

London Strategic Licensing Pilot: Equality Impact Assessment

Key information

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1. Key information and clarifying aims

1.1 The London Strategic Licensing Pilot

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is developing a London Strategic Licensing Pilot to test the potential benefits of introducing new strategic powers, policies and tools to strengthen and modernise the capital's licensing framework. The Pilot seeks to ensure that licensing policy and decisions across London support good growth, protect public safety and sustain London's diverse and inclusive nighttime and hospitality economy.

1.2 Core elements of the Pilot

The Pilot encompasses five core elements:

- A London Strategic Licensing Policy, which local licensing authorities would be required to have regard to when carrying out their licensing functions
- The GLA becoming a statutory consultee in the preparation of borough Statements of Licensing Policy
- The GLA being designated a responsible authority for premises licence applications in Greater London
- The Mayor operating a new call-in power for applications of strategic importance. This will ensure that major decisions support London-wide priorities
- A Strategic Licensing Playbook to support best practice, enhance transparency and provide consistent monitoring of trends and impacts.

1.3 About this Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) considers the potential equality and inclusion implications of the Strategic Licensing Pilot as a whole. It assesses both the potential immediate impacts of the consultation and policy development process, and the potential medium- to long- term effects arising from the adoption or operation of new powers that may arise, on those with protected characteristics. It also sets out what mitigations could be applied to reduce any negative impacts.

1.4 Public Sector Equality Duty compliance

An EqIA is the primary tool for demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The PSED requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not

- Remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010, taking steps to meet the different needs of such people, and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low.

1.5 About this draft

This draft of the EqIA recognises that not all components of the Pilot are fully designed yet. It is therefore an iterative live document that will be updated as the policy and supporting mechanisms are refined, tested and implemented. This includes the proposed mitigations which, in later versions, will include the responsible actors and timelines for implementation. All versions of the EqIA will be retained for transparency and audit purposes.

1.6 Outcomes

It is envisaged that this work will achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase economic growth in hospitality, culture, events and nightlife
- Boost London's reputation as a destination for tourism, business and investment
- Improve the quality, transparency and use of data to inform decision making; and monitor the impact of licensing policies
- Deliver a pilot that can help inform national policy.
- Start-up investment of £3,521,123 over three years will contribute to the GLA delivering the following outputs (subject to legislative amendments being introduced, and the outcome of any consultation on the draft policy, anticipated call-in powers and strategic importance criteria):
 - Public consultation is delivered
 - A Strategic Licensing Policy for London is published (subject to final Mayoral Decision following consultation)
 - A GLA licensing function is designed and launched
 - Communications, resources, support and training for licensing stakeholders
 - The pilot programme is evaluated.
- The London-level outcomes that this project will support are:
 - High streets and town centres are thriving across London (Helping Local Economies to Thrive)
 - Stable long-term growth benefits all of London's communities (Boosting London's Growth Sectors)
 - London is an attractive and high-quality destination for visitors (Celebrating London)
 - London is a world-leading global city (Celebrating London).

1.7 About the analysis

The analysis below is structured in line with GLA EqIA guidance and draws on demographic, economic and equalities data for London alongside relevant research and stakeholder evidence from previous equality assessments in licensing and the nighttime economy.

2. The evidence base

This section summarises the information used to inform the assessment of equality impacts associated with the London Strategic Licensing Pilot. It draws on:

- Demographic, economic and social data for London
- Sectoral and workforce evidence
- Published research relating to the licensing and nighttime economy.

2.1 About the evidence base

The evidence base covers both protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010 and other inclusion groups that may experience structural inequality. It will continue to develop as new data and consultation responses become available during the pilot period.

