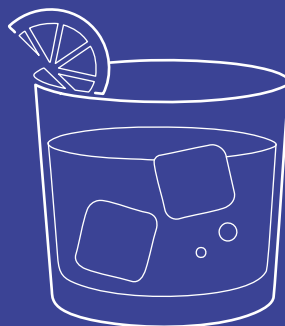




# Tackling drink **SPIKING**

**Venue guide**



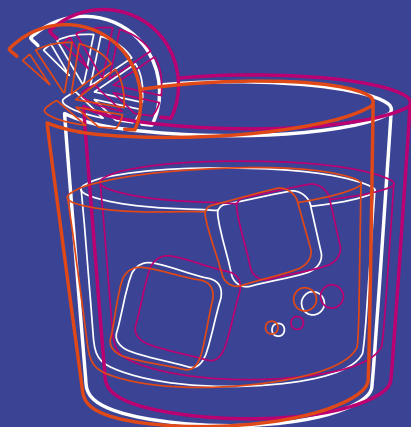
Information to help Southwark businesses tackle drink spiking



## **Southwark Council is working with local businesses to prevent drink spiking in venues.**

This guide offers advice on what to do if you believe an incident has occurred. Please share this guide with all staff so everyone is aware of how to spot the signs of spiking and effectively respond to incidents.

If you have any questions or would like further information, contact us at **[community.safety@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@southwark.gov.uk)**





## What is drink spiking?

Drink spiking occurs when someone slips a substance, or substances, into another person's drink without their knowledge to try to influence or impede their behaviour. This could be for a number of reasons, including to steal from them or deliberately interfere with their judgement to make them susceptible to sexual assault.

The person may do it just because they think it's funny to watch someone lose control. Whatever the motivation, drink spiking is a criminal offence and can carry a prison sentence of up to 10 years.

Many victims don't realise their drinks have been spiked because the substances used are often colourless and odourless. They can cause the person to become ill, unconscious, unaware of their surroundings or their actions and affect their ability to say no or protect themselves from unwanted sexual advances. In extreme cases, it can lead to death.

### **Drink spiking includes:**

- slipping drugs into an alcoholic drink
- adding alcohol to a non-alcoholic drink
- adding additional alcohol to an alcoholic drink
- there have also been reports of people being injected with drugs, or being given drugs in a vape or cigarette





## Signs to watch out for

The effects of drink spiking will depend on a number of factors, including what substances are used and the size and weight of the person who has been targeted.

It can be difficult to tell the difference between a customer who has had their drink spiked and someone who has willingly drunk too much alcohol.

Victims will often realise they have been spiked when they feel more intoxicated than they should, based on the amount of alcohol they have consumed.

If you're unsure, always react as if they HAVE had their drink spiked.

**According to the Metropolitan Police Service website, symptoms of drink spiking can include:**

- confusion
- nausea or vomiting
- hallucinations and paranoia
- disorientation or poor coordination
- inability to communicate properly
- memory loss
- feeling sick or throwing up
- lowered inhibitions
- loss of balance
- unconsciousness
- problems with vision

Symptoms can begin within 15 to 30 minutes of the spiking taking place, often lasting for several hours. The effects can be felt for days.

Most victims, but not all, are women.

