

Response ID ANON-GXRH-UWGM-S

Submitted to **CALL FOR EVIDENCE AND VIEWS ON THE LICENSING AND REGISTRATION OF CLUBS (AMENDMENT) BILL**
Submitted on **2020-12-15 09:31:18**

Introduction

What is your name?

Name:

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What is your organisation?

Organisation:

The Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA)

Please indicate if you are providing a submission:

on behalf of an organisation or business

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or business please tell us briefly how it relates to the subject matter of the Bill:

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

The Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) was established in 1980 to represent the growing number of independent breweries in the UK. Today SIBA has around 750 brewery members, including in Northern Ireland, responsible for 80-85% of the country's independently brewed beer.

Our members in NI want to see reforms which would allow them to operate on the same basis as small breweries elsewhere in the UK and in many other countries, including opening taprooms, selling at events and online directly to the public.

1. The Policy Objectives of the Bill

What are your views on the overall policy objectives? Do you think that the Bill will meet those objectives? If not, why not?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA welcomes the progress being made in this Bill to allow breweries to sell their products online and to consume off the premises. However, we believe that this is also an opportunity not to be missed to level the playing field and allow small producers to also open taprooms.

In Great Britain, taprooms are an increasingly important part of breweries' businesses. This direct route to market allows them to showcase their products, increase their interaction with consumers and have a new source of revenue. They enable independent brewers to engage with their local communities, develop an engaged local following, and foster pride amongst the community and their local employees and their families.

In comparison, while the number of breweries in NI have grown from two in 2010 to around 30 today, the majority of what they sell is exported because the barriers to local retail sale are so significant. Selling directly to the public through taprooms would encourage the development of the industry with the employment that it provides, allow NI breweries to respond to recent economic and social trends, and also support NI's tourism goals.

2. Easter Opening Hours and Additional Permitted Opening Hours

The removal of restrictions at Easter [Clauses 1 & 23]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Additional permitted hours for certain licensed premises [Clause 2]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

PSNI authorisation for additional permitted hours for smaller pubs [Clause 4]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

“Drinking-up Time” and the Alignment of Alcohol and Entertainment Licences

What are your views on the extension of “drinking-up” time?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

Allowing public houses and other on-sale licensed premises to stagger their closing times can help to reduce congestion and associated issues such as demand for taxis. Changes should take into account representations from key stakeholders such as local authorities, police services and residents.

What impact do you think it would have on alcohol consumption towards closing time and during ‘drinking up’ time?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

See above

What impact do you think it would have on issues such as anti-social behaviour and crowd dispersal?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

See above

Do you have any comments on the proposals to align closing time for liquor and entertainment licences [Clause 3]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

4. Supporting Tourism, Special Events and Small Producers

Do you think that the provisions contained within the Bill will have a positive impact on hospitality and/or tourism and in Northern Ireland? If so, how?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

The provisions in this Bill are necessary but not sufficient for NI to fully benefit from the economic, hospitality and tourism opportunities that are open to them. The restrictions to samples after a tour for small producers will severely limit the potential for these NI businesses. In the Republic of Ireland where similar policies have been introduced, only one brewery (and one combined brewer and distillery) have successfully applied for an onsite producers’ licence given the additional costs and restrictions imposed despite there being 70-80 microbreweries in Ireland.

There is significant and growing interest from residents and tourists in local products and permitting small breweries to open taprooms will allow NI to develop a more competitive offering whilst enabling local businesses to grow and thrive by providing greater and direct access to the local market.

There are several benefits from taprooms that we have detailed below in section 10 which could assist NI.

What are your views on the proposals relating to permitted hours for special events [Clauses 6 & 25]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

What are your views on the provisions of the Bill that are aimed at supporting small local producers of beer, cider and spirits [Clause 8]? What impact do you envisage this could have on tourism? Do you feel that the regulatory framework, as outlined in the Bill, is sufficiently robust?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

The provisions in the Bill to allow local producers to sell for consumption off the premises is welcome, along with the ability to sell online.

However SIBA believes that it is a missed opportunity to include provisions for a taproom within the Bill. Currently the Bill does not meet people’s expectations and means that small breweries in NI cannot meet their potential or maximise the economic and tourism goals of NI.

Accordingly they will have a limited impact on tourism as the additional costs of providing a tour may not be outweighed by the small benefits of offering samples onsite. It also discourages repeat visitors who would have to undertake a new tour each time they visited.

If this Bill passes in its current form, then the Department should ensure that the regulations are not so restrictive so as to impede small producers from holding tours and should allow producers to showcase their full range of products via samples.

The Bill also includes significant fines for selling other producers’ products, which seems disproportionate. The Bill should ensure that it takes account of the growing number of collaboration beers whereby breweries partner together to produce a beer which carries their brand but may not be actually produced on the site of the brewery.

