

Anti Spike –raising awareness of the risks of drink spiking

Tool Kit to raise awareness of the risks of drink spiking, using a radio advertisement

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Chapter 1

Anti Spike – Raising Awareness of the risk of drink spiking

Introduction – aims and objectives of the Initiative

Health Challenge Wales

1. The key themes of Health Challenge Wales have been selected because they are considered to be those issues that constitute a significant proportion of the ill health that could be avoided. Reducing alcohol and other substance misuse is one of the key themes. This initiative seeks to prevent the spiking of drinks; that is the introduction of a mind altering substance to another persons drink without that person's knowledge. It builds on and supplements the Drink Spiking initiative piloted by Pembrokeshire County Council and contained in Volume 1 of the Health Challenge Wales Tool kit, by running that initiative alongside a radio advertising campaign raising awareness of the risk of drink spiking, and directing listeners to the local authority web site where information about drink spiking and other health issues is carried.
2. For details of the aims and objectives of a campaign to reduce the risk of drink spiking go to [http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Food_safety_and_nutrition/Diet_and_nutrition/09%20a%20Drink%20Spiking%20\(%20English\)](http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Food_safety_and_nutrition/Diet_and_nutrition/09%20a%20Drink%20Spiking%20(%20English))
3. This initiative builds on the initiative in Volume 1, which sought to reduce the risk of drink spiking by raising the profile of the issue through posters, working with bar and door staff in licensed premises and by giving away protective bottle tops that prevent substances being inserted into open bottles of drinks. It supplements that action through the production of a radio advertisement, played on local radio which addresses the issue of drink spiking and directs listeners to a website carrying information about drink spiking as well as other associated health messages. Both the original initiative and this supplemented version address the Health Challenge Wales key themes of alcohol and substance abuse and mental health and well being, and contribute to reducing sexually transmitted diseases.

Chapter 2

Anti Spike – Pre-considerations to running an Initiative

This initiative links to the Drink Spiking initiative in Volume 1 of Environmental Health Contributions to Health Challenge Wales Tool Kit, reproducing that intervention and supplementing it with the addition of a profile raising radio advertisement. For details of the aims and objectives of the initiative and of the considerations to the running of the initiative, go to

[http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Food_safety_and_nutrition/Diet_and_nutrition/09%20a%20Drink%20Spiking%20\(%20English\).pdf](http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Food_safety_and_nutrition/Diet_and_nutrition/09%20a%20Drink%20Spiking%20(%20English).pdf)

The information below relates to the supplementary feature, being the addition of the radio advertising campaign. This information and the information contained in Volume 1 of the Tool Kit should be read together.

1. Initial considerations

Initial considerations for this project have to be addressed, including;

- What is the target group?
- Will the outcome have the desired outcome, i.e. reducing drink spiking incidents to the target group (as well as to others outside this group)?
- How can the target group be reached?
- Who are the key partners in the initiative?
- How will the initiative be evaluated?
- Will the initiative deliver value for money?

2. Target group

As young people between the ages of 18-25 are the most likely victims of drink spiking, this group was selected as the target group for the anti spiking campaign. The radio advertisement however raised the profile of the issue of drink spiking with all of the listeners to the radio station. This had the effect of raising the profile of the issue with non-members of the target group, such as parents, who could learn about the subject and could reinforce the message with members of the target group in the home or other environments.

3. Achieving the desired outcome

The purpose of the radio advertisement, which was deliberately designed to be hard hitting was to persuade members of the target group, as well as members of the general public to take extra care when out drinking, to prevent their drinks being vulnerable to being spiked. To reinforce the advertisement the local authority website offered practical advice and information about protecting the drinker from perpetrators of drink spiking, advice on sensible drinking, details as to the effects of spiking on the body and advice about what to do if a drinker considered that their drink may have been spiked. This

information together with the provision of protective, reusable bottle tops and a raised levels of awareness of the issue with bar and door staff should have the effect of raising awareness of the issue with drinkers and with potential perpetrators, and thereby reduce the number of incidents of drink spiking.

4. Reaching the target group

Whilst the radio advert will be heard by members of the target group and non-members alike, the advertisement was designed to be hard hitting and tailored for young people, to ensure empathy with the scenario being promoted. The estimate of the radio station was that the advertisement would reach 42,000 adults over the age of 15 years, amounting to 35% of the people who live in Anglesey/Gwynedd. It was further estimated that the advertisement would be heard on average 12 times by each listener.

