



# Campaign for Pubs

Promote, Support and Protect Pubs

Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

11<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

## **Urgent – 21<sup>st</sup> June and the urgent need for relaxation of restrictions affecting pubs**

We are writing on behalf of the Campaign for Pubs and pubs, publicans, their staff and their families to urge you and the UK Government to remove key restrictions that are damaging pubs, from 21<sup>st</sup> June, as planned.

As you and your ministerial colleagues are aware, the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions over the last fourteen months has been disastrous for pubs, publicans and their families. As well as being closed for a very large proportion of that time, pubs have also not been able to operate normally as pubs since the pandemic began. Impositions such as table service and other requirements have meant increased costs while the need for social distancing has meant restricted trade. Pubs that have lost a huge chunk of a year's normal turnover now desperately need to be able to trade normally again if they are to have any chance of paying off rent and other debts, let alone recovering and becoming profitable again. This is not currently the case; our publican members report levels of trade being only somewhere between 50-70% of comparable times of year in previous (trading) years. This is not sustainable and unless it improves, many publicans will simply not be able to continue.

Many pub businesses have already closed and huge numbers more are now at grave risk of being lost for good, especially as there are owners of pubs who are now cynically using the pandemic to justify planning applications, something that the Government must also address by tightening up the planning rules to avoid many unnecessary permanent pub closures.

You are due to make the announcement regarding 21<sup>st</sup> June, for pubs in England, on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June and we urge you to have the courage to herald the quite remarkable success of the UK's vaccination programme, which has seen vulnerable people (and many millions more) double vaccinated, and to announce that as a result, life, including life in pubs, can return to normal. Despite suffering huge losses (and in many cases, significant debt and in some cases, serious hardship) the nation's publicans and pub staff have done all that has been asked of them over the last year, to abide by the various rules and regulations, despite the impact on business and livelihoods. They, like the public as a whole, were told that vaccinations would lead to normal life returning. Having operated with the restrictions (despite some of them being without evidence and in some cases, without commonsense, like the infamous 'scotch egg' rule and the 10pm curfew) it is now time for the Government to stick to their commitment to allow more normality, now that vaccinations have reached such a high level.

The fact that this announcement is taking place just one week before 21<sup>st</sup> June is again causing huge anxiety for publicans, as well as brewers and other suppliers. The current speculation that the Government will not announce the planned unlocking is causing huge anxiety and stress and a renewed sense among publicans that they still have no idea when they can ever get back to normal and operate viably as pubs again.

Clearly we hope that you stick to your guns and announce a removal of all restrictions, as envisaged for months, due to the success of the vaccination programme. There is, however, now widespread speculation

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that you may not do so. If this is the case, and the Government feels that there is an overwhelming scientific case for an extension to the restrictions then it is vital that the Government provides further financial support to an industry that has now run out of reserves. We also specifically implore you to at least change the following two rules for pubs neither of which have an evidence base and both of which are clearly prejudicial to pubs, as well as damaging both to trade and to the health and wellbeing of publicans and staff.

- First, we implore that you remove the mandatory requirement for table service and allow customers to order at the bar. Customers were allowed to do this last summer and there was no spike in infections then (and that was when millions of people were not vaccinated). It is completely unfair and unjustified that people are permitted to order at counters in cafes and tearooms, but not in pubs.
- Secondly, please reconsider the rule that people must wear masks to stand up and go to the toilet. There cannot be any scientific basis for people who are openly conversing (directly to others), in a pub, to then have to put on a mask simply to stand, walk to the bar or go to the toilet. It is off-putting for customers and discourages many to come to the pub at all, when we need people back supporting pubs.

Please understand that the current regulations, in this phase of the Government's planned unlocking, are making it difficult or impossible for many pubs to operate profitably, when they urgently need to do so. Many publicans and staff are run ragged operating table service and we have had numerous reports of the impact it is having on their well-being. In addition, some customers, especially older customers and lone pub customers are put off and these are some of the people who have been most impacted by loneliness during the pandemic. In addition, some pubs literally cannot open with table service and social distancing remaining in place (there is still a significant proportion of smaller pubs that haven't been able to open yet).

We therefore urge you and the Government to show some understanding and whatever is announced on Monday, we urge you to at least allow these two key changes, which really are vital for pubs, publicans and their families.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Crossman  
**Chair, Campaign for Pubs**  
Licensee, The Swan, The Slip, The Volunteer, York



Dawn Hopkins  
**Vice-Chair, Campaign for Pubs**  
Licensee, The Rose, Norwich

cc Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Rt. Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for BEIS  
Paul Scully MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets)  
Charlotte Nichols MP, Chair, All Party Parliamentary Pub Group