

# SERIOUS SECURITY STEPS MAKE SOCIALISING SAFER

**Pub staff and external experts combine to help to keep any hint of trouble at bay**

**W**etherspoon always aims to offer its staff and customers the best-possible pub experience.

Whether it is as a work place or a socialising space, a safe environment is of paramount importance to everyone.

Our pub managers and staff work closely with their local police forces and pubwatch groups, making every effort possible to ensure that the safety of staff and customers is placed as a high priority.

Wetherspoon has a dedicated security group which works directly with security company SECOM.

It provides expert guidance, helping the company to make its pubs and hotels safe and secure, as well as giving invaluable and immediate first-hand assistance to our pub teams on the occasions issues do arise.

SECOM provides Wetherspoon with CCTV, security installations and monitoring equipment, as well as working with employees who may have been assaulted, to pursue charges on their behalf.

## **Behaviour**

Wetherspoon's pub & hotel security co-ordinator, Lewis Hinckley-Keens, said: "Poor customer behaviour and antisocial behaviour are not tolerated at any of our pubs or hotels.

"The purpose of the security group is to make our pubs and hotels as safe and welcoming as possible for all of our customers, guests and employees."

Lewis continued: "We are involved in a wide scope of work, including door security, individual pub security measures, police response and prosecutions.

"We also liaise and work with local authorities and external organisations, including local pubwatch schemes and Best Bar None initiatives, to help to make a difference."

The group, in partnership with the SECOM intelligence team, headed by communications and investigations manager Gemma McKinlay, has been able to work with local policing teams and agencies to resolve several issues at various pubs.

## **Tenacity**

Issues have included a repeat offender returning to a pub regularly, assaults on staff members and instances of racial assault or abuse, which have all been fully investigated thanks to the tenacity of the SECOM intelligence team, with successful outcomes achieved.

Police attendance and meetings at the pubs have been arranged, security measures reviewed, intelligence shared, evidence gathered and investigations pursued.

Subsequent arrest and charging of suspects have been achieved in some cases, as well as welfare and victim support offered to those involved.

Lewis reported: "Of the 78 incidents reported and escalated (since January 2022), the team has secured an 81-per-cent success rate, illustrating the great success of the work achieved by Gemma and SECOM.

"Where issues have been resolved, the pubs are now in a much better position, often with closer relationships developed with the local police and better lines of communication now in place.

## **Key**

"These are key to establishing a better and safer environment, in not only the pub, but also the wider local community."

Gemma McKinlay added: "Having worked in collaboration with Wetherspoon since January 2020, SECOM and I have been given the opportunity to support pubs, employees and the wider communities against anti-social and sometimes violent behaviour.

"Our main objective is to reduce risk against customers and staff and to encourage a safe environment.

"We are here to support and help them to empower staff, when dealing with the police or local authority, and to understand processes and legislation – which can be overwhelming.

"Additionally, we are able to assist with internal and external investigations and ensure that all lines of enquiry are fully developed.

"Collaboratively, we have achieved a healthy balance among safety, security and accountability."