

NRF Drinking Responsibly project

Training staff in alcohol retail: summary report November 2005 – March 2006

Responsible alcohol server programmes are well established in other parts of Europe; namely the Republic of Ireland and Holland. In the draft EU Strategy on alcohol-related harm, the Commission is demanding the industry to implement provision of “well trained cashiers, servers and bar staff”.

The aim of the NHS Drinking Responsibly project was to further contribute to the promotion of responsible alcohol retailing and the promotion of a responsible drinking culture within Manchester. There were no formal training opportunities available for alcohol retail staff in Manchester.

“ServeWise” (a training programme operated from Scotland) had been the only responsible alcohol retailing course in existence across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Manchester Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) had at one time a member of staff who had been trained as an accredited “ServeWise” trainer. In June 2005, ADS confirmed that this person was no longer in post and “ServeWise” confirmed that their records showed that ADS had been the only provider for Manchester.

BIIAB and Calling Time

Between June 2005 and March 2006, the NHS project worked in collaboration with the British Institute of Innkeeping Awarding Body (BIIAB) to be the first in the country to offer local staff in alcohol retail the new Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing certificate. Simultaneously the NHS project also produced a resource booklet aimed at staff who would not be able to access face:face training. This booklet was titled “Calling Time: helpful advice for staff” and addressed the nature of alcohol, indications of drunkenness, and ways retail alcohol responsibly.

BIIAB Level 1 Award in responsible alcohol retailing

To address the needs of England, throughout the summer of 2005, the British Institute of Innkeeping Awarding Body (BIIAB) piloted a new course called the award in responsible alcohol retailing. The qualification aims to provide essential knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of alcohol retailers authorised by a personal licence holder to sell alcohol. It enables those who complete the qualification to act within the law, and to support the designated premises supervisor to retail alcohol responsibly on their premises.

Following its launch on 24/11/2005, BIIAB director Cathie Smith said, “The BII is committed to supporting licence holders at this time of great change. The BIIAB Level 1 Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing provides additional protection to licensed premises operators and candidates alike as it contains three mandatory questions that ensure that every candidate fully understands the legislation concerning underage sales, serving persons who are drunk and the licensing objectives. Knowing the law gives those at the sharp end the confidence to do their job properly. We’re pleased to have received support and endorsement from Home Office Minister of State, Hazel Blears MP, who has written the foreword to the handbook. The award has been designed to be deliverable in less than a day and includes a short multiple-choice examination. A comprehensive handbook, presented in an easy-to-follow format, supports the qualification and covers all the information required to complete the examination”.

The QCA accredited BIIAB Level 1 Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing is available in two formats. Candidates can either attend a training course at a BIIAB approved centre, followed by a paper-based examination, or they can receive training on-site and take the examination in a closely monitored environment, via telephone assessment. It is designed for anyone, including bar staff and supermarket cashiers, who work on any licensed retail premises from pubs to convenience stores involved in the sale of alcohol. The BIIAB is the wholly-owned awarding body of the BII, the professional body for the licensed retail sector.

The NHS Drinking Responsibly project steering group agreed to make the course available for free to staff across Manchester at a BIIAB approved centre, using the paper-based examination. The project funded 95 places November 2005 – March 2006. 74 attended from pubs, clubs, and off licences across Manchester. In 2005-6 all training groups were from a mixed background of both off licences and pubs, clubs and bars.

- A total of 19 places were booked by off licence staff (18 individual staff)
- A total of 53 places were booked by on licence staff (53 individual staff)
- A total of 2 places were booked by associated professionals (Police Sergeant + Brewery Training Manager)
- A total of 70 candidates passed the exam (95% pass rate)

In 2005-2006, the course cost on average of £49.41 + VAT per candidate. Cost covered room hire, trainer costs, exam costs, and refreshments. All BIIAB courses must be delivered by trainers who have been BIIAB accredited. The training company we used were "abv training Ltd".

Immediate response questionnaires were carried out by candidates surveying their experience on attending the course:

Overall, how would you rate the course?

