

# CODE OF PRACTICE

Scotland

# Signatories to the Code

The following companies are signatories to this Code

Admiral Taverns Limited  
Belhaven/Greene King plc  
Hawthorn Leisure Limited  
Mitchells & Butlers plc  
Punch Taverns plc  
Star Pubs & Bars/HEINEKEN UK Limited  
Trust Inns Limited

# The Code of Practice

The Code of Practice (referred to hereafter as the Code) describes the minimum requirements governing the operation of tied public houses in Scotland.

The Code is effective from the date the Statutory Code (Pubs Code etc. Regulations 2016) comes into force and is not retrospective. The Code replaces the UK Industry Framework Code version 6 and any previous individual company codes. The Code is supervised by the Pub Governing Body ([www.thepubgoverningbody.co.uk](http://www.thepubgoverningbody.co.uk)). Individual companies are required to display the Code within the tenanted/leased section of their websites and ensure each of their tenants receive a copy.

The Code sets standards for landlord companies regarding the interaction with tied tenants throughout the life of their relationship with the company. Individual sections describe industry requirements for:

- Letting of Premises
- Rent Reviews
- Agreement Renewal
- Interaction with Landlord
- Operation of AWP's
- Use of Flow Monitoring Equipment
- Complaints Procedure
- Surrender of Tenancy
- Tenant's Commitment

A full list of signatories to the Code is shown at the beginning of this document. The Pub Governing Board (PGB) strongly recommends that new entrants to the Licensed Trade only consider taking on a tied agreement with a company which subscribes to this Code.

## Introduction

Types of tied lease and tenancy agreements in Scotland containing the following characteristics are specifically covered by this Code, irrespective of what they are called or how they are marketed. For the purposes of the Scottish code, tenants and lessees are referred to as 'tenants' throughout.

### **Tied tenancy agreements**

Tenancies are typically agreements with a short period of tenure i.e. 3years. Tenants are likely to be "tied" for a range of drinks, with the pub owning company responsible for the structural upkeep of the property and providing additional support services.

### **Tied lease agreements**

Lease agreements are typically longer than the traditional tenancy agreements available in the market and tend to run from five years upwards. They can vary greatly from one agreement to another and usually come with greater repairing obligations. Lessees are “tied” for a range of drinks.

### ***Types of agreements which are NOT covered by this Code:***

#### **Temporary agreements**

Temporary agreements of one year or less are not covered by the Code, often referred to as tenancies at will (TAWs) or temporary tenancies. These are short-term agreements which can be terminated at short notice, and which are used to cover either temporary arrangements or interim arrangements, while longer term agreements are finalised. Companies must make clear in writing that the tenant is taking on a temporary agreement and is therefore not covered by this code of practice.

#### **Free of Tie tenancy/lease agreements**

These types of tenancy and lease are not covered by this code due to the lack of any form of tie to purchase products from the pub company.

## **Principles of the Code**

1. Companies which subscribe to the Code agree to:
  - abide by its terms and to act at all times in the spirit with which the Code has been compiled;
  - act with integrity and honesty at all times and conduct business in a professional, fair and legal manner;
  - be transparent about their terms of business and other dealings, particularly any charges made or costs passed on and the way in which rent has been assessed;
  - offer contracts that are fair, reasonable and comply with all legal requirements;
  - deal with complaints in good time and fairly, in accordance with a clearly defined internal dispute mechanism and with access to independent dispute resolution, where appropriate, if such a mechanism fails to resolve the complaint.
2. The Code also places obligations on tenants to ensure that they are fully equipped to make informed commercial decisions. It includes requirements or recommendations for tenants to take independent professional advice.

3. The Code also sets out a requirement for prospective tenants to undertake training to ensure that they fully understand the implications of a pub tenancy.

