



## EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF A CUMULATIVE IMPACT POLICIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS IN ISLINGTON LOCAL AUTHORITY

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**Project code:** SPHR-LSH-PES-CIZ

**Background & aim:** The Licensing Act (2003) gives English local authorities the ability to implement Cumulative Impact Policies (CIPs) which are intended to strengthen licencing powers and limit the growth of on- and off- premise alcohol outlet density. Local authorities can now enforce CIPs by designating boundaries within their borough as cumulative impact zones (CIZs) if negative social effects of alcohol market saturation can be demonstrated. We are using quantitative and qualitative research to evaluate the effects of this intervention in the London borough of Islington. The study runs from May 2014 until April 2016 and is funded by SPHR's *Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme (PHPES)*.

**Key research questions:** *Why and how do local authorities implement CIPs? How, and to what extent, do CIPs affect alcohol-related harms among local populations in Islington? How can our evaluation of CIPs meaningfully inform future local authority alcohol policies in and beyond Islington?*

**Population:** The London Borough of Islington has a diverse population of 206,000. The CIZs cover all major night-time economic areas in the borough, which includes most of the shopping areas and main roads. Reducing alcohol related harms is a key objective for Islington Council.

**Study design and methods:** Our evaluation of this complex alcohol policy intervention involves a mixed method programme of research. The qualitative arm of our study includes conducting individual and group interviews with stakeholders (e.g., licencing officers, councillors, police, trade and alcohol consuming populations). We are also conducting documentary analysis and observing licencing meetings to better understand how this intervention operates at the local level. The quantitative component of this evaluation draws on diverse data sources (e.g. alcohol hospital admissions, anti-social behaviour calls) to map the pathways by which the intervention operates and account for intermediate process and long term health outcomes.

### Progress and where next?

- We have conducted qualitative analysis designed to provide a rich understanding of the intervention, both aims and implementation. This includes interviews and non-participant observation with key stakeholders. The insights gained have helped us refine a logic model that will form the basis of our a priori theory of change and analysis plan.
- As a next step we intend to conduct quantitative analyses of routine data sets relevant to the implementation and impact of CIZs on two neighbouring LA populations.
- We will finish qualitative interviews and surveys of target consumer population groups.
- Analysis, writing up and disseminating results both to our Local authority partners in London but also more widely to local authority licencing and alcohol policy communities of practice across England, and to scientific fora (e.g. presentations, workshops and a range of written outputs aimed at different audiences).

### Early impacts

Our team was invited by the Home Office to deliver a joint presentation (with our research partners from Islington and Camden Public Health Directorate) of the analysis plan of SPHR LSHTM's evaluation of Islington's Cumulative Impact Policy. The Home Office hosted a day-long workshop on October 21, 2014 focusing on health as a licencing objective in the context of cumulative impact zones and policies. Daniel Grace presented in a joint session with Colin

Sumpter of Islington and Camden Public Health Directorate. There are 3 main potentials for impact:

- 1) The Home Office representatives were using the day to consider the question of whether Health should be made a fifth licensing objective in the context of Cumulative Impact Policies. Our presentation provided them with evidence of how (i) Cumulative Impact Policies are delivered – using Islington as a case study of an area that has a particularly assertive approach to the policy, (ii) theories of change related to health and other social impacts, and (iii) our approach to evaluating changes in local licensing policies.
- 2) Both Home Office representatives and representatives from other local authorities present at the meeting have asked for copies of our analysis plan and accompanying logic model – which we have sent. This suggests the potential for our research approach to influence other data gathering and evaluation plans – potentially across a range of licensing intervention evaluations.
- 3) The presentations have informed our own understanding of licensing policy, and provided further contacts through which we can disseminate future outputs – and so in these ways impacted on our own work as researchers involved in the co-production of evidence to inform action.

Earlier in 2014, D Grace and M Egan also presented at an event hosted by Drink Wise (an NGO working on reducing alcohol harms based in the North East) designed to give local authority practitioners involved in licensing and alcohol a chance to share good practice and present case studies related to cumulative impact policies. We presented work on Islington's cumulative impact policy intended to highlight an example of a local authority attempting to assertively deliver this policy, and to show how CIPs can be evaluated robustly. Following the meeting there was continued interest in our work and Drink Wise representatives have subsequently agreed to be on the 'virtual' advisory group supporting SPHR alcohol theme's Work Package 6.

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