2.2 Sources used to inform this EqIA

Sources used to inform this EqIA include:

- GLA Intelligence and London Datastore data on demographics, housing, employment and accessibility
- Census 2021 data for Greater London on age, sex, ethnicity, disability and religion
- Office for National Statistics workforce data including accommodation, food service and entertainment sectors
- GLA Economics reports on London's nighttime economy and night work
- London at Night evidence base for a 24-hour city
- Borough level Equality Impact Assessments for licensing and cumulative impact policies
- Existing EqIAs from related GLA programmes and from comparable city level licensing frameworks.

2.3 Consultation and engagement

The GLA will supplement this evidence base through the public consultation process, targeted engagement with underrepresented groups and further review of borough level EqIAs and policy statements. Findings will be incorporated into an updated version of this EqIA before the implementation phase of the Pilot. The planned groups of consultees include:

- Boroughs, licensing officers and local political representatives
- Industry, trade associations and Business Improvement Districts
- Nightlife, hospitality and business leaders and representatives
- Business and venue operators
- Landowners and developers
- Residents' associations
- Community groups
- Young people (aged 16 to 25)
- Night workers.

2.4 Potential gaps in data and where the Pilot could begin to fill these

Licensing authorities are already subject to a statutory duty under the Licensing Act 2003 to maintain public registers of licensing applications and issued licences, and to make these registers available for public inspection. However, licensing data is frequently inconsistent and fragmented. Varied interpretations on what needs to be collected lead to uneven data collection across licensing authorities. Information on operating schedules is not routinely updated once applications are granted. Furthermore, access to registers differs significantly between authorities; some provide online access, while others require formal requests or in-person visits. These inconsistencies in data content, maintenance and accessibility undermine efforts to develop a comprehensive and reliable picture of licensing activity across the city, which hinders strategic improvements.

Through the monitoring and evaluation of this Pilot, more data will be made available on:

- The quality, transparency and proportionality of the licensing system in London
- Partnerships between London licensing authorities, businesses, responsible authorities and communities
- Impacts of the reputation of London as a global city
- Vibrancy and growth of the hospitality, culture, events and nightlife industry
- Safety and inclusiveness for Londoners and visitors, with specific focus on the safety of women, girls and people who may need additional support
- Public confidence in the licensing system.

As part of this Pilot, the GLA will also work with London licensing authorities to disseminate and encourage the adoption of best practices on data collection and transparency.

Changing or updating the licensing application system to increase the collection, access or accuracy of data on protected characteristics and their experience with the licensing system is outside of the scope of this Pilot.

2.5 Data to show context/overview of potential impacts

- Quantitative data shows that London has a highly diverse population, with 46% of residents identifying with a minority ethnic background and more than 40% of residents born outside the United Kingdom ([Census, 2021](#)).
- Younger workers are more likely to work evenings and nights in London. 34% of workers aged 16–20 were night workers in 2023, while the share was 38% for those aged 21–25 ([Night Time Work In London, 2023](#)).
- People who work at night are more likely than those who work in the day to experience low pay (17% vs 12%) and insecure work (18% vs 9%) ([Living Wage Foundation, 2024](#)).
- Women make up a significant proportion of the nighttime economy, particularly in front of house, bar and service work roles. The share of female evening and night workers has been rising over the past five years, from 38% in 2017 to 43% in 2022 ([London Datastore, 2022](#)).

3. Assessment of impacts and proposed mitigations

This section identifies potential positive, negative and neutral impacts of the London Strategic Licensing Pilot on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and on inclusion groups identified as being at greater risk of structural inequality. Where potential negative and neutral impacts have been identified, proposed mitigations are suggested.

Scope of the analysis

The analysis considers the full scope of the Pilot including the Strategic London Licensing Policy, the call-in power, the GLA's role as statutory consultee and responsible authority and the Strategic Licensing Playbook.

Basis of the assessment

The assessment is based on available evidence from GLA datasets, national statistics and published research and will be updated as further information becomes available through consultation and pilot implementation.

