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Rt. Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
Horse Guards
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Monday 20th December 2021

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pubs, regarding the recent speculation that restrictions and curfew may be reinstated for pubs in England.

It is of great concern that an unevidenced and disproportionate burden may once again be placed on pubs and licensees, who have worked incredibly hard throughout the pandemic to keep their communities safe and help stop the spread of COVID-19.

I understand that the emergence of the Omicron variant necessitates a response, but I urge you to consider the wider financial impact of any measures the Government may take.

The festive period should be one of the busiest and most profitable for the trade. Government guidance has already damaged consumer confidence, resulting in a devastating wave of cancellations and lowered footfall. This sector is vital to the UK economy – representing 10% of employment and creating £130bn in economic activity every year. Targeting pubs with unevidenced restrictions will not only damage individual businesses, it will damage our economic recovery as a nation.

I urge you to introduce an immediate and comprehensive new support package for pubs, including grants, employment support, rent support, an expansion of VAT cuts, and business rate relief.

The current financial support available to pubs is simply not enough to mitigate the huge loss of income they are facing. Implementing restrictions without offering equivalent support will undoubtedly lead to the collapse of countless businesses and loss of livelihood for licensees and pub staff. This will be especially vital for the businesses facing the greatest amount of financial pressure – typically those that are wet-led, or where the licensee has a tied tenancy. A lack of support for pubs with these business models will compound the existing rent debt crisis and further slow recovery from the pandemic.

I ask you to take action, listen to representatives from across the pub sector, and offer real, substantive support to this vital part of our economy.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Nichols MP
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Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pubs

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