



■ Simple Guide to the Licensing Act 2003

The Licensing Act 2003 is the law that controls the **sale of alcohol, the provision of regulated entertainment, and the sale of hot food or drink between 11pm and 5am** in England and Wales. Its purpose is to make sure licensed premises operate safely and responsibly.

1 The Four Licensing Objectives

Everything in the Licensing Act is built around these four objectives:

1. **Prevention of crime and disorder**
2. **Public safety**
3. **Prevention of public nuisance**
4. **Protection of children from harm**

Every decision by authorities and operators must support these objectives.

2 Types of Licences Under the Act

Premises Licence

Allows a building to:

- Sell alcohol
- Provide entertainment
- Serve late-night refreshment

A Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) must be named if alcohol is sold.

Personal Licence

Allows an individual to:

- Authorise the sale of alcohol
- Become a DPS

You must pass the **APLH** qualification and have a clean criminal record (or declare offences).

Temporary Event Notice (TEN)

Used for:

- Small events
- Up to 499 people

- Lasting up to 168 hours

You are limited in how many you can use each year.

3 Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS)

If alcohol is sold or served:

- You must have **one DPS**
- They must hold a personal licence
- They are responsible for **day-to-day alcohol management**

A premises can't sell alcohol without a DPS (unless it's a club premises certificate).

4 Operating Schedule

When applying for a premises licence, you must submit an **operating schedule** that covers:

- Opening hours
- Alcohol sale hours
- Entertainment activities
- Steps you'll take to promote the licensing objectives

This becomes part of the licence conditions.

5 Responsible Authorities

These bodies can comment on or object to applications:

- Police
- Environmental Health
- Licensing Authority
- Fire service
- Trading Standards
- Child protection team
- Public Health
- Home Office Immigration (for alcohol/late-night refreshment)

Their main role is to ensure your premises is safe and compliant.

6 Licence Conditions

A premises licence includes:

- **Mandatory conditions** (e.g., age verification policy, small measures)
- **Additional conditions** set by the licensing authority

You must comply with all conditions at all times.

7 Reviews and Enforcement

If problems occur, a licence can be:

- **Reviewed** (formal investigation)
- **Modified** (extra conditions added)
- **Suspended**
- **Revoked**

Common reasons include crime, disorder, noise, or selling to under-18s.

8 The Role of Staff

All staff involved in selling alcohol must:

- Know the law
- Check ID (Challenge 25)
- Refuse service when necessary
- Follow conditions and company policies
- Report incidents to management

Training is a strong defence in enforcement cases.

9 Age Restrictions

- Alcohol cannot be sold to **under-18s**
 - Proxy sales (buying alcohol for a minor) are illegal
 - Proof of age should include PASS cards, passport, or photo ID
 - Challenge 21 or Challenge 25 is strongly recommended
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10 Regulated Entertainment

The Act covers:

- Live music
- Recorded music
- Films
- Indoor sports
- Plays
- Dancing

Some activities are exempt below certain audience numbers or times.

1 1 Late Night Refreshment

Selling **hot food or drink between 23:00–05:00** requires a licence.
(Even a takeaway needs one.)

1 2 Temporary Use and Changes

Minor Variation

Small changes—layout changes, small condition adjustments.

Major Variation

Larger changes—like extending hours or adding new licensable activities.

Transfer of Licence

When a business changes hands, the premises licence is transferred to the new operator.

1 3 Record-Keeping Requirements

You must display and keep:

- Premises licence summary
 - DPS name
 - Licence available for inspection
 - Incident log
 - Refusals log
 - CCTV (if required)
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Penalties for Breaking the Act

Penalties can include:

- Unlimited fines
- Prison sentences
- Review or revocation
- Closure notices
- Loss of personal licence

Authorities take breaches very seriously.

Summary

The Licensing Act 2003 ensures alcohol, entertainment, and late-night food are managed safely.

To comply, you must:

- Promote the four objectives
- Follow your licence conditions
- Train staff thoroughly
- Work with authorities proactively

