

CAMRA's Definition of a Pub (and other licensed premises)

The aim of this definition is to identify, in an objective and evidence-based manner, the essential features of what differentiates a 'pub' from other on-trade licensed premises where alcohol is sold.

The primary use of this definition is within the CAMRA pub database systems that populate the CAMRA WhatPub online pub guide. This definition is included within CAMRA's Pub Data Specification, which sets out how pub data can be represented to be shared between compliant systems. As such it will also provide a consistent statistical base for analysing pub gains and losses etc. extracted from databases for CAMRA's bi-annual pub closure analysis.

Definition of a Pub

'The licensed premises must:

- (1) be open to and welcome the general public without requiring membership or residency and without charging for admission (a);
 - (2) serve at least one draught beer or cider (b);
 - (3) allow drinking without requiring food to be consumed, and have at least one indoor area not laid out for meals; and
 - (4) allow customers to buy drinks at a bar (c) without relying on table service.'
- (a) except when entertainment is provided on limited occasions, when an entry charge may apply.
- (b) includes cask or keg beer or cider. References to 'cider' should be read as 'cider and perry'.
- (c) includes service from a hatch or specific service point.

While this definition is intended as the general rule, there will be exceptions, such as the specialist bottled beer bar offering a wide range of RAIBs but no draught beer, or the micropub where logistically a specific service point is not possible. Such premises may be treated as pubs at the discretion of Regional Directors.

Interpretation of the Definition

The term 'pub', as defined, is intended to be as inclusive as possible while ensuring that the essential features of what constitutes a pub are present. The on-trade is enjoying a healthy level of diversification. Different styles of licensed premises may be branded as micropubs, pub/kitchens, gastro-pubs, bar/restaurants, and café/bars but, as long as the defining criteria are satisfied, all kinds of premises can be considered to be pubs.

Bars attached, for example, to sports and leisure centres, cinemas, theatres, bowling alleys etc., would qualify provided they are open to the public and not restricted to users of the facilities for which an entrance fee had been charged, and they fulfil the other criteria.

Hotel bars would qualify provided they are open to and welcome non-residents. Often a separate entrance from the street indicates access for the public, while liveried staff at the doors of hotels barring free entry generally indicate the opposite.

Pubs or bars that charge entry fees when entertainment is provided would qualify, provided they are free-ly open to the public for at least part of every trading day.

Premises primarily trading as restaurants with an area specifically for drinkers and non-diners and that meet the other 'pub' criteria would qualify as pubs.

Premises primarily trading as off-licences and bottle shops that also have an on licence to allow draught beer or cider to be sampled and consumed on the premises, and that meet the other 'pub' criteria, would also qualify.

Other Licensed Premises

Details of other categories of licensed premises that do not qualify as 'pubs' under the definition can also be recorded in CAMRA's pub database systems. For clarity and completeness, these other categories are defined here:

Clubs: For the purposes of CAMRA's definition, clubs are private members' clubs with a membership list, operated by members for the benefit of their members. The primary categories are social, working men's, ex-servicemen's, political, religious, student unions and sporting (e.g. cricket, rugby, football, golf, bowling, etc.). Clubs may operate under a full premises licence, a clubs premises certificate or, in some cases, both types of licence but, if a given club is a private members' club and it falls within the range of categories indicated, then it is a club for the purposes of this definition.

Notes:

- Many 'sports clubs' e.g. golf centres, are commercial sports centres and should be considered as such rather than as private members' clubs.
- Licensed premises that might have the word 'club' in their name and run a loyalty club for members with benefits such as discounts, but which operate under a full premises licence and allow entry to the public, are pubs and not clubs.
- Proprietary clubs owned by an individual or business with a view to making a profit, rather than existing for the benefit of their members, fall within the category of 'Other Drinking Establishments', as described below.

Restaurants: licensed restaurants and cafes where drinking alcohol, including draught and bottled beer, is only allowed when food is being consumed.

Hotel Bars: licensed bars in hotels where purchase of alcoholic drinks, including draught and bottled beers, requires residency (payment for room) or where non-residents not accompanied by hotel guests are not welcome.

Off Licences: establishments with licences restricting them to selling alcohol, including draught and bottled beers, for consumption off the premises.

Other Drinking Establishments: Other licensed drinking establishments comprise premises operating under a full premises licence that always charge for admission and/or that are open only to members, for example night clubs, music clubs, and bars in sports centres, theatres, cinemas etc.

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