5. Children and Young People (under the age of 18)

The removal of the requirement of a licensed premises or registered club to hold a children’s certificate [Clauses 10 & 26]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Permitting certain premises to hold underage functions; the conditions that must be met; the permitted opening hours; and, proposed enforcement action [Clauses 11 & 27]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Permitting the attendance of young people to remain on licensed premises to attend a private function (e.g. a wedding reception) and the proposed conditions that must be met [Clauses 12 & 28]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

The strengthening of the current law around the delivery of alcohol [Clause 9] and the delivery of alcohol to young people [Clause 13]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

The prohibition on self-service and sale of alcohol by vending machines [Clauses 15 & 30]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Permitting children and young people to be present in a sporting club to 11:00pm during the summer months (1 June to 31 August) [Clause 29]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Permitting children and young people to attend an awards ceremony in a sporting club one night per calendar year (until 11pm) [Clause 29]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Overall, do you feel the measures are adequate to protect children and young people from alcohol related harm? If not, why not?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

6. Alcohol Consumption and Alcohol-Related Harm

What impact do you think these measures will have on reducing alcohol consumption and preventing alcohol-related harm?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Do you have any other comments in relation to any other aspect of the Bill in relation to alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

7. Regulation, Enforcement, Offences and Penalties

The Bill proposes to allow statutory approval for voluntary industry-led codes of practice in relation to the sale and supply of alcohol in licensed premises and registered clubs [Clauses 19 & 32]. Do you feel these are an effective means of helping to regulate the industry? If not, what alternatives would you suggest?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

The Bill contains provisions to permit a court, when determining an application for an occasional licence, to impose terms and conditions on the licence with consequences for non-compliance [Clause 18]. What are your views on this?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

What are your views on the measures in the Bill that would require a body corporate (licensee) to notify the courts and police of any change of directorship (within 28 days) [Clause 20]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue.

Throughout the Bill there are a number of new offences and/or penalties under The Licensing (NI) Order 1996, The Registration of Clubs (NI) Order 1996 and The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985. The Committee would welcome any comments you have in relation to any of these.

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

The Bill also includes significant fines for selling other producers' products, which seems disproportionate. The Bill should ensure that it takes account of the growing number of collaboration beers whereby breweries partner together to produce a beer which carries their brand but may not be actually produced on the site of the brewery.

8. Resource Implications for Certain Organisations/Bodies

(a) The PSNI:

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue

b) Health and social services:

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue

c) Other organisations (please specify):

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue

9. Registered Clubs

Do you have any additional comments on the provisions in the Bill which specifically relate to registered clubs [i.e. Clauses 22 to 32]?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA does not currently hold a view on this issue

10. Additional Information

Are there any other measures not included in the Bill that you think should be included and why?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

As explained above, SIBA believes that NI breweries should be permitted to open taprooms under the Bill. These have become an important and growing source of revenue for small independent brewers in England, Wales and Scotland which operate in a highly competitive market where the vast majority of the beer is still produced by global companies.

Three in four of our members in Great Britain now have a shop, tap bar or a visitor centre at the brewery. 30% have a taproom or bar with 20% planning to open one in the future. For more than four in ten breweries these facilities generate up to 10% of their annual turnover, while one in ten it represents more than 25% of turnover.

Taprooms also provide a connection between the customers and where the beer comes from and means that the brewery can sell the beer at retail. This has been invaluable in supporting the expansion of these business. They are also a way to support local pubs as it leads customers to seek out their products at other nearby venues.

Taprooms also offer local employment opportunities, with 38% of brewery employees living in the same town or village the brewery and are often a source of employment for young people.

They also bring people into the local area and help regenerate the local economy. Studies in the USA has shown that the presence of craft breweries and taprooms are linked to greater investment and the revitalisation of neighbourhoods.

Breweries value their contribution to the local community, with 83% of SIBA members considering it to be important or extremely important. Taprooms help to generate this connection and provide an opportunity for breweries to build relationships with their consumers. Consumers are increasingly seeking experiences and quality and small independent breweries that can sell beer directly to the public are well placed to respond to these trends. Taprooms allow small breweries to offer a unique experience where they can taste various beers and learn about the traditional process of brewing, providing them with a closer connection to the production process. Many taprooms serve their beers in smaller glasses (such as thirds or two thirds of a pint) and in sampling flights, allowing people to try different beers.

SIBA believes that the same opportunities should be offered in NI and recommends that the Committee consider an amendment to the Bill to include taprooms.

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

SIBA would like to extend the opportunity to all Committee members to visit a local brewery in NI or can help facilitate a visit to a GB taproom in the future.