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Jonathan Brearley
Chief Executive, Ofgem

By email: jonathan.brearley@ofgem.gov.uk

15th December 2022

Dear Jonathan,

I am writing today regarding an issue of real urgency for our pubs and breweries across the UK. We were grateful for your letter of 17th November which highlighted some bad practice on the part of energy suppliers and reminding them of their responsibilities to their non-domestic customers. However, I regret to inform you that we are still seeing reports from our members that suggest your warning has not always been heeded.

As temperatures plummet businesses will be significantly increasing their consumption. If suppliers are profiteering on the back of this, and evidence we have received to date suggests there are cases where they are doing just that, businesses will be pushed beyond the brink. I appreciate you have taken initial action to address some of these issues, but it is incumbent upon us as the representative body for our British beer and pub sector to ensure that we are keeping you apprised of bad practice so that you can act before it is too late. I am attaching a short summary of some of the issues we have had raised by our members, and which we have also shared with the hospitality team at BEIS. It is also important to reiterate that many pub businesses also serve as homes as well and as current practice is not to differentiate between domestic and non-domestic use, a threat to the business is similarly a threat to someone's living space.

Pubs, along with other community spaces, are relied on as warm banks by local people unable to heat their own homes. Our members want to continue to play their part as community hubs even in this most challenging of periods, but many are being pushed to the absolute edge of viability because energy suppliers continue to act in bad faith. We urgently need to find a resolution to this issue and we stand ready to help with this in any way that would be helpful. We would welcome your views on the extent that energy suppliers have indeed answered your challenge to them and I would be very happy to discuss this further with you at your earliest convenience. I can be contacted on emccларkin@beerandpub.com or 07912541441.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emma McClarkin".

Emma McClarkin
Chief Executive