

8 July 2021

To the Chairman of the Licensing Committee

Dear Councillor

The coronavirus pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption and hardship since March 2020. The impacts have affected many businesses, and the hospitality industry in particular, with limited opportunities to react and adapt. As we emerge from this exceptionally difficult time, many of these impacts will continue.

One of the key problems that hospitality businesses now face is a lack of resources including staff. This is a particularly serious problem when it comes to complying with licence conditions that depend upon staff resources.

The night-time economy is in the middle of a particular crisis concerning security professionals. There is a grave shortage of security staff available for work, and this has been compounded by more stringent new training standards introduced by the Security Industry Authority for those wishing to enter. Even the limited numbers coming forward to qualify are too often failing to do so. Often, the numbers are simply not there to service full licence requirements, and there is nothing that the security industry, or the licensees can do about it. This problem is not going to go away.

The Government recently announced its consultation on the Duty to Protect. This aspiration to increase security provision in the public and private sector is only going to deepen the crisis.

We are writing to you at this time to make you aware of the issues, and to ask that you take them into account in making case by case licensing decisions.

On 8 April 2020, Kit Malthouse, the Minister of State for Crime and Policing wrote to the Chairs of Licensing Committees, to invite them to take “a pragmatic and more flexible approach” to licensing while the outbreak was ongoing.

He said: “Retailers may be operating under licences with conditions that may prove difficult to comply with in the current period due to absenteeism. These include, but are not limited to, conditions that mandate the minimum number of staff or door supervisors on site, training requirements or attending external meetings.... A considered and pragmatic

approach should be taken to breaches of licence conditions and procedural defects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly where these breaches or defects do not have a significant adverse impact on the licensing objectives. Licence holders must rectify any breaches as soon as reasonably practicable.”

This continues to be very important even as we emerge from the worst restrictions of the pandemic. Partnership working with businesses, to allow them to recover and make their contribution to the economy has never been more important. We hope that highlighting this crisis will assist in making informed and proportionate decisions.

Sincerely



**Daniel Davies**  
Chairman  
Institute of Licensing



**Michael Kill**  
CEO Night Time Industries Association /  
Chairperson UK Door Security Association