

Borders Local Licensing Forum Development Workshop

Discussion one: Taking Stock

Background

AFS has been engaging with forums to learn more about challenges and opportunities they have encountered. The experience of forums across Scotland appears to be very mixed. While some describe having influence within the licensing system, others do not believe that they are functioning effectively. Some examples of common challenges and opportunities identified by forums are set out below.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion over role and remit • Lack of clear aims / workplan • Views ignored / tokenistic • Poor communications • Difficulties involving specific groups • Difficulties retaining members • Competing interests/lack of consensus • Limited resources/time • Lack of activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New reporting requirements (Functions Reports) • Agreed aims / workplan • Support from local agencies • Access to valuable information/data • Engaged membership • Good relationships with board • Wealth of experience/skills around table • Strong leadership

Questions for discussion

- Which of the above challenges/opportunities could apply to your forum?
- What other challenges/opportunities might you encounter?

Discussion 2: Looking Forward

Background

It can be beneficial for forums to set out the activities that they will undertake in the coming year, or over a longer time period. This can support them to agree what actions they will take and what types of issues they will explore, as well as to track progress. Some examples of activities forums might undertake are set out below.

Work area	Examples of activities
Reviewing the operation of the Act in the forum's area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the licensing policy to identify how the board intends to promote the objectives. • Use Annual Functions Report to review decisions of the board – is the policy being followed? • Gather evidence to measure the local impact of alcohol and the board's decision making (e.g., published alcohol data, views of licensees, local services). • Develop a local alcohol profile that pulls evidence together from multiple agencies (some forums develop these each year).
Giving advice and making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence to show what impact the licensing policy is having and recommend any actions/changes needed.

recommendations to the board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make recommendations regarding the content of Annual Functions Report, and any issues arising from it. • Make recommendations regarding licensed hours in the area. • Suggest good practice controls for licensed premises and occasional licences, such as sample conditions. • Monitor the use of occasional licences and make recommendations e.g., what sort of events it is not appropriate to license? • Make recommendations to the Board on improvements to processes that would increase accessibility/transparency for the public.
Developing the forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a work plan setting out the activities that the forum will undertake. • Undertake a review of the membership to ensure it is broadly representative. • Encourage/enhance membership e.g., contact youth organisations, promote forum on social networking sites. • Identify opportunities to develop relationships with fellow licensing stakeholders e.g., work shadowing, training, events. • Develop terms of reference and/or standing orders. • Gather feedback about the forum to identify areas for improvement. • Agree practical arrangements for communication with the board. • Actively seek opinions from the community – find new ways for public to feed-in.

Questions for discussion

- What issue/s would you like your forum to focus on over the coming year?
- Which activities do you think would be most useful for your forum to undertake?
- How will you take this forward?