

Home Office abandons proposal to abolish personal licences



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Good news for the licensed trade: the Home Office has today announced that it is abandoning its previously announced proposal to abolish personal licences under the Licensing Act 2003, on which it consulted last Autumn. Its proposal to abolish the requirement to renew a personal licence every ten years is nevertheless being implemented via the Deregulation Bill that is currently before Parliament.

There were 352 responses to the consultation, which were largely against the proposed abolition of personal licences:

- 90% thought that the proposal would undermine the licensing objectives
- 72% did not think that the proposal would reduce burdens on business in terms of time and/or money
- 78% thought that 90% or more of all premises would require training requirement conditions (with concerns of inconsistency between local authority areas)

Suggestions for change made by respondents to the consultation included the introduction of a personal licence holder national database, ensuring that a trained personal licence holder was on the premises at all times, new powers to enable licensing authorities to remove personal licences from holders and the introduction of tiered training accreditation schemes. However, the Government has no plans to take these suggestions forward on the basis that *“reforms to the licensing regime must be proportionate and cost-effective”*.

The Home Office response to the consultation states that the Government *“will maintain an ongoing dialogue with its partners and ensure that any proposed changes to alcohol licensing continue to strike a balance between removing unnecessary bureaucracy for responsible businesses but maintaining important safeguards”*.

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