



## Programme for Government 2024

The Scottish Beer and Pub Association welcomed the First Minister's commitment to re-set the relationship between the Scottish Government and business and action taken to delay the Deposit Return Scheme's implementation until 1 March 2024, and withdrawing the consultation on alcohol advertising restrictions to engage more closely with industry.

We are keen to work constructively with the Scottish Government to place Scotland's brewing and pub sector at the heart of a thriving wellbeing economy. However, the challenges facing our members have only become more pronounced since the pandemic due to inflationary pressures, rising energy costs, staff shortages and increases to business taxation.

We are therefore calling for the Scottish Government to include the following proposals in September's Programme for Government:

- Assist in lowering the disproportionate tax burden on pubs and brewers by investigating **a hospitality specific business rates multiplier set at 35p in the £1** ahead of this year's budget and **support a reduction in VAT** for all food and drink sales in the on-trade.
- Consider all new **legislative or regulatory proposals in the context of the cumulative regulatory impact on the sector** and look at ways to ensure ease this burden.
- As part of a holistic evaluation of Minimum Unit Pricing, if there is strong evidence for the policy continuing, ensure it targets those drinking at harmful levels and **is structured to incentivise lower-strength products**.
- Ensure that future **alcohol policy interventions are underpinned by a strong evidence base and recognise the emergence of low and no alcohol products as ways to reduce alcohol consumption**
- Officially endorse **low and no alcohol products as ways to encourage responsible consumption** and that support public health objectives.

In addition to adopting the proposals outlined above, we are calling for the Scottish Government **not to** introduce policies or consult on proposals which may disproportionately impact our sector, without prior engagement with industry and without conducting a thorough business impact assessment.

Scotland's beer and pub industry's gross value added to the economy is £1.6bn annually, and our sector employs 88,700 people - numbers which underpin our strategic importance to not just the Scottish economy but communities right across the country. We want the Scottish Government to be as proud of our sector as we are, and to ensure that our interests are given equal standing to the groups who seek to see us regulated further, notwithstanding our tantamount and robust commitment to safe and responsible consumption.

If you have any questions, please contact Paul Togneri, Senior Adviser at the Scottish Beer and Pub Association at [ptogneri@beerandpub.com](mailto:ptogneri@beerandpub.com).