



Meeting	SPA Policing Performance Committee
Date	7 December 2022
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Spiking Update
Presented By	ACC Smith, Major Crime, Public Protection and Local Crime
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes. Appendix A – Spiking Communications Toolkit

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a further update to the SPA Policing Performance Committee in respect of Action 20220317 – 002 on spiking in Scotland and insights from analysis in relation to intersectionality.

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this paper.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In mid-October 2021, reports began circulating in national and social media regarding incidents of Spiking via injection and an increase in reports of Spiking to Police Services across the UK was immediately noted.
- 1.2 Given increased public concern, Police Scotland implemented a Gold Command structure, led by an Assistant Chief Constable, with a view to providing effective co-ordinated activity across Scotland, engaging with strategic partners and contributing to the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) Gold Command structure and response.
- 1.3 Under this Gold Command structure, Police Scotland co-ordinates its response to ensure consistent, high quality investigations, supported by analysis, to identify patterns of reporting and offending. The structure encompasses both investigative and preventative strategies.

2. PREVALENCE, ANALYSIS AND ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS

- 2.1 In mid-October 2021, Police Scotland noted a significant increase in the number of reported crimes relating to Spiking. This pattern continued for an initial 8 week period, peaking at almost 60 in the first week of November 2021.
- 2.2 After this initial period, reports of Spiking decreased quickly and amounted to single figure weekly reporting by mid-December 2021. A slight increase was noted in the second half of January and into February 2022 (coinciding with lockdown restrictions being lifted); however levels have since fallen back and have remained consistently low since, returning to single figure weekly reporting levels (an average of 6 reports per week since mid-December 2021 until 30 October 2022).
- 2.3 Between 1 October 2021 and 30 October 2022, there were 601 recorded crimes relating to Spiking. After investigation and review, 122 have been subsequently reclassified as 'No Crime', leaving 479 recorded. Of these 479 reports, 35 (7.3%) involve associated criminality (32 Sexual, 3 Theft).
- 2.4 Analysis of Spiking incidents is undertaken on a weekly basis to ensure national oversight is maintained and understanding evolves.

- 2.5 Due to the complex nature of investigations, it should be noted that analytical findings are only valid at the time of publication and may alter as investigations progress. With that in mind, the following has been noted from analysis to date:

Victim Profile:

- Mostly female, aged 18 – 26 years.
- A significant proportion of victims are recorded as being students.
- A very low percentage of reports involve associated offending (7.3%).

Location/Time/Date:

- Nightclubs are the most prevalent location.
- Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the most prevalent days.
- The majority of incidents occur in the evening/night.

Method:

- In 31.3% of reports the victim suspects they have been spiked via injection.
- In 38.8% of reports the victim suspects they have been spiked via drink.
- In 29.9% of reports the victim is unsure how they have been spiked.
- Reports of spiking via injection all relate to incidents where small red marks have consequently been found on the victim's body and/or a sharp pain has been felt on a body part whilst in a crowd. There are currently no physical witnesses to an incident of spiking via injection in Scotland.
- Reports of spiking via drink all relate to the victim suspecting an unknown substance has been added to their drink without their knowledge, resulting in them being overly intoxicated/feeling unwell. There are a small number of physical witnesses to incidents of spiking via drink.

Intersectionality Comment:

- As per 'Victim Profile', current data indicates the majority of victims are young females who socialise in city centre licensed premises at weekends. There is no available data to identify any particular combination of interconnected social categorisations being targeted, or at an increased risk of becoming a victim of Spiking, other than noting a significant proportion of victims are young female students.

