

# Reducing Harm in Drinking Environments



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
CAMPAGNE MONDIALE POUR LA PREVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE  
VIOLENCE PREVENTION ALLIANCE / ALLIANCE POUR LA PREVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE

**Karen Hughes and Lisa Jones**

Centre for Public Health

Liverpool John Moores University

WHO Collaborating Centre for Violence Prevention



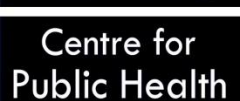
# Introduction

- Over 65,000 pubs and nightclubs in UK
- Benefits – *employment, regeneration, relaxation, socialising, exercise*
- But, drinking environments key locations for:
  - Drunkenness
  - Drug use
  - Violence
  - Sexual assault
  - Accidents
  - Drink driving
  - Anti-social behaviour
- Key issues and what works to reduce harm?



# Alcohol and Harm in Nightlife

- Average alcohol use in a night out in NW England:
  - Females 16 units
  - Males 25 units *(1 bottle wine = 9 units)*
- 1 in 3 have been too drunk to walk in last 12 months
- 1 in 5 violent assaults occur in or around pubs and clubs
- Weekend nights, alcohol involved in:
  - 63% driver & 80% pedestrian deaths
  - 70% Emergency Department cases





# Current Issues

- Alcohol price discrepancy

- On and off license

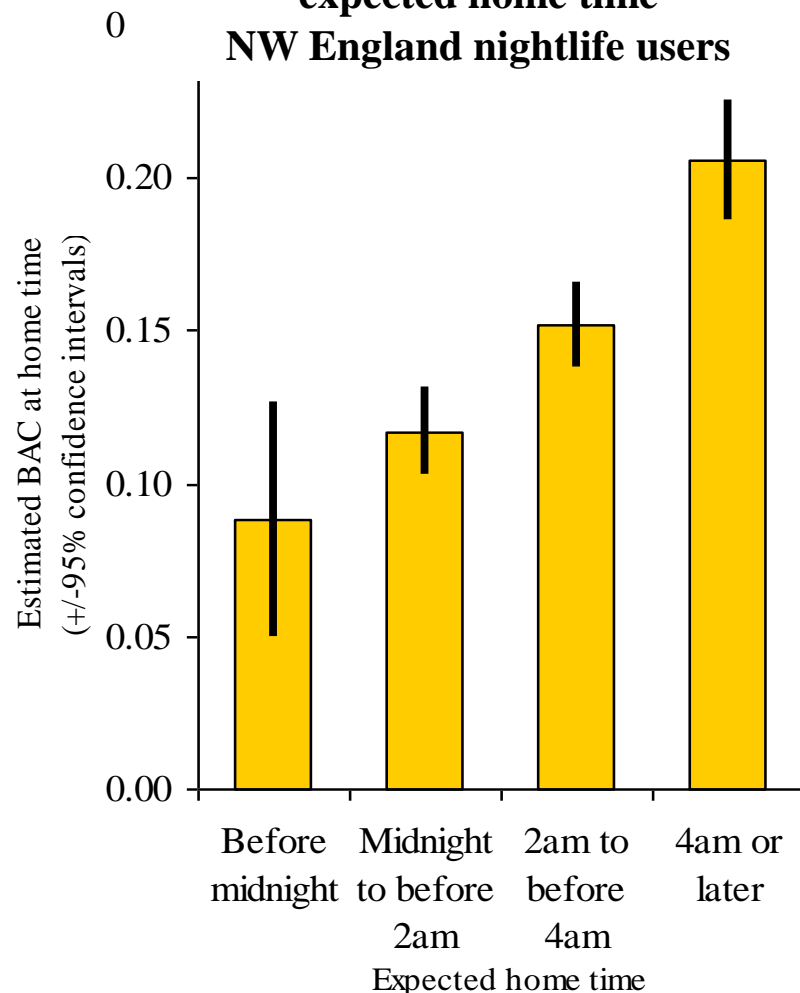
- Preloading

- Liverpool
- Half nightlife users preload
- Average 7 units
- Already intoxicated
- Drink greater quantities
- Greater risk of violence