3.1 Age

Potential positive impacts

- Young people are more likely to work in the evening, nighttime and hospitality sectors ([Night Time Work In London, 2023](#)). A positive impact of the Strategic Licensing Pilot could be an increase in job opportunities as a more consistent approach to licensing could see more licensed premises open. GLA Economics analysis found a clear positive correlation between the number of licensed premises and job creation across London boroughs ([GLA Economics, 2025](#)).
- Young people are more likely to be victims of violence at night ([Youth Endowment Fund, 2025](#)). The Strategic Licensing Policy is expected to have a positive effect by enabling a wider variety of premises to open and staggering closing times, increasing passive surveillance as more people socialise in these spaces.
- A positive impact is expected where the Pilot improves consistency and transparency in decision making helping to reduce tension between age groups over the management of nighttime activity. The Strategic Licensing Playbook should be a useful tool here as it will set out best practices for mediation and partnership working.
- The Pilot aims to support a diverse range of spaces and experiences for Londoners and visitors, including the availability of low and no-alcohol options that feel safer and more inclusive, which may potentially have a positive impact for families and children.

Potential negative impacts

- Older people are often more likely to feel adverse effects from late-night noise and public nuisance particularly where residential properties are located close to licensed premises.
- **Mitigation:** The Strategic Licensing Policy and Playbook may need to promote fair balancing of residential amenity and economic activity.
- Given young people tend work in leisure and hospitality roles and typically work late at night, there are potential negative health impacts due to exposure to noise and later working hours impacting on sleep.

- **Mitigation:** The Strategic Licensing Playbook could mitigate these impacts by providing best practice to boroughs and businesses on how to support night workers.

Potential neutral impacts

- None identified.

3.2 Disability

Potential positive impacts

- Disabled people and those with long-term health conditions may experience barriers to participating in the nighttime economy and in accessing licensed premises. These include physical accessibility, sensory overload, lack of accessible transport and communication barriers. The Strategic Licensing Playbook provides an opportunity to embed accessibility standards and good practice guidance for licensees and responsible authorities. This may have a positive long-term impact by promoting inclusive design and operations.
- The Pilot can support the creation of a varied social offer in town centres throughout the day and night. This can reduce social isolation by ensuring all Londoners have access to welcoming spaces that meet their needs and allow them to build social ties. This may have a positive impact for people with long-term physical and mental health conditions, as the [World Health Organization](#) highlights that social isolation and loneliness are associated with poorer physical health, mental health and even mortality.

Potential negative impacts

- People with additional needs may face challenges when engaging with the consultation for this Pilot.
- *Mitigation:* Mitigations such as accessible formats will be made to ensure that everyone can engage with this consultation.

Potential neutral impacts

- None identified.

3.3 Sex

Potential positive impacts

- Women are more likely to report safety concerns associated with the nighttime environment ([End Violence Against Women, 2021](#)), which can include harassment and intimidation when travelling to or from licensed venues. Licensing policies that support well-managed premises and safe dispersal can help reduce these risks. The Strategic Licensing Policy is expected to have a positive effect by enabling a wider

variety of premises to open and staggering closing times, increasing passive surveillance as more people socialise in these spaces. The Pilot can also support bringing vacant units back into active use and increasing footfall, deterring crime and strengthening women's sense of safety. The Strategic Licensing Playbook could reinforce existing good practice in staff training and venue management to promote safer spaces for all.

- The Strategic Licensing Pilot should also see more premises open later at night; this would mean that there are more potential safe spaces for those who feel vulnerable, including women, to access should they need to. This could be supported by best practice in the Strategic Licensing Playbook that can highlight how to operate a safe space in a premises.

