

News story: Government announces plans to extend pub opening hours for Royal Wedding

The government has launched a [public consultation](#) on plans to extend licensing hours on the nights of Friday 18 and Saturday 19 May until 1am the following morning, to give everyone the chance to celebrate the occasion.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

The Royal Wedding will be a time of national celebration, and we want everyone to be able to make the most of such an historic occasion.

I hope that this relaxation of the licensing hours will allow people to extend their festivities and come together to mark what will be a very special moment for the country.

Licensing hours orders have previously been made for occasions of national significance including the Queen's 90th birthday, the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton in 2011, and the World Cup in 2014.

Chief Executive of the British Beer and Pub Association, Brigid Simmonds, said:

This is great news for pubs and pub-goers and shows the government has listened to our calls to put pubs at the heart of the Royal Wedding celebrations.

Visitors see the Great British pub as a cultural icon, almost as much as the Royal Family. Extended hours would give a £10million boost to the trade and make the most of the expected increase in tourism.

The government proposes to make a licensing hours order under Section 172 of the Licensing Act, which would extend opening hours for the sale of alcohol to benefit those premises in England and Wales which are not normally licensed until 1am.

The 4-week public consultation will give the public the opportunity to submit their views on the proposals. The government will also seek the views of specific stakeholders, including the police, licensing authorities and alcohol awareness groups.

The Royal Wedding will coincide with the FA Cup Final. There have been no

reports of increased disorder as a result of the previous extensions to licensing hours including the extension for the weekend of Her Majesty's 90th birthday, which coincided with 2 Euro 2016 matches involving England and Wales, and the extension of licensing hours during the World Cup 2014.

[News story: Retailers and academics join government effort to tackle acid attacks](#)

This is part of a series of voluntary commitments proposed by the government.

Today the government has published the details of the voluntary commitments, as well as a list of those retailers who have already signed.

Waitrose, B&Q, Morrisons, Wickes, Co-op, Screwfix and Tesco are among the major brands to sign the voluntary commitments on the responsible sale of corrosive substances. The British Independent Retailers Association will this month be encouraging all its members to sign up.

The publication comes as the University of Leicester launches a major research project, commissioned by the Home Office, into the motivations of offenders who carry and use acid in violent attacks.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins, said:

Acid attacks have a devastating impact on their victims, leaving both emotional and physical scars. I'm pleased that so many of the UK's major retailers are joining our fight to combat this scourge and signalling they are committed to selling acids responsibly.

This is the next step of our [acid attacks action plan](#) that has already seen us consult on new laws to restrict young people's access to acids.

It is also vital we gain an insight into the motivations and behaviours of those who carry out these unspeakable attacks, which is why we have commissioned a major piece of research that will help us understand more about this crime.

The [voluntary commitments](#) will see the retailers:

- agree not to sell products to those under 18 that contain potentially harmful levels of acid or corrosive substances – including applying

Challenge 21/25 policies when asking for age identification, staff supported by till alerts, supervision and inclusion of these products in age restricted sales training.

- agree that equivalent age restriction measures are applied to products sold online.
- Agree to comply with the Poisons Act and promote awareness to staff and what this means for the sale of products which contain levels of acid and other corrosive substances which are either regulated or reportable under the Act.

The voluntary agreement has been introduced now to ensure immediate action is taken by retailers on a voluntary basis, in advance of new legislation including the ban on sales to those under 18 being brought before Parliament and put into effect. We welcome the support and action being taken by retailers now to restrict access.

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Corrosive Attacks, Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Kearton said:

The use of acid to commit acts of violence is particularly abhorrent – perpetrators aim to leave their victims with horrific and life-changing injuries.

Tackling the scourge of acid attacks requires a coordinated approach across a number of different organisations and sectors. I commend all those major retailers and independent stores which are now taking steps to help prevent acid attacks from taking place.

The majority of us find it hard to believe that anyone would choose to throw acid over another person. This new research project will enable us to improve our understanding of why offenders are motivated to use acid as a weapon and assist us in stopping attacks in the future.

The academic research being undertaken at the University of Leicester will see criminologists examine the motivations and decision-making processes behind carrying and using acid as a weapon, the characteristics of offenders and their relationships with their victims, as well as how the substances are purchased and transported.

Professor Teela Sanders from the University of Leicester's Department of Criminology said:

This project taps into the expert skills of researchers at the University of Leicester with case file analysis and interviews with

serious violent offenders in prisons. This most needed research on this phenomenon will produce important recommendations for government to take forward.

The steps announced today form part of the Acid Attack Action Plan announced by the Home Secretary in July 2017. The Home Office also recently concluded its consultation on proposals to ban the sale of products containing the most harmful corrosive substances to under 18s, make it an offence to possess a corrosive substance in a public place without good reason and introduce minimum custodial sentences for those repeatedly caught carrying acid without good reason.

National President of British Independent Retailers Association (BIRA), Vin Vara said:

BIRA represents thousands of hardware stores across Britain.

As specialist retailers we want to make sure that our customers get the expert support and advice they need to ensure the responsible sale of any of our products.

We take our duty to supply and sell these substances very seriously and we are happy to back the government's commitment to address and limit the sale of them.

[News story: Boost for school standards with primary literacy drive](#)

A Centre of Excellence for Literacy Teaching is one of a range of measures launched today by Education Secretary Justine Greening to help more children from disadvantaged backgrounds master the basics of reading in primary school.

Today's series of announcements represents the next steps towards delivering on the Government's ambitious social mobility action plan [Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential](#), published on 14 December.

The plan identifies how the Department for Education will deliver equality of opportunity for every young person, regardless of where they live, through five key ambitions. Today's measures will deliver progress in the first two core ambitions, Ambition 1 to close the word gap in the early years and Ambition 2, closing the attainment gap in school outcomes between disadvantaged young people and their peers.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

School standards are rising with 1.9 million more children being taught in good or outstanding schools than in 2010.

Our ambition is that no community will be left behind on education. Today's literacy investment will help make sure that not just most, but every child arrives at school with the vocabulary levels they need to learn. And our investment will mean that once they are at school, every child will get the best literacy teaching. We've already seen what a difference our approach on phonics has made for children in England.

It is thanks to the hard work of teachers, and the government's drive to raise school standards to make Britain a country fit for the future, that there are already 1.9 million more children in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010. Last month a new study found English children had risen up the international literacy league tables, and were now significantly better readers than their American, Canadian and Australian counterparts.

However, too many children arrive at school struggling with language and literacy, making it harder for them to master the fundamentals of reading that many children take for granted. Research has shown that five-year-olds who struggle with language are six times less likely to reach the expected standard in English at age 11 than those with good language skills.

The social mobility action plan focuses £800 million of government resources to close these gaps and level up opportunity for every child, ensuring no community is left behind. This will ensure that Britain is a country that truly works for everyone, ready to make the most of the opportunities provided by Brexit and could provide a £20 billion boost to the economy.

Programmes announced today (Saturday 6 January) include:

- A new Centre of Excellence for Literacy Teaching that will set up a national network of 35 English Hubs across the country – backed by £26 million investment – to work with schools in challenging circumstances and help raise standards. The centre will also promote and share effective practice with a particular focus on language and literacy teaching in reception. This mirrors the already successful approach with Maths Hubs – high performing schools which share their knowledge with other schools locally;
- From April 2018, new phonics and reading partnerships will be set up, to drive improvements in teaching and encouraging more pupils to enjoy reading a wide range of literature. Another 20 phonics and reading roadshows will also be run across the country and include a specific focus on reception teaching. This new investment worth £435,000 will build on the successes of the phonics programmes, which have already

helped put 154,000 more six-year-olds on track to become fluent readers since 2012;

- £5.7 million through our Strategic School Improvement Fund for initiatives that boost literacy and numeracy skills in early years and primary education in 469 schools around the country, benefitting around 40,000 children; and
- Inviting organisations to bid for the contract to launch a £5 million fund to trial approaches across the North of England that will help parents and carers to support early language development at home. Research shows that this early home learning environment plays a vital role in developing a child's vocabulary, and provides additional benefits to those gained from attending formal early education.

The Government is also announcing today a new £7.7 million curriculum fund – delivering on a manifesto commitment – to encourage the development of high quality teaching resources by organisations, including by leading cultural and scientific institutions. These resources will help teachers deliver the government's new curriculum while reducing workload and giving them more time to focus on what they do best – teaching.

The new Centre of Excellence for Literacy Teaching will be tasked with establishing the network of hubs, similar to the successful Maths Hubs established in 2014 that are helping to improve maths teaching across the country, including in schools in challenging circumstances. A procurement exercise to set it up will be launched later this year.

The establishment of a new national network of school-led English Hubs will promote and share excellence around the country – drawing on and developing the evidence base – with a particular focus on reception year.

Good phonics teaching, as highlighted by England's highest ever results in the [2016 PIRLS study](#), provides an excellent foundation for reading. The Phonics Screening Check, put in place in 2012, encourages teachers to use this method and since its introduction has helped put 154,000 more six-year-olds on track to become fluent readers since 2012.

To help teachers use this method the government has funded nearly 50 roadshows – designed to promote the effectiveness of phonics and showcase best practice – and today's investment of £100,000 will fund another 20.

Alongside this, a £335,000 fund will be used to create 20 enhanced Phonics and Reading partnerships in 2018-19. These partnerships will still address phonics, but also how schools can encourage pupils to enjoy reading and improve effectiveness in teaching in reception.

Since 2010 the government has introduced a range of reforms to improve standards in schools including a brand new primary curriculum, more rigorous Key Stage 2 tests and continuing investment in core school funding which is

rising from almost £41 billion in 2017-18 to £43.5 billion in 2019-20.

As a result, latest figures show the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers in a combined measure of English, reading and maths has fallen in each of the last six years and by more than 10% at Key Stage 2 since 2011.

Speech: “Let us not forget: A prosperous, stable Iran is beneficial us all, in the region and beyond”

Thank you Mr President, and welcome to the hot seat.

And thank you to our briefer Assistant Secretary General Zerihoun for the update on the situation in Iran.

And a very warm welcome to all the new Members of the Security Council. We look forward to working closely with all six of you to enhance international peace and security.

The United Kingdom is watching events in Iran very closely. We regret the loss of life that has occurred during the protests. We call for an end to the violence and for the Government of Iran to comply with its international human rights obligations in dealing with these protests.

There needs to be a meaningful debate about the legitimate and important issues that the protestors are raising. I note here that President Rouhani has said that the protestors’ concerns are legitimate and that they have a right to peaceful protest.

People should be able to exercise their right to freedom of expression and demonstrate peacefully and lawfully. We encourage the Iranian authorities to permit this.

No one is forcing Iran onto our agenda. The Security Council is perfectly empowered through Article 34 of the UN Charter, and I quote, “to investigate any dispute or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.”

The United Kingdom’s concerns about the human rights situation in Iran extend beyond the recent treatment of protestors. The continued use of the death penalty, including for juveniles, weak rule of law, restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, are all deeply worrying.

We call on Iran to adhere to its international obligations to respect the rights of individuals to freedom of expression, opinion and peaceful assembly. We also urge Iran to permit full access to the Special Rapporteur so she can fully assess Iran's actions on areas of concern.

At the same time Mr President it is important to recognise that Iran has legitimate security interests in the region. Iran suffered hugely in the Iran-Iraq war; we worked with Iran after 9-11. The Iranian people represent an ancient and important civilisation that has a rightful place in the modern world, with a modern economy. But too often Iran's security interests are pursued in a way that destabilises – and at times directly threatens – others, supports terrorism and distorts the Iranian economy. These regional activities risk increasing international conflict and threaten international peace and security. We are deeply concerned by Iranian assistance to groups in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

This includes reported transfers of Iranian ballistic missile parts and related technology to the Houthis in Yemen. Such transfers violate our Resolution 2231 which prohibits such transfers without the authorisation of the Security Council. They also violate our Resolution 2216 which prohibits the sale or transfer of arms and related materiel to the Houthis.

Houthi missile attacks in November and December targeted civilian areas. Had they landed as intended they would have caused suffering and chaos. And there are press reports even today of a new launch. This is unacceptable. We call on all member states to implement UN Security Council Resolutions and prevent such attacks, which increase regional tensions and threaten peace and security.

The transfer of weapons to the Houthis will also prolong the conflict in Yemen and the suffering of the Yemeni people. As I have said previously it is essential that the UN conducts a thorough investigation and informs the Security Council of its conclusions as soon as possible. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call for a joint meeting of the 2140 Committee and the 2231 format. We look forward also to the Yemen Panel of Experts report this month.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. It is one of the international community's greatest successes in recent memory. We welcome Iran's compliance with its nuclear commitments. We encourage all Member States to uphold their commitments so the Iranian people see the tangible benefits of this deal.

We also encourage Iran to uphold its commitments, especially with respect to the provisions of Annex B as highlighted in the Secretary General's fourth report as stipulated by Security Council Resolution 2231. Iran continues to invest heavily in ballistic missile development despite UN sanctions; we saw launches of ballistic missiles in 2016 and 2017 that were inconsistent with the Resolution. We urge Iran to refrain from such activity and ask all partners to report any evidence that Iran is conducting activity inconsistent with Resolution 2231 to the UN Security Council.

In conclusion, Mr President, let us not forget: A prosperous, stable Iran is beneficial us all, in the region and beyond. We will continue to encourage Iran to comply fully with Security Council Resolutions, to respect their citizens' human rights, and to reduce regional tensions. This is the only way to achieve the peace and stability we all endeavour to achieve.

Thank you.

[Speech: Liam Fox celebrates the UK and China's shared commitment to innovation](#)

Thank you all for being here tonight.

This evening is an opportunity for Britain and China to come together. A chance to identify our shared ambitions, our mutual strengths and the opportunities we have to work together to shape the future of global trade.

But, first and foremost, we are here tonight to celebrate the upcoming [GREAT Festival of Innovation](#).

The festival, which will take place in March just a few miles away in Hong Kong, will bring together some of the UK and Asia's most pioneering companies.

It will be a gathering like no other – an opportunity to share innovations that will drive the future of free trade and for businesses to build lifelong partnerships.

It is this spirit of friendship and commonality that I wish to speak to you about tonight.

It is fitting that this evening we are gathered in Shenzhen, a city with innovation in its DNA.

Shenzhen, as the technological capital of China, is the engine room that will power China in the age of the fourth industrial revolution.

In a matter of decades, Shenzhen has transformed from a small fishing village into a dynamic and youthful city with a population of more than 11 million.

Much of this success has been down to this city's dynamism, and its dedication to technical advancement.

With research and development investment accounting for 4% of GDP – double the national average – and patent applications standing at the highest in

China for 10 consecutive years, it cannot be denied that we stand in a city that is unapologetically focused on the future.

Across this city, some of the world's most talented minds are coming together to design tomorrow's technology.

Shenzhen is a world-leading producer of drones, electric cars and DNA sequencing machines.

It is clear that this city has much to offer the world.

But I am here this evening to talk about what the United Kingdom can offer Shenzhen.

Yesterday, I had several hours of constructive and positive talks with Commerce Minister Zhong Shan where we discussed the opportunities that result from the complementary nature of our economies.

Technology is clearly one but there are others. Another lies in food and drink.

China will need to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of quality foodstuffs available for its growing population and especially its burgeoning middle class.

Britain will want to ensure better and more predictable incomes for our farmers as we leave the EU so that we can attract investment and improve productivity.

We must work together in the months ahead to ensure that we address any concerns that Chinese authorities have so that the Chinese people can enjoy the benefits that quality UK beef, lamb and poultry can bring. Our already growing exports of food and drink can improve further with the lifting of market access barriers.

There is a great opportunity to be ambitious about our future trading relationship to the benefit of both sides. We will continue to explore all our options together.

When the UK voted in 2016 to leave the European Union, there were many around the world that portrayed the result as a symptom of insularity.

They predicted that Britain would be turning in on itself, abdicating its international responsibilities and severing global ties.

I am here to tell you that nothing could be further from the truth.

Instead, last year's referendum vote to leave the European Union has offered us an unprecedented opportunity.

For the first time in more than 4 decades, we have the opportunity to forge new trading partnerships around the world, with old friends and new allies alike.

We are building a Global Britain – a country that champions commercial freedoms, prizes international talent, and helps the world’s most dynamic and innovative enterprises to reach their potential.

We want to see companies, like those that join us today, succeed. We want to see Shenzhen succeed.

As shown by figures from the Shenzhen Statistics Bureau, UK-Shenzhen trade is already worth more than US\$6 billion a year and the UK is the largest EU source of Foreign Direct Investment to the city – with investments totalling around US\$1.4 billion.

Likewise, the innovative firms that have made Shenzhen their home are growing their businesses in the UK, with Huawei alone employing more than 1,500 staff across the UK.

The UK and Shenzhen share common strengths. Fintech, information and communications technology, advanced healthcare, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and clean energy are all industries in which we are both seeking to blaze a trail.

These areas of commonality mean opportunities for our businesses. Opportunities for UK and Chinese firms of all sizes to trade with one another, to share expertise and to secure investment.

Indeed this evening we’re very lucky to be joined by some of the excellent British food and drink manufacturers who are meeting the growing demand from Chinese consumers. If you haven’t done so already I would urge you to sample the delicious products being showcased today, including smoked salmon from H. Forman & Son, cider from Brothers, cheese from Somerdale, and ale from Badger.

In 2016 China became the ninth largest importer of British food and drink and early figures for 2017 show a move to eighth place.

Tonight, and all through the Great Festival of Innovation, we come together to fortify our bonds and fundamentally to support one another to achieve our ambitions.

Britain’s decision to leave the European Union is our acknowledgement that our destiny lies not only in our valued friendship with Europe, but also the wider world.

Earlier I quoted some rather impressive statistics relating to UK-Shenzhen trade and investment. These figures, while heartening, fail to show the real impact and value of trade.

Trade and investment creates jobs, supports the livelihoods of real people, means the food and clothes that we buy in the shops are more affordable and that businesses can grow and thrive.

In short, it means for us a more prosperous Britain and a more secure world.

That is why, far from retreating from the world, we are extending the hand of friendship beyond the borders of Europe.

Being a globally minded country is in our very nature. We are in the right time zone to trade with Asia in the morning and America in the afternoon. We champion business-friendly regulation, are home to the world's leading financial sector, are the number one destination for inward investment in Europe and boast some of the world's best universities that bring students from across the world together.

In the first full year since the referendum we saw the highest number of foreign direct investment projects into the United Kingdom in our history, a 13.5% rise in our exports and record employment. A vote of confidence from global investors.

Last year our government launched a modern [industrial strategy](#) for the United Kingdom. It is a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK.

It focuses on the 5 foundations of productivity: ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places.

The strategy sets out how we are building a Britain fit for the future and how we will respond to the technological revolution taking place across the world.

Technology will disrupt nearly every sector in every country, creating new opportunities and challenges.

We, like our partners in Shenzhen, are focused on seizing these opportunities. From the data-driven economy to the future of mobility, we want to back visionary businesses to make their mark.

As you will see there are many parallels between the United Kingdom's modern Industrial Strategy and the new area strategy for Guangdong.

We both share the ambition of supporting our industries to be world leaders in research, manufacturing, life sciences and high technology.

We also have a shared understanding of the vital role that transport and infrastructure play in driving productivity.

While of course there are many ways in which our worlds differ, it is impossible not to be struck by the commonality.

That is why I truly believe the UK and the Greater Bay Area can and should work together to achieve these great aims and to be partners as we nurture innovation-driven economies.

The scale of opportunity for UK business to export to, partner with, and invest in this region is unrivalled.

My department, which is responsible for trade and investment, wants to offer

more support to those UK companies who see China as their trading partner of the future, and to do more to engage with Chinese investors, encouraging them to take advantage of opportunities in the UK.

That is exactly why in March we will be hosting the GREAT Festival of Innovation in Hong Kong. I hope many of you will be there joining hundreds of other international business leaders and investors.

The festival will showcase the very best of British and Asian innovations in how we will learn, live, work and play in the future across multiple sectors.

It will be a meeting of brilliant minds. It will provide an opportunity for British and Asian visionaries to forge new trade links and strengthen existing relationships.

The event will be the third in a series of successful GREAT festivals in 5 years, following the success of the GREAT Festivals of Creativity in Istanbul in 2014 and Shanghai in 2015, with the latter generating over £800 million in business.

I look forward to welcoming you all to the festival, to join the most exciting, dynamic and successful companies that the Asian tech sector has to offer.

I hope this evening I have imparted some of the optimism that my colleagues and I feel at this juncture in our history. It is a new, exciting chapter for the United Kingdom, but also for our valued friendship with Shenzhen and China. The opportunities and the prizes of the future are there to be shared together.

Thank you.