

**Helping create a  
safer night-time  
economy**

**Drinkaware Crew Pilot**  
January 2017



## Introduction

The Drinkaware Trust is an independent UK-wide alcohol education charity, funded largely by voluntary and unrestricted donations from UK alcohol producers, retailers and supermarkets. The Trust is governed independently and works in partnership with others to help reduce alcohol-related harm by helping people make better choices about their drinking.

We engage and work directly with alcohol producers, retailers and supermarkets and public sector bodies to tackle alcohol-related harms.

This report outlines how Drinkaware developed and launched the Drinkaware Crew scheme. It also presents key findings of the process evaluation of the Drinkaware Crew 2016 pilot, outlines the breadth and variety of ways Drinkaware Crew have been helping young people on a night out and it indicates future research to assess the scheme's impact on wider society.

## Context

The sale of alcohol is important for the UK's economy and pubs and clubs are a significant and vibrant part of the night-time economy of many UK towns and cities. As noted in the Modern Crime Prevent Strategy 2016, recent trends in alcohol-related crime and disorder are positive; however, harms associated with alcohol and the costs of policing and other support services remain high, and negative behaviours associated with excessive drinking have an impact not only on the safety and wellbeing of drinkers but also on others who have a right to enjoy evening entertainment without risk.

Efforts to prevent alcohol-related crime and disorder remain a key priority for national and local government, and establishing strong, sustained and effective local partnerships is one of a number of priorities set out by Government to address local needs. The police, local authorities, health partners and third sector organisations all have an opportunity, in concert with one another, to identify and reduce alcohol-related harm, and to ensure that people participating in the night-time economy are able to enjoy a night out safely.

While drunken nights out are not the only site of alcohol-related harm in our society, they do represent an important piece in the overall picture and are therefore an important problem for Drinkaware to tackle.

In this context, Drinkaware commissioned a strategic review of whether, and if so how, it might contribute to harm reduction in the night-time economy, and whether there were opportunities to challenge and shift attitudes to excessive drinking in this context. The final strategic review, published in 2014, was called *Drunken Nights Out: Motivations, norms and rituals in the night-time economy*.

The problem of drunken nights out should not be seen as a problem of 'young adults drinking'; however, whilst excessive drinking in the night time economy appears to be declining, the review identified a significant minority of this age group who drink with the intention to get drunk.

Attitudinal research indicates that approximately two fifths of 18-24 year olds agree with the statement 'I really enjoy going out to get drunk', and 15% of this age group state that they drink with the intention of getting drunk every time or most times they drink alcohol<sup>1</sup>. Our Drunken Nights Out review revealed that a regular intention to get drunk is associated with drinking more frequently, drinking more, getting drunk more often and an increased risk of experiencing or causing harm.



The strategic review, *Drunken Nights Out: Motivations, norms and rituals in the night-time economy*, found that:



**63%**  
of 18-24 year olds who drink alcohol will at least occasionally drink with the specific intention of getting drunk<sup>1</sup>.

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Large quantities of alcohol consumed before going out, or in night-time venues, create a serious risk of acute health-harms, including accidents.



Over time, cumulative alcohol consumption is associated with a range of serious health problems.

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Evidence suggests that excessive drunkenness in the night-time economy is linked to patterns of **violence and sexual assault**.




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The behaviour of drunk people in the night-time economy has direct and indirect impacts on others who are not drunk, including people working in the night-time economy and local residents.



The report also highlighted pervasive, drunken sexual harassment on a night out, which can be upsetting for many participants. Young women in particular reported that they often accepted it as part of the culture of nights out, but said they found it unpleasant. Young men may also experience uninvited molestation.


Getting in a fight, a regrettable one night stand or passing out in public, are all recognised as negative experiences that spoil a night out. In a further survey of more than 2,000 UK students commissioned by Drinkaware, **three quarters of those aged 18-24** admitted to having experienced one or more of the following on a night out over a 12 month period: **inappropriate sexual touching, comments or abuse; vomiting; having an accident; a regrettable sexual encounter or experiencing uncertainty around one; passing out in public; involvement in a fight, or needing hospitalisation<sup>2</sup>.**

More than two in five female students (**44%**) have experienced inappropriate sexual comments or abuse on a night out.




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Over a third of female students (**35%**) said they received inappropriate or unwanted physical attention or touching on a night out.



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Most female and male students (**80%**) said that persistent unwanted sexual attention ruins a good night out.



The findings are consistent with a survey undertaken in 2014 by the National Union of Students which found that more than **a third of female students (37%) had faced unwelcome sexual advances**, defined as inappropriate touching and groping<sup>3</sup>.