Potential negative impacts

- As part of this Pilot, there could potentially be an increase in the number of licensed venues. This could result in more spaces where alcohol is served, which could potentially heighten risks related to harassment and the safety of women at night.
- *Mitigation:* According to the [UK Institute of Alcohol Studies](#), about 70% of alcohol in the UK is sold 'off-trade', where it is cheaper to buy. A study by [Holmes et al.](#) also found that most heavy drinking in the UK takes place during occasions involving only off-trade alcohol consumption. By encouraging regulated environments in responsible licensed premises, and low or no-alcohol activities, the Pilot can support social interaction that is not centred solely on alcohol consumption. Moreover, the Strategic Licensing Playbook could encourage local authorities and venues to take consistent steps to keep people safe in and around licensed venues, pointing to best practice initiatives and programmes delivered by the Metropolitan Police Service.
- The potential for extended periods of alcohol consumption could have negative health and social impacts on men. Higher rates of alcohol consumption (55% of men and 42% of women drank alcohol at least once a week) and a higher proportion of men (32%) than women (15%) drank at levels that put them at increasing or higher risk of alcohol-related harm (over 14 units in the last week) according to the Health Survey for England 2022 Part 1 ([Adult drinking - NHS England Digital](#)). Alcohol also appears to be more involved in male violence than female, specifically in the proportion of cases where the offender/s were male, as found in the [Institute of Alcohol Studies 2020 report](#), Men and Alcohol.
- *Mitigation:* The Strategic Licensing Playbook could include guidance on steps venues can take to prevent violence in their premises; there may also be guidance on alcohol harm reduction campaigns.

Potential neutral impacts

- None identified.

3.4 Race

Potential positive impacts

- Black and minority ethnic Londoners are both key participants in and contributors to London's nighttime economy. Some operate small independent or culturally specific venues. Research on [Barriers faced by underrepresented groups in securing and sustaining community-led and cultural spaces in London](#) shows that operators in London, particularly those serving ethnically diverse or grassroots audiences, often report differential treatment and disproportionate scrutiny. The Strategic Licensing Pilot may provide those that operate culturally specific venues with greater safeguards to protect their operations by ensuring that evidence and decision-making does not contain bias.
- Black and minority ethnic workers are more likely to work in hospitality, as well as in nighttime shifts ([Resolution Foundation, 2020](#); [Trades Union Congress, 2024](#)). Similarly to the impacts on young people, the Pilot will hopefully create more job opportunities in these sectors as more consistent licensing practices lead to more licensed premises operating in London.
- There is evidence of historic and ongoing barriers for some minority ethnic operators including disproportionate enforcement, higher costs and reputational risks linked to music genres and event types, as highlighted in the report [Barriers faced by underrepresented groups in securing and sustaining community-led and cultural spaces in London](#). The Strategic Licensing Policy and Playbook should promote equitable treatment and awareness of cultural bias within enforcement and decision-making. The Pilot is expected to have a positive long-term effect by promoting fairness and consistency across boroughs, and by recognising the cultural and economic value of ethnically diverse ownership and creative activity.

Potential negative impacts

- Given that Black and minority ethnic workers are more likely to work in hospitality, as well as in nighttime shifts, and that these roles typically work late at night, there are potential negative health impacts due to exposure to noise and later working hours impacting on sleep.
- *Mitigation:* The Strategic Licensing Playbook could mitigate these impacts by providing best practice and information from hospitality mental health support charities.
- People whose first language is not English may experience communication barriers in understanding licensing processes or participating in consultation.
- *Mitigation:* The GLA will ensure that key materials are written in plain English and that translations or summaries are provided where appropriate, as well as encouraging boroughs to do the same.

Potential neutral impacts

- None identified.

3.5 Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

Potential positive impacts

- London's LGBTQ+ venues form part of the city's cultural infrastructure and are recognised as important community and social spaces. London lost 56% of its LGBTQ+ nightlife venues between 2006 and 2016 (

[GLA, 2024](#)). The availability of such venues catering for distinct communities can be shown to reduce violence to members of those groups who might otherwise be forced to migrate to mainstream venues where individuality is less tolerated and violence may often ensue as a consequence. Licensing policies that do not account for their cultural and community role could have a direct negative impact on LGBTQ+ Londoners. The Strategic Licensing Policy should encourage boroughs to recognise and safeguard such spaces where evidence supports their significance.

