



Home Office

Consultation:

CONTINGENT RELAXATION OF LICENSING HOURS DURING THE SEMI-FINALS AND FINAL OF THE FIFA MEN'S FOOTBALL WORLD CUP 2026

This consultation begins on 4 December 2025

This consultation ends on 15 January 2026

About this consultation

To:	We are keen to hear from everyone who may be affected by a national relaxation of licensing hours, including: members of the public, those who live near to licensed premises, those who own or work in on-trade premises, the police, licensing authorities and trade associations. The consultation covers England and Wales where these proposals apply.
Duration:	From 4 December 2025 to 15 January 2026.
Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to:	Email: alcohollicensingconsultations@homeoffice.gov.uk
How to respond:	<p>Please send your response by 15 January 2026.</p> <p>Responses can be submitted online through the GOV.UK website or by post by sending responses to:</p> <p>Licensing Hours Consultation Alcohol Team 5th Floor, Fry Building Home Office 2 Marsham Street, SW1P 4DF</p> <p>Email: alcohollicensingconsultations@homeoffice.gov.uk</p>
After the consultation:	Responses will be analysed and a 'Response to Consultation' document will be published. This will explain the Government's final policy intentions. All responses will be treated as public, unless stated otherwise.

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Introduction

This paper sets out consultation proposals to contingently relax licensing hours for licensed premises in England and Wales for the semi-finals and the final of the FIFA Men's Football World Cup 2026 (World Cup 2026) should any of the home nations (England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) reach those stages.

The consultation is aimed at members of the public, local licensing authorities, licensed premises and other interested parties in England and Wales where these proposals apply.

Copies of the consultation are being sent to:

Local Government Association
Welsh Local Government Association
Institute of Licensing
National Organisation of Residents Associations
National Police Chiefs Council
Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
British Beer and Pub Association
UKHospitality
Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers
Wine and Spirits Trade Association
Alcohol Health Alliance
Alcohol Research UK
Institute of Alcohol Studies

However, this list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive, and responses are welcomed from anyone with an interest in or views on the subject covered by this paper.

The proposals

1. The Government is consulting on whether to contingently relax licensing hours across licensed premises in England and Wales to mark the **FIFA Men's Football World Cup 2026 (World Cup 2026) semi-finals and final**, or whether to rely on the existing system of Temporary Event Notices (TENs) which gives the local police and environmental health officers a say in decisions on whether individual local premises should extend their licensing hours for a particular event, based on local circumstances.
2. The proposal is to extend licensing hours if any of the home nations (England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) are successful in reaching the semi-finals and final of the FIFA Men's Football World Cup 2026. Any extensions would only apply to a match where one of the home nations plays - for example, the semi-finals are due to take place on 14 and 15 of July and there will not be an extension for both dates automatically – only for dates where a home nations team is playing.
3. The Government proposes to make a licensing hours Order under section 172 of the Licensing Act 2003 which would contingently extend licensing hours on the days of the semi-finals (14 and/or 15 July 2026) and the final (19 July 2026) so that they would end at 1:00am the following morning. This would be the case for all matches with a kick-off time of 9:00pm or earlier as this allows sufficient time for any potential extra time and penalties to be completed before the extension ends.
4. The time difference between the UK and the host nation means that kick-off times could be even later in the evening or run into the early hours with matches not finishing until after 1:00am. In these instances, the TENs system can be used by any premises that wishes to continue to undertake licensable activities later than this.
5. The Government has decided that, if it were to relax licensing hours nationally following this consultation, this would be contingent on any of the home nations reaching the semi-finals, with a further extension applying in the event that any of the teams then reach the final. **No extension would come into place on any date during the tournament should the aforementioned teams not participate in those matches.** If the aforementioned teams reach the semi-finals, but are unsuccessful in those matches, the extension would only apply to the relevant semi-final matches, and licensing hours **would not then** be extended for the final.
6. The Government proposes that any national relaxation of licensing hours during the semi-finals and final would **only apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises**, and would **not** apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises (i.e. in supermarkets and off-licences) as anyone wishing to mark the occasion at home will be able to buy alcohol during normal shopping hours. Late-night refreshment venues, by definition, are already licensed to open late at night and would not benefit from a relaxation in licensing hours. We do not intend to extend licensing

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hours for the provision of regulated entertainment. It should also be noted that unlicensed premises would not benefit from a relaxation in licensing hours and would still need to give a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) to undertake licensable activities on any of the match dates.

7. The purpose of the national relaxation of licensing hours during the World Cup 2026 semi-finals and the final would be to enable communities to come together to celebrate this achievement and support their national team. Licensing hours would not be relaxed beyond 1:00am. After these licensed hours, premises would not be able to sell alcohol under the licensing hours order.
8. The options presented in the consultation seek to enable communities to come together and celebrate whilst balancing concerns about public order.
9. This licensing hours extension would apply to premises in England and Wales only. Licensing is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Background

10. Under section 172 of the Licensing Act 2003 (the Act), the Secretary of State may make an order relaxing licensing hours for licensed premises in relation to a 'celebration period' to mark an occasion of 'exceptional international, national or local significance'. A 'licensing hours order' can be used to relax licensing hours in licensed premises during a period not exceeding four days. An Order may be applied to all licensed premises in England and Wales or only to premises in one or more specific area. Other variables in the Order are the dates, times and licensable activities to which it applies.
11. Since the introduction of the Act, this power has been used to mark the Royal Weddings in 2011 and 2018, the Late Queen's Diamond Jubilee, 90th Birthday celebrations, and Platinum Jubilee, His Majesty's Coronation in 2023, the 80th Anniversary of VE Day celebrations and major football tournaments including the FIFA World Cup 2014, UEFA Men's Euro Championship 2020 final in 2021, the semi-final and final of the UEFA Men's Euro Championship 2024 and the semi-final and final of the UEFA Women's Euro Championship 2025.
12. Should any of the home nations reach the semi-finals and the final of World Cup 2026, this will be an event of national celebration and it is likely that many pubs and other licensed premises in England and Wales will wish to open later to ensure coverage of the match(es).
13. Licence holders currently have the option of using a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) to extend their opening hours for a limited period. A TEN costs £21 and must be submitted at least 10 working days before the event begins, while a "late TEN" must be given not before 9 and not later than 5 clear working days before the event. However, TENs are subject to certain annual limits and may be refused if the police object on the grounds of crime and disorder. The TENs regime also allows people or organisations without existing licences to give notice that they intend to sell alcohol at times when this would not otherwise be authorised on a 'one-off' limited basis. This system is designed to balance giving people and organisations flexibility in selling alcohol and carrying on other licensed activities, whilst protecting local people from the problems this can cause, including crime and disorder and public nuisance.
14. There are always some potential risks related to relaxing licensing hours nationally. These largely relate to the impact on enforcement agencies and an increased risk of alcohol-related crime and disorder, although there is no evidence that a significant increase in alcohol-related crime and disorder has materialised during past national licensing hours extensions. The time differences between the UK and the host nation, however, mean that this tournament may see matches not kicking off until past midnight or beyond. This is a significant shift from previous tournaments where an extension to 1:00am has provided ample time for match celebrations to take place. Given this difference, we are of the view that requiring any premises wishing to

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remain open after 1:00am to use the existing TENs system provides an additional level of safeguard.

15. Whilst considering whether or not to relax licensing hours nationally, the Government will balance those wishing to celebrate the home nations in World Cup 2026 with protecting the public from potential crime and disorder and public nuisance late at night. We believe our approach as set out in this consultation achieves this balance.

Questionnaire

We would welcome responses to the following questions set out in this consultation paper.

Q1: Do you support the proposal for extending licensing hours in England and Wales in the event that any of the home nations reach the semi-finals of the Men's Football World Cup 2026 - 14 and/or 15 July 2026 - until 1:00am the following morning, providing the match kicks-off at 9:00pm or earlier?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q2: Do you support the proposal for extending licensing hours in England and Wales in the event that any of the home nations reach the final of the Men's Football World Cup 2026 - 19 July 2026 - until 1:00am the following morning, providing the match kicks-off at 9:00pm or earlier?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q3: Do you agree that the contingent order should only apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises (i.e. it should not apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q4: If you disagree with this proposal, or think we should go further (for example, by also extending licensing hours if any of the home nations teams reach the quarter finals), please explain your reasoning below.

About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself.

Full name	
Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (for example, member of the public)	
Date	
Company name/organisation (if applicable)	
Address	
Postcode	
If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response, please tick this box	<input type="checkbox"/> (please tick box)
Email address to which the acknowledgement should be sent	

If you are a representative of a group, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

Contact details and how to respond

Please complete the Consultation online at Gov.UK or send your response by 15 January 2026:

Licensing Hours Consultation
Alcohol Team, 5th Floor Fry Building
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Email: alcohollicensingconsultations@homeoffice.gov.uk

Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact the Home Office at the above address.

Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available online at Gov.UK.

Publication of response

A paper summarising the responses to this consultation will be published. The response paper will be available online at Gov.UK.

Representative groups

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent when they respond.

Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality

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disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Home Office.

The Home Office will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Consultation principles

The principles that government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the consultation principles.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>



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