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U.K. beer prices entered deflation in September after falling 2.4% from a year earlier

The category flipped from 0.5% inflation in August, diverging from the U.K.’s 3.5% headline inflation rate

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Beer prices in the United Kingdom fell into deflation in September, according to official data released Wednesday, marking a sharp reversal from the small annual increase recorded a month earlier and setting the category apart from broader consumer

inflation.

The Office for National Statistics said the consumer price index for the specific beer category stood at 131.6 points in September, using 2015 as the base year at 100. That was down from 134.7 points in September 2025, a year-over-year drop of 2.4%. Compared with August, beer prices fell 1.9%.

The move is notable because it came as overall U.K. consumer inflation was moving in the opposite direction. The ONS said headline consumer prices rose 3.5% in September from a year earlier. That means beer, at least as measured in the CPI basket, was getting cheaper for consumers even as the general price level continued to rise.

The annual rate for beer shifted quickly. In August, the same category was still showing inflation of 0.5% from a year earlier. By September, that had turned to -2.4%, a swing of 2.9 percentage points in one month. In index terms, the category fell by 3.1 points from 134.7 to 131.6 over 12 months.

The figures come from the ONS report “Consumer price inflation, UK: September 2026,” published on Oct. 21. The agency is the national statistics office for the United Kingdom and produces the CPI series used as the country’s main measure of consumer inflation.

The data matter because the U.K. is a mature beer market with two large routes to consumers: retail sales and a broad hospitality channel that includes pubs, bars and restaurants. Price moves in the CPI beer category can therefore draw attention from brewers, retailers and hospitality operators looking at promotions, shelf pricing and margins.

The ONS measure, however, has limits. It tracks prices paid by consumers for the beer category within the CPI basket. It does not measure beer sales volumes, brewery output or the average price of all beer sold in pubs and other hospitality venues. That means the figures show how consumer prices moved in the statistical basket, not whether beer demand rose or fell.

Even so, the direction of travel is clear in the September reading. Beer moved from mild inflation to outright deflation in a single month on an annual basis. The monthly drop of 1.9% also suggests the category weakened between August and September, not just over a longer comparison with last year.

The divergence with the broader inflation picture is likely to be closely watched across the industry. When a category declines while headline CPI remains positive, it can affect how companies think about discounting and how much room they have to protect margins. For consumers, it means beer prices in the CPI basket were lower than a year earlier at a time when many other household costs were still rising.

The ONS did not present the beer figure as a measure of the full market. Its CPI data are designed to capture changes in consumer prices across a representative basket of goods and services. Within that framework, the September reading places beer among the categories showing price relief rather than continued inflation.

The September index level of 131.6 still means beer prices remain well above their 2015 level, which is set at 100 in the series. But the latest change shows that the more recent direction was downward, both over the month and over the year. For businesses across the beer supply chain, that shift may shape pricing decisions as the market moves into the final months of the year, while for policymakers and analysts it offers another example of how category-level inflation can differ sharply from the national headline rate.

Because the measure reflects consumer prices within the official CPI framework, it is best read as an indicator of what shoppers were paying in the beer category in September. It should not be read as a direct signal of revenues, production trends or the average price of every pint served across the U.K. hospitality sector.