As the Drink Spiking campaign giving away bottle tops was being run consecutively with the Anti Spike radio advertisement it was considered that a large number of the target group would be aware of the campaign and aware of how to seek advice and information.

5. Who are the key partners?

As well as the partners to the Drink Spiking campaign the initiative was run by Anglesey County Council partnered by North Wales Police and North West Wales Fire Service, who were involved in the campaign as they had a considerable input into the anti-spiking campaign, to which it is linked.

The local radio station, which designed and carried the advertisement was also a partner in the initiative.

6. Evaluating the Initiative

As noted in Volume 1 of the Tool Kit it is hard to evaluate initiatives which seek to prevent something happening. Raised awareness of an issue may result in raised levels of reporting, both or actual or perceived incidents, which may not be a true reflection of what is actually happening in the community. It is however suggested that there are a number of ways in which the effectiveness of the radio advertising campaign could be measured.

As noted in paragraph 4 above the radio station producing the advertisement provided figures regarding coverage of the geographical area over which it broadcasts. It is suggested that a study could be carried out to determine whether members of the target group listened to the radio station, and if so whether they had heard the advertisement. If they had they can be asked what the advertisement said, where it advised them to go for further information, and what, if any, steps they had taken to protect themselves in consequence of hearing the advertisement. Similarly members of the non-target group could be asked if they had heard the advertisement, and what, if anything they had done on consequence of hearing it. This information would allow the partners to the initiative to determine the depth of coverage of the advertisement, and to establish whether members of the target group had taken any action to protect themselves after

hearing it, such as obtaining a bottle cap to protect their drinks or had modified their behaviour in any way.

The advertisement text ([Appendix 1](#)) directs listeners to a specific page on the local authority web site. A further evaluation measure would be to measure traffic to that page of the website prior to the commencement of the campaign, and to measure it again during the campaign. Since the Drink Spiking campaign and the radio advertisement will both be directing both members and non-members of the target group to the web page not all of any increased in web traffic can be attributed to the radio advertisement, but it may be possible to get an approximate idea of how many listeners who say that they have heard the radio advertisement in response to the follow up research questions visited the web page after having heard it.

7. Will the initiative deliver value for money?

There are no figures collected that relate directly to the number of incidents of drink spiking, or the costs of responding to incidents of drink spiking. Victims may be sexually or physically assaulted or may be robbed, and may be left with resulting long term mental health problems. Home Offices figures for 2003/4 show that the average cost of investigation a sexual assault is £31,438, of investigating a serious wounding is £21,422 and of investigating an allegation of theft from a person is £844. These figures take no account of costs to the National Health Service of offering immediate medical treatment or of offering long term treatment for mental health issues that may arise as a result of a spiking incident. They further take no account of the debilitating effect such an attack may have on the victim, who may be traumatised and find it difficult to hold down employment or to live independently after such an attack.

The original Drink Spiking campaign, which runs parallel to the Anti Spiking advertisement cost approximately £2000 for the purchase of 9,000 bottle tops, which was considered to be good value for money.

The additional cost of running a radio advertising campaign to the pilot authority was approximately £1,000. For the pilot project Anglesey County Council purchased an unlimited airtime package offered by the local radio station at a cost of £4,000 which included producing one advert free of charge. The additional cost of running a radio advertising campaign to the pilot authority was approximately £400 to develop the advert bilingually. To ensure maximum impact, the advert will run for 3 months with a guarantee of 90 commercials aired at peak times.

The combined initiative has a total cost of £3,250. It is suggested that this represents good value for money, since it is considerably less than the costs incurred in investigating alleged incidents, and since the benefits of the campaign persist after the campaign itself has stopped.

Chapter 3

Anti Spike – Running the ‘Anti-Spike’ Initiative

The campaign

Free ‘bottle tops’ are provided to the target group being young drinkers drinking in public places to prevent their drinks being spiked without their knowledge. This is supplemented by the airing of a radio advertisement raising the profile of the issue of drink spiking and directing listeners to a web site where information regarding staying safe when drinking, safe use of alcohol and other related health messages can be found. Information and advice could be included on the Radio Station’s website.