“On the final night of Fresher’s Week, me and my friends were all at a club. We were all having a good time and some of the boys decided that they wanted to rip their own shirts off for a laugh. I was dancing near them and they abruptly decided that it would be a laugh to rip my shirt in half too so I was, essentially, wearing a skirt and a bra in the club. I was extremely uncomfortable and went to the bathroom to try and fashion some way to cover myself up by tying my ripped shirt together. Thankfully, one of the Fresher’s reps saw what happened and gave me his shirt to cover myself with.

There is a real undercurrent of sexual harassment at university and I’ve experienced a lot of catcalling in my university town too. Women get harassed by people they know too, which has happened to me - I once had to throw a friend out of my house because he kept harassing me for sex. That incident happened in my third year and I was really angry about it, but if I was still a Fresher in my first year I would have been less confident and I wouldn’t have known what to do.”

**Female, recent graduate (2016)**

“There is a lot of groping on nights out at university. I’m gay so I go to gay clubs much more than I go to straight clubs, but I have seen sexual harassment in straight clubs too, with random girls just starting to twerk or grind on you. It doesn’t matter where you go in the club; you can pretty much always expect to be groped. I’ve even been grabbed by guys in the bathroom. It happens every night I go out - it’s almost run of the mill now which isn’t right. I think people feel more ‘free’ when they’re drunk on nights out and they’re more likely to feel like they can pressure you into something you don’t want to do.”

**Male, student**

“Once, some friends and I were at a big club in Norwich and when we tried to leave we were blocked by this group of guys. They were commenting on our bodies, saying really offensive things and we couldn’t get past them. We felt really trapped and uncomfortable but we didn’t want to cause any trouble. We all felt really upset after that - no-one wants to be talked to that way, especially when you feel like you can’t escape.

“Sexual harassment is so common at university - it’s got to the point now where you just expect it on a night out. Being touched by someone you don’t know is not a nice situation to be in but I kind of just accept it. I don’t think people talk about sexual harassment at university enough - there seems to be this illusion that people who sexually harass others aren’t really doing anything wrong.”

**Female, third year student,**

## Drinkaware Crew

Based on the Drunken Nights Out report, and in partnership with Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Nottinghamshire Crime and Drugs Partnership, Drinkaware first introduced Drinkaware Crew (formerly Drinkaware Club Hosts) in a pilot scheme in three venues in Nottingham and Mansfield with the aim of helping reduce negative experiences associated with drunkenness including anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related sexual harassment. Drinkaware Crew were employed by venues and worked alongside security and bar staff, to identify and support people who might be vulnerable as a result of intoxication, and to help ensure young people to leave the venue safely.

Drinkaware Crew are trained venue employees who work in large clubs and venues to support the welfare of venue customers on a night out. Working in pairs, Drinkaware Crew mingle with customers to help promote a positive social atmosphere and provide assistance to those who may be vulnerable as a result of excessive drinking. The training programme was developed and delivered by Peter Fulton Associates and is endorsed by the British Institute of Innkeeping.

The partnership was supported by Nottinghamshire police, local councils, Street Pastors and university Student Unions all of whom played a vital role. We are also grateful to charities Hollaback, Street Pastors and Victim Support, who advised on the specialist training for Drinkaware Crew.



An initial evaluation of the Nottingham and Mansfield pilot informed a further pilot scheme, which ran from November 2015 to July 2016, in eight venues in South West England and an additional venue in Nottingham.

A process evaluation considered whether Drinkaware Crew could achieve its stated aims; how the Drinkaware Crew scheme was implemented; and assessed the potential for the scheme to directly benefit venue customers in need of support, and indirectly, the wider club customer population.

Throughout the pilot period, Drinkaware Crew were required to submit a confidential Activity Log (using a secure online system), to record activity in each working shift; these records included information about the number of people supported; the nature of support provided; and whether venue security staff or external agencies were involved.

**"We want our students to enjoy their night out and at the same time be safe. Our Drinkaware Crew scheme supports this as a safety net against sexual harassment, as well as a caring person who can look after people when in a vulnerable state."**

Clint Stephenson,  
Venue Operations Manager,  
Plymouth University Union

## Pilot Results

**From Activity Logs completed during the pilot period November 2015 to July 2016, a total of 225 nights of Drinkaware Crew activity were logged across eight venues:**

# 2577

people were supported by Drinkaware Crew, an average of 11 people per shift

# 3019

activities were reported; half of these involved providing emotional support, 40% providing practical assistance and 10% involved providing assistance outside the venue.



**Two-thirds** of the people helped were women,



and **one third** men.