## Pre-Entry Requirements for Tenants

4. Pub operating companies are under an obligation to ensure that pre-entry training is completed by proof of certification from the prospective tenant before the final terms for the premises are agreed.
5. Prospective tenants must always demonstrate that they have taken proper independent professional advice prior to accepting a tenancy and that such advice has been used to prepare a business plan.
6. Pre-entry training is also an essential part of the final interview process and will help the applicant prepare. It is the company's responsibility to ensure that training is completed in advance – ideally at least five working days - of the final interview at which Heads of Terms are agreed.
7. Prospective tenants must prepare a Business plan which will include estimations of incomes and related costs, together with projected profit and loss (P&L) calculations. Prospective tenants should consult their financial advisors on the effects of changes on the business plan, both positive and negative.
8. Business plans should be prepared independently by the tenant or prospective tenant and are not to be confused with the pub owning company's rent assessment. Further information on the form and content of rent assessments and the role of P&L accounts is contained from Clause 26 onwards.
9. Tenants and their advisers' attention should also be drawn to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) guidance which provides advice to valuers on the matters to which they should have consideration.
10. Companies will advise prospective and existing tenants about the availability of industry benchmarking reports, which may assist with the preparation of their business plan and in particular, assist with market comparisons under RICS guidance.
11. Some of the above requirements may be waived (but NOT the business plan), at the company's discretion, in cases where the prospective tenant is suitably qualified through experience and achievement to rely on their judgement or is a company of sufficient standing.
12. Companies will require prospective tenants to sign an exemption agreement signifying that the requirements for pre-entry training and or professional advice have been waived in accordance with the statement of qualification for exemption

made by the prospective tenant. Companies will provide details of any other training courses they require to be completed, prior to the tenant taking on the agreement.

13. A waiver may be applied where:
- Applicants are multiple retailers with a number of other pub or bar premises.
  - Applicants can demonstrate at least three years recent experience of running a successful tenanted or leased pub business.
  - Applicants can demonstrate at least three years' relevant business management experience.
  - Applicants have an existing successful lease or tenancy with the company.

## Minimum Requirements for Company Information

14. The key principles set out below must be followed to ensure sufficient information is provided to enable the “reasonably efficient operator” to understand the nature of the pub business being offered and how this will be embodied in a tenancy agreement.
15. Information provided by the company should be sufficient to allow a thorough evaluation of the business opportunity and the preparation of a detailed business plan to enable a considered commercial decision to be made.
16. A summary of the general terms of the agreement under discussion must be provided to the prospective tenant before the final interview. This will involve the types of tenancy agreements available and the period of tenure, any purchasing obligations such as a beer tie, together with discounts available, amusement machine tie and any other product ties, and whether they would be willing to consider discussing amendments and whether standard terms are open to negotiation.
17. Information should be provided to prospective tenants regarding the treatment of cask conditioned beer, for example as an allowance within the expenses or an adjustment to the gross profit line. When calculating the selling price and margins for cask ale, tenants should check information on saleable pints made available by the beer supplier and make the necessary adjustments to wastage allowances and/or gross profit in any business plan or P&L account as appropriate. Details should also be given regarding repairing obligations, payment terms, rent review frequency and ownership of fixtures and fittings. Companies will also advise whether there is a superior landlord where the company does not own the freehold of the

premises.

18. At or before the final interview, companies must ensure the tenant completes and signs off a form of interview checklist in respect of the property.

## Pub Premises

19. A full description of the pub building together with associated land and buildings included in the tenancy will be provided, including details of the premises licence and any conditions attached thereto as well as any enforcement action taken during the previous two years, where known. It may also include information that is held by the company about local planning developments that will affect the premises.
20. Details of any restrictions on the uses to which the premises may be put which relate to its operation as a public house will be provided.

## Business Development Managers (BDMs)

21. Companies will set out provisions and commitments governing the competence and future progression of BDMs or equivalent role; including on-going training.
22. Companies will set out the role of BDMs and the support and professional guidance they will provide including the content and application of the Code and associated self-regulatory mechanisms. Under the Code, companies will ensure all BDMs have completed appropriate training. Companies must ensure this is completed within twenty-four months of the BDM being appointed in their role. This will include procedures for rent reviews. In keeping with the code, BDMs are required to act in a professional and responsible manner in their dealings with tenants.

## Business Support

23. Companies will explain how the relationship between the company and the tenant will be conducted during the operation of the tenancy so that the business opportunities presented by the outlet can be exploited to mutual benefit.
24. Companies will describe the range of support programmes and advice which may be available through the company. Such support might typically include:
  - Commitment to assess capabilities and training needs of tenants and staff.
  - Licensing and legal issues.
  - Business management advice (tenants will be advised to obtain professional services in areas such as finance, stocktaking and book-keeping).

