

PE1995/F: Improve support for victims of spiking

Scottish Government written submission, 2 December 2025

Since the last [update](#) in January 2024 the Minister for Victims and Community Safety has chaired a further six Multi-Agency Roundtables on spiking (most recently in November) with partners from policing, health, victims' organisations and prosecution, as well as representatives from colleges and universities, community safety, and the night-time economy sector.

The Committee will be aware that the Roundtable's objective is to discuss and better understand the structure and prevalence of spiking in Scotland and to ensure that the response is robust and effective. Partners meet regularly to ensure that collective efforts to tackle incidents of spiking remain coordinated and effective; and that we consider what more we could and should be doing as part of our wider policy commitment. More recently we have extended membership to include officials from the Home Office to share good practice and ensure consistency in our public messaging.

NHS / Police Scotland Reporting Pathway

This year we have seen significant progress in addressing the reporting pathway between police and health professionals. We have now ensured that there is a consistent national approach to ensure that individuals who present to A&E receive clear and uniform advice regarding the roles of health professionals and the police when they report incidents of spiking which will reassure victims about the service they will receive. This approach has been endorsed by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine.

Furthermore, from October 2025, changes have been introduced to the NHS digital system which will allow us to record those who present to A&E as potential victims of spiking. This will provide invaluable data on previous unrecorded incidents and will allow us to better understand the extent to which these lead on to formal police reporting.

We are also looking at a potential awareness raising campaign next year and how we might utilise the data that will emerge from the updated NHS system to inform future work.

More details can be found in this NHS24 [News Release](#).

UK Government Crime and Policing Bill – Spiking Proposal

Acknowledging the [spiking proposals](#) in the UK Government's Crime and Policing Bill, there are already comprehensive laws in place in Scotland that allow Police Scotland to effectively tackle perpetrators of this crime, which carries a maximum penalty of up to five years, or a fine, or both.

As Committee members will be aware, Spiking can be prosecuted under the common law offence of drugging, which is a broad offence covering all types of drink spiking, the common law offence of assault, depending on the individual facts and

circumstances of the case, and also the more specific statutory offence contained in section 11 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 called administering a substance for sexual purposes.

The Scottish Government continues to engage regularly with UK Government officials and to assess the need for a similar approach in Scotland to take account of our different criminal justice framework as the UK Bill progresses.

Awareness Raising Activity over the Festive Period

The Minister for Victims and Community Safety recently wrote to MSPs and Scottish MPs to outline a number of our most recent initiatives to raise awareness of the dangers of spiking as we approach the festive period and it may be helpful to note the below activity that is taking place.

Our focus remains on supporting and reassuring the public around reporting incidents of spiking and members of the Roundtable have planned activity over the festive period which includes universities continuing to work closely with their students' associations to provide information and resources for students – having support available to students who report a spiking incident and focussing on prevention initiatives.

Spike Aware UK have attended various universities and colleges for events to help raise awareness of spiking and will continue to do so in December. They will also be joining British Transport Police officers on Thursday 11th December in the Glasgow area and Friday 19th December in Edinburgh to engage with members of the public travelling into the cities for festive events.

Police Scotland are working with partners in relation to prevention, response and reassurance. There are a number of plans over the festive period that include, but not limited to:

High Visibility patrols – in the night-time economy, transport hubs, queues etc. and working with street pastors in Glasgow to incorporate safety plans within their Safer City Centre plans particularly over the weekend deployments.

Licensing checks – Through connections with the licence trade, Police Scotland have conducted engagement with licensed premises across the country providing guidance to venue staff on incident response and reporting procedures. Also focussing on identifying vulnerability and supporting individuals in keeping them safe.

Bystander Training – with licensed premises particularly city centre hotspots and popular premises such as student pubs and clubs. The inputs have been adapted to specifically include messaging around spiking and best practices for venues when an incident is reported to them. Five venues in Edinburgh have already received training with other venues identified to be rolled out to during spiking intensification week (w/c 8 December) and beyond.

Clear public messaging – Police Scotland are ensuring that the focus is not only on victim behaviours but also those behaviours displayed by perpetrators and to encourage reporting of any concerns or suspicious activities by one or a group of individuals to report to police, venue, or security staff.

There is further information available on the [Student Safety Hub](#) on Police Scotland's website which gives essential advice and useful contacts/signposting on safe nights out etc.

Partners who work in the night-time economy and hospitality sector want individuals to feel safe to report any suspected incidents of spiking to venue staff and to know their report will be taken seriously and that they will be cared for by staff. We want to reassure the public that Police Scotland will handle each case sympathetically in recognition that incidents of spiking are being reported by potential victims of criminality.

Further information on where to get support and how to report can be found on our [Safer Scotland](#) webpages – which brings together resources developed by Roundtable members to inform and support the public around the subject of spiking.

Violence Against Women and Girls Justice Unit

Criminal Justice Division