

STOP SPIKING

Drink Spiking
Procedure Guide

Together we can stamp
out drink spiking in Bristol

INTRODUCTION

Bristol's night-time economy is working together to tackle drink spiking in our venues, promoting awareness of how to correctly support a victim of drink spiking and the proper way to report the incident.

This guide is designed to help venue teams understand the physical and psychological threat posed by drink tampering, spot suspicious activity and act when an incident may have occurred.

1. WATCH OUT

A person's drink can be spiked to increase vulnerability for a variety of reasons, including sexual assault, robbery or an attempted joke. This can be slipping drugs into an alcoholic drink, adding alcohol to a non-alcoholic drink, or additional alcohol to an alcoholic drink. We're also aware there have been reports of injected spiking in other parts of the country.

2. LISTEN UP

We all have a part to play in stamping out drink spiking in Bristol. Listening and believing is the vital first step in supporting someone who has been affected, whether it has been proven to be a spiking incident or not.

3. ACT

Whether you have noticed suspicious activity yourself, or have been approached by someone with concerns, it's vital that you act quickly to provide the greatest possible chance of apprehending and prosecuting the perpetrator.

**DRINK SPIKING IS A
PREMEDITATED ACT,
A PERSONAL
VIOLATION
AND A CRIME.
IT CARRIES A
SENTENCE OF UP TO
10 YEARS IN PRISON.**

1. WATCH OUT

What is drink spiking?

Drink Spiking refers to the act of adding drugs or alcohol to people's drinks to try and influence their behaviours. Please watch out for the following things:

- People putting alcohol into a non-alcoholic drink
- Customers putting more alcohol into an alcoholic drink
- People slipping prescription or illegal drugs into a drink (such as benzodiazepines, amphetamines or GHB – also called liquid ecstasy).

Drink spiking with drugs

A range of drugs can be used to spike a drink... **these are added to alcohol and they act as a powerful sedative.**

The majority of victims are **unable to detect that they have been spiked through sight, smell or taste** because the substances used to spike drinks are **often colourless and odourless**. They can cause the person to become ill, fall unconscious and, in extreme cases, it can even lead to death.

The effects of drink spiking can occur **within 15-30 minutes** and symptoms will usually last for several hours. A lot of people who have had **their drinks spiked eventually blackout**. A blackout can last up to 12 hours and can be followed by confusion or memory loss.

Drink spiking with alcohol

One of the most common ways to spike drinks is by adding alcohol to a non-alcoholic drink or **adding extra alcohol** (double / triple shots).

Be alert to **suspicious or unusual behaviour**.

Remove **unattended glasses**.

Be aware of unusual requests; double / triple shots or requests to **add alcohol to another person's drink**.

Don't **promote or sell** alcohol in a way that encourages rapid consumption.

If a person suspects their drink has been spiked with additional alcohol, **take action against the perpetrator** and **protect the victim**.

Symptoms include:

Symptoms will vary depending on the type and amount of drug or alcohol used, how much alcohol was consumed prior to the incident, if the victim takes medication, and the body size or age of the victim.

Confusion

Nausea or vomiting

Hallucinations

Disorientation

Inability to communicate clearly

Paranoia

Poor coordination

Poor visibility

Unconsciousness

**DRUGS CAN LEAVE THE
BODY IN AS LITTLE AS
12 HOURS, SO IT'S
IMPORTANT THAT THE
INDIVIDUAL GETS
TESTED QUICKLY.**

2. LISTEN UP

Listening and believing is the vital first step in supporting someone who has been affected.

If someone suspects a drink has been spiked.

Listen

Stop what you are doing, **pay attention and focus** on the information the person is giving you.

Avoid judgement

It can be difficult to judge whether someone has consumed too much alcohol or has been spiked. **Always believe the person who has approached you. Avoid phrases that suggest you don't believe them** such as, 'Are you sure they've not just drunk too much?' or 'Why would someone want to spike you?'

Know your venue's procedure

Your venue may have its own testing kits, or it may have a dedicated point of contact for any incidents. **Ask NOW what the process is to ensure you make the person feel confident** that they are in good hands on the night.

Gather all the information for the Police

The perpetrator may still be in your venue so please gather as much information as possible about the incident for the police ahead of their arrival.

Ensure everyone's safety

With another member of staff, **help the individual to a place where they feel safe** away from crowds.

Ask a friend or trusted individual to accompany the victim. Drink spiking is a scary experience and the victim needs to be reassured they are safe.