- Brand promotion, merchandising and provision/maintenance of dispense equipment.
  - Outlet promotion and marketing.
  - Procurement benefits.
  - Rating advice.
  - Property support – external decoration, signage, building repairs (where relevant).
25. Companies will set out their policy for dealing with requests for assistance from tenants arising from circumstances where it can be demonstrated that their business has been adversely affected by a material change in circumstance beyond their control. This is defined as an event that brings about a permanent change to trading conditions, is not capable of prevention or remedy by other means, specifically affects the tenant's pub, and is not a result of an increase in tax, duty or regulatory compliance costs. The tenant must make their request for assistance in writing to their BDM. Companies will respond within thirty-five calendar days, unless a further timescale is mutually agreed.

## Rent Assessment

26. Rent assessments are used by pub owning companies in the preparation of rent negotiations.
27. All initial rent assessments and assessments for periodic reviews or renewals must be conducted in accordance with the RICS guidance prevailing at that time.
28. Tenants are encouraged to seek advice from a suitably qualified trade valuation advisor before accepting a proposed rent.
29. The guidelines for rent assessment are established independently by RICS and applicable to all tenancies. RICS keeps its rent assessment guidelines under review. Amongst other matters which the guidelines may take into account are any resulting legislative changes and court rulings.
30. Any resultant changes arising from such developments of the guidelines will be adopted and applied to all tenancies on review as and when they are published.
31. Companies are to ensure that they make tenants aware that any authorised improvements carried out by the tenants at their own expense, are properly documented through a landlord's 'Licence to Alter' and signed by both parties. This will enable the correct procedure under the RICS guidelines for dealing with these



works when negotiating the rent.

32. A “Rent Assessment Statement” shall be provided for all new tenancy agreements and for the purposes of rent reviews. It will contain sufficient detail to enable a prospective tenant to take proper professional advice upon the terms, conditions and effect of the tenancy being offered. The Rent Assessment Statement will be based on reasonable assumptions and will be produced, drafted and approved by a properly competent individual. The Rent Assessment will enable the tenant to estimate potential profit and loss. Such P&L accounts are not intended to be nor must they be taken as projections of profit. Evaluation of the business prospects and profitability are a matter for the tenant and business planning.
33. The rent assessment model will be based on a lawful application of statute and common law. Companies will ensure that the prospective tenant is aware of the basis of the rental assessment (Fair Maintainable Trade) and how the market rent for the property is established. The setting of initial rent and its subsequent review will be handled fairly being based on sustainable trade levels with reasonable allowances made for costs.
34. Details of product volumes purchased directly from the company over the past three years will be provided to prospective tenants where available. Precise history of turnover and overheads will generally not be available as such information rests with the existing or former holders of the tenancy.
35. Companies will ensure that a responsible officer of the company or its agent involved in obtaining and/or evaluating the supporting material provided in preparing the rent assessment will have visited the premises in question within at least three months prior to the assessment being undertaken.
36. Companies will seek to comply with any reasonable request for further information relevant to the rent assessment from the tenant and/or their professional advisors. Where such information is not available the reason for this must be disclosed.
37. When calculating gross profits for tied pubs the prices charged to the tenant by the pub owning company in the relevant tied price list should be used and allowance made for wastage where appropriate.

## Rent Review and Renewals

38. All relevant information, including a rent assessment, must be provided for both a rent review and agreement renewal. Companies will provide a specific timetable for the process involved in rent negotiations, rent review and renewals. Initial rent renewal proposals should be issued no less than six months before the review date.
39. Where the agreement does not include periodic rent reviews, then a tenant may at

any time request a rent assessment following the conclusion of an agreed rental term.

