**MP Letter template**

I am writing to you as one of your constituents who operates a pub locally, to ask for your commitment to back a reduction to the unfair tax burden pubs like ours face with a reduction in VAT. This investment will allow us to weather the storm of escalating costs, invest in our teams and diverse businesses and continue to be at the heart of our communities.

Pubs have continued to face the most extreme trading conditions that they have ever seen. Food and drink costs having risen by 40% over the last 24 months, energy costs for many are 2 to 3 times higher than pre-pandemic levels and wage costs have risen significantly to attract and retain staff. The National Living Wage (NLW) have been increased 40% from 2019 when the newly announced levels came into force in April 2024.

The recognition by Government of the value of pubs at the heart of communities and high streets through the extension in Business Rates Relief for a further year in 2024/25 was greatly welcomed.

However, in addition to facing these high costs in energy, staffing, and food and drink, many of us are still paying covid specific debts. In order to provide an affordable experience for our customers, we have not fully passed these costs through, to ensure we maintain positive levels of trade as consumers face their own cost of living crisis.

Whilst sales for many are positive, this does not convert to profit, and ultimately sustainable businesses. Recent data from a British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) member survey highlighted that whilst 3 out of 4 pubs have not generated a profit in 2023, pubs continue to provide strong levels of taxation to the Treasury. This is simply not sustainable without investment in pub businesses like ours.

I am asking you to raise the need for further investment in our fantastic local pubs with Treasury. We need a confirmation of the extension of the business rates relief, as well as increasing it to the same levels seen for English pubs, until there is a full reform of the outdated business rates system. We also need a reduction in VAT for all pub sales, ensuring they can thrive as essential and unique venues in towns, high streets and villages across the UK.

Thank you in advance for your support - I would love you to come and visit our pub, to see first hand the impact and importance it has to our customers, teams and community and hear about the challenges we face and gain your support.