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Britain could lose 360 pubs in 2026, brewers group warns

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Britain could lose 360 pubs in 2026, putting about 5,000 jobs at risk, under a forecast from the British Beer and Pub Association that points to continued financial strain across the sector.

The trade group’s estimate, published on Saturday, November 14, would amount to roughly one permanent pub closure a day if it is reached. The association said the employment impact would fall heavily on younger workers, with more than half of the jobs at risk currently held by people under 25.

The warning comes after 295 pubs had already shut permanently across Britain by the end of September, according to BBPA figures. England accounted for 226 of those closures, while Scotland lost 64 pubs and Wales lost five. If the full-year total reaches 360, it would be higher than the 336 net closures recorded in 2025.

The BBPA said nearly 2,200 pubs have disappeared over the past five years, leaving Britain with 43,656 pubs at the end of 2025. The group presented the 360 figure as a forecast and industry estimate, not as a confirmed list of specific venues set to close. Even so, the projection adds to concern over rising costs for pub operators and the effect on employment, suppliers and local economies.

Pubs have long served as an entry point into the job market for teenagers, students and young adults, especially in customer service roles. The BBPA’s warning suggests that any further contraction could hit that part of the labor market first. South West Londoner, cited in the source reporting, highlighted concerns from pub campaigner Greg Mulholland that cost pressures are narrowing opportunities for younger workers seeking their first paid jobs.

Dave Law, landlord of the Eagle Ale House in Battersea, told South West Londoner that an independent pub closure can cost operators both their livelihood and their home, while also cutting spending that would otherwise go to local tradespeople and suppliers. That effect can spread well beyond a single business. A pub typically buys from breweries, drinks wholesalers, food distributors, cleaners, maintenance firms and entertainers. When it closes, some of that demand disappears with it.

That matters for the drinks industry as well. Pubs remain a core sales channel for brewers, cider makers, distillers and wine suppliers, particularly for draft and on-premise sales. A sustained decline in pub numbers could reduce orders across that supply chain and increase pressure on smaller producers and distributors that rely on local venues.

The regional pattern in the BBPA data shows that closures have not been evenly distributed. In England, the South East recorded 42 closures in the first nine months of 2026, the highest regional total. The North West followed with 39. The North East had the lowest English total, at 11.

The association also said each permanent pub closure costs the Treasury about £200,000 in lost tax receipts. Across 360 closures, that would amount to nearly £72 million in lost revenue from employment taxes, beer duty, business rates, corporation tax and VAT.

The BBPA has tied much of the pressure to operating costs and tax policy. It said measures announced in the November 2025 Budget added £322 million in costs for pubs and brewers. The group welcomed a planned 20% reduction in business rates for pubs beginning in 2027, but said that step would not be enough without broader reform.

Its policy demands include a permanently fairer business-rates system, a freeze in beer duty, more generous draft relief and a review of employment costs, especially those affecting younger workers. The group has also argued that government should weigh the social and economic role of pubs alongside their tax contribution.

Emma McClarkin, the BBPA’s chief executive, said the damage from a local closure reaches far beyond the pub itself. Her comments reflect an argument the industry has made repeatedly as operators face higher costs and weaker margins: when pubs disappear, the losses are felt in jobs, local spending and community life, not only in the hospitality trade.

The figures do not mean 360 specific pubs have already been marked for closure, and the year-end total will depend on trading conditions through the rest of 2026. But the latest data show that the sector had already absorbed nearly 300 permanent closures by September, and industry leaders are warning that without further support, Britain’s pub estate could shrink again at a faster pace than it did in 2025.