



UK's largest pubs and breweries demand immediate cut in beer duty Free 221224

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British beer drinkers cheering on England and Scotland pay 54p duty per pint compared with German or Spanish fans paying less than 5p, a letter says.

The UK's largest pub groups and breweries have written an open letter to the leaders of the three main political parties demanding an immediate cut in beer duty alongside business rates reform.

The letter, which appears in Friday's edition of The Times to coincide with the start of Euro 2024, has been signed by 80 of the UK's leading brewers and pub groups including Heineken, Budweiser, Greene King, Stonegate, JD Wetherspoon and Diageo.

They call for a cut in duty as a "first step" towards bringing the UK in line with the European average and an "urgent radical reform" of business rates.

The Government has frozen beer duty since 2020 and the current rate is in place until February 2025.

The letter reads: "For every three pounds spent in a pub, one pound goes straight to the tax man.

"Pubs pay up to four times the business rates of other comparable businesses and until the urgent radical reform to business rates is implemented the current 75% relief in England is a lifeline without which many more pubs would close.

"The upcoming Euros championships brings into sharp focus the extent to which beer remains over-taxed.

"British beer drinkers cheering on England and Scotland pay 54p duty per pint compared to German or Spanish fans paying less than 5p.

"Combined with high costs such as energy, publicans currently only make an average 12p profit on the average £4.80 pint in the UK."

The letter, written by Emma McClarkin, chief executive of the British Beer and Pub Association, whose members brew 90% of the beer sold in the UK, adds: "Whilst there has been recognition and acknowledgement from successive governments on the important role that pubs and brewers play in our society, a step change is required to secure its future and to promote and celebrate such an intrinsic part of British life that brings combined economic, social, and cultural value to almost every community around the country.

"The beer and pub sector is special, but it does not need special favours – it needs fair recognition of its unique value.

"It is, therefore, imperative that the next government provides a sustainable and proportionate fiscal and regulatory framework that allows the sector to do what it does best; invest in our businesses and employees, embrace changing consumer taste and demands, and provide the community hubs that

are the crucial and often invisible glue to social cohesion.

“It’s the Government’s responsibility to provide that framework, we can do the rest.”

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