# What to do if you become aware that someone may have had their drink spiked

## Keep them safe

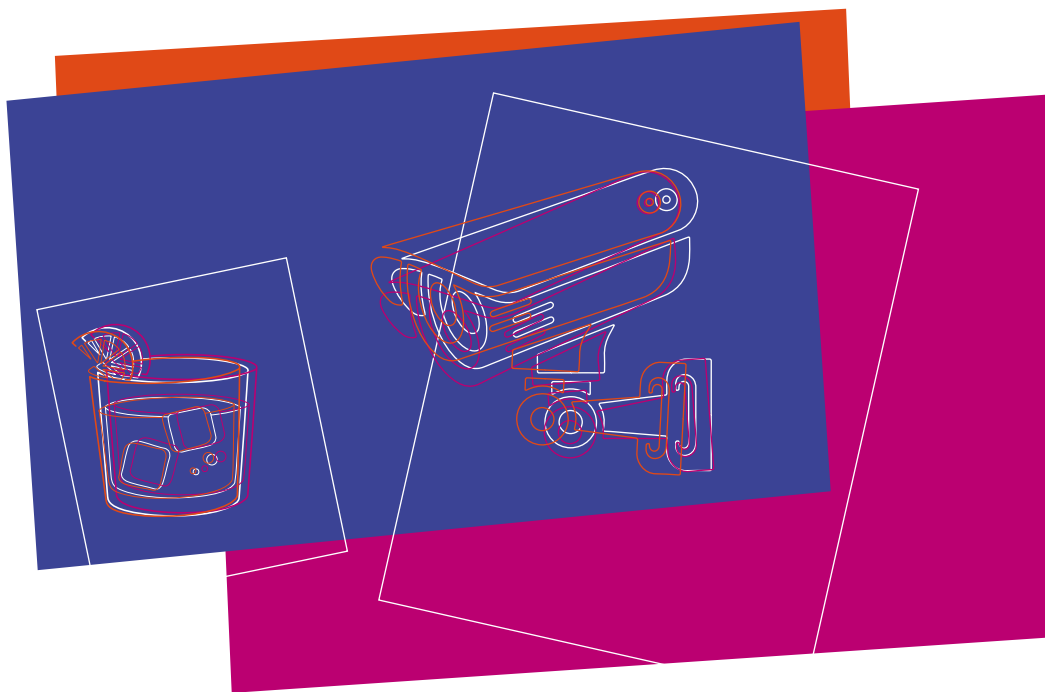
- It isn't always easy to tell if someone has consumed too much alcohol or may have been spiked. If someone comes to you for help, take what they say seriously and offer support.
- Work with another member of staff to help the person to a safe place away from other customers. Don't be alone with them as they may become distressed or feel threatened. If they are with friends, suggest one of them stays with them.
- If they are unconscious, call **999** for an ambulance immediately and mention that you suspect their drink may have been spiked.
- If the person wants to leave before emergency services arrive or doesn't want to speak with the police, offer them details of support services they can use later. Advise them to go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) as soon as possible.
- Encourage them not to leave the venue alone or go with someone they don't know or trust. Symptoms can worsen quickly, so continue to monitor them and offer reassurance in a safe space.
- Once police have attended and evidence has been gathered, make sure they have a safe journey home with someone they know – whether that's a friend who is already there or by helping them contact a trusted friend or family member to come and collect them.





## Help collect evidence

- Call **999** for an ambulance if you suspect someone has been spiked and they need urgent medical attention. With the person's consent, you can also ask for the police on the same 999 call to report the suspected spiking. If you think they may have also been physically assaulted, tell the police when you call so they can send a specially trained officer.
- Listen to what they, and any potential witnesses, say. Make a note of any details they share about the incident, such as a description of the person who they think has spiked their drink.
- Keep the glass or bottle they drank the suspected spiked drink from safe, so it can be used as evidence. If possible, cover the glass or container to prevent contamination, such as with cling film or a clean napkin.
- Try to discover if the suspected spiker is still in the venue but don't approach them. Point them out to the police when they arrive if they are still there.
- If you have drink spiking kits available, test the drink. Preserve the drink for the police, whatever the result. A negative result doesn't mean the person hasn't been spiked so reassure them that you are taking their concerns seriously.
- Make a note of the testing kit serial number in your venue's serious incident or accident log.
- Hand any evidence you have gathered to the police when they arrive.



## What if they don't want you to contact the police?

- Someone suspected of having had their drink spiked is likely to be upset and confused and may not want you to call the police.
- You should try to encourage them and reassure them that they won't get into trouble, even if they have voluntarily taken illegal drugs before the drink-spiking incident.
- If they are still unwilling to talk to the police, make a note of the incident in your venue's serious incident or accident log.
- Give them, or a friend, advice on how to report it to the police if they change their mind. They can report spiking online on the Met's website or call **101**.





## Offer them advice on testing

- Some drugs can leave the body within 12 hours, so it's important that someone who believes their drink has been spiked gets tested as soon as possible.
- As a venue, you can source your own testing kits that can identify some substances commonly used to spike drinks. Hospitals and GPs can also test suspected spiking in the victim's blood or urine after the event to help determine treatment and confirm what happened.
- If there is a chance of prosecuting the perpetrator, the police can organise forensic testing that can identify over 100 drugs and would be admissible in court should a prosecution go on to take place.
- The person who is believed to have been spiked can contact the police to request a test up to four days after the incident and they will be sent a container to collect a urine sample. If they believe they were spiked more than four days before, the police may still be able to investigate.
- Report spiking on the Metropolitan Police website at **[www.met.police.uk/ro/report](https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report)** or by scanning the **QR code**.