- Licensing Act 2003

- Later nights
- Vast majority of late night drinkers are drunk

**Blood alcohol concentration by  
expected home time  
NW England nightlife users**



# The role of licensed premises

- High densities of pubs and clubs linked to increased harm
- The way bars are managed, operated and designed is critical
  - prevent or increase problems
- Small number of badly managed premises can account for large proportion of crime
- E.g. Blackpool
  - 10 premises accounted for over half of all violent crime in bars



# Environment and Management

- Factors linked to higher violence and crime include:
  - Poor cleanliness, shabby décor
  - Crowding, poor ventilation, lack of seating, loud noise
  - Low decorum expectancies (e.g. Drunkenness..)
  - Cheap drinks promotions
  - Aggressive or ineffective staff
- Reducing harm a combination of:
  - Creating safer environments (*Inside and outside bars*)
  - Reducing risk behaviours
- Need to avoid:
  - Creating environments where it is safe to get very drunk
  - Pushing risky and violent drinkers into unmanaged environments



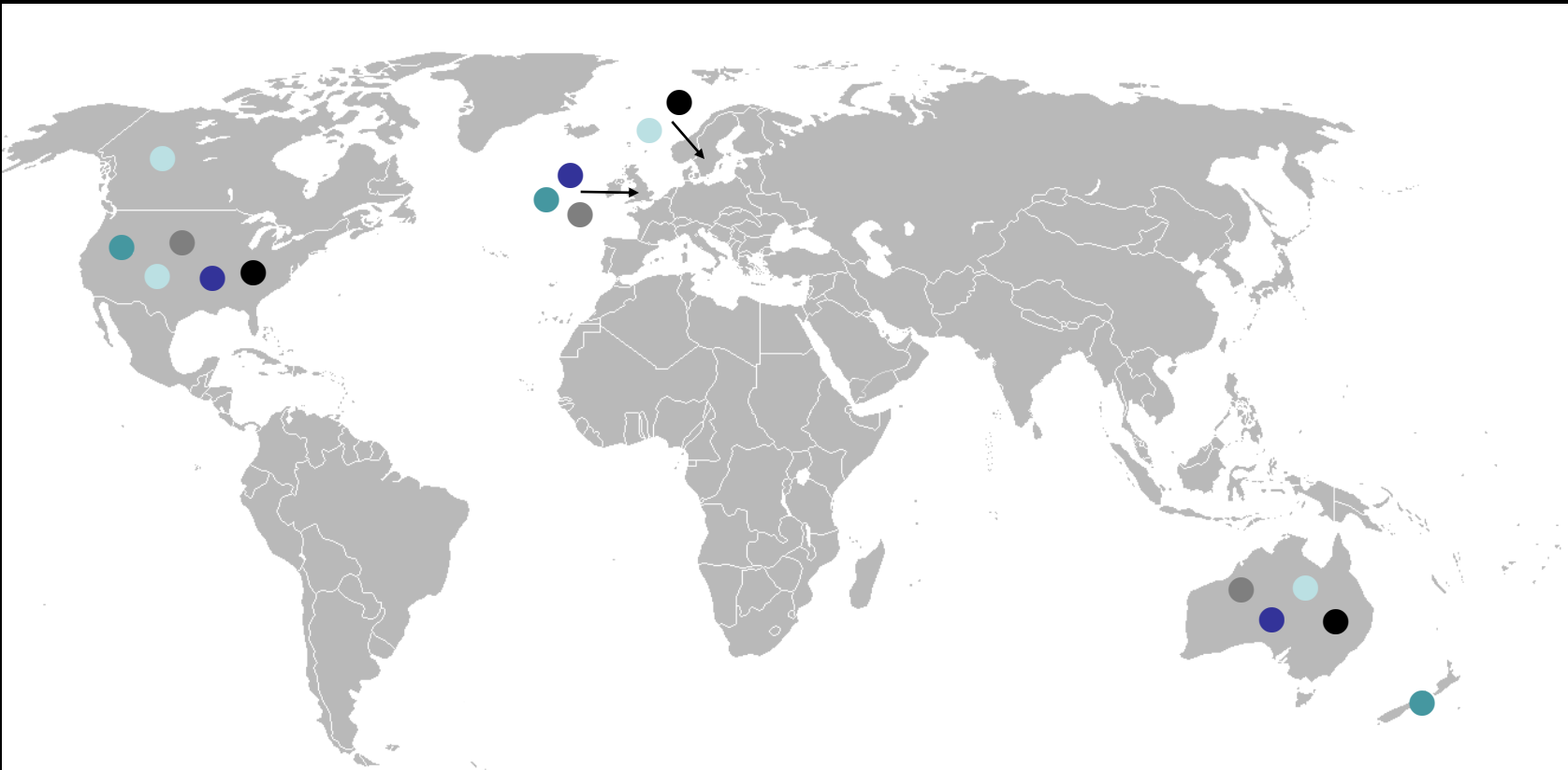
# Systematic review of effective approaches

