

- 9.12 The Secretary of State recommends that in borderline cases, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the interested party making the representation. The subsequent hearing would then provide an opportunity for the person or body making the representation to amplify and clarify it. If it then emerged, for example, that the representation should not be supported, the licensing authority could decide not to take any action in respect of the application.
- 9.13 Licensing authorities should consider providing advice on their websites about how any interested party can make representations to them.
- 9.17 For instance, they could advise interested parties to provide the relevant responsible authority with details of how they consider that the licensing objectives are being undermined so that the responsible authority can make representations if appropriate and justified.
- 9.18 The licensing authority may also decide to withhold some or all of the interested party's personal details from the applicant, giving only enough details (such as street name or general location within a street) which would allow an applicant to be satisfied that the interested party is within the vicinity of the premises. However, withholding such detail should only be considered where the circumstances justify such action and the licensing authority is satisfied that the complaints are not frivolous or vexatious.

#### **DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL DETAILS OF INTERESTED PARTIES**

- 9.14 Where a notice of a hearing is given to an applicant, the licensing authority is required under the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 to provide to the applicant with the notice and copies of the relevant representations that have been made.
- 9.15 In some exceptional and isolated circumstances interested parties may be reluctant to make representations because of fears of intimidation or violence if their personal details, such as name and address, are divulged to the applicant.
- 9.16 Where licensing authorities consider that the interested party has a genuine and well-founded fear of intimidation and may be deterred from making a representation because of this, they may wish to consider alternative approaches.

#### **HEARINGS**

- 9.19 Regulations governing hearings may be viewed on the DCMS website. If the licensing authority decides that representations are relevant, it must hold a hearing to consider them. The need for a hearing can only be dispensed with by the agreement of the licensing authority, the applicant and all of the parties who made relevant representations. In cases where only 'positive' representations are received, without qualifications, the licensing authority should consider whether a hearing is necessary. To this end it may wish to notify the interested parties concerned and give them the opportunity to withdraw their representations. This would need to be done in sufficient time before the hearing to ensure that parties were not put to unnecessary inconvenience.