## Be prepared: create an action plan for your venue

- Every venue should have an established procedure in place to deal with suspected drink spiking. This should be written down and easily accessible to all staff.
- Consider investing in your own testing kits. If that's not possible, direct customers to health services or the police for testing.
- Many venues also make anti-spiking drink lids or bottle stoppers available to customers. You can customise them to carry your venue's branding or buy generic versions.
- Create a serious incident or accident log especially for spiking, or record them in your existing one.
- Try to have a dedicated point of contact for spiking incidents on every shift, such as the duty manager.
- The policy should include a checklist of how to gather information the police will need to investigate and to help any eventual prosecution.





## Useful contacts

### Metropolitan Police

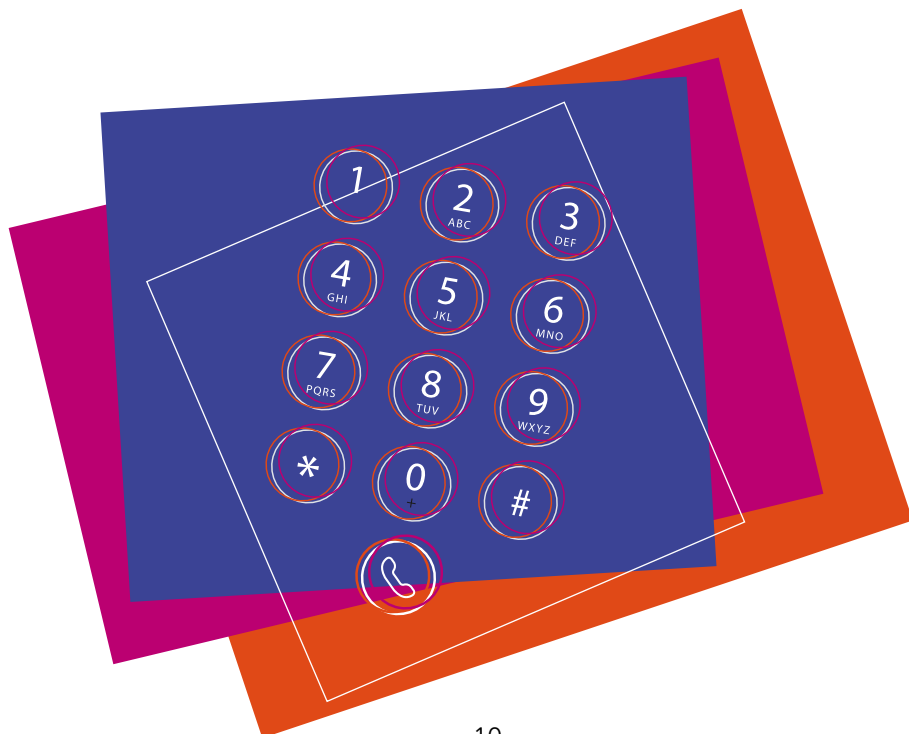
If you suspect someone has been spiked, you can report it to the police in an emergency by calling **999**.

You can also report to the police online at **[www.met.police.uk/ro/report](http://www.met.police.uk/ro/report)** or call **101**.

### NHS

If someone shows symptoms of spiking and they need urgent medical attention, call **999** for an ambulance immediately.

If their condition is less severe but you are still concerned, call **111** for medical advice and support.



## Other services

### Victim Support

Independent charity that helps victims of crime, their family or friends.

You can call their support line on **08 08 16 89 111**

Website: **[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)**

### Southwark Domestic Abuse Service (delivered by Refuge)

Refuge delivers domestic and sexual violence community-based services to those living in Southwark who have experienced or are at risk of, gender-based violence.

You can call them on **0118 214 7150** or email **[sdas@refuge.org.uk](mailto:sdas@refuge.org.uk)**

Website: **[refuge.org.uk](http://refuge.org.uk)**

### Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)

SARCs offer confidential medical, practical and emotional support after rape, sexual assault or abuse.

The person can refer themselves directly. SARCs can also report to the police on a person's behalf, with their permission. Search for '**find your nearest SARC**' online.

### Southwark Wellbeing Hub

Providing information and support to anyone in Southwark who would like to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

You can call their free helpline on **0800 368 8433**.

Website: **[www.together-uk.org/southwark-wellbeing-hub](http://www.together-uk.org/southwark-wellbeing-hub)**

### South East London Mind

A local charity supporting people with their mental health.

Website: **[selmind.org.uk](http://selmind.org.uk)**



## More information

### **UK government spiking advice and support**

[www.gov.uk/guidance/  
spiking-advice-and-support](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/spiking-advice-and-support)

### **Advice from the Metropolitan Police**

[www.met.police.uk/advice/  
advice-and-information/  
spiking-advice/spiking](http://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/spiking-advice/spiking)



### **Information from Southwark Council**

[www.southwark.gov.uk/spiking](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/spiking)