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- 2.6 Police Scotland have developed and circulated a comprehensive Investigative Strategy to provide guidance and direction to staff responding to and investigating incidents of Spiking.
- 2.7 Senior Investigating Officers have been appointed within each territorial Police Division to act as Divisional Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for all Spiking related matters and investigations.
- 2.8 The Detective Superintendent tasked with national investigative oversight, chairs fortnightly meetings with Divisional SPOC's, to ensure investigations are supported as required.
- 2.9 Each report of Spiking is reviewed and investigated, with an absolute determination to support the victim and, where criminality can be evidenced, bring the perpetrator to justice.
- 2.10 It is of note that the level of reporting from October 2021 onwards, resulting in the capture of a significant amount of forensic samples, has presented significant challenges for SPA Forensic Services when considered against the wider national demand, in particular relating to Toxicology analysis. To overcome this, SPA Forensic Services procured a short term fixed contract, funded by Police Scotland, to outsource the screening of forensic samples to a forensic services provider in England.
- 2.11 This process is underway and working well, with a large number of screenings complete. Weekly reviews are in place with SPA Forensic Services to monitor progress.
- 2.12 Given the short term/fixed nature of the aforementioned outsourcing contract, Forensic Services have instigated a further procurement process, again funded by Police Scotland, to outsource forensic screening with a view to ensuring forensic samples awaiting analysis are progressed as soon as possible. It is hoped this contract will be in place in the near future.
- 2.13 When screening results are received they are reviewed by a Senior Investigating Officer with a view to informing investigations.
- 2.14 There have been four detected cases since October 2021. All involved Spiking via drink. Three occurred in residential properties and one in a licenced premises. In two cases, the perpetrator was known to the victim. One case involved associated criminality (sexual offence).

3. REVIEW OF APPROACH/RESPONSE

- 3.1. Due to the complex nature of Spiking, Police Scotland have conducted a review of the strategies, processes and governance which were implemented in October 2021, in response to the increased reports of this crime type. This ensures that Police Scotland continually improves their processes and governance, as more becomes known about this crime type. As with any review, a number of recommendations were made which DCS Laura Waddell has delivered, one being a need to amend the internal intranet with clear guidance for officers and staff as to how to investigate incidents of spiking. This was carried out as a result of the review findings. Ultimately improving the service received by victims, ensuring perpetrators are quickly brought to justice, and any linked cross divisional incidents, are quickly identified. ACC Bex Smith, as Gold Commander maintained an Executive overview throughout the delivery of these recommendations, and is assured by the strategies, processes and governance now in place
- 3.2 Police Scotland are committed to continuous improvement and will continue to improve these strategies, processes and governance, as required.

4. PARTNERSHIP AND PREVENTION RESPONSE

- 4.1 A key focus of the partnership and prevention response was the delivery of sensitive and appropriate prevention activity and communications. This focussed on safer spaces and perpetrator behaviour, rather than placing the focus and onus on potential victims.
- 4.2 A Corporate Communications toolkit was compiled and shared with Divisional Commanders, for them to disseminate as they saw fit externally, to provide consistency and support to partners, including licensed premises, with the ability to signpost to third party organisations. The toolkit was shared with the Partner's meeting group which formed part of the Gold Command structure, to promote consistency in messaging for dissemination as members see fit.
- 4.3 A review of the toolkit was carried out in August 2022 ahead of Fresher's Week and was shared with Divisional Commanders and internal partners and was further shared with wider partners via Scottish Government, who are now coordinating partner activity

since the Operation Precept Partners meeting was stood down in February 2022.

- 4.4 As preparations began for Fresher's week, on 16th May ACC Bex Smith, ACC Major Crime and Public Protection, chaired her first Operation Precept Gold Meeting, having taken over as Gold Commander from ACC Ritchie.
- 4.5 With concerts, festivals and other events resuming following the pandemic, Police Scotland identified the need to convey key messaging to stewards and other event staff. As an interim measure and in advance of the Harry Styles concert at Ibrox Stadium, Glasgow on 11 June 2021, an overview of ByStander theory was compiled and provided to the event organiser for inclusion in Steward's briefings, in lieu of being able to facilitate full ByStander awareness sessions. This briefing tool has since been shared via the Events Industry Advisory Group for dissemination at other events and work will continue to deliver these key messages periodically.
- 4.6 This briefing tool along with an overview of the 'Ask for Angela' initiative was similarly provided for Police Officer event briefings, to ensure awareness of the scheme, which is operated by some event organisers.
- 4.7 On 8th September, ACC Bex Smith and Superintendent Sloan attended the Ministerial Roundtable chaired by the Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training. Further engagement continues with COPFS regarding an issue raised relative to victims and their immigration status preventing them from reporting incidents.
- 4.8 PPCW have an officer seconded to the NPCC Violence Against Women and Girls Task Force, who represent Police Scotland at NPCC Op Lester meetings chaired by DCC Maggie Blyth, NPCC Violence Against Women and Girls Lead. This officer provides a link to share best practice and experiences between Police Scotland and England & Wales. The secondment of this officer has now been extended until March 2023.
- 4.9 A proposed Fresher's week communications plan was shared from NPCC Op Lester, along with a draft of a flowchart intended to assist Emergency Department staff, which reflects the positional statement from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine. It was confirmed that this position is shared by Royal College of Emergency Medicine in Scotland.

- 4.10 PPCW have been engaging with Best Bar None, coordinated through the Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC). Best Bar None is being rolled out this year, although to a lesser extent than pre-pandemic. Best Bar None will support the promotion of ByStander Awareness through their channels and will host information and material in relation to 'Ask for Angela'. This has been signposted via the revised Police Scotland Communications Toolkit.
- 4.11 Local Policing Divisions were encouraged to utilise established links with local Universities and Colleges in advance of Fresher's week and to include spiking awareness messaging in their activities.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Police Scotland take all reports of Spiking very seriously. The activity outlined above is designed to ensure a professional, victim focused response, whilst providing consistent messaging and reassurance to report such incidents.
- 5.2 Police Scotland will continue to thoroughly investigate all reports of Spiking, whilst simultaneously engaging with partners to understand the impact, ensuring the preventative message continues. Such messaging was reiterated in advance of and throughout Freshers Week 2022, when reports of Spiking were noted as significantly lower compared to the previous year.
- 5.3 Since October 2021, significant work has been undertaken by Police Scotland, from a single agency perspective and in partnership with others, to understand and respond to the increase in Spiking reports noted in October 2021. Approaches have evolved and processes have developed to ensure policing and partner responses are victim centred and effective.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

9. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

10. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no social implications in this report.

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT

11.1 There are no community implications in this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

13. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss.

APPENDIX 'A' - SPIKING COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

Introduction

Welcome to the toolkit for spiking awareness. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide consistent messaging and reassurance about Police Scotland's approach to incidents of spiking in pubs and clubs across Scotland.

We would like your support to ensure all licensed premises, including student unions, and all relevant stakeholders have information about spiking, what to do if you think someone has been 'spiked' and how to prevent it.

We hope the work we do with partners will provide reassurance to communities and those who attend licensed premises.

Included in this toolkit is:

- Information about spiking
- Key messages/statement
- Guidance for licensed premises
- Information about Bystander Awareness
- Information about 'Ask for Angela'
- Links to further information and guidance
- Suggested divisional social media posts
- Suggested posts for licensees

Background

Spiking is when someone adds alcohol or drugs to another person's drink without their knowledge or consent. It is a criminal offence.

Spiking by injection is when a needle is used to inject drugs into a person without their knowledge or consent and is also a criminal offence.

Police Scotland has a role to play in issuing advice and information around spiking, to provide reassurance and to warn perpetrators that we are taking this criminality seriously. We work in collaboration with partner organisations on prevention. This toolkit supports these objectives.

Our messaging is focused on bystanders and perpetrators. We want people to report if they see something suspicious, to step in if they think someone may be at risk or see someone behaving suspiciously.

Most people reporting incidents of spiking, whether in drinks or by injection, are women aged between 17 and 27. Most incidents occur at the weekend.

Police Scotland is continuing to work with licensees across the country helping them provide bystander training to bar staff/stewards. This helps to raise awareness amongst staff and provides them with the confidence to step in if they think someone is at risk of harm.

National Message

Assistant Chief Constable Bex Smith, Police Scotland, said: "We understand people continue to be concerned about spiking but Police Scotland, working with our partners, has carried out a significant amount of action to increase awareness of the risk, to tackle it and to protect people on a night out.

"While we saw an increase in reports and investigations last year, the number of reports has reduced significantly. However, we do continue to investigate reports from people having been 'spiked'.

"Our focus remains on keeping people safe and identifying offenders who carry out an assault in this way. Bystander Awareness training has been and continues to be delivered in venues/locations across the country.

"We continue to work in partnership with other emergency services, the licensing industry, student bodies, Universities/Colleges and third sector organisations to raise awareness and provide support for anyone affected by spiking.

"Every report of spiking is taken seriously and is investigated. Offenders are dealt with swiftly and robustly.

"We would encourage anyone who believes they have had their drink spiked or been assaulted in this way, or who knows someone who may have been spiked, to contact Police Scotland on 101 or in an emergency 999."