## Pub Independent Rent Review Scheme (PIRRS)

40. In the event that a rent review remains in dispute when the company and the tenant have produced their final rent proposals and internal rent resolution procedures have been explored, the tenant has the right to refer the matter to an independent expert through PIRRS or arbitration. Specific pricing for Scottish PIRRS applications can be found on the PIRRS website (see clause 42) and details of Scottish independent experts. PIRRS cases involving Scottish pubs will be held in Scotland.
41. Referrals to PIRRS can be made in respect of the following events;
  - Rent reviews.
  - Settling the rent upon the intended grant of a tenancy renewal to an existing tenant.
42. A link to PIRRS will be available on company websites ([www.pirrscheme.com](http://www.pirrscheme.com)).
43. Irrespective of the terms of the tenancy agreement the tenant has the right to elect for a referral to PIRRS and agrees to be bound by the expert valuation delivered through the PIRRS. This will not remove the right to arbitration as provided for within individual agreements but the tenant will waive such a right if the option to refer to PIRRS is taken.
44. With regard to tied tenancies, companies must advise the tenant no less than six months prior to the expiry of a tenancy whether the tenant will be offered a new agreement. If both parties agree to take forward a new agreement, the tenant will have the right (where agreement on rent cannot be reached) to make an application to PIRRS for independent assessment of the rent reflecting the terms of the tenancy agreement, subject to the conditions below.
45. An application to PIRRS to determine the rent for an agreement for an existing tenant in the premises will only be permitted if the referral is made no more than six months and not less than three months prior to the expiry of the term, there having been no breach of the existing tenancy agreement and all other terms of the new tenancy (aside from rent) have been agreed. The tenant does not have a statutory right to a new agreement.

## Indexation

46. Where a tenancy refers to indexation of rent by reference to an index (e.g. RPI/CPI), companies will confirm that the agreement specifies which index is to be used, the date on which the rate will be assessed and applied as well as the frequency of any

adjustment. Companies will notify their tenants that the adjustment in the rent may be upwards or downwards, according to the movement of the index at the time. Companies should encourage tenants to take advice on the effect of indexation on their business plan and their income over the rental period.

## Upwards Only Rent Reviews (UORR)

47. UORR clauses must not be included in new tied tenancy agreements or subsequent renewals.
48. Some existing agreements may contain UORR clauses and, in such circumstances, companies will make it clear that they will not enforce them. In addition, if tenants want a side letter/deed of variation to that effect it can be provided though at the tenant's expense. Companies will also provide tenants with the opportunity to convert to new agreements without an UORR at no less favourable commercial terms if terms can be agreed.

## Wholesale Price List

49. The pub owning company's current and relevant price list will be supplied (under the terms of the agreement for tied and other products) which will include notification about any imminent changes. An outline of trading terms (e.g. credit/payment terms) will also be provided. Pricing and any changes to price lists will always be communicated to the tenant in a fair, timely and transparent way.
50. Where beer is supplied under a tie, details of the range of products available will be provided, including the prices charged by the company for these products, qualifications for discount and whether the company will allow a guest beer supplied direct from any other supplier to be purchased outside the tie.
51. Where wet products other than beer are also supplied, the terms of the purchase obligations attached to these products will be made clear according to the type of agreement.

## Insurance

52. Companies must make it clear whether the company will maintain and meet the cost of insurances for the building or whether the cost of such insurance is to be arranged by the company and re-charged to the tenant. Where the company makes a charge the following clauses in this section apply.
53. Full details of the insurance schedule (to include all aspects of cover provided), a summary of cover and the charges payable to the company will be given to the tenant together with any excess applicable. Companies will "price-match" on any like-for-like policies (based on realistic comparable terms) identified by the tenant

and will provide all necessary information on request to enable a comparable quotation to be sought.

54. In the event that the tenant is able to demonstrate that such insurance can be secured at a lower price, for the same degree of cover, the company will recompense the difference in the charge from the date that a like-for-like policy is provided to the pub company.
55. Companies re-charging for insurance cover will do so only in accordance with the policy and this charge will be clearly and separately shown in the shadow P & L account that is included in the rent assessment statement. Companies will make specific reference to the insured risks to the pubs to which the charge refers.

## Amusement Machines

56. Companies will explain the procedure with regard to the supply and operation of tied amusement machines on the premises.
57. Relevant information will include the terms of supply (whether or not a machine tie exists), number and siting of machines, arrangements for the collection of cash, machine-management support provided and details of how the landlord/tenant share of machine income will be assessed.
58. Companies will specify the distribution of machine income between the company and the tenant.
59. Companies may not apply royalty charges or up-front access payments.
60. The basis of the calculation of any management or administration fees charged must be transparent, clearly explained and justified. The detail of the charges to be applied and the services that it will cover, must be provided to the tenant in advance of an agreement being signed or a charge being applied. Administration charges must be reasonable and must relate solely to the operation and maintenance of those machines covered by the purchase obligation. Such charges must be deducted before the agreed distribution of machine income is made.
61. Tenant income which derives from amusement machines under a purchasing obligation will not be included in the rent assessment statement and will be shown below the 'divisible balance'. Where such income is not subject to a purchase obligation, the net income may be included in the pub income and assessed for rent. The net income is that accruing to the tenant after rent, maintenance and other such charges are taken into account.

