

PCA MEETING WITH CAMRA: BUSINESS, ENERGY, INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY (BEIS) OFFICES, 1 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON – 23rd JANUARY 2019

Attending: Paul Newby, Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA)
Fiona Dickie, Deputy PCA
Stephen Childerstone, Office of the PCA
Tom Stainer, Chief Executive, CAMRA
Stuart Donaldson, CAMRA
Ellie Hudspith, CAMRA

1. Publishing arbitration awards:

Fiona Dickie confirmed that the office of the PCA had now published the first in a series of awards in arbitration cases. The objective, by putting the arguments and behaviours of parties in the public domain was to help everybody who operates under the Code, and tied tenants in particular, to gain an equal understanding of the decisions that are being made on questions of Code compliance. Publication would also facilitate the greater use of alternative arbitrators to increase arbitration capacity and further expedite cases.

She was clear, however, that the best option for most parties is to settle disputes promptly through negotiation. In 2019 she and the PCA wanted to see arbitration becoming the exception rather than the rule.

CAMRA stressed the importance of building up a cadre of reliable representatives with the same level of insight into the Code as pub-owning businesses (POBs) and who can act for tenants.

2. Access to MRO:

The PCA had been encouraged by the level of tenant interest in its MRO Questionnaire. The PCA would welcome CAMRA's support in encouraging tenants to continue to provide this valuable feedback on their MRO experiences.

There was agreement about the importance of demonstrating how MRO can help tenants to make a genuine choice between tied and free of tie offers, and to secure better tied deals.

Action – The PCA to talk to the BBPA about making the POB MRO statistics published on their website easier to find.

3. Tenant information and engagement:

Paul Newby explained that the PCA website had been restructured to make information easier to find. The PCA would shortly be rolling out a refreshed set of Code factsheets reflecting tenants' desire for more accessible information about their Code rights and how to exercise them.

The PCA was always looking for opportunities to engage with tied tenants through events and other fora. The PCA was keen to work with CAMRA to identify such opportunities.

CAMRA said that they would be happy to carry periodic updates from the PCA in 'What's Brewing' magazine. They could also circulate PCA Bulletins via their volunteer network.

Action – CAMRA would offer the PCA an article in the April 2019 edition of 'What's Brewing'; and would explore options for the PCA to work with pub protection officers in its larger and city branches.

4. Beer Duty and Waste Consultation:

The PCA thanked CAMRA for their response to the consultation and confirmed that it was aiming to publish its summary of responses as soon as possible.

5. BEIS statutory review of the Pubs Code:

Paul Newby encouraged CAMRA to engage with the statutory review when launched by BEIS.