92% indicated "it was relevant"

8% indicated "it was quite relevant"

0% indicated "it was of little use"

How good was the pre-course information?

(BIIAB handbook "Award in responsible alcohol retailing")

95% indicated "just what was needed"

1% indicated "room for improvement"

4% indicated "what information"

General ratings

"will the course help business profitability" 51% said YES

"will you do things differently" 72% said YES

"was the course fun and enjoyable" 77% said YES

"would you recommend it" 80% said YES

As part of a post-training evaluation process, semi-structured interviews have been carried out with four candidates who attended the course and used "Calling Time". Comments with regards to the award in responsible alcohol retailing course:

"I introduced a challenge 21 policy when I got back".

"The level 1 was great for me, was useful, so I paid myself to sit the new level 2. I didn't realise how much I didn't know. The level 2 should be re-done by licensees who got grandfather rights and if they don't pass it I think they should re-sit it".

"I went on a local alcohol awareness course on young people through Sports Development. After that I came away and saw how I needed to talk to young people differently. My generation would just shout at young people, tell them to 'do one'. Then I went on this other course and learnt how to talk differently to them. The next time this young lad came in my shop and tried to buy alcohol, this time I explained to him why I couldn't serve him, my fines, and the risks. I said we should get him involved in local football in the area, get him onto something. That same lad saw me a few days later and said "sweet" and we "chinked" knuckles. That would never have happened before".

"When I heard about the quirks of the new level 2 it showed I needed to find out more (about my new laws) myself. The free cost was a big incentive. I will still pay for more staff to go on it though this year".

"We made one brand of wine more expensive from £2.50 to £1.99 (1.5 litres 7%)".

"I had a lot of problems when I first came back, checking I.D, knowing what to ask for and then refusing but I knew the acceptable types of I.D and also knew how to explain and talk to the kids differently, telling them why, not just saying "NO I can't serve you".

"Overall it was useful. Length was reasonable".

"Nothing changed except for (my) confidence, I can talk to customers differently – use the manner to explain the law, explain how it will affect me if I get caught and (how) you would get caught for fines".

Over 2006-7, the NHS Drinking Responsibly project will offer the same course at a subsidised rate. The project will contribute £30 per candidate (course rate 2006-2007 abv training Ltd £65 + VAT). The course is being offered within districts/communities to promote community cohesion and to increase the likelihood of attendance (convenience of location) eg. City Centre, Levenshulme, East Manchester. The course will be offered to a homogenous group of off-licence staff in East Manchester in 2006-7 in collaboration with the East Manchester Off Licence Forum. This will also provide an opportunity to compare feedback on training from mixed training groups or homogenous training groups. For East Manchester Off Licence a funding application has been submitted for members to receive this training for free.

Calling Time: helpful advice for staff

In addition to this formal training, the "Calling Time" booklet was produced with this audience in mind:

- Any person authorised to sell alcohol
- Staff in organisations where there may be particular obstacles to accessing training

It aimed to:

- Assist staff during their induction period
- Act as a forerunner to training in responsible alcohol retailing
- Encourage further discussion and self-directed learning

Since drunkenness is just one factor that threatens the 4 licensing objectives, this resource was produced as a forerunner to training and not as a replacement. From January 2006-August 2006, 3000 copies have been distributed. Distribution has involved a combination of assertive mail out, individual orders from licensees and dissemination by GMP City Safe officers.

"Calling Time" cost 0.83p per booklet to print (print run of 3000). A typical cost to supply one venue with the maximum of order of 50 = £41.50 box + delivery £5.50 = £47.00 per order.

As part of a post-training evaluation process, semi-structured interviews have been carried out with four candidates who attended the course and used "Calling Time". Comments with regards to the use of "Calling Time":

"Booklet easier to understand, I didn't need the space to write notes, I didn't write in them but used it at work just when we were quiet. With one girl, I had one (booklet) and she had one (booklet), and we would test each other like a quiz".

"I think there should be one booklet for off licences and one booklet for on licences. There are differences and some things that don't apply to one of us".

"I think it should have a place to sign 'I have been on training'".

