

# **Briefing Note – Event Safety Advisory Group**

## **1. Purpose of Briefing Note**

The purpose of the briefing note is to outline the role of Wiltshire's Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG).

Event Safety Advisory Groups (ESAG) sometimes also known as Operational Management Groups, Public Event Safety Groups or Safety Advisory Groups (SAG), can be utilised as a tool in planning the safety of community events and other similar public mass gatherings.

## **2. Background**

ESAGs were recommended as a result of the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster and are now recognised as a fundamental core planning forum for safety planning at all sports stadia. Nationally ESAGs have been relatively successful as a planning tool and the principle of this type of partnership / inter professional approach is good practice to be shared for events that are organised outside of stadia.

## **3. Purpose and scope of an Event Safety Advisory Group**

ESAGs provide a forum for discussing and advising on public safety at an event. They aim to help organisers with the planning and management of an event and to encourage co-operation and co-ordination between all relevant agencies. ESAGs are non-statutory bodies and so do not have legal powers or responsibilities, and are not empowered to approve or prohibit events from taking place. Event organisers and others involved in the running of an event, retain the principal legal duties for ensuring public safety.

ESAGs are usually co-ordinated by the Local Authority (LA) and made up of representatives from the LA, emergency services, other relevant bodies and the event organiser.

## **4. ESAGs and public events**

The local authorities have a legislative requirement in respect of certifying sports stadia and licensing public events and as such they have democratic public accountability. The Licensing Act 2003 has meant many smaller events can take place through applying for a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) although the larger events will require licensing and may require an ESAG.

Public and community events may be "one off" and may take place in venues or at sites not normally designated for that function such as local parks, fields and streets. These will therefore provide additional risks because of the nature and environment in which they are taking place. It is in these circumstances that the benefit of working in collaboration across services and agencies will provide a more effective and consistent advisory response to public health and safety risk.

When groups of people gather together, dangerous situations can occur and many different factors can influence crowd behaviour. The event organiser is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the people attending their event, as well as that of the employees, contractors and sub-contractors working there.

## **5. Wiltshire's ESAG**

There are many types of public events that take place in the Wiltshire Council area every year. These public events can enhance community life in Wiltshire but if poorly planned the potential for risks to public safety and adverse environmental effects is increased. Proper planning and management by the event organiser is essential to reduce those risks.

Some public events take place without the organiser contacting the local authority or emergency services - in such circumstances public safety can be compromised and the organiser could be vulnerable to legal action. To help organisers, a Wiltshire Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) has been established to co-ordinate the efforts of relevant agencies to provide advice to anyone who wishes to organise an event within the council's area.

Wiltshire's ESAG members encourage event organisers to take advantage of the safety advice available and to make sure that public safety at the event is always a major priority.

Wiltshire's Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) is a multi-agency group, which provides advice and guidance to event organisers of licensable or non- licensable events and in particularly for those that have the potential to pose a significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of participants, spectators and/or the general public.

Wiltshire's ESAG has terms of reference that were written in 2017 and approved by the Community Safety Partnership. See appendix A

A new website page is under construction to aid event organisers and advising of the ESAG process.

## **6. Wiltshire's ESAG includes representatives from:**

- Chair (Licensing Manager Public Health and Protection Service)
- C/o Chair (Public Health Consultant)
- Wiltshire Council Environmental Food & Health and Safety
- Wiltshire Council Emergency Planning
- Wiltshire Council Highways
- Wiltshire Council Environmental Protection
- Wiltshire Police: Traffic, Licensing, Events Team, Counter Terrorism
- South West Ambulance Service,
- Dorset & Wilts Fire and Rescue,
- Highways England.

The Chair may invite such other specialists as the Chair feels appropriate to assist the ESAG to fully consider any issue.

## **7. What is Wiltshire's ESAG's remit?**

The Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) provides independent specialist advice to event organisers who retain the legal responsibility for ensuring a safe event and to help them discharge their responsibilities under relevant legislation, and to create a consistent process that can be used to enhance public safety at events. It does this by:

- Providing advice to individuals and organisations that are planning a public event – from street parties to festivals.
- Working together to give consistent safety advice and share learning from previously held events.
- Ensuring plans are in place in place for emergency situations, including contingency arrangements.

- Providing a forum for discussion between the Council, emergency services and other relevant groups to develop best practice for the safe management of events.
- Ensuring that any detrimental effects on the environment and road network are minimized and to encourage the principles of sustainability when possible.
- Advising event organisers on any licensing and permit requirements for their events and check that these are in place.
- Making recommendations for future safety improvements following an event.
- Producing a set of minutes following the ESAG meeting outlining the discussions that have taken place.

## **8. Frequency of meetings of the ESAG**

The number and location of the ESAG meetings is flexible, determined by particular local circumstances and is event (s) specific.

Number of events / festivals going through the ESAG process in Wiltshire:

2015 = 16 plus 1 debrief  
 2016 = 14 plus 1 debrief  
 2017 = 13 plus 2 de-briefs  
 2018 = 5 to date

On average Wiltshire have 100+ licensable events a year ranging from Womad with a licence for 40,000 to attend, to small scale festivals for 499. Events include carnivals, festivals, street fayres, re-enactments, motor bike meets, vintage car shows and parades. Several of the events include fly overs / fly pasts which, since the Shoreham accident, the organisers now have to consider / incorporate further restrictions on no-fly zones.

Wiltshire is a military county and due to the heightened security risk following a number of national and international events, advice around counter terrorism is included in the meetings where relevant.

## **9. Consideration of what events get invited to ESAG**

- Any high profile / high risk events such as Womad (this is also conditioned on the licence), Sir Elton John, mass motor bike rallies
- Through the use of the ESAG trigger form which is utilised by members of the group to assess the event via a number of criteria.
- At the request of the event organisers and agreed by the Chair.

## **10. Conclusion**

The provision of a pre-event safety planning service for our event organisers and partner agencies has proven to be effective and popular, and has grown in scope and scale over the past 2 years. It continues to be delivered at no extra cost to event organisers and the participating services are keen to stay fully committed and involved.

## **11. Summary**

The Licensing Committee is asked to support the work of the Event Safety Advisory Group and note the report.