

ALMR Press Notice

Scots experience a warning for England

24 August 2006

The experience of Scots licensees could be replicated throughout England unless the Government gives the trade time to prepare. That is the warning from the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers, who today endorsed the Scottish Licensed Trade Association (SLTA) survey into the impact of the smoking ban on licensed premises.

The SLTA found that almost half of Scottish licensees reported a drop in visits by regular customers, with a similar proportion reporting a decline in spend per visit. The average decline in drink sales was 10.8%.

Nick Bish, Chief Executive of the *ALMR*, said:

“These reports mirror the experiences of our members with outlets north of the border. Since the introduction of the ban in March 2006, we have seen a massive stay-away by Scottish pub regulars, and little in the way of new custom. City centre outlets in particular have reported the virtual death of the after-work drink.

There is clearly a cost involved when such a major piece of legislation is introduced and results in a demonstrable downturn in business. In Scotland, the effect was more dramatic because the regulations were finalised only just before the ban took effect, and the proposals for outside areas were tightly drafted. The trade was badly let down and has suffered as a result. Ireland’s more sympathetic approach meant that trade bounced back relatively quickly post-ban.”

He concluded:

“There are lessons to be learnt here – a smoking ban is not a cost-free option and it is licensees who pay the highest price. The Government needs to take note of these results and ensure that when the legislation is introduced in England it is done so in a sympathetic way and with enough time for licensees to prepare. Only then can we ensure that the dip in trade is short and shallow.”

-ENDS-

Notes for Editors

- 1. The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR) is the only national trade body dedicated to representing the interests of pub and bar operators and providing their companies with business support and advice. There are currently just under 100 companies in membership, between them operating 30,000 outlets – or half the UK pub estate. However, the bulk of our membership is derived from small independent companies operating 50 outlets or less under their own branding*
- 3. For Further information please contact Nick Bish on 020 8579 2080 or 07831 778993*

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