

Relaxation of licensing hours for the Royal Wedding

Proposal

The government proposes to make a licensing hours order under section 172 of the Licensing Act 2003 to mark the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton on 29 April 2011. The order will extend opening hours to 1am on Friday 29 April and Saturday 30 April for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises and the provision of regulated entertainment in licensed premises in England and Wales.

Background

Under section 172 of the [Licensing Act 2003](#), the Secretary of State may make an order relaxing opening hours for licensed premises to mark an occasion of 'exceptional international, national or local significance'.

A 'licensing hours order' can be used to override existing opening hours in licensed premises, i.e. any premises with a premises licence or club premises certificate for a period of up to four days. An order may be applied to all licensed premises in England and Wales or restricted to one or more specified areas. It is also possible to impose different opening hours on different days during the relaxation period and to allow different licensing hours for different licensable activities.

It is likely that many pubs and other licensed premises will wish to open later over the Royal Wedding weekend to take advantage of the celebrations and the long weekend (the 29th has been designated a public holiday). We do not hold official figures on closing times (apart from 24 hour licences), but unofficial figures suggest that around 67 per cent of licensed premises selling alcohol for consumption on the premises close before midnight and around 88 per cent close by 1am.

Licence holders currently have the option of using a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) to extend their opening hours for a limited period. A TEN costs £21.00 and must be submitted at least 10 working days before the event begins. However, they are subject to certain annual limits (for example 12 per premises) and may be refused if the police object on the grounds of crime and disorder.

Details of the proposal

The government proposes that all licensed premises in England and Wales should be able to open for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises and the provision of regulated entertainment until 1am on Friday 29 April and Saturday 30 April 2011.

Extent of order

The Royal Wedding is a national celebration and on this basis the government considers that the order should apply to all licensed premises in England and Wales so that everyone who wants to can participate.

Do you agree that the order should apply to all licensed premises in England and Wales? * This question is mandatory

- Yes
- No

Extension of licensing hours

The government wishes to strike a balance between allowing people to celebrate the Royal Wedding and protecting those at risk from possible crime and disorder and public nuisance late at night. British Crime Survey Statistics (2009/10) show that around 64 per cent of violent crime occurs in the evening or late at night. The government therefore considers that licensing hours should be extended to no later than 1am. This will allow celebrations to continue to a reasonable hour and the majority of pubs and other licensed premises that would normally close earlier than 1am will benefit from the public holiday. The government considers that the extension should apply on Friday 29 and Saturday 30 April as these are the days when most people tend to go out to socialise.

Do you agree that the order should extend licensing hours until 1am? * This question is mandatory

- Yes
- No

Do you agree that the order should apply on Friday 29 April? * This question is mandatory

- Yes
- No

Do you agree that the order should apply on Saturday 30 April? * This question is mandatory

- Yes
- No

Licensable activities

An order can be used to relax licensing hours for any or all of the activities licensable under the 2003 Act. These are:

- the sale and supply of alcohol (on and off the premises)
- the provision of regulated entertainment (plays, live and recorded music, indoor sport, films and boxing and wrestling); and
- late night refreshment (the sale of hot food and drink between 11pm and 5am)

The government considers that the order should not apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises (i.e. in supermarkets and off-licences) as anyone wishing to celebrate at home will be able to buy alcohol at other times of the day and is unlikely to benefit from an extra hour of sales. Late night refreshment venues, by definition, are already licensed to open late at night and would not benefit from a relaxation of licensing hours. The government therefore considers that the order should apply only to the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises and the provision of regulated entertainment. This will allow licensed premises to put on a range of different events and entertainment to celebrate the Royal Wedding.

Do you agree that the order should apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises? * This question is mandatory

- Yes
- No

Do you agree that the order should apply to the provision of regulated entertainment? * This question is mandatory

- Yes
- No

Impact of the order

We do not hold detailed official statistics on closing times, but unofficial figures suggest that around 67 per cent of licensed premises selling alcohol for consumption on the premises are closed by midnight and around 88 per cent are closed by 1am. We do not know how many of these premises would have applied for a TEN in the absence of an order, but clearly there will be savings for those that were intending to trade later and additional takings from the extended opening time. The order would also relieve local authorities and the police from the burden of considering (potentially) thousands of TENs in the run-up to the Wedding. There are likely to be some additional policing costs as a result of the later opening time.

Do you agree with the impact assessment outlined above? * This question is mandatory

- Yes
- No