

17. Early morning alcohol restriction orders

General

- 17.1 This chapter provides guidance to licensing authorities about Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Orders (“EMROs”). The power conferred on licensing authorities to make, vary or revoke an EMRO (or propose to take any of these steps) is set out in sections 172A to 172E of the 2003 Act. The exercise of the licensing authority’s functions may be delegated by its committee to a sub-committee, other than the decision to make, vary or revoke an EMRO (which is exercised by its full council). This power enables a licensing authority to prohibit the sale of alcohol for a specified time period between the hours of 12am and 6am in the whole or part of its area, if it is satisfied that this would be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.
- 17.2 EMROs are designed to address recurring problems such as high levels of alcohol-related crime and disorder in specific areas at specific times; serious public nuisance; and other instances of alcohol-related anti-social behaviour which is not directly attributable to specific premises.
- 17.3 An EMRO:
- applies to the supply of alcohol authorised by premises licences, club premises certificates and temporary event notices;
 - applies for any period beginning at or after 12am and ending at or before 6am. It does not have to apply on every day of the week, and can apply for different time periods on different days of the week;
 - applies for a limited or unlimited period (for example, an EMRO could be introduced for a few weeks to apply to a specific event);
 - applies to the whole or any part of the licensing authority’s area;
 - will not apply to any premises on New Year’s Eve (defined as 12am to 6am on 1 January each year);
 - will not apply to the supply of alcohol by those who provide hotel or similar accommodation to their residents between 12 am and 6am, provided the alcohol is sold at those times only through mini-bars and/or room service; and
 - will not apply to a relaxation of licensing hours by virtue of an order made under section 172 of the 2003 Act.

The EMRO process

- 17.4 An EMRO can apply to the whole or part of the licensing authority’s area. The area may, for example, comprise a single floor of a shopping complex or exclude premises which have clearly demonstrated to the licensing authority that the licensable activities carried on there do not contribute to the problems which form the basis for the proposed EMRO.
- 17.5 If the licensing authority already has a Cumulative Impact Policy (“CIP”) in its Licensing Policy Statement (see Chapter 14 of this Guidance), it should consider the relationship between the CIP and proposed EMRO area, and the potential overall impact on its local licensing policy.

17.6 Introducing an EMRO is a licensing function. Therefore, this is not the responsibility of a council's executive. The final decision to make an EMRO (or to vary or revoke one) must be made by the full council of the licensing authority. Any preceding steps, including advertising the proposed EMRO, holding hearings and making a determination to put before the full council for its final decision, are for the licensing committee of the licensing authority. The licensing committee may delegate these steps to the licensing sub-committee or officers as it sees fit.

Evidence

17.7 When establishing its evidence base for making an EMRO, a licensing authority⁸⁸ may wish to consider the approach set out in paragraphs 14.24 to 14.28 of this Guidance which includes indicative types of evidence, although this should not be considered an exhaustive list of the types of evidence which may be relevant. These matters are not necessarily determinative. They include but are not necessarily limited to:

- local crime and disorder statistics, including statistics on specific types of crime and crime hotspots, statistics on local anti-social behaviour offences,
- environmental health complaints, particularly in relation to litter and noise;
- complaints recorded by the local authority, which may include complaints raised by local residents or residents' associations;
- residents' questionnaires;
- trends in licence applications, particularly trends in applications by types of premises and terminal hours;
- changes in terminal hours of premises;
- capacities of different premises at different times of night and the expected concentrations of drinkers who will be expected to be leaving premises at different times.

17.8 Before a licensing authority makes a determination to recommend to the full council that it makes a proposed EMRO, it should be satisfied that it has sufficient evidence to demonstrate that making the EMRO would be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. The requirement to take an evidence-based decision to promote the licensing objectives should enable licensing authorities to draw on their experience from other licensing decisions they make under the 2003 Act, such as the determination of applications for the grant of premises licences. The licensing authority should consider evidence from partners, including from responsible authorities and local Community Safety Partnerships, alongside its own evidence, to determine whether an EMRO would be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

⁸⁸ The final decision to make an EMRO (or to vary or revoke one) must be made by the full council of the licensing authority. However, all preceding steps, including advertising the proposed EMRO, holding hearings and making a determination to put before the full council for its final decision, are for the licensing committee of the licensing authority. The licensing committee may delegate these steps to the licensing sub-committee or officers as it sees fit.

