BBPA and ALMR join forces for VAT reduction campaign

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Two leading industry organisations representing retailers, producers and pub goers have joined forces to campaign for a reduction in the level of VAT in the hospitality industry as well as highlighting the overall tax burden faced by their members.

The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR) and the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) will be collaborating on the campaign.

It will focus on reducing the overall tax burden for pubs as well as a reduction in the level of VAT which retailers have to pass on to their customers.

It has hired Chris Guyver to head the campaign.

Mr Guyver has advised the leisure and hospitality industry on a number of issues including licensing reform during a 20 year career as a political consultant in Westminster.

He said: “ The overall tax burden on the pub remains too high and there is a big differential between pubs and supermarkets.

“Pubs pay a third of their turnover in taxes and regulatory costs and supermarkets around a fifth.

“This disparity inhibits job creation and investment and also gives supermarkets an unfair advantage over pubs.

“The VAT regime is also unfair as supermarkets pay zero VAT on most food, compared with pubs which pay 20 per cent and use this financial advantage to sell alcohol at low prices.

“ “Unlike other countries in Europe, the British government hasn't taken action to reduce VAT in the sector, despite the positive contribution it would make to job creation. We believe it should address this important issue.”

BBPA Chief Executive Brigid Simmonds said: “ I am delighted we will be working together on this campaign. I have always believed that action is needed to tackle the VAT burden on pubs, not least because when it comes to food, it is a burden that falls too heavily on our sector.”

ALMR Chief Executive Kate Nicholls said: “ We are delighted to be working together with the BBPA and its members in order to address the important issues of tax and VAT. Food led pubs and casual dining restaurants are labour and property intensive and the high tax burden is a barrier to jobs, growth and investment.

“We are very pleased that Chris will lead the campaign and his experience advising some of the world's largest companies will be invaluable in getting the message over to politicians and opinion formers.”

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