Potential negative impacts

- LGBTQ+ people may also experience higher levels of harassment and discrimination in public and licensed spaces. A survey by LGBT Hero revealed that more than 1 in 5 LGBTQ+ people have been sexually assaulted in a club, bar, or LGBTQ+ venue in the UK ([LGBT Hero, 2025](#)). There is a chance that an increase in the number of licensed premises could lead to more incidents in London's nighttime economy.
- *Mitigation:* Improved safety management and inclusive staff training that may be highlighted in the Strategic Licensing Playbook can contribute to positive impacts.

Potential neutral impacts

- None identified.

3.6 Religion or belief

Potential positive impacts

- The London Strategic Licensing Pilot aims to increase the diversity of London's evening and nighttime offer. This could have a positive impact on individuals who do not consume alcohol for religious purposes, who could have a wider variety of late-night refreshment and entertainment options as a result of this pilot. Similarly, it could benefit individuals who fast during the day for religious reasons by providing more options for hot food after dark.
- The Pilot will also ensure that consultation and engagement processes are inclusive of faith communities and that materials are accessible to people of different languages and literacy levels.

Potential negative impacts

- Some faith groups may be indirectly affected by changes to local licensing patterns. Late-night activity, noise or public nuisance could affect the enjoyment of places of worship located near licensed premises.
- *Mitigation:* The Strategic Licensing Policy and Playbook can promote careful spatial planning, through tools such as the "agent of change" principle, and coordination between planning and licensing within boroughs to minimise such impacts.

Potential neutral impacts

- The Strategic Licensing Pilot is not expected to have a direct impact on access to places of worship. Licensing decisions rarely affect religious premises.
- Some religious groups hold festivals or community events involving late-night activities that may require temporary event notices or extended hours. Clear and proportionate licensing guidance can ensure these are treated fairly. Temporary event notices will, however, be out of scope of the Pilot activities, as they are not proposed as applications of strategic importance.
- *Mitigation:* The Strategic Licensing Playbook and consultation guidance could also support inclusive engagement with faith-based organisations where relevant.

3.7 Pregnancy and maternity

Potential positive impacts

- The Pilot will encourage a wider range of activities for Londoners at night, including those not focused on alcohol consumption. The potential for increased diversity in London's evening and nighttime economy presents a potential positive impact for pregnant people and those on parental leave.

Potential negative impacts

- The potential for extended venue opening hours may lead to expectations for staff to work more unsociable hours. This could disproportionately affect pregnant women due to increased fatigue and health risks, limited access to safe and reliable transport at night and lack of workplace adjustments or flexible scheduling.
- *Mitigation:* The Strategic Licensing Playbook could encourage employers to adopt inclusive staffing practices and ensure compliance with health and safety obligations.

Potential neutral impacts

- None identified.

3.8 Marriage and civil partnership

No specific impacts have been identified in relation to marriage or civil partnership. This will be kept under review during the consultation and pilot phases.

3.9 Inclusion and disadvantaged groups

In addition to the protected characteristics, this EqIA considers groups that may experience broader forms of structural inequality. The EqIA also aligns with the objectives set out in the [Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#).

Potential positive impacts

- Migrant and precarious workers, including those on zero-hour or agency contracts, are often concentrated in the nighttime economy ([Trades Union Congress, 2024](#)). [Data After Dark \(2025\)](#), a University College London report supported by the Mayor of London, showed the inequalities faced by the 1.32 million people working in London between 6pm and 6am, including lack of access to healthy and affordable food, with significant consequences for night workers' physical and mental health. Improved licensing practice and worker engagement could help address exploitation risks and promote safer working environments.
- Low-income Londoners may benefit from more consistent licensing approaches that sustain local venues and affordable leisure options. This is something the pilot aims to indirectly achieve by making licensing processes more consistent and aiming to see a more diverse evening and nighttime offer in London as a result.
- Students and young Londoners are major users of nighttime venues and may also work within them. The Pilot can support positive outcomes for these groups by improving safety, accessibility and job quality, as best practices could be included in the Strategic Licensing Playbook.
- The Pilot may result in a more diverse offering of late-night refreshment for individuals working at night.

