

ID scan for identifying people banned from licensed premises

ID scanning technology for late-night licensed premises pubs and clubs, linking information about banned people and night-time economy venues.

First published

21 July 2023

Updated

27 August 2025

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Public order offences Digital, data and analytics
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Region	East Midlands
Partners	Police Business and commerce Community safety partnership Local authority

Key details

Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2021
Completion date	March 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults General public Offenders Victims

Aim

This initiative aims to:

- facilitate information-sharing between venues – if an offender is banned from one venue they will be flagged as being barred from all
- prevent crime and disorder – offenders are less likely to commit crime, knowing their details have just been stored on a database
- identify suspects quickly – if a crime is identified at the venue, there is an audit trail of who was at the address at that time, which helps police investigations
- prevent underage access to alcohol
- protect women and members of the public from harm, as those who have received a ban are preventing from entering the venue again

Intended outcome

- reduce crime
- improve customer safety
- support door staff and licensed premises management – a computer-generated ban makes the decision feel more objective

- possible option for police to add as a condition of licensing
- support investigations and increase detection opportunities
- promote partnership working through pub watch. Businesses are competitors for sales but should be working together when it comes to crime reduction and keeping customers safer
- enforce a message to offenders and potential offenders that if you cause violence or commit a crime in a licensed premises with ID scan installed, then you will be barred from county pubs, this avoids deflection

Description

Northamptonshire Police has completed a county-wide ID scanner project. This involved thirty venues receiving either a wall-mounted or a floor unit ID scanner. Every venue open past 1am with door staff was offered a free unit, fully funded by the Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC). Also provided was training on how to use it at the point of installation and full support (24/7) for a minimum of two years, allowing door staff to check the ID of each customer.

The scanner has artificial intelligence (AI) capability, meaning it is impossible to fake an ID. The system is fast and easy to use. It produces a tick or cross when the ID is scanned, producing an instant yes or no decision, by way of a green tick or red cross. The information of each ID is stored on a secure database in line with GDPR requirements, with the premises themselves being the data controller.

The purpose of checking ID is beyond age verification. Venues benefitting from this free equipment can check all customers as a condition to enter their licensed premises. By funding thirty units of the same type, venues can share information with each other. This ensures that if an offender is barred from one venue, they will flag up as being barred from all.

Overall impact

Northamptonshire OPFCC are seeing a notable impact since implementation. Feedback from licensed premises, door staff, volunteers within the night time economy, partners and night time economy users are overwhelmingly positive. The night time economy feels safer, with better organisation and more accountability on revellers to not offend.

There has been some notable decreases on offences which could be linked to violence against women and girls (VAWG) related incidents within Northampton town centre, this could be attributed to the use of the ID scanners, the positive impact they are having, and the likelihood of them being a deterrent to offenders.

Learning

As this project has been implemented and is still live across Northamptonshire, it continues to be managed in house by Northamptonshire OPFCC project managers. The ID scan machines were gifted to the night time economy venues, with a two year license fee included. This two year period has now finished and how further license fees would be funded needs to be considered.

We were very transparent with venues from the outset, making it clear that two years would be funded by Northamptonshire OPFCC and further funding was not confirmed, meaning venues may need to absorb these costs themselves. As the initiative has proved so successful, Northamptonshire OPFCC has committed to a further three years license fees for venues, meaning the ID scanners can stay in place and continue to have a positive impact on the safety of the county. Learning wise for other organisations considering this initiative, it was essential to be honest with venues around future license fees so no hidden costs affected the uptake and overall impact of the project.

It is also important to consider the fluidity of the night time economy and it's venues. Venues would often close down or change ownership so it was essential to factor in repurposing machines to other venues where appropriate. We factored this into our contractual agreements with GB Scannet to ensure maximum uptake and usage rates. This element will continue for the next three years, during the additional licensing fee period and will be assessed at the end of this period.

Northamptonshire OPFCC continue to encourage venues to share scanner data, where appropriate, so a consistent approach can be adopted across the county. Where an individual is banned from one premises, they can be banned from all so it is vital that venues are aware of this capability, to maintain safety levels and reduce VAWG related incidents.

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Tags

Information communication technology (ICT) Crime reduction Public safety