

CAMRA's DEFINITION OF A PUB (and other licensed premises)

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

The primary use of this definition is within CAMRA pub database systems which populate the CAMRA WhatPub online pub guide. This definition is included within CAMRA's Pub Data Specification, which defines 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 annual PubWatch analysis.

Definition of a Pub

'The licensed premises must be open to and welcome the public without requiring membership or residency, allow free entry (1), serve at least one draught beer or cider (2), allow drinking without requiring food to be consumed, have at least one indoor area not laid out for meals, and permit drinks to be purchased in person at a bar (3), without relying on table service.'

(1) Except when entertainment is provided on limited occasions

(2) Includes cask or keg beer or cider. References to 'cider' should be read as 'cider and perry'

(3) Includes also a hatch or specific service point

Interpretation of the Definition

The term 'pub', as defined, is not intended to refer only to a traditional pub. Premises trading as bars of various types, including those attached to other uses, will qualify under the definition, provided they meet the criteria. In addition, hybrid bar/restaurants and café/bars could qualify, albeit in only part of the premises. The aim is to be as inclusive as possible whilst ensuring that the essential features of what constitutes a pub are available.

First, it is considered that to qualify as a 'pub' of any style, the premises must stock at least one draught beer or cider, either cask or keg. This is a simple criterion to research before other factors are examined and few would disagree that pubs are synonymous with beers/ciders and particularly draught beers/ciders.

Hence other licensed drinking establishments not fulfilling or only partly fulfilling the criteria, including those selling only bottled beer or where draught beer or cider is only available with table service, would not qualify as pubs. Be aware however that other outlets trading under similar generic names may meet the criteria and qualify. In the case of a very few pubs with low turnovers in remote locations where only bottled beers are available, and where it is argued that exclusion from the pub database could threaten their viability, an exception might be justified, at the discretion of the Regional Director.

Second, in the case of hybrid pub/kitchens, bar/restaurants, (including those specialising in ethnic food), café/bars, and gastro pubs where food predominates, there should be at least one area made available to non-eaters to qualify. No specific floor space figure or proportion of the premises for drinkers is recommended but preferably a separate room or bar area should be available. It is accepted that the amount of drinking space available may vary throughout the day to reflect meal times and could even be reduced to stools at the bar at times. The drinking area should be inside the premises and outdoor patios, gardens etc., would not in themselves be sufficient to qualify.

Third, the feature that probably most differentiates pubs from continental style bars and cafes is the ability to approach the bar (or hatch) and order a drink over the bar (or at the hatch) in person and for friends without being required to be seated and served by waiting staff. The resultant scrum at busy times may be annoying but is an essential part of the pub experience.

Premises calling themselves bar/restaurants and café/bars, where customers are confronted on entry by staff at lecterns insisting on seating them, and/or where the bar is only available to waiting staff, would not qualify, and would instead be classified as other drinking establishments or restaurants. Premises where table service is offered as an option but not insisted upon, such as many micropubs where space is often limited at busy times, would qualify as a pub provided they fulfil the other 'pub' criteria. The very small number of micropubs where space is so constrained that no specific service point is available and drinks are served direct to sitting or standing customers would also qualify, as would speciality Belgian-style beer bars, where it can be argued that table service is traditional.

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

Clubs with membership restrictions and music venues with entry fees would not qualify as pubs. Pubs or bars that charge entry fees when entertainment is provided would qualify, provided they are freely open to the public for at least part of every trading day.

Off licences would not qualify as pubs. However, those whose primary business is off sales but which also have an on licence to allow draught beer or cider to be sampled and consumed on the premises, and fulfil the other 'pub' criteria, could qualify as pubs.

Other Licensed Premises

Details of other categories of licensed premises which do not qualify as 'pubs' under the definition can also be recorded in CAMRA's pub database systems, and typically this is done on a selective rather than comprehensive basis.

For the purposes of clarity and completeness, the full list of these other types of licensed premises is defined below:

Clubs: For the purposes of CAMRA's definition, clubs are private members' clubs with a membership list, operated for the benefit of their members. These are licensed establishments where entry requires either a membership fee to have been paid or possibly a per visit temporary membership fee for guests. 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, or 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 but which operate under a full premises licence and allow entry to the public, but operate a loyalty club for members with benefits such as discounts, 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. They would tend to be those premises with A3 use classification in planning terms, but not exclusively.

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. Hotel bars which welcome non-residents and meet the other criteria would qualify as pubs.

Off Licences: establishments whose business is the sale of alcohol, including draught and bottled beers, for consumption off the premises. Those whose primary business is off sales but which also have a licence to enable draught beer to be sampled on site would qualify as pubs provided they meet the other 'pub' criteria. Some off licences are known to hold a full premises licence, but do not allow consumption on the premises, that is, this definition is based on the observed operation and not on the type of licence.

Other Drinking Establishments: other licensed drinking establishments not meeting the criteria for definition as a pub in full or part. These include licensed premises operating under a full premises license, but which always charge for entrance or are only open to members, for example night clubs, music clubs, strip clubs, music venues, and bars in sports centres, theatres, cinemas etc. These also include those offering only bottled beers or offering draught beer but only with table service. They would tend to be premises having the benefit of A4 use classification in planning terms.