Introducing an EMRO

17.9 An EMRO is a powerful tool which will prevent licensed premises in the area to which the EMRO relates from supplying alcohol during the times at which the EMRO applies. The licensing authority should consider whether other measures may address the problems that they have identified as the basis for introducing an EMRO. As set out in paragraphs 9.42-9.44 of this Guidance, when determining whether a step is appropriate to promote the licensing objectives, a licensing authority is not required to decide that no lesser step will achieve the aim. They should, however, consider whether taking that step is reasonable, justified and proportionate. The introduction of an EMRO may have far-reaching, wider impacts on the socio-economic circumstances in an area. In considering whether the introduction of an EMRO is an appropriate step to promote the licensing objectives, based on whether this is reasonable, justified and proportionate, a licensing authority may hold informal discussions early in the process with a range of interested partners; these include, but are not limited to, premises that may be affected by the introduction of the EMRO. Other measures that could be taken instead of making an EMRO might include:

- working in partnership with licensed premises on voluntary measures and encouraging the creation of business-led best practice schemes in the area;
- reviewing licences of specific problem premises;
- introducing a CIP;
- use of the new closure power in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which replaces section 161 of the 2003 Licensing Act. This new closure power can be used to protect victims and communities by quickly closing premises that are causing nuisance or disorder. Further guidance on this power can be found on the gov.uk website, under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act: anti-social behaviour guidance;
- use of other mechanisms such as those set out in paragraph 14.40 of this Guidance

17.10 If the licensing authority has identified a problem in a specific area attributable to the supply of alcohol at two or more premises in that area, and has sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives, it can propose making an EMRO. The licensing authority should first decide on the matters which must be the subject of the proposal. These are:

- the days (and periods on those days) on which the EMRO would apply;
- the area to which the EMRO would apply;
- the period for which the EMRO would apply (if it is a finite period); and
- the date from which the proposed EMRO would apply.

In relation to the date when it plans to introduce the EMRO, the licensing authority should note that this may change when it is specified in the final order without the need to formally consult on the new date (as if it was a new proposal), provided it does not adversely affect any person as described in paragraph 17.21.

Advertising an EMRO

- 17.11 The proposed EMRO must be advertised. The licensing authority should include a short summary of the evidence and the manner in which representations can be made in the document, as well as the details of the proposed EMRO. The proposal must be advertised for at least 42 days (a reference in this Chapter to a period of “days” means a period comprising calendar days and not only working days). The licensing authority must publish the proposal on its website and in a local newspaper. If no newspaper exists, it must be published in a local newsletter, circular or similar document. The licensing authority must also send a notice of the proposal to all affected people in its area. They are:
- holders of (and applicants for) premises licences or club premises certificates to which the proposed EMRO would apply;
 - premises users in relation to TENs to which the proposed EMRO would apply;
 - those who have received a provisional statement in respect of a premises to which the proposed EMRO would apply.
- 17.12 Licensing authorities must, moreover, display a notice of the proposal in the area to which the EMRO would apply, in a manner which is likely to bring the proposal to the attention of those who may have an interest in it.
- 17.13 The licensing authority should also inform responsible authorities in its area and neighbouring licensing authorities of its proposal to make an EMRO. It may also like to consider what further steps could be taken, in any particular case, to publicise the proposal in order to draw it to the wider attention of any other persons who are likely to have an interest in it.

Representations

- 17.14 Those who are affected by a proposed EMRO, responsible authorities or any other person have 42 days (starting on the day after the day on which the proposed EMRO is advertised) to make relevant representations. To be considered a relevant representation, a representation must:
- be about the likely effect of the making of the EMRO on the promotion of the licensing objectives;
 - be made in writing in the prescribed form and manner, setting out the EMRO to which it relates and the nature of the representation;
 - be received within the deadline; and
 - if made by a person other than a responsible authority, not be frivolous or vexatious.
- Chapter 9 of this Guidance gives further advice on determining whether a representation is frivolous or vexatious. Representations can be made in relation to any aspect of the proposed EMRO. If a licensing authority decides that a representation is not relevant, it should consider informing the person who has made that representation.
- 17.15 Responsible authorities may wish to make representations, as may affected persons (as set out in the above paragraph).
- 17.16 Others may also wish to make representations about the proposed EMRO. These persons could include, but are not limited to:

- residents;
- employees of affected businesses;
- owners and employees of businesses outside the proposed EMRO area; and
- users of the late night economy.

Hearings

- 17.17 If a relevant representation or representations are received, the licensing authority must hold a hearing to consider them (unless the authority and anyone who has made representations agree that this is unnecessary). The licensing authority should consider, based on the number of relevant representations received by it and any other circumstances it considers appropriate, whether to hold the hearing over several days, which could be arranged to take place other than on consecutive working days.
- 17.18 As described in paragraph 17.6, a hearing to consider representations in relation to an EMRO may be held by the licensing committee, the licensing sub-committee or an officer of the licensing authority. It is recommended, however, that such hearings be conducted by the licensing committee or sub-committee.
- 17.19 Licensing committees or sub-committees⁸⁹ should be familiar with the hearing process as it has similarities with other processes under the 2003 Act. Further guidance on hearings can be found in Chapter 9 of this Guidance (paragraphs 9.31 to 9.41). However, licensing authorities should note the following key points in relation to a hearing about a proposed EMRO:
- the hearing must be commenced within 30 working days, beginning with the day after the end of the period during which representations may be made;
 - the hearing does not have to take place on consecutive working days, if an authority considers this to be necessary to enable it to consider any of the representations made by a party or if it considers this approach to be in the public interest;
 - a licensing committee or sub-committee must make its determination within 10 working days of the conclusion of the hearing;
 - the licensing committee or sub-committee is not required to notify those making representations of its determination; and
 - the licensing authority may give notices in relation to a hearing by electronic means provided it is satisfied that the text of the notice is capable of being accessed by the recipient, it is legible in all material respects and is capable of being reproduced in written form (e.g. printed by the recipient).
- 17.20 The licensing committee or sub-committee will determine the manner in which the hearing will be conducted in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005. If a licensing committee or sub-committee determines that a representation is frivolous or vexatious, it must notify in writing the person who made the representation.
- 17.21 As a result of the hearing, the licensing committee or sub-committee has three options:
- to determine that the proposed EMRO is appropriate for promotion of the licensing