Drinkaware Crew worked with other agencies, and reported an average of **one incidence of collaboration with venue security staff per night.**

On one in five nights **Drinkaware Crew collaborated with an external agency.**



**Separately, interviews with a small number of venue customers indicate that their experiences with Drinkaware Crew have been positive; that the service Drinkaware Crew provides is perceived as 'filling a gap in nightlife culture'; and that the presence of Drinkaware Crew provides a reassuring 'safety net' to young people on a night out.**

"This girl was completely staggering and couldn't register anything. We got her outside and they came over to help her - they sat her down and gave her water. If I had been back at home the bouncer would have picked her up, chucked her out, and just left her to it, but these people actually looked after her." **Male, 18**

"When we left the club, a drunk guy started on my friend, and he ended up getting quite hurt. The Crew directed us to the right medical attention. Without them, my friend would have been ten times worse" **Male, 20**

"Drinkaware Crew are never anything other than helpful - they not pushy either, they're just there if you need them and keep an eye on. It's pretty cool." **Female, 19**

Club-goers said that they respect and appreciate the service that Drinkaware Crew provide; and see them as peers who are friendly, approachable and non-judgmental; more importantly, the presence of Drinkaware Crew had begun to create the 'action step' of proactively looking for Drinkaware Crew members when in need.

**Interestingly, for some people, the presence of Drinkaware Crew has begun to promote an atmosphere of maturity and reflection:**

"It promotes a more mature atmosphere - you can enjoy yourself and not cause harm" **Female, 19**

"Just seeing them reminds you that if you're getting drunk, what you're doing isn't really ok, in way that's a good thing" **Male, 20**

**Finally, feedback from Drinkaware Crew partners and participating venues has been positive:**

"I am always open to new ideas of how to improve the night time economy. Working with partners like Drinkaware will help to produce a safer and more welcoming environment which will be to everyone's benefit. We want people to enjoy themselves and be safe at the same time. This is a good way of achieving that and spreading the word that Cheltenham is a good place to spend a night out."

**Martin Surl, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire**

"The Drinkaware Crew are a great asset to the UPSU in making sure we maintain our duty of care. Since they have joined the team at the UPSU we have found ourselves with a lot more time and free man power to deal with the job in hand."

**Craig Franks, Axien Security, University of Plymouth Student Union (UPSU)**

"DHP Family are very happy to be involved in the Drinkaware Crew project, we are always looking at practicable initiatives that will improve safety and the customer experience in our venues. The project has been a valuable exercise, it has not only helped some our of customers to remain safe but it has also freed up managers and security staff to keep the venue running effectively when they would have been otherwise tied up."

**Julie Tippins, Head of Compliance, DHP Family**

# Process Evaluation

Dr Mark Tarrant of Exeter University led the process evaluation of the Drinkaware Crew pilot, which followed Medical Research Council guidelines on the evaluation and process evaluation of complex interventions<sup>4</sup>. The evaluation involved a survey of venue customers; interviews with venue customers; observations in Drinkaware Crew venues; a focus group with Drinkaware Crew members and interviews with stakeholders.

The evaluators also observed training and assessed data from Drinkaware Crew Activity Logs.

Findings from the process evaluation have been used to inform development of the Drinkaware Crew scheme ahead of its wider UK implementation.

**“Hearing feedback from people that we’ve helped previously makes us feel really great about our jobs and we know we are making a difference”**

Drinkaware Crew,  
Rock City, Nottingham

## Key insights

- The evaluation found evidence of the need for Drinkaware Crew given the potential for harm to individuals in club venues. Specifically, venue customers reported a shared perception that alcohol-related sexual objectification (including unwanted sexual advances and body evaluation) commonly occurs and shared their personal experiences of it. The evaluation acknowledged the potential for these perceptions and experiences to translate into directly harmful behaviour.
- The Drinkaware Crew scheme was effective for vulnerable individuals who may otherwise experience alcohol-related antisocial behaviour. The evaluation concluded that the actions of Drinkaware Crew are likely to have prevented harmful outcomes for vulnerable customers. Drinkaware Crew fulfil this preventative role effectively, and this aspect of their role was clearly articulated in training. However, the evaluation found variability in how this role was performed by individual Drinkaware Crew members and how it was supported by venues.
- Venue managers believed that Drinkaware Crew have improved the running of their venue and served the interests of customers, allowing other venue employees to focus attention on roles such as security to help ensure customer safety. However, the successful implementation of Drinkaware

Crew was dependent upon a good level of engagement from venue management, something which the evaluators observed to vary across participating venues.

- The evaluation concluded that it is unlikely the Drinkaware Crew scheme, in itself, was able to challenge norms around alcohol intoxication and to influence the wider social atmosphere in venues. The Drinkaware Crew were considered to be too few in number, insufficiently visible, and had limited means of communicating with a majority of venue customers.

Findings are being prepared for academic publication.



