

CAMPAIGN RESPONSE 6

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in response to the findings of Ofgem's non-domestic market review, published on 26 July 2023.

Breweries like mine have been significantly affected by rising energy costs, both directly (brewing is an energy-intensive activity), and also via the increased costs of our raw materials --such as malted barley -- which also require significant energy use in their processing.

As a result, Ofgem's findings and recommendations are very welcome, in particular the recognition of the challenges faced by hospitality businesses specifically and the measures Ofgem proposes to rectify these. In response to the consultation, we would like to make the below points which will help our business in the short, long and medium term:

- Ofgem should move rapidly to fulfil its recommendation to encourage suppliers to work with hospitality businesses -- specially including breweries in this bracket -- to resolve issues many are facing with prices fixed at levels far above current market rates. This should include direct, immediate communication to suppliers from Ofgem.
- Urgently enact Ofgem's proposed changes to offer greater transparency to customers, deliver more timely responses to customer complaints and drive better practice in setting deemed rates.
- Deliver wider access to the energy ombudsman to redress the imbalance of power between energy suppliers and businesses, which currently lies too heavily with the suppliers.
- Put in place measures to prevent the blacklisting of entire sectors, particularly hospitality, as this dramatically reduces competition and unfairly penalises businesses.
- Improve regulation of energy brokers, including extending protections to more businesses, the introduction of a formal redress scheme and greater transparency around fees.

It is vital that ALL UK industries work together and support each other in these difficult times, or our collective quality of life in the UK will undoubtedly be compromised as even more restaurants, breweries, pubs, theatres and bars go inevitably into administration, jobs and skills are lost, communities disappear, UK exports reduce and our growth overall continues on a downward trajectory.

Let's ensure we all pull together to stop this happening.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]