



## COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

**Please use this form to submit written submissions in relation to the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill. Return to [committee.communities@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:committee.communities@niassembly.gov.uk) by **Wednesday 19 October 2016**.**

**Name:** Ellen Hudspith, Policy & Research Officer and Clive Talbot, Chair of CAMRA's Northern Ireland Branch

**Organisation: (if applicable)** CAMRA, Campaign for Real Ale

**Date:** 19th October 2016

### **CAMRA Submission to the Committee for Communities Call for Evidence on the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill**

1. CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is a UK consumer organisation representing over 183,000 individual consumers on matters relating to beer and pubs. We are an independent, voluntary organisation campaigning for real ale, community pubs and consumer rights.

#### **Summary**

2. Small brewers are an exciting emerging sector in Northern Ireland, but need to be supported through legislative change to ensure these businesses continue to thrive, and that their high quality, local produce can be showcased through the licensed trade.
3. CAMRA is calling on the Committee to amend the Bill to add brewers to the list of categories of premises which can hold a premises licence, allowing them to sell their product at source and also away from the usual premises through the use of an occasional licence.

#### **Part 1: Licensing**

4. CAMRA supports the measures in the Bill to relax licensed hours through the extension of 'drinking up' time and extended hours through occasional licences. This will give publicans the opportunity to increase trading for special occasions and also allow consumers greater access

to pubs and the beer on offer in them. CAMRA also supports the introduction of a Code of practice for the industry, to ensure the responsible promotion and enjoyment of alcohol.

## **Part 2: Registration of Clubs**

5. CAMRA supports the measures in the Bill to relax licensing restrictions on clubs through the extension of 'drinking up' time and extended hours through occasional licences, and also the introduction of a Code of practice for the industry, to ensure the responsible promotion and enjoyment of alcohol.

## **Part 3: General**

6. CAMRA is satisfied with Part 3 of the draft Bill.

## **Recommendation for Action: Amendment to add breweries to the categories of premises which can hold a licence**

### Growth in microbreweries

7. Small brewers are an exciting emerging sector in Northern Ireland, but need to be supported through legislative change to ensure these businesses continue to thrive.
8. Pubs, brewing and beer support over 16,700 jobs in Northern Ireland, and there are now 27 breweries listed on the Northern Ireland CAMRA branch website<sup>1</sup>. An emerging small brewing sector will create even more jobs, and can boost tourism, provided that changes are made to allow brewers to sell their products from their brewery and also at events such as food and drink festivals.
9. Small brewers are creating a high quality, local product which should be showcased as an example of the excellent food and drink sector in Northern Ireland, however the current licensing regime does not allow for this to happen.

### The current situation

10. There are twelve categories of premises which are eligible for a licence, including pubs, off licences and hotels. Breweries are excluded from the list of premises that are allowed to apply for a licence, which prevents them from being able to 'sell at source' (e.g. at the brewery).
11. If breweries were allowed to 'sell at source', they could offer brewery tours - which could increase tourism, create jobs and generate interest in the brewing process.
12. As breweries are not on the list of premises that can apply for a premises licence, they are also unable to apply for an occasional licence to sell at events outside of the brewery such as food and drink festivals and farmers markets.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://camrani.k-hosting.co.uk/local-beer-guide/local-breweries>

13. Many of these small brewers are 'home brewing' from very small premises and the ability to sell at farmers markets or festivals would allow better business sustainability for such brewers, and an opportunity to expand operations.

#### Amendment to add breweries to the categories of premises which can hold a licence

14. CAMRA is calling on the Committee to amend the Bill to add brewers to the list of categories of premises which can hold a premises licence.
15. This will allow brewers to sell at source, and also apply for occasional licences to sell their high quality, local produce at food and drink festivals. Additionally, brewers who wished to could run and take payment for brewery tours, selling their beer to visitors and creating an exciting new branch of the Northern Irish tourist sector.

#### Case Studies

16. The following are quotes from small brewers on the current licensing situation:
17. Knockout Brewery, Belfast
18. *"The main battle we have at the minute is allowing Northern Irish breweries to sell from their premises and get licences to do events. The increased margin from direct sales will be the difference in maintaining the microbreweries in NI or them being decimated or worse!"*
19. Bull House Beer, Newtonards
20. *"Really the main issue for me is not being able to get a personal license in Northern Ireland. I'd love to be able to take my beer down to local markets and sell there, and I'd love to be able to sell online. We are really disadvantaged here compared to the rest of the UK in that regard."*
21. Night Cap Beer, Belfast
22. *"I think the main issues facing the drinks industry as a whole are the well reported licensing restrictions in Northern Ireland. Not being able to sell directly to the public being one of our biggest issues, if we were based in England I could have a personal licence to sell alcohol yet over in NI this is completely restricted. For Belfast to become a major European City that is attractive for tourists the licensing laws need to change. Relaxed licensing laws will create a positive knock on effect from pubs/clubs to hotels to taxi firms to wholesaler's right back to the producers."*

#### **Contact**

23. Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss any of these issues further.

**Ellen Hudspith**

Policy & Research Officer



**Clive Talbot**

Chair of CAMRA's Northern Ireland Branch

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**Date received:** \_\_\_\_\_

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