



Campaign for Pubs

Promote, Support and Protect Pubs

Sir Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

10th September 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

Concerns Regarding a Potential Ban on Smoking in Pub Gardens

We are writing on behalf of the Campaign for Pubs and publicans across the country to express deep concern over reports suggesting that the Government may consider banning smoking in pub gardens. Publicans are shocked and dismayed that such a policy is being discussed, particularly when they are already struggling with high energy costs, inflation, and reduced consumer spending. This policy would only add to the immense challenges facing the pub industry.

At a time when the sector is facing unprecedented financial pressure due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, we had hoped for support from your Government. A smoking ban in pub gardens would not only damage pubs further but is also impractical and difficult to enforce. It would push smokers onto pavements, parks, and other areas without proper disposal facilities, creating more public health and litter issues.

Policing such a ban would be nearly impossible, especially for smaller pubs that are already cutting staff to cope with financial challenges. Forcing smokers away from designated areas within pub premises could inadvertently drive them away from pubs altogether, further diminishing trade at a critical time.

This policy was not mentioned in your party's manifesto, and we believe it would be wrong to introduce it without consulting publicans. People will simply find other outdoor spaces to smoke or stay at home, where they might smoke around family members, including children. This outcome would contradict efforts to improve public health.

We support public health measures aimed at reducing smoking but urge the Government to focus on more practical and effective solutions. Many pubs already offer non-smoking areas outdoors, and a blanket ban would be both unnecessary and counterproductive.

We note that there was no mention of this potential policy in the manifesto you and your party stood on at the recent General Election. This is what was mentioned about smoking:

“Labour will ensure the next generation can never legally buy cigarettes and ensure all hospitals integrate ‘opt-out’ smoking cessation interventions into routine care. Labour will ban vapes from being branded and advertised to appeal to children to stop the next generation from becoming hooked on nicotine”.

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We appreciate the Deputy Prime Minister's office reaching out to us during the election, and we remain eager to engage with your Government. However, we urge you to reconsider this harmful policy and instead explore ways to support both public health and the pub industry during these challenging times.

We hope you and the Government will be a Government that supports pubs and our important and unique pub culture.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Crossman
Chair, Campaign for Pubs



Dawn Hopkins
Vice-Chair, Campaign for Pubs