Target Audiences

- Offenders
- Bystanders (including licensees)
- Students
- Wider public

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This information and messaging will be aimed at bystanders and perpetrators.

We want to support licensees and those who work in pubs and clubs to ensure their premises are a safe place for all their customers, to spot the signs of spiking and to know what action to take.

We want to reassure communities including student communities, that we take all reports seriously and that we will thoroughly investigate them.

We want to encourage people to report incidents of spiking. It is hoped that by working with licensees we will deter potential perpetrators if they see that premises are taking real action against spiking.

We want to deter offenders.

Police Scotland Key Messages:

- People should be able to go out for a night out without fear for their safety including being spiked.
- Spiking, whether by adding drugs or alcohol to someone's drink, or by injection, without their consent, is a criminal offence.
- We are not always able to determine the reasons why a perpetrator carries out an assault in this way.
- Spiking can put people at significant risk of harm.
- Police Scotland takes every report of spiking extremely seriously and will investigate robustly.
- We are working with a range of partners, locally and nationally, to ensure pubs and clubs are safe spaces for all.
- We are providing advice and support, working in communities, with licensees, pubs and clubs. We are also offering Bystander Awareness Training to help spot the signs of when someone may be at risk.
- We are reaching out to student communities to offer advice, support and reassurance.
- If you believe you have been targeted or subjected to spiking whether by injection or in your drink, or think that a friend or someone you know has been targeted, then please report to Police Scotland on 101, or in an emergency always call 999.
- Anyone who reports being spiked will be taken seriously. Our investigations are victim-centred, ensuring people who report a crime are supported.
- Our focus is on investigating the crime being reported and identifying potential offenders.
- Forensic samples may be taken by officers (or forensic medical examiners) at the time of reporting or soon after, if appropriate.

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- We would encourage anyone who believes they have had their drink spiked or been assaulted in this way to contact Police Scotland on 101 or in an emergency 999.

Guidance for the Licensed Trade/Student Unions

What is spiking?

- Spiking is when someone adds alcohol or drugs to another person's drink without their knowledge or consent and is a criminal offence.
- Spiking by injection is when a needle is used to inject drugs into a person without their knowledge or consent and is also a criminal offence.

As a licensee you will want to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your customers when they are within, and around, your premises.

There are a number of steps you can take to help avoid incidents occurring:

- Train your staff to be aware of the possibility of drinks being spiked and encourage them to monitor unattended drinks.
- Train your staff to recognise the signs of a person who may have had their drink spiked - this includes suddenly appearing intoxicated, drowsiness, vomiting or being disorientated.
- If anyone is acting suspiciously around unattended drinks challenge them or ask them to leave the premises immediately.
- If a customer reports that their drink tastes or smells unusual, don't hesitate to replace the drink. If there is suspicion that the drink may have been spiked seize the drink and report it to the police immediately.
- If a customer reports having their drink spiked be mindful, they may not be the only one. Alert all staff, increase vigilance and consider patrols, CCTV monitoring and the lighting within your premises.
- If a customer appears drowsy, disorientated or showing signs of intoxication take action and assist - particularly those who may have become isolated or separated.
- Don't hesitate to assist customers who appear suddenly intoxicated or disorientated - even if they are in the company of others.
- Be vigilant and prepared to intervene when strangers offer assistance to anyone within, or outside, your premises.
- Door stewards should be alert to persons loitering outside premises for no apparent reason and be prepared to challenge them.
- Consider adopting a policy of personal search as a condition of entry to your premises.

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- Display clear signage informing customers that refusal to be searched will result in refusal of entry.
- Consider increased numbers of door stewards to ensure thorough searches of customers.
- Educate your staff about the 'Ask for Angela' scheme to support members of the public on a night out and help customers if they are in a difficult situation.
- Posters should be placed to raise awareness about the 'Ask for Angela' scheme around the venue to enable people to seek help if they feel threatened.
- Consider Bystander Awareness Training: this will support stewards to identify where someone may be at risk of harm and when to step in to help.
- All incidents of drink spiking or spiking by injection should be reported to the police at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure all investigative opportunities are maximised, evidence is preserved and the likelihood of bringing offenders to justice is increased.

Licensed premises are in a position to make a significant contribution to the safety of their customers and enhance the experience for customers and staff through education and engagement.

Bystander Awareness

The Bystander effect is a theory that states that individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when there are other people present.