# Developing Drinkaware Crew

The findings of the process evaluation is consistent with feedback from local partners; and interim findings helped Drinkaware to improve the Drinkaware Crew scheme in advance of its expansion into additional locations from September 2016. Specifically:

## Training

- The process evaluation recommended that greater focus be given in Drinkaware Crew training on how they can, as venue employees, help create a positive social atmosphere. Drinkaware has improved training to help Drinkaware Crew understand safe and positive nights out, and the ways they can promote them.
- Drinkaware Crew training provides clear guidance about incidents that Drinkaware Crew should and should not address and situations they need to escalate to venue security and management. However, the process evaluation found a lack of direction for Drinkaware Crew on how, or when, to intervene in no or low risk situations. Drinkaware has developed new sections of the Drinkaware Crew training to provide more direction on the situations where it is appropriate to intervene, how to identify these situations and what Drinkaware Crew should do.
- The process evaluation recommended that greater focus be given in the training, on how to identify and respond to incidents of sexual harassment, or actions to be taken if they are informed of such an incident. The Drinkaware Crew training has been updated to include more direction and discussion around sexual harassment situations, including information on identifying potentially predatory individuals.

## Information and guidance for venue managers and staff

While venue managers generally reported that Drinkaware Crew improved the running of their club, Dr Mark Tarrant and his team noted that there were varying approaches and levels of engagement from them, which gave rise to inconsistencies in how Drinkaware Crew performed their role. As a result:



- Training has been improved to provide more clarity on the role of Drinkaware Crew. Venue managers and staff are being provided with more information and guidance on how to support Drinkaware Crew to work effectively in their venues; and welcome packs outlining the key management requirements have been developed in partnership with venue management.
- Drinkaware is asking new venues to nominate a Drinkaware Crew sponsor or ambassador to lead on all Drinkaware Crew activity and implementation within their business.
- All managers and venue staff are encouraged to attend Drinkaware Crew training.

## Increasing in-venue visibility

The pilot evaluation found that while Drinkaware Crew are effective at helping vulnerable individuals who may otherwise become victims of antisocial behaviour, there was low visibility and customer understanding of Drinkaware Crew within venues, and this limited their ability to contribute to a positive social atmosphere. As a result, Drinkaware has developed a communications tool-kit for venues to help generate wider awareness, for example through local media and venue social media channels.

## Social Impact

As a key part of Drinkaware's Drunken Nights Out programme, we have commissioned a team led by Professor Andromachi Tseloni at Nottingham Trent University to assess the societal impact of Drinkaware Crew. This research will analyse local crime data as well as the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey and the Ordinance Survey Points of Interest Data for 2015 and 2016, to consider key questions including:

- What is the societal impact of Drinkaware Crew?
- How can the data be used to create a cost-benefit analysis of the intervention?
- How can the impact of Drinkaware Crew activities be routinely assessed through analysis of routinely collected data?

The researchers will report in Summer 2017.

### For further information:

If you have any questions or comments about Drinkaware Crew, please contact

**Drinkaware**  
**3rd Floor (Room 519)**  
**Salisbury House**  
**London Wall**  
**London EC2M 5QQ**



Via email, please contact: [contact@drinkaware.co.uk](mailto:contact@drinkaware.co.uk),  
Marketing Manager [Janet Mackechnie](mailto:Janet.Mackechnie@drinkaware.co.uk) at  
[jmackechnie@drinkaware.co.uk](mailto:jmackechnie@drinkaware.co.uk)  
or Strategic Partnerships Lead, [Brett Crabtree](mailto:Brett.Crabtree@drinkaware.co.uk),  
at [bcrabtree@drinkaware.co.uk](mailto:bcrabtree@drinkaware.co.uk).



### Thanks to our Partners:

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- Peter Fulton Associates
- British Institute of Innkeeping (BII)
- Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR)
- Hollaback

#### Nottinghamshire

- Nottinghamshire Police
- Nottingham Community Protection
- DHP Family, and the management, staff and customers of Rock City
- JD Wetherspoons
- Nottingham City Council
- Paddy Tipping, Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Nottingham Street Pastors

#### South West

- Tony Hogg, Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, and his team.
- Exeter Community Safety Partnership
- The management, staff and customers of Timepiece
- The Deltic Group
- The management, staff and customers of Unit 1
- Safer Plymouth
- Plymouth University Student Union
- Stonegate, and the management, staff and customers of Popworld
- Truro Safe
- The management, staff and customers of The Office
- The management, staff and customers of The Venue
- Safer Communities Torbay
- Torbay Street Pastors
- Exeter City Council
- Devon and Cornwall Police Force
- Torbay Council

#### Cheltenham

- Martin Surl, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire
- Gloucestershire Police
- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Cheltenham Safe
- The management, staff and customers of MooMoo Clubrooms
- Gloucestershire Council

**“It would feel reassuring if I saw them on my next night out... It's nice to know they're there. There's always someone who has a problem on a night out and, as long as you can find them, it would be really helpful if they were there”**

Female, 21

3rd Floor (Room 519), Salisbury House  
London Wall, London EC2M 5QQ  
T: 020 7766 9900

[drinkaware.co.uk](http://drinkaware.co.uk)

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