Latest figures reveal six pubs close each week

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Industry

New data which reveals six pubs a week are shutting their doors for good has seen the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) demand urgent government action to halt “completely avoidable” closures. Nearly 300 pubs closed across England and Wales in 2024 according to the latest figures from the BBPA. The trade body, which represents more than 20,000 pubs, reported there were 289 closures in the past year, which equated to more than 4,500 job losses alone.   The BBPA says the enormous scale of closures can be halted if government sticks to its commitment of business rates reform, which must be swiftly and meaningfully introduced.  Overhauling business rates for pubs and breweries, which are among the most heavily taxed business sectors in the UK, coupled with phasing in new employment costs, would slow down unnecessary closures the BBPA said. With the beer and pub sector pouring more than £34bn into the economy in one year alone and supporting more than a million jobs, the BBPA says government must remain committed to supporting the sector. BBPA chief executive Emma McClarkin said: “The scale of these closures is completely avoidable because pubs are doing a brisk trade. Consumer demand is there, however, profits are being wiped out with sky high bills and pubs are facing yet more rates and costs come April.  “We’re right behind Labour’s mission to supercharge growth and can deliver this economic boost across the UK, but only if it is easier for pubs to keep their doors open.    “Government must urgently bring in meaningful business rates reform and phase in new employment costs so pubs can keep boosting the economy, supporting local jobs, and remaining at the heart of communities.” The BBPA said that the April cliff-edge when business rates relief drops from 75 per cent to 40 per cent, more than doubling bills for most pubs, new employment costs kick in and the start of the chaotic and unsustainable beer bottle tax (EPR fees), will all add to the financial pressures. The cumulative impact of the Budget will create an extra £650m in costs for the sector, which worsens the outlook for pubs, the trade body said. The regions that suffered the most from net pub closures were London at one per cent, followed by East Midlands and West Midlands, with 0.9 per cent closures. The North East suffered the least closures at 0.3 per cent. For every three pounds spent in a pub, one pound goes straight to the tax man, the BBPA stressed.