## Flow Monitoring Equipment

62. Pub operating companies may have a right to install flow monitoring equipment (FME) within premises depending on the terms of individual tenancy agreements granted. Where the pub operating company does have such a right they are at liberty to introduce such equipment.
63. Pub operating companies are responsible for the installation costs, maintenance and calibration of FME.
64. Pub operating companies are under an obligation to share data (if requested) derived from FME with the tenant. This is a useful management information tool. Access to such data is to be available online and/or through a request to the BDM.
65. Tenants are responsible for the cost of electricity.
66. Protocol in the event of a suspected breach of the tie is as below:
  - i. Where FME data records any discrepancies between dispensed volumes and those purchased from the pub company, the pub company or agent, authorised to act on behalf of the company will visit the premises to conduct an investigation.
  - ii. If FME data provided through FME shows a variance between volumes dispensed and those purchased from the pub owning company, a calibration of the system by a suitably qualified person must be carried out before any investigation is raised. The tenant must be invited by the pub operating company representative, or their authorised agent, to attend the re-calibration of FME. Following calibration (i.e. the system is working properly) FME information obtained prior to the calibration remains valid.
  - iii. Where FME data indicates that a breach of the tie agreement has occurred, pub operating companies must provide one or more pieces of supporting evidence, in addition to this data, before a charge can be levied against a tenant's trading account.
67. Additional evidence, as referred to in Paragraph 66 (iii) may include, but shall not be limited to one or more of the following:
  - Discovery of product not purchased from Pub owning company
  - A signed admission by the tenant
  - Non pub company marked packaged product on site
  - Letter of undertaking
  - Stock reports
  - Significant turnover discrepancies versus accounts
  - Surveillance information

- Third Party supplier documentation
  - Test purchasing
  - Proof of tampering
  - Container balances
  - Container tracking
  - Refusal of access to any part of the property without due reason by the signatory to the agreement
68. Where a breach of the tie agreement has occurred pub operating companies are permitted to impose a compensation charge as specified in the agreement. Pub operating companies are not permitted to raise a charge to the trade account without the tenant's prior knowledge.
69. Where tampering with flow monitoring equipment is discovered, pub operating companies are entitled to recover from the tenant, costs relating to any necessary repairs.

## Capital Developments

70. Where the company is to undertake and to be responsible for the financial cost of a capital development project (and the agreement provides for this), they must make clear to the tenant the implications of such a development on the rent payable and the tenant's financial responsibilities for fixtures and fittings.
71. Tenants are advised that they should always discuss with the company, obtain a "Licence to Alter" and take professional advice before undertaking any capital investment projects at their cost.

## Dilapidations (if applicable)

72. If dilapidations are to be applied, companies will provide a breakdown of repairs or decorations (for areas that the tenant has responsibility for) to be carried out within two months of notice being served by or on the tenant, or six months prior to the termination of the agreement. New agreements and/or assignments will describe the extent to which the agreement places obligations on the tenant in respect to put, keep, maintain and repairing the property at the final interview.
73. If applicable (and usually applied to a longer term lease agreement as described on page 4) companies can issue a Schedule of Dilapidations. In this event, the company will afford the tenant ideally 12 months - but no less than 6 months - to put right the works, save for any repairs that require immediate repair under health and safety legislation, needed to prevent damage to the building, void any insurance claim made by either party or are business critical.

## Assignment of agreements (if applicable)

74. If the agreement contains the ability to assign to another party, companies will respond to a request to assign in writing within a maximum of 20 working days of receipt of the written request and will explain the contractual implications for disposal of the business. Full details will be provided regarding procedures, professional support and advice available and all relevant fees.
75. The company will ensure that the potential purchaser (assignee) is supplied with the same information as would be supplied by the landlord at the commencement of a lease and is able to take his/her own proper business decisions about the business being offered.
76. The companies are under an obligation to ensure that assignees comply with the pre-entry requirement procedures by:
  - Demonstrating they have taken proper independent and professional advice (legal and business advice).
  - Completing pre-entry training or applying a waiver if the criteria are met.
  - Being in possession of a Personal Licence or having a Designated Premises Manager.
  - