



## Relaxation of licensing hours for the Men's Football World Cup 2026

### Consultation response

This response is submitted on behalf of the UK Faculty of Public Health (FPH), as developed by the [Alcohol Special Interest Group](#).

The FPH, as part of the medical Royal College arrangements, is the standard-setting body for public health in the UK and professional home for around 6,000 members of the public health workforce. We advocate on key public health issues and have a strong mandate and responsibility to ensure that the essential functions, standards and resources of a robust public health system are maintained. Our role is to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities and national populations. We do this by supporting the training and development of the public health workforce and improving public health policy and practice in partnership with local and national governments in the UK and globally.

**Q1: Do you support the proposal for extending licensing hours in England and Wales in the event that any of the home nations reach the semi-finals of the Men's Football World Cup 2026 - 14 and/or 15 July 2026 - until 1:00am the following morning, providing the match kicks-off at 9:00pm or earlier?**

No.

**Q2: Do you support the proposal for extending licensing hours in England and Wales in the event that any of the home nations reach the final of the Men's Football World Cup 2026 - 19 July 2026 - until 1:00am the following morning, providing the match kicks-off at 9:00pm or earlier?**

No.



**Q3: Do you agree that the contingent order should only apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises (i.e. it should not apply to the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises)?**

No.

**Q4: If you disagree with this proposal, or think we should go further (for example, by also extending licensing hours if any of the home nations teams reach the quarter finals), please explain your reasoning below.**

The World Cup 2026 is a great opportunity for football fans and people who enjoy sport to get together to enjoy the experience. However, it is generally accepted that levels of alcohol availability through licensing arrangements is one of the most important public policy controls on levels of alcohol consumption and harm. In the UK alcohol is more freely available, both from licensed premises and from off sales than most other countries.

The most recent figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the number of alcohol specific deaths in the UK in 2023 reached an all-time high at 10,473. Alcohol is toxic and causes at least seven different types of cancer including common ones such as bowel and breast cancer. It is also known to cause liver disease and is a co factor in cardiovascular conditions, accidents and injuries. Apart from premature death and illness there are widespread societal impacts which are particularly concentrated in more socio economically deprived parts of the UK

In the context of the FIFA World Cup 2026, consideration must also include the well evidenced harms which result from domestic abuse. This has been documented by the Police Chiefs Council in relation to the Euros in 2021 and 2024 and in a recently published 8-year study in Greater Manchester. Both of these studies include reports to the police of violence specifically related to football matches. These abuses are almost exclusively perpetrated by men on women and affect the women themselves, the NHS and emergency services.

It is the view of the Faculty of Public Health that there should not be a blanket relaxation of licensing regulations during the FIFA World Cup 2026 in the event that any of the home nations are successful at reaching the quarter finals, semi-finals or the final.