

BETTING, GAMING & LIQUOR LICENSING

## Hospitality and Licensing update – *Second phase of liquor licensing modernisation to come into force*

With the first phase of the modernisation of Northern Ireland's liquor licensing regime having entered force in October 2021, the second phase of the planned reforms in the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 are due to enter effect on 6 April 2022.

Among other things, these further changes to the regime will see the introduction of major event orders and local producer's licences, the ability for cinemas to apply for liquor licences and tighter regulations on venues operating underage events.

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## Summary of key changes to come into effect on 6 April 2022

### Major event orders

- The Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and the Registration of Clubs (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 will be amended to give the Department for Communities (DfC) the power to designate an event of significant interest, a 'major event' and in turn issue a 'major event order'.
- This order will allow specified licensed premises or clubs to sell alcohol outside the hours permitted under the relevant regulations while such events are taking place.
- One key benefit of the orders is that they will offer flexibility for licence holders to open even later during major events and the orders may either be localised or extended across all of Northern Ireland, depending on the nature and scale of the event.



### Sale of alcohol in cinemas

- For the first time, cinemas may be designated as places of public entertainment and as such, operators will be able to apply for a licence to sell alcohol on the premises.
- Licences will be granted to allow sale 30 minutes before and after film screenings and until 11pm at the latest.

### Local producer's licences

- Local producers, such as craft breweries and artisan gin distillers, will be able to apply for licences to sell their goods on their own premises for off-premises consumption.
- Such producers will also be able to offer a small sample of their produce on-premises to guests who on guided tours.
- They will also be able to sell their products in certain other licensed venues, such as stadia and conference centres.
- In limited circumstances and provided a number of approvals have been obtained, certain non-licensed venues, such as food, drink or craft fairs, may sell products made by local producers.

### Underage functions

- For the first time, licensed premises who hold underage functions, such as teenage discos, will be required to apply to the magistrates' court for permission to do so.

- The court will need to be satisfied that the premises are structurally suitable for such events, that the appropriate security will be in place and that sufficient measures will be taken to ensure under-18s are not able to access any part of the premises where alcohol is being sold.
- Over 18s will not be permitted to drink alcohol in the part of the venue where the underage event is taking place.
- Any equipment used to dispense alcohol will need to be disabled during the function.

### Remote sales of alcohol

- If the seller is based in Northern Ireland, it will become a requirement for the person making the sale to hold an off-sales licence.
- Anyone delivering alcohol, who is neither a servant nor an agent of the licence holder, will have to do it 'without reasonable delay' and carry a receipt from the licence holder at all times.
- Existing requirements to record such remote sales in a day book will remain in place.
- Under 18s will no longer be able to receive deliveries of alcohol on behalf of the purchaser. There will be an onus on the courier to check and record the proof of age document of the recipient to ensure that they are not underage.



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