If you are concerned that an assault has taken place, you can ask for a specially trained police officer to attend or signpost the victim to relevant resources (see useful links).

Call an ambulance if they require medical attention (especially if they are unconscious) and advise them that you suspect the person's drink may have been spiked.

3. ACT

It's vital that you act quickly to ensure the safety of those affected, and to provide the greatest possible chance of apprehending and prosecuting the perpetrator.

Working with Police

If the person affected has vomited, this and any contaminated clothing should be brought to the attention of the Police.

The Police or a medical professional will test the victim through a urine and/or blood test once they are in attendance, taking the sample at the most appropriate time but as soon as possible.

Any CCTV recordings should be preserved.

You may be asked if the CCTV can be viewed in situ to identify any suspects at the earliest opportunity. CCTV evidence can be provided electronically.

If the perpetrator is still present, they should be identified to the Police immediately as they may be subject to search and arrest. If there is a suspect identified you should circulate the details through the agreed DISC system.

Secure. Test. Report

Report the incident to the Police via 999 as soon as possible. Drugs can leave the body in as little as 12 hours after consumption; it's vital that the individual gets tested quickly.

Seize the affected drink, containers and any remaining residues. These should be put in a secure place for examination by the Police.

If the venue has a 'drink spiking kit' then test the drink for presence of drugs. The kit should be preserved whether positive or negative and handed to the Police upon attendance. If it is a negative test result, please follow this procedure and reassure the victim that they are right to come to you with their concerns as spiking with alcohol is also a common practice.

Keep a note of the kit number and details of the incident in your venue's incident book.

If a request is made for the Police not to be contacted...

Remember that the person affected is likely to be highly stressed and upset, embarrassed or ashamed and may be reluctant to prolong the experience. Be mindful of their wishes and wellbeing. But also...

Reassure them that reporting an incident will not get them in any trouble, even if recreational drug use has taken place.

Be mindful of who is making the request; is it in the best interests of the individual; do they have the capacity to agree to this request? If in doubt, report any concerns to the Police.

Ensure anyone offering to help is a friend and can be fully trusted. If in doubt, intervene. Take a record of names, ID and exchange contact details if you can.

Advise the individual, and those with them, that if drink spiking is suspected, **drugs can leave the body in as little as 12 hours** after consumption, so it is important that the individual gets tested quickly.

If there is no Police involvement, **instead report this incident to Bristol City Council or Bristol City Centre BID**, who will record it for official reporting with anonymised information to drinkspiking@bristolcitycentrebid.co.uk.

What next?

Do not let the victim leave the venue alone or with anyone you are suspicious about. Ensure they have a planned journey home and are accompanied by someone they know and trust, once they have been attended by a member of Avon and Somerset Police, and evidence has been gathered.

USEFUL CONTACTS

AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE

The Police should always be the first point of call in the instance of suspected drink spiking

Is the incident ongoing? Call 999

Are you calling after the incident (e.g. next day)? Call 101

BRISTOL SUPPORT SERVICES

The Bridge

Bristol's Sexual Assault Referral Centre providing emotional, medical and practical care and support for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted including the opportunity to have evidence collected without the pressure to make an immediate decision about calling the police.

0117 342 6999 (24 hours) to speak to a specially trained crisis worker

thebridgecanhelp.org.uk/

The Survivor Pathway

The Bristol survivor pathway is a guide for anyone wanting to know more about specialist sexual violence support services in Bristol.

survivorpathway.org.uk/bristol/

Bristol Mind

A local charity for anyone wanting to look after their emotional or mental health.

bristolmind.org.uk

SARSAS

A specialist support service for anyone who has experienced any form of sexual violence, at any point in their lives.

saras.org.uk

OTR

Mental health social movement by and for young people aged 11-25 living in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

otrbristol.org.uk

The Drop - Bristol Drug Project

The Drop is BDP's one-stop-shop for information and support for people who use recreational and party drugs.

bdp.org.uk/thedrop/

INDUSTRY SUPPORT FOR YOUR TEAM

NTIA

The voice for the sector, working to increase awareness and understanding of its contribution and benefits

ntia.co.uk

Hospitality Action

Working to provide hospitality workers with financial, physical and psychological support to help them overcome adversity.

hospitalityaction.org.uk

Nightwatch

Bristol's citywide Pubwatch advocating working for Bristol's 24 hour economy.

24hourbristol.co.uk

BARBIE

Membership group and source of advice for Bristol venues.

barbiebristol.com