Members of a crowd will often stand by and watch something happen to someone rather than act.

Consider Bystander Awareness Training: this will support stewards to identify where someone may be at risk of harm and when to step in to help.

Bystander Intervention is:

- Notice something is happening
- Recognise that there is something wrong
- Decide that you have a personal responsibility to intervene
- Have the skills and confidence to act

Licensees from pubs and clubs can reach out to their local Licensing Department to request delivery of the ByStander Awareness Training.

Ask for Angela

“Ask for Angela” is a tool to help customers if they are in a difficult situation.

- If a person is struggling to leave a date or feels unsafe or threatened, they can approach bar staff or security and “Ask for Angela”.
- If bar staff are approached by a person using the phrase they should then take action to ensure the safety of that person.
- This might include securing a safe and discreet exit from the premises, calling a friend or arranging for a taxi.
- Posters should be placed around the venue including in toilets to encourage people to use the phrase to staff if they feel unsafe or vulnerable.
- Venues/licensees can train their staff to recognise ‘Ask for Angela’ and to act appropriately if approached. More information is available [here](#).

Useful Links

Crew2000

[Updates \(crew.scot\)](#)

Fearless

[Home - Fearless](#)

Victim Support Scotland

[Home - Victim Support Scotland](#)

Scottish Alcohol Industry Partnership

[Scottish Alcohol Industry Partnership \(saip.org.uk\)](#)

Institute of Licensing Scotland

[Region: Scotland | Institute of Licensing](#)

Security Industry Authority

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority>

Ask for Angela

[Ask for Angela | Best Bar None Scotland \(bbnscotland.co.uk\)](#)

Social media messaging for divisions:

Twitter

Example 1

We all want to enjoy a night out.

Spiking can put people at risk of harm and is a criminal offence. We're continuing to work with licensees to make pubs and clubs a safe space for all. All reports of spiking will be investigated.

Example 2

If you think someone is spiking or is showing the symptoms of being spiked, report it to bar staff, stewards or the police immediately.

Call us on 101 or in an emergency always dial 999.

Example 3

Signs of spiking appear suddenly and can include appearing intoxicated, drowsiness, vomiting or being disorientated.

If you see someone experiencing these symptoms, report it to bar staff or the police immediately. Dial 999 in an emergency.

Example 4

Do you feel like you are not in a safe situation? Go to the bar and ask for 'Angela', the bar staff will know you need help and will get you out of the situation discreetly without fuss.

Facebook

Example 1

We all want to enjoy a night out.

Spiking can put people at risk of harm and is a criminal offence. We're continuing to work with licensees to inform them on how to spot the signs of spiking to make pubs and clubs safe spaces for all.

All reports of spiking will be investigated. If you or someone you're with thinks they have been spiked, inform bar staff, stewards or the police immediately. Call us on 101, and always dial 999 in an emergency.

Example 2

We're working with licensees to make bars and clubs safe spaces for all.

Signs of spiking can appear suddenly. Symptoms can include appearing intoxicated, drowsiness, vomiting or being disorientated. Victims may be isolated or separated from their group.

If you see someone or if someone you're with is experiencing these symptoms, report it to bar staff or the police immediately. Dial 999 in an emergency.

Example 3

If you think someone is spiking, or is showing the symptoms of being spiked, report it to bar staff, stewards or the police immediately. Call us on 101 or in an emergency always dial 999.

Example 4

"Ask for Angela" is a campaign that was created to help people leave a date safely and discreetly. If you feel unsafe, go to the bar and ask for 'Angela', the bar staff will know you need help and will get you out of the situation discreetly without fuss. Call us on 101 or in an emergency always dial 999.

Social media messaging for licensed premises:

Example 1

We want to keep people safe when they are enjoying a night out. We ensure XXXXX is a safe space for all. We are taking steps including increased searches, training for our staff to spot suspicious behaviour and we will also be ensuring anyone who appears to be at risk of harm will be looked after. Together we are working to ensure there is no place for this criminal and dangerous behaviour at XXXXXX.

Example 2

"Ask for Angela" is a campaign that was created to help people leave a date safely and discreetly. If you feel unsafe, go to the bar and ask for 'Angela', the bar staff will know you need help and will get you out of the situation discreetly without fuss. You can then call the police on 101 or in an emergency always dial 999.

Ends