



Home Office

Home Secretary

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Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP  
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 4AA

24 October 2019

Dear Yvette,

**FOR INFORMATION: CONSULTATION ON THE RELAXATION OF LICENSING HOURS FOR THE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY OF EUROPE (VE) DAY**

I am writing to inform you that the Home Office will be launching a consultation on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019 about whether to relax alcohol licensing hours in England and Wales on Friday 8 and Saturday 9 May 2020 in celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. The Government has already taken a decision to move the Early May Bank Holiday from Monday 4 May to Friday 8 May 2020 to mark this national occasion.

Under section 172 of the Licensing Act 2003 ('2003 Act'), a licensing hours order may be made to allow premises to open for specified, extended hours to mark an occasion of 'exceptional international, national or local significance'. An order can be used to relax licensing hours for any or all of the licensable activities under the 2003 Act, which includes the sale and supply of alcohol (on and off the premises); the provision of regulated entertainment (plays, live and recorded music, indoor sport, films and boxing and wrestling); and the provision of late night refreshment (the sale of hot food and drink between 11pm and 5am).

The power to extend licensing hours nationally has been used for the Royal Wedding (2018), HM The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday (2016), the FIFA World Cup (2014), HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee (2012) and the Royal Wedding (2011). Orders made under section 172 are subject to the affirmative parliamentary procedure.

As part of a consultation, the Home Office will be considering whether licensing hours for the sale of alcohol for consumption on premises that normally close by 11pm should be extended until 1am the following mornings on Friday 8 and Saturday 9 May 2020, and whether premises providing regulated entertainment up to 1am should also be included in scope of a licensing hours order. Any relaxation of licensing hours would not apply to the off-trade sale of alcohol by shops, as those wishing to celebrate at home could buy alcohol in advance or during normal trading hours. Unlicensed premises would not benefit from

this extension and would still need to obtain a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) if they wanted to undertake licensable activities.

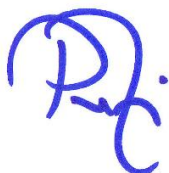
Pubs and other licensed on-trade premises may wish to sell alcohol later than their normal licensing hours during the VE Day anniversary weekend. Under the 2003 Act, licence holders can use a TEN to extend their licensed hours for a limited period, though these are subject to certain annual limits and may be refused where there are objections by the police on grounds of crime and disorder. A national relaxation of licensing hours would therefore remove the need for all licensed on-trade premises to obtain a TEN from their licensing authority during the specified period and reduce bureaucracy for local government in processing applications for TENs. On coming to its final decision on whether or not to relax licensing hours nationally, the Home Office will balance reducing burdens on businesses wishing to celebrate the anniversary of VE Day against the need to protect the public from potential crime and disorder and public nuisance late at night.

Given tight timescales to complete the necessary parliamentary procedures, we intend to follow the process used previously for HM The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday and hold a selective consultation on this proposal with key partners including the police, licensing authorities, industry and community groups, rather than a full public consultation, before making a final decision. The consultation will be launched on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and will run for 10 working days.

The 2003 Act applies to England and Wales only. It would be for the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Department of Justice to make any similar arrangements for extending licensing hours in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

A copy of this letter will be placed in both House Libraries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Patel', written in a cursive style.

**Rt Hon Priti Patel MP**