Preliminary steps

Details of the drink spiking campaign which forms part of this initiative can be found in the first volume of the Environmental Health contributions to Health Challenge Wales Tool Kit – go to [http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Food_safety_and_nutrition/Diet_and_nutrition/09%20a%20Drink%20Spiking%20\(%20English\)](http://www.cieh.org/library/Knowledge/Food_safety_and_nutrition/Diet_and_nutrition/09%20a%20Drink%20Spiking%20(%20English)) The details below relate to the second part of the initiative, being the radio advertisement.

Having determined the nature of the target group the text of the advertisement can be prepared. The advertisement should be aired on a radio station which has a target audience of predominantly young listeners, to ensure maximum impact. It is suggested that the marketing staff at the radio station should be used in this regard, since they will have considerable expertise and will be able to advise on text that will address the issue without being over dramatic in such a way as to alienate listeners or without skirting the issue. The text of the advertisement used in the pilot project is shown as [Appendix 1](#).

It is necessary to determine the period over which the campaign will be run, in order to ensure that all of the preliminary work can be carried out, and to further ensure that the advertisement is played on radio over the same period as the rest of the campaign is being conducted. The campaign can be pre-promoted before commencement by tag lines on other health promotion material, bearing strap lines such as ‘Look out for the Health Challenge Wales anti-spiking bottle tops and literature in your local public house/restaurant’.

Prior to the campaign commencing suitable information must be placed on the web site to which listeners will be directed. This may include direct advice to drinkers about protecting themselves from spiking [Appendix 2](#) (same as [Appendix 4](#) of the

[first tool kit](#)), details of safe drinking practice in relation to consumption of alcohol, what to do and where to seek help if a drinker considers that their drink may have been spiked and other useful local advice. If traffic visiting the website is to be used as an indicator of the success of the initiative it will be necessary to conduct some traffic surveys prior to the commencement of the initiative, which can then be used for comparison purposes.

Running the Initiative

Once the radio advertisement has been written and recorded there is no action for the local authority and its partners to take in respect of this part of the initiative. The radio station should be advised of the dates over which the campaign will be run to ensure that the advertisement is broadcast to coincide with the rest of the campaign.

Following up the Initiative

As noted in Chapter 2 it is hard to evaluate an initiative which seeks to prevent something from happening, since awareness raising in relation to the activity may result in reporting of incidents previously not recognised as the activity may skew the results.

It is suggested that the partners to the initiative may wish to evaluate its effectiveness by comparing the web traffic to the relevant page carrying the related message before the initiative commenced and during the life of the initiative to see whether traffic increased. It may also be instructive, if the web package being used allows to consider the word searched which led to the page, and to consider whether users came to the page using a the web address broadcast or via another web address.

It is also suggested that use of a simple questionnaire immediately after the campaign and some months after the campaign may indicate levels of awareness of the campaign amongst listeners to the radio station, and amongst users of pubs and clubs , as well as levels of information retention after the campaign has finished. Suggested questions are shown as [Appendix 3](#). The questionnaire could be incorporated in existing annual departmental/organisational questionnaires/surveys e.g. in the pilot project one question within the Smoke Free Anglesey survey asks whether individuals have heard the advertisement relating to this campaign on Champion FM over the past year.

Appendix 1

Anti-spiking radio advert

© Champion FM

MUSIC: Echoey and distorted, nightmarish

Voice over: It was just the usual night out. Few drinks.
Next thing I know I'm more drunk than I've ever been in my life.
And you're telling yourself to fight it, but your limbs won't listen.
Then blank.
It's just the next day, you've woken up, and everything's mixed up.
You just can't remember.
But you know something bad's happened to you.

Master voice Over : Anyone can have their drink spiked.
It only takes a moment, but the consequences could last a life time.
Going out? – Think Safe, Drink Safe, and don't get Spiked.
Click onto anglesey.gov.uk/health

Appendix 2

See attached document- [Drinkers Handbill – advice to reduce the risk of spiking](#)

Appendix 3

Suggested questions for Evaluation of Initiative

Question	Answer
1. Do you listen to (name of radio station)?	
2. How often do you listen to it?	
3. What advertisements can you remember? List *	
4. How many times did you hear the advertisement?	
5. What did it say?	
6. Did it have an address that you could go to for more information?	
7. (If yes to Q5) What was it?	
8. Did you visit the web site?	
9. (if yes to Q8) If so, how sufficient was the information and advice provided ?	
10. Is drink spiking something you would worry about?	
11. Have you changed your behaviour in any way as a result of the advertisement?	
12. (If yes to Q9) How?	

*

- If remember Anti- Spike advert, continue with questions
- If do not remember close questions after Q2