

East Lothian Licensing Report 2024-2025



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**POLICE
SCOTLAND**
Keeping people safe

Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to provide the Annual Licensing Report for 2024/25, in accordance with Section 12(A) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

Throughout the last year I have been committed to improving confidence amongst our communities by working in partnership with a focus on prevention, early intervention and proactivity. This supports our broader 2030 vision of safer communities, less crime, supported victims and a thriving work force.

In respect of Licensing, I recognise that success can only be achieved in collaboration with the 32 local authorities across Scotland. Along with contribution from many other associated national and local partners, this collaborative working ensures support for the licensed trade while also preventing alcohol fuelled violence, disorder and anti-social behaviour. Our joint campaigns which aim to protect children and young persons from harm will continue.

In the year ahead, our approach will remain focused on prevention and collaboration to ensure high standards of service delivery. I will continue to encourage officers and staff to engage with licensed premises and take relevant and proportionate action where appropriate to ensure licensing standards are maintained in the interest of the safety of the people of Scotland.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank our local partnerships for their contribution to maintaining high standards and driving improvement where necessary within the Licensed Trade for the benefit of the communities we all serve.



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Police Scotland Licensing Overview –

The Violence Prevention and Licensing Co-ordination Unit (VPLCU) sits within the National Policing Together Division and have staff based across the force. The department has overall responsibility for determining and delivering national licensing strategy and policy, providing advice, guidance and support to divisional licensing teams and undertaking other specialist functions.

The VPLCU is a specialist department which consists of a small team of officers. The officers within the unit work with divisional licensing teams and partner agencies to help shape policy and strategy around the police licensing function. They provide advice to police licensing practitioners, operational officers, supervisors and policing commanders.

The VPLCU seek to ensure that legislation governing the sale and supply of alcohol is applied consistently across the country and all opportunities are taken to stop the illegal or irresponsible sale, supply or consumption of alcohol with the intention of preventing and reducing crime and disorder.

During 2024/2025, from a licensing perspective, our particular focus was on the following.

- Scrutiny of the serious incidents of violence, disorder and antisocial behaviour linked to licensed premises.
- Delivering and promoting campaigns which seek to address issues arising from the consumption of alcohol, particularly in relation to young persons and in the context of the night-time economy.
- Governance and ongoing development of the National ICT Licensing System, known as “Inn Keeper”, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of liquor and civic licensing administration and management. Police Scotland continue to work on upgrading the National ICT system to ensure compliance with GDPR legislation.

Each of the 13 Local Policing Divisions have a licensing team responsible for the day-to-day management of licensing administration, complying with statutory requirements as well as addressing any issues that may arise within licensed premises in their local area.

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LICENSING BOARD AREA

The Licensing Board area is policed by Lothian & Scottish Borders Division (J).

Chief Superintendent Gregg Banks is the Divisional Police Commander who has the responsibility for all day-to-day policing functions.

The Local Area Commander Chief Inspector Ben Leathes is based at Musselburgh Police Station. He is responsible for performance management, community engagement, partnership working and the daily management of local personnel.

Chief Inspector Ben Leathes is supported by Inspector Alan King who is also based at Haddington. The East Lothian Licensing Boards are predominantly attended by PC Stephen Gibson.

Inspector Laura Stevenson is the Head of the Licensing Department, and she is responsible for the overall supervision of the department.

Sergeant Stuart Miller is the Licensing Sergeant, and he is responsible for the day-to-day management of the department and staff.

Local Policing Priorities

Following our public consultation process, the policing priorities for J Division, as set out in our Local Policing Plan as follows.

- Protecting the most Vulnerable People
- Reducing Violence & Antisocial Behavior
- Reducing Acquisitive Crime
- Improving Road Safety
- Tackling Serious and Organised Crime

In response to the local policing priorities, J Division will continue to work in partnership with partner agencies to reduce alcohol related criminality and continue to develop nighttime economy plans. It is recognised that education, prevention, partnership working and robust policing are all key factors in reducing crime and disorder in this area.

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Description of Board Area

East Lothian is council area is located in the South East of Scotland, bordering Edinburgh, Midlothian and the Scottish Borders. With a population of approx. 110 000, East Lothian combines rural landscapes, long stretches of coastline and historic towns making it a popular location to live and work.

East Lothian has experienced significant population growth and development over recent years, with that growth projected to continue in the coming years.

Licensing plays a critical role in promoting safety, preventing crime and disorder, protecting children and vulnerable persons and ensures the fair operation of licensed premises.

