

# Licensing Act 2003

## A User-Friendly Guide



## Making Your Point. (A guide for 'Interested Parties')

The Licensing Act 2003 will enable thorough scrutiny of applications both by experts and by the local residents and businesses. "Responsible authorities" such as the police, fire authorities, health and safety and environmental health authorities, and others, will be notified of every application for a new premises licence, or variation of existing licences. They will have the opportunity to make representations to the licensing authority about the effect on the promotion of the licensing objectives of the application.

The Act also enables residents and businesses in the vicinity of the premises (interested parties) to make relevant representations about any application for new, or for variations to licences. This gives the local community a greater say than ever before in licensing decisions.

For a representation to be relevant it must be one that is about the likely effect of the application on the promotion of the four licensing objectives, which are

- **Prevention of Crime and Disorder**
- **Public Safety**
- **Prevention of Public Nuisance**
- **Protection of Children from Harm.**

If the representation is made by an interested party it will not be relevant if the licensing authority considers it to be vexatious or frivolous.

In addition, responsible authorities and interested parties will have the power to apply for a review by the licensing authority of existing licences, on a ground relating to the promotion of the licensing objectives. Such a review can result in the modification of the licence, its suspension, or ultimately, revocation.

The Act also makes provision for rights of appeal against a licensing authority's decision to the magistrates' court.

Similar provisions apply in regards to applications for, or to vary, a club premises certificate and in respect of applications for a provisional statement.

### Putting forward your views on applications for, or to vary, a premises licence

When applying for, or seeking to vary, a premises licence, an applicant must give notice of their application to each responsible authority. The applicant will also be obliged to advertise his/her application. Any residents or business operating in the vicinity of the premises which are the subject of the application will be able to make representations to the licensing authority about the application, if they wish to do so. This includes the ability to raise objections.

All interested parties and responsible authorities will have a 28 period in which they can make representations to the licensing authority about the application. If the licensing authority considers that the representations are relevant it must hold a hearing to consider those representations (unless all agree that this is unnecessary). The licensing authority will then have choices as to how it proceeds depending upon what is necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives. It may:

- decide to grant or vary the licence in the same terms as it was applied for;
- decide that it is necessary to refuse to issue or vary the licence;
- decide to grant or vary the licence, but to modify the conditions;
- exclude from the scope of the licence a licensable activity.

If no relevant representations are made the licence or variation must be granted (subject to the mandatory conditions).

A similar approach is taken in respect of club premises certificates and provisional statements.

## Requesting a review of a premises licence

An interested party or responsible authority can, at any time, apply for a review of a premises licence on an issue relating to the licensing objectives. The person or body requesting the review must notify the holder of the premises licence and each responsible authority of their request. The licensing authority must advertise the application for the review and invite representations from responsible authorities and interested parties.

The licensing authority can reject any ground for the review if it considers it to be frivolous, vexatious or a repetition. If not rejected, the licensing authority must hold a hearing to consider the application.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, all applications should be sent directly to East Northamptonshire Council, regardless of the area in which the premises is situated.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who can make representations about a licence application or ask for a review of the licence?

'Interested parties' or 'responsible authorities' can make representations.

*Interested parties* are any of the following:

- a person living in the vicinity of the premises;
- a body representing persons who live in that vicinity;
- a person involved in a business in the vicinity of the premises;
- a body representing persons involved in these businesses.

*Responsible authorities* mean any of the following:

- the chief officer of police for the area in which the premises are situated;

- the fire authority for the area in which the premises are situated;
- the health and safety authority for the area in which the premises are situated;
- the local planning authority for the area in which the premises are situated;
- the environmental health authority for the area in which the premises are situated;
- the body recognised as being responsible for protection of children from harm for the area in which the premises are situated;
- with regard to a vessel - the relevant navigation authority, the Environment Agency, British Waterways Board or the Secretary of State; and
- Inspectors of Weights and Measures (trading standards officers).

### Can the licensing authority impose conditions on a premises licence?

If no relevant representations are made, the only conditions that can be imposed are those that are consistent with the applicant's operating schedule and any mandatory conditions provided in the Act. If relevant representations are made, the licensing authority may modify or add conditions to the operating schedule if necessary in order to promote the licensing objectives.

### What are relevant representations?

In brief "relevant representations" is the expression used in the Act for comments including objections on applications etc.

For a representation to be relevant it must:

- relate to the effect of the grant of the licence on the promotion of the licensing objectives;
- be made by an interested party or responsible authority;

- not have been withdrawn;
- not be 'frivolous or vexatious' or, in the case of a review, 'repetitious' if made by an interested party; or
- if it concerns the premises supervisor be made by a chief officer of police and include a statement explaining the reasons for the objection.

### If the local pub, club, restaurant etc is currently open and causing disturbance is it possible to request a review of the licence?

Yes, an interested party, such as a resident in the vicinity of the premises, may apply to the licensing authority to review the licence if there are grounds relating to the licensing objectives.

If an interested party, applies for a review of the licence, the licensing authority must first consider whether the grounds they have put forward are relevant to the licensing objectives and that they are not vexatious, frivolous or repetitious. If the grounds comply with these tests, the licensing authority must arrange a hearing to consider them and any relevant representations made.

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You can view a complete copy of the Act and associated guidance at [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

Produced by N.L.P. March 2008.