

Bottling success: Regulatory reforms for Wine Regulations in 2024

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Following the UK's exit from the EU, the Government has been actively engaging with stakeholders to reassess EU-inherited laws. The wine sector has been identified for potential regulatory reform to foster innovation and expand consumer choice.

There have already been two phases to the wine reforms:

1. **'The Wine (Revocation and Consequential Provision) Regulations 2023 (1362)'** which have been effective since January 2024 and have resulted in simplified labelling rules for wine business, relaxed packaging standards for sparkling wines in order to lower costs, improved bottle recycling and the removal of restrictions on hybrid grape varieties to encourage more innovation.
2. **The Wine (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2024 (No 115)'** sets out updates to the approved winemaking practices, such as, where the alcoholic strength may be increased, authorised oenological practices and restrictions applicable to the production and conservation of grapevine products. It also sets out new rules restricting the use of the term 'ice wine'.

As part of phase three of the reforms DEFRA issued a further public consultation which ended on 10 May 2024. The consultation called for views on a range of issues including:

- The carbonisation of imported bulk wine
- Sweetening and other adaption of imported wine
- Producing wine from imported grapes
- Amendments to the labelling of 'British Wine'
- Changes to no and low alcohol wine and amendments to the minimum alcohol contentment of wine

The purpose of the next phase of wine reforms has been aimed at encouraging investment as well as supporting innovation to meet the ever changing demands of consumers. It will be interesting to see what happens after the election and the appetite for the next Government, whoever that might be, to continue to support reform in the wine sector.

Energy Drinks

As part of the Labour Party's child Health Action Plan they have pledged to ban the sale of energy drinks to under 16s if it is successful at this week's election.

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