- Conducted as part of the European *Focus on Alcohol Safe Environments* (FASE) project
- Aim was to develop a better understanding of measures that can be implemented locally to reduce alcohol-related harm in drinking environments.
- Comprehensive review of the international literature published since 1990
  - Interventions designed to reduce harm associated with alcohol consumption and delivered in drinking environments
  - Intervention studies using any research design were included
  - Impact on a wide range of alcohol-related harms





# Included studies

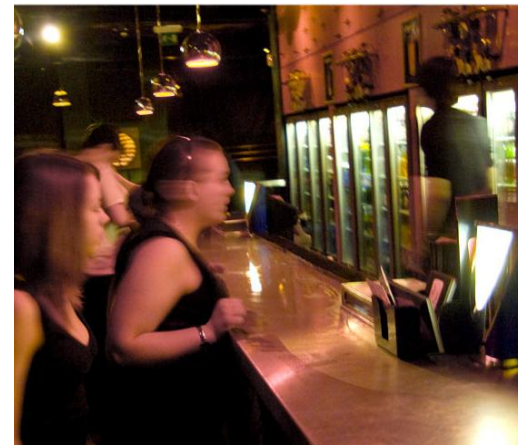


- Training programmes for servers and managers: 7 studies
- Interventions delivered in drinking environments: 5 studies
- Policing and enforcement: 8 studies
- Reducing underage access to alcohol: 7 studies
- Multicomponent community-based programmes: 7 studies



# Evidence summary

- Responsible server and staff training interventions can increase staff knowledge about alcohol and improve serving practices
  - Wider effects on alcohol-related harm are generally small, except where training is made mandatory
- There is limited evidence to support the effectiveness of standalone interventions, such as designated driver programmes



# Evidence summary

- There is no evidence to support the placement of age verification devices as a standalone method of reducing underage sales.
  - Combined training and police enforcement has shown some success, but enforcement needs to be applied regularly to maintain its effects
- Evidence for the effectiveness of policing and enforcement approaches are mixed.
  - Some studies have demonstrated increases in alcohol-related harm following policing and enforcement activity, **but** this may be due to better detection and reporting of problems
  - Targeted enforcement activity in high risk environments has been shown to be a more effective strategy than street policing



# Evidence summary

- Multicomponent programmes implemented through strong partnership working at a community level provide the clearest evidence of effectiveness
  - Studies of these programmes have demonstrated reductions in alcohol consumption, drink driving, road traffic accidents, violence and underage drinking.
- The *Stockholm Prevents Alcohol and Drug Problems* (STAD) project in Sweden combined community mobilisation with responsible beverage service training and stricter enforcement of alcohol laws
  - Associated with significant reductions in violent crime
  - €39 saved for every €1 invested in the programme



# Conclusions

- Findings of the review show that community-based, multicomponent programmes can reduce alcohol-related harm in drinking environments
- Differences in behavioural, environmental and cultural factors across drinking environments moderate intervention effectiveness
  - Effective approaches need to be adapted, implemented and subject to rigorous evaluation in other settings
- Effective approaches need to be sustainable, which requires a commitment to public health from a range of agencies responsible for safety in drinking environments







Centre for  
Public Health

# Thank You

Karen Hughes

[k.e.hughes@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:k.e.hughes@ljmu.ac.uk)

Lisa Jones

[l.jones@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:l.jones@ljmu.ac.uk)



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
CAMPAGNE MONDIALE POUR LA PREVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE  
VIOLENCE PREVENTION ALLIANCE / ALLIANCE POUR LA PREVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE