

New plans to ensure pubs, restaurants and cafes offer both smoking and non-smoking outdoor options

Press release

People using pubs, restaurants and cafes will soon have greater freedom to choose non-smoking outdoor areas following an amendment tabled today to legislation in Parliament.



- Pubs, cafes and restaurants to offer choices for smokers and non-smokers as part of new bill
- Plans will help premises reassure all customers that they are open for businesses

People using pubs, restaurants and cafes will soon have greater freedom to choose non-smoking outdoor areas following an amendment tabled today to legislation in Parliament.

Under the Business and Planning Bill, the Government had already set out a range of measures to help these vital businesses safely reopen and get staff back to work by making it quicker, easier and cheaper to operate outside.

The Government will not ban outdoor smoking. Since the existing ban was introduced, businesses have invested heavily in their outdoor areas and banning outdoor smoking would lead to significant closures and job losses. However, today's amendment will ensure that customers are given more choice by ensuring premises offer separate seating for smokers and non-smokers outside.

Laws already exist making it illegal to smoke in enclosed areas and business owners can already make their own non-smoking policies in places where food is served.

This Government has taken great strides in reducing the harms caused by smoking and has committed to do so in the Prevention Green Paper.

Planning Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

We are supporting our pubs, cafes and restaurants to safely reopen and securing jobs by making it quicker, easier and cheaper to set up outdoor seating and stalls to serve food and drink, whilst protecting public health against the transmission of covid.

These changes will allow everyone to enjoy outdoor eating and drinking whether they smoke or not, with appropriate provisions made for non-smokers and smokers.

The changes in the amendment will help strike the right balance between protecting public health and not imposing additional red tape on businesses at a time when they need as much support as possible. The Government will not ban outdoor smoking in pubs, cafes or restaurants.

Businesses can already make their own non-smoking policies for outside space without the need for regulations. This guidance will reinforce this point, making it clear that the licence-holder has to make reasonable provision for smoke-free seating.

It includes:

1. Clear 'no smoking' signage displayed in designated areas.
2. No ash trays or similar receptacles to be provided or permitted to be left on furniture where a smoke-free seating is identified.
3. Licence holders should aim for a minimum 2 metre distance between non-smoking and smoking areas, wherever possible.

Today's announcement also builds on measures to help businesses get back on their feet, including:

1. Simpler licensing process for outdoor seating for pubs, restaurants and cafes
2. Councils encouraged to reduce red-tape and create more outdoor markets
3. Part of comprehensive plan to revive high streets, support the hospitality industry and help get people back to work
4. Helping councils and businesses transition from crisis response and lockdown, towards economic recovery

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