

The Forum recommended that the Licensing Board extend an invitation to Professor Fitzgerald in early 2026 to share the outcomes of the study.

4. Forum Membership

Two new members were formally welcomed:

- Jonathan Dorrat, Vice-President for Communities, Aberdeen University Students' Union (representing young people);
- James Welsh Hospitality Manager, Aberdeen Arts Centre. (16 years of hospitality experience across bars, restaurants, theatres, and events)

5. Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson Nominations

It was noted that Elaine Mottram will step down as Chairperson at the Annual General Meeting in February 2026.

Members were reminded to obtain consent from nominees before submission and to submit nominations for Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson roles by 30 January 2026 to the Clerk

William Rae, Vice Chairperson
November 2025