As of March 2025, there are currently:

- 51 'on sales' only premises,
- 87 'off sales' only premises
- 145 combined on/off sales premises

giving a total of 283 premises in East Lothian licensed to sell alcohol, which is the same as last years reporting period.

OPERATION OF THE LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

Introduction-

The East Lothian Licensing Team is based at Dalkeith Police Station. This consists of one police officer, PC Stephen Gibson, supported by administration staff Natasha Gregory and Craig Beveridge based at Dalkeith Police Station and West Lothian Livingston Civic Centre.

The team works standard Monday to Friday however are flexible and often carry out variations to this working late shifts or at weekends to support Divisional demands.

The team are responsible for processing all correspondence and applications received from East Lothian Licensing Board. The officer reviews applications on behalf of the Chief Constable as part of the consultation process in conjunction with the Local Area Commander. This consultation process forms part of the Police support of the Licensing Objectives.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, police officers are deployed on foot where other incidents permit, to aid with dispersal of licensed premises and reduce antisocial behaviour and violence related incidents between the hours of 2200-0300.

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The proactive use of exclusion orders and antisocial behaviour legislation continues to contribute to reducing repeat offending in licensed premises.

The misuse of alcohol is regularly cited as a contributory factor in relation to crimes of violence, domestic abuse, disorder and antisocial behaviour occurring on our street and within our homes. In addition, alcohol is also known to lower inhibitions which can have the impact on people's lives, both resulting in them becoming victims of crime, as well as the perpetrator, which can have serious consequences for individuals and their families.

We continue to ensure there is a concerted focus on the issues surrounding the sale and supply of alcohol within our communities and work together in partnership with licensed premises and other agencies to promote responsible trading practices, ultimately keeping people safe. Our focus is to "Keep People Safe" and we seek to reduce the negative impact alcohol has on our communities. This is achieved through encouraging the responsible sale and supply of alcohol in well run licensed premises, taking positive action to stop irresponsible supply of alcohol to children and young persons and preventing the over supply to individuals already intoxicated in licensed premises.

In the reporting period 2024/2025 the following incidents within licensed premises were recorded.

Premises Type	2023/2024	2024/2025
Public Houses	69	58
Off Sales	187	120
Restaurants	11	9
Hotels	4	5
Total (including misc.)	303	226

Police Scotland carried out 136 recorded inspections of licensed premises in East Lothian during the reporting period.

The Intervention Process

Issues in licensed premises are assessed using a well-established intervention process. Incidents connected to premises are identified by licensing officers who evaluate the Licensing Objectives to determine if any have been compromised.

Police intervention usually results in a meeting with the appropriate representatives of the premises concerned e.g. premises licence holder, designated premises manager and if appropriate, any stewarding company to discuss concerns and agree a way forward to resolve these.

Premises being monitored by way of the above system are subject to regular visits by either local officer's or licensing officers to monitor progress, measure improvement and ensure that agreed remedial measures are implemented.

The intervention system is ultimately designed to support the licence holder before any premises review is sought, although a serious or significant incident may obviously merit an immediate review application. Depending on the severity of the incident and history of the premises, officers will categorise the premises/incident as below: -

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Intervention Process – Stages	Description of Process	Number this reporting year
Green – Monitored	The premises have come to note for a minor issue and require to be monitored. This may result in an informal intervention providing advice/support to the premises along with Police visits.	0
Amber – Intervention	Issues have arisen and an intervention action plan/agreement is drawn up by the Police and implemented by the licence holder to resolve them. This action may be taken with more serious or repeat issues.	0
Red - Problematic	Premises are operating in a manner inconsistent with the licensing objectives or outwith the terms of their licence. Where local Police intervention and support has failed or is unlikely to succeed in resolving the issues. A premises review request to the Licensing Board is considered the most appropriate way to address the issue	1

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Summary of Applications/Offences

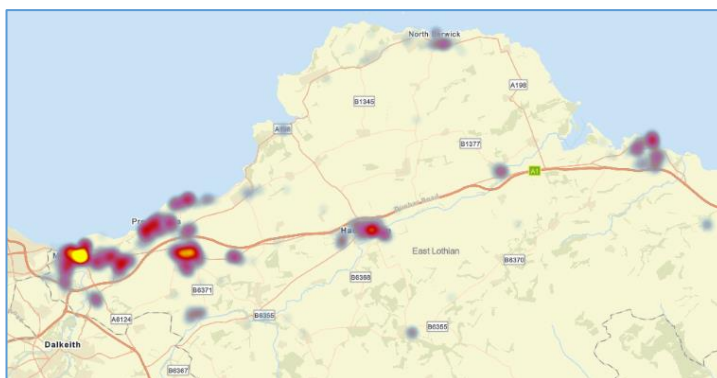
During the year 2024/2025 the following applications were received and processed by the Police Licensing Team.