"I didn't use the space to fill in, I just keep it handy. I was doing this business more than 12 years and didn't know how much is one measure? How much is in 4 cans? How much alcohol is he going to carry (to be drunk)? All of that was in that booklet".

Over 2006-7, the NHS Drinking Responsibly project will offer "Calling Time" again to licensed premises across the city. There will be a new training log to demonstrate training activity and personalised pages for off licences and on licences. It will also include a sleeve to insert local information/communication to optimise its shelf life and to meet the needs of other PCTS/City Councils who are interested in adopting "Calling Time" and distributing copies in their area.

General feedback from alcohol retail staff:

Other comments regarding how we can support staff in sustaining a high level of confidence and keeping up-to-date with knowledge:

"Refreshers to keep up with showing due diligence".

"Anyone who works on alcohol retail should be made to go on it (Award in responsible alcohol retailing)".

"It would be a big help to have updates by email like a centralised emailing system. We could then show it to staff and get them to sign it to say they have read it".

“Shopkeepers refresher training? Too long once a year, every six months is good”.

Other comments regarding how we can improve responsible retailing initiatives in the city:

“We should give them (young adults) a free I.D pass, or even just a minimum charge. You can't force people to get the PASS but you could make it easier for them to have the proper I.D. We could act as third party, collect their forms, send off applications, and then get them sent back here to collect”.

“Community wardens they should go on the course”.

*“We could improve how the police come in every Friday night – they could introduce themselves, build relationships with the officers. They go on at us about promotions but are they going to **** (superstores)? What promotions have they got on (at the superstores)?”*

“Don't let kids in shops unaccompanied after 8pm”.

“There should be test purchasing but also there should be Trading Standards watching out for adults buying for children (enforcement for adults). We can chase them up the road and ask them to give it back but that's all we can do. We bar them too but who's going to fine them?”

“Kids round here wont buy one of those citizen cards, they should be able to get it free”

“Communication to the public? Do a cut out and keep Calling Time”.

Evaluation Plan 2006-2007

A review of how many staff remain in post will be carried out. Of those staff remaining, they will be invited to take part in the post-training evaluation process and a semi-structured interview will be carried out. A focus group will also be planned with City Safe police officers who distributed a large proportion of copies of Calling Time throughout their day:day activities (“Visits to Licensed Premises”, “Best Bar None Awards” follow-up and preparation, “Top 10”).

EU programme activity

In order to ensure a wider dissemination of such training across EU countries, The EFRD, in partnership with University of Wolverhampton, the BII and ServeWise, have produced “Guidelines for developing a responsible service of alcohol training programme at a national level”. The guidelines draw on the expertise of national bodies already involved in such training across Europe such as Failte Ireland with the “RSA programme”, the Dutch Horeca Institute with “Think before you Serve” and Alcohol Focus Scotland with “Serve Wise” and many other organisations.

They have been designed to assist companies, trade associations in the hospitality, tourism or retailing industry as well as local public authorities in this process of developing training programme and qualification schemes that support those serving/selling alcohol in running legally and socially responsible premises. The progress of the NHS Drinking Responsibility project including the production of “Calling Time: helpful advice for staff” has been forwarded to the EU project group as well to the BIIAB.

“A training programme helps the professionals to develop policies and procedures about serving/selling alcohol so as to minimise the risk of alcohol-related problems as a result of inappropriate alcohol consumption. Every one benefits when staff know how to serve alcohol responsibly. Staff have a better understanding of the product they sell. Their job skills are improved. Customers are also encouraged to drink responsibly. As a consequence, it is good for the business because these customers attract other customers like themselves, discourages drinking styles that are causing problems and they come back. Another positive side effect of such training is the reduction in employees' turnover- which in some countries is very high- to the benefit of both the employees and employers”.

Wiscombe, Smith & Ellmers, December 2005, Guidelines for developing a responsible service of alcohol training programme at a national level (EFRD).

Report correct as of 08/09/2006

Liz Burns

Public Health Development Project Worker-Alcohol

NHS Drinking Responsibly Project

Elizabeth.burns@northpct.manchester.nhs.uk