

CAMRA slams proposed ban on takeaway beer sales for pubs and brewers

The Campaign for Real Ale has blasted the proposed ban on pubs and brewers selling takeaway beer during the impending lockdown in England, details of which were revealed over the weekend.

The Campaign has now written to the Cabinet Office, which is at the heart of the Government's coordination efforts to tackle COVID, to demand the removal of the unfair restriction.

In the letter, concerns are raised that the ban for hospitality venues is unprecedented, unexplained, and will only benefit supermarkets and off-sales retailers at the expense of community pubs and local brewers.

CAMRA National Chairman Nik Antona said:

"Offering alcohol for takeaway was a lifeline for many pubs, and particularly breweries, during the first lockdown in England. It is a baffling and damaging decision to remove this option, particularly when other businesses such as supermarkets can continue to sell takeaway alcohol.

"Pubs and breweries were already reporting losses and the risk of closure before Christmas, and this will only add to the risk of permanent closures within the next few months. CAMRA and the entire pub and brewery industry are now urging the Government to reverse this bizarre decision and ensure the survival of our pubs and breweries.

"We are encouraging all concerned consumers to write to their MP and request the scrapping of the takeaway sales ban to give pubs and brewers in England a better chance of surviving the lockdown. This also needs to be accompanied with a sector-specific support package to avoid permanent closures, otherwise the damage to communities across the country will be irreparable."

Ends

Notes to editors:

Concerned pub goers and beer drinkers in England can email their MP and ask for the removal of the takeaway restrictions, and a proper support package for pubs and brewers here: <https://camra.e-activist.com/page/68352/action/1>

The full text of the letter to the Minister for the Cabinet Office reads:

Dear Michael Gove,

We are writing from CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, regarding the proposed ban on hospitality venues offering takeaway alcohol during the impending lockdown in England. We are UK wide consumer group representing over 180,000 consumers and pub goers, and we campaign in support of the thousands of publicans and brewers across the country that have been providing a COVID secure, safe space for consumers, since reopening in July.

Pub goers, brewers and publicans alike all want to stop the spread of COVID-19, but have continually been faced with extra restrictions on trade, without adequate evidence, and without an appropriate support package to compensate them for the impact that these restrictions have on trade.

As the sector faces another full closure period, the proposed ban on hospitality venues offering takeaway alcohol (as they could during the first closure period) is yet another extra imposition on the industry, which is unprecedented and has been proposed without evidence or explanation.

This will mean more beer will have to be poured down the drain, with the associated cost of lost stock, and another reduction in choice for consumers, and particularly of cask ale. This is a move that will only benefit supermarkets and off-sale retailers, at the expense of community pubs and local brewers.

Please remove this unfair restriction immediately and urge colleagues to announce a comprehensive support package for pubs and brewers, to give them a better chance of surviving through this latest lockdown period.

We will be writing to Ministerial colleagues in the coming days about a sector specific support package to avoid mass closures, and the need for a clear, evidenced roadmap out of lockdown that allows pubs and brewers to return to viability and reboot the economy. Without this, the damage to communities will be immeasurable, long-term, and ultimately extremely costly for Government.

Yours sincerely,

Nik Antona, CAMRA Chairman

Tom Stainer, CAMRA Chief Executive

About CAMRA:

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is a not-for-profit consumer group with over 180,000 members that has been operating since 1971. Our vision is to have quality real ale and thriving pubs in every community.

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