Application Type	2023/2024	2024/2025
Personal License	222	156
New Premises License	15	18
Variation	86	107
Occasional	852	885
Total	1175	1166

Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour

A total of 898 crimes of violence were recorded within the East Lothian area for the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. This represents a decrease of 141 crimes (-13.6%) from the 2023-24 levels of violence. The violence recorded in 2024-25 included five attempted murders, 35 serious assaults, 13 robberies and 771 common assaults, with a further 74 assaults on emergency workers. It should also be noted that there was one crime of drugging recorded in East Lothian during 2024-25, however was not within a licensed premise.

Map 1: East Lothian Heatmap for Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour



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A total of 34 crimes of violence were recorded for licensed premises within East Lothian during 2024-25 compared to 19 reports in 2023-24. It was also noted that 21 crimes were committed within supermarkets licensed to sell alcohol.

The 34 crimes of violence recorded for licensed premises were in the following areas:

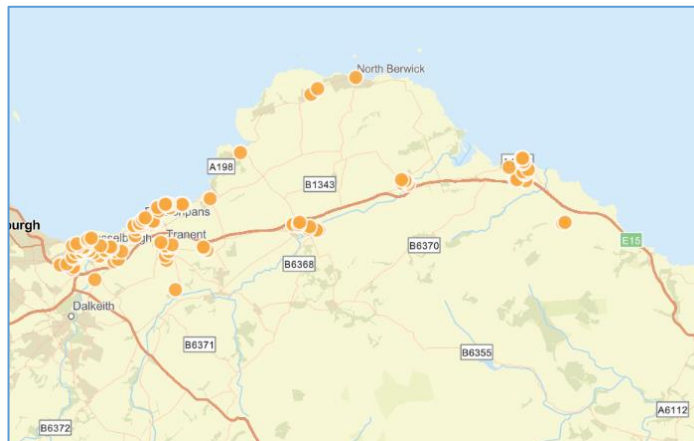
Area	# of Crimes
Musselburgh	12
Haddington	8
Tranent	5
Wallyford	3
Port Seton	2
Prestonpans	1
Longniddry	1
East Linton	1
North Berwick	1

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Violence data where Alcohol is a factor

Crimes with an “alcohol” tag applied can give an indication of offences where alcohol is a factor. It should be noted however that it is not compulsory to add tags to crime reports and therefore the statistics provided here in relation to alcohol related violence provide an indication only, and do not specify the nature of the link to alcohol. Of the 898 recorded crimes of violence for the 2024-25 period, a total of 149 (16.6%) had the alcohol marker attached to the crime report, which is a reduction of 28 from the previous year. Common assaults continue to account for the main volume of alcohol-related violence (76.5%), an increase of five percentage points from the previous year (71%). The number of serious assaults (13) where alcohol is a factor has reduced from 18 in the previous year. Of note, the number of alcohol-related assaults on emergency workers (16) increased by 167% from 2023/24. There were also four alcohol-related assaults on retail workers, a reduction from six when compared with last year’s level.

Map 2: East Lothian Locations for Violence where Alcohol is a Factor

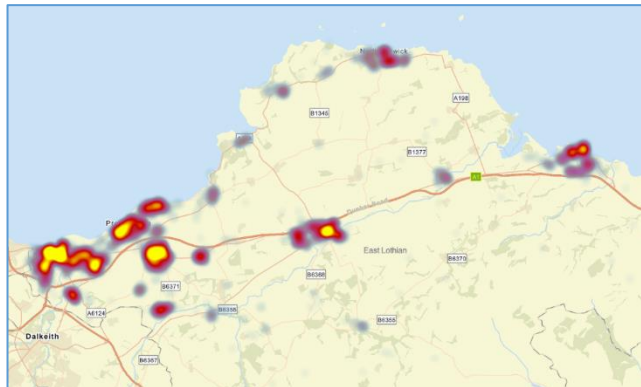


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Anti-Social Behaviour

A total of 4998 incidents relating to ASB have been recorded during 2024-25 within the East Lothian area. This represents an increase of three incidents (0.1%) from 2023-24, and an increase of 186 incidents (3.9%) from 2022-23.