Potential negative impacts

- People experiencing homelessness or insecure housing may potentially be affected by late-night noise, rough sleeping displacement, or enforcement actions near licensed areas.
- *Mitigation:* The Strategic Licensing Playbook can promote partnership approaches between boroughs, venue operators, and outreach services.
- People with heightened sensitivity to noise or those with certain health conditions may experience negative impacts from nighttime activity.
- *Mitigation:* Clear policy guidance on cumulative impact, sound management, and venue and residential design (such as "agent of change") can help to mitigate this.

Potential neutral impacts

- Neighbouring businesses may be affected by changes to operating hours, delivery patterns, and customer footfall associated with licensed premises.
- *Mitigation:* The Strategic Licensing Policy and Playbook can promote fair and balanced street management and coordination to minimise adverse effects and support local high streets.
- Suppliers and support services, including logistics, cleaning, security, performers, taxis, and delivery drivers, may be indirectly affected by licensing conditions and by changes to late trading or event patterns.
- *Mitigation:* Clear guidance and predictable processes can reduce uncertainty and help these sectors plan safely and efficiently.
- Community and cultural organisations, including arts groups, community centres, and advocacy organisations, may be impacted by how licensing decisions shape local cultural provision.
- *Mitigation:* Engagement through consultation and recognition of cultural anchors can support positive outcomes for these organisations and the communities they serve.

3.10 Intersectional impacts

With the identified impacts above, it is important to highlight that some of these are intersectional. The mitigations and impacts remain as above, but the intersectionality is noted below:

Intersectional impacts

- While the proportion of violent crime where the victim believed the offender to be under the influence of alcohol declined from 54% in 2009/10 to 39% in 2023/24, alcohol remains a factor in violent incidents in England ([Drinkaware, 2025](#)). Young men are disproportionately represented as both perpetrators and victims of alcohol-related violence in public spaces ([ONS, 2015](#)). The male-to-female alcohol-specific death rate ratio is greatest in London ([ONS, 2021](#)).
- Younger women are more likely to be victims of sexual harassment in the nighttime economy ([Drinkaware, 2017](#)).
- 74% of Black disabled music creators feel there are specific barriers to success in the industry because of their race or ethnicity, compared to 58% of Black non-disabled creators who feel the same way ([Attitude is Everything & Black Lives in Music, 2023](#)).

4. Monitoring and evaluation

This EqIA will remain a live document and will be updated as the Strategic Licensing Pilot progresses. The GLA will review and revise the assessment following public consultation and before any final recommendations or legislative proposals are made.

4.1 Monitoring

Monitoring will focus on whether implementation of the Pilot supports the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and the objectives set out in section 1.

4.1.1 Licensing data

Licensing data that is currently available will be used to support the monitoring of equality impacts across boroughs, including trends in licence applications, outcomes, and enforcement actions. Where possible, this information will be analysed to identify any differential effects for businesses or communities with protected characteristics.

4.1.2 Feedback

Feedback from consultation respondents and stakeholder groups will provide qualitative evidence of the Pilot's potential impact on residents, workers, operators and communities. This will be reviewed alongside quantitative data to inform updates to the Strategic Licensing Policy and the Playbook.

4.1.3 Sharing learning

The GLA will work with boroughs and sector partners to share learning and identify areas where additional guidance or mitigation is needed.

4.1.4 Final version

A final version of this EqIA will be produced following the evaluation of the Pilot and will reflect evidence from implementation, monitoring, and engagement.

5. Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

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