



Smoking ban hits JD Wetherspoon Free 251224

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Pubs group JD Wetherspoon has warned again that the smoking ban in England is hitting sales of drinks.

The company said like-for-like sales, which exclude new pub openings, fell 1% in the 13 weeks to 28 October, due to a decline in beer and other drinks sales.

But Wetherspoon added that the fall in bar sales was being cushioned by an increase in food sales.

The company had first said in September that the smoking ban was likely to trim its profits.

“As anticipated by most commentators, bar sales have come under some pressure [since the ban in England],” the company said.

But it added: "We are seeing encouraging growth in products, for instance wine and real ale, often associated with the purchase of food."

Wetherspoon said that it remained confident that the smoking ban would benefit the pub trade in the long-term, but "the short-term effect of a decline in bar sales means that we continue to remain cautious regarding the outlook for this financial year".

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