Map 3: East Lothian Heatmap for Anti-Social Behaviour



RECORDED LICENSING OFFENCE CRIMES

Offence	2023/2024	2024/2025
Section 1 – Unlicensed sale of alcohol	0	1
Section 63 – Sale or supply out with licensed hours	0	0
Section 102 – Sale of alcohol to a child	0	0
Section 103 – Allowing sale to child or young person	0	0
Section 105 – Purchase of alcohol for a child or young	0	1
Section 111 – Drunk persons within licensed premises	0	0
Section 113 – Sale of alcohol to a drunk person	0	0
Section 114 – Premises manager, staff not to be drunk	0	0
Section 115 – Drunk/disorderly conduct on premises	0	0
Section 116 – Refusal to leave licensed premises	7	2

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PREVENTING THE SALE OR SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL TO CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

Police Scotland can make a positive impact on the future outcomes for children and families, by addressing the sale and supply of alcohol to young persons and working with our partners, taking the appropriate action to address both the potential and actual misuse of alcohol within the early years.

From April until August, Community Policing Teams in conjunction Police Scotland Youth Volunteers continued to support the 'It'll Cost You' Proxy Purchase Campaign, this involved further distribution campaign materials, engaging with licensed premises staff to provide appropriate guidance and some social media activity to raise awareness across East Lothian.

There are dedicated School Link Officers based across schools in East Lothian and they are seen as one of the main links between police and children and young persons in the area. The local Licensing officer continues to work alongside these officers to provide education and support to students around the dangers of alcohol not only to their own health but also the impact on the community.

Youth Engagement: actively engage with youths and foster a positive image of the police and their local communities. Act as primary first responders to youth calls, disrupt antisocial behaviour and enforce appropriate legislation firmly but fairly. Maximise alcohol seizures. Engage with partners and Community Policing Teams to identify appropriate support and diversionary activities.

Licensed Premises: monitor licensed premises activity and act as first responders to antisocial behaviour related incidents whenever possible.

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TACKLING SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

Serious and organised crime has far-reaching consequences that affect a large proportion of society and the economy. Those involved have spread their activity into an increased variety of criminal enterprises including illegal drugs, money laundering, fraud, human trafficking, fake goods and the licensed trade.

The Serious Organised Crime Task Force was set up by the Scottish Government to provide direction and co-ordination for all organisations involved in tackling Serious Organised Crime in Scotland.

The task force has a remit to disrupt, dismantle and pursue Serious Organised Crime Groups (SOCGs). Key partners include Police Scotland, NCA, HMRC, COPFS, SOLACE and the Scottish business Resilience Centre, amongst others.

If SOCGs gain a foothold in licensed premises then this would afford the criminal group a seemingly legitimate income stream, which could be no more than a veneer for other criminal activities.

SOCG's pose a serious threat to communities, individuals and businesses. We use intelligence and enforcement to break the cycle of crime and reduce opportunities for criminals to profit from illegal activity.

All opportunity is taken to disrupt the running of these licensed premises with the assistance of the National Intervention Unit. Multi-Agency Proactive visits are conducted with key partners in an effort to put the pressure on these operators, in an effort to disrupt their activity and cease from trading.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- The Licensing Officer will continue to work in conjunction with partner agencies and LSOs to provide guidance and support to all parties, ensuring license holders and licensed premises staff have a better understanding of their responsibilities/obligations. This collaborative approach should seek to further develop partnerships as well as fulfil licensing objectives
- The Dedicated Night Time Economy Policing Plan will continue and will be led by Local Community Police Officers, with assistance from Response Officers (subject to incident demand). This co-ordinated plan will be devised with the Licensing Officer and will include licenced premises inspections to ensure compliance with licensing obligations and to detect and deter any alcohol-fuelled criminality. All incident related visits will continue to be recorded for any required further action from the Licensing Officer.

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- Continue with the “It’ll Cost You” Proxy Purchase Campaign. This will encompass further distribution of campaign materials, engaging with licensed premises staff to provide appropriate guidance and some social media activity to increase awareness across East Lothian.
- Provide student safety inputs at Queen Margaret University.
- The Licensing Officer will continue to review any relevant intelligence and liaise with colleagues or other intelligence sources (where permitted) to facilitate a satisfactory resolution.
- Work in conjunction with event organisers, events planning colleagues and partner agencies to agree conditions for events, offer advice and support in order to achieve a safe and crime free environment for such events.
- Funding by East Lothian Council for the policing Community Action Team has ceased for the 2025/26 period, which will impact the capability of local policing.

CONCLUSION

Police Scotland would like to thank East Lothian Licensing Board, The Licensing Standards Officer, and the wider council colleagues for their continued support, collaboration.

We look forward to a safe and healthy 2025/2026.