⁸⁹ This could also be done by a licensing officer, however, it is recommended that representations in relation to an EMRO are conducted by the licensing committee or sub-committee.

objectives;

- to determine that the proposed EMRO is not appropriate for the promotion of the objectives and therefore that the process should be ended;
- to determine that the proposed EMRO should be modified.

In the final case, if the authority proposes that the modified EMRO should differ from the initial proposal in relation to the area specified, any day not in the initial proposal or the period of any day specified, the authority should advertise what is in effect a new proposal to make an EMRO in the manner described above, so that further representations may be made. However, there will be cases in which it may be possible to modify the terms of a proposed EMRO without being required to formally consult. This may arise where the modified terms would not have a more adverse effect on any person (primarily, if not solely, licensed premises which will be subject of the EMRO) than the EMRO in the terms in which it was originally proposed. Such cases may include the following:

- the modification may shorten the period during which the EMRO would apply or reduce the number of days on which it applies, provided these periods were a part of the original proposal. For example, a change to an EMRO applying on Fridays and Saturdays to just applying on Saturdays may not require re advertisement and consultation of the EMRO design, whereas changing the days the EMRO applies on from Fridays and Saturdays to just Thursdays might reasonably be expected to require further consultation;
- the date on which the EMRO commences is later than that described in the original proposal;

Licensing authorities should consider very carefully in each case (including in relation to legality) whether further consultation on a proposed modification to the EMRO is necessary.

Final EMRO

- 17.22 If the licensing authority determines that the proposed EMRO is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives, its determination must be put to the full council for its final decision. There is no time specified in legislation by which the full council must make this decision. This is intended to reflect the fact that the licensing authority may only meet in full council infrequently.
- 17.23 The matters set out in the final order must be no different from the matters set out in the proposal to make the order, subject to the caveat described above in paragraph 17.21. The order must be set out in the prescribed form and contain the prescribed content.
- 17.24 No later than 7 days after the day on which the EMRO is made, the licensing authority must send a notice to all affected persons of the EMRO, and make the order available for at least 28 days on its website and by displaying a notice in the EMRO area. A licensing authority should retain details of the EMRO on its website for as long as the EMRO is in force. It is recommended that the licensing authority advises neighbouring licensing authorities and the Secretary of State that the order has been made, the nature of the order and when (and for how long) it will take effect.
- 17.25 The licensing authority should monitor the effectiveness of the EMRO to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and periodically

review whether it is appropriate to continue to apply it. The licensing authority should consider setting out its policy in relation to reviewing EMROs (if any) in its statement of licensing policy.

- 17.26 The variation or revocation of an order requires the licensing authority to undertake the same process as that which applied on its introduction; that is after gathering the appropriate evidence, it advertises its new EMRO proposal, following the process set out above so that those affected and anyone else can make representations.
- 17.27 If an order applies for a finite period, the order will cease to apply on its last day. If the licensing authority wishes to introduce a further (new) EMRO, it must follow the full process for proposing a new EMRO.
- 17.28 Licensing authorities should update their statement of licensing policy (in accordance with section 5 of the 2003 Act) to include reference to the EMRO as soon as reasonably possible.

Exceptions to an EMRO

- 17.29 EMROs will not apply on New Year's Eve in recognition of its status as a national celebration. The supply of alcohol to residents through mini-bars and room service in premises with overnight accommodation will also not be subject to an EMRO.

Enforcement of EMROs

- 17.30 The sale or supply of alcohol in contravention of an EMRO is an 'unauthorised licensable activity' which is an offence under section 136 of the 2003 Act. Moreover, it may result in a closure notice being served on the premises under section 76 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 as a precursor to an application for a closure order under section 80 of that Act (which requires the constable or authority that issued the notice to apply to a magistrates' court not later than 48 hours after the service of the closure notice). This may alternatively, result in the licence being reviewed on crime prevention grounds. Further information on reviews can be found in Chapter 11 of this Guidance.
- 17.31 An EMRO overrides all authorisations to supply alcohol under the 2003 Act (including temporary event notices). It is immaterial whether an authorisation was granted before or after an EMRO was made as there are no authorisations that have the effect of authorising the sale of alcohol during the EMRO period, with the only exception being a licensing hours order made under section 172 of the 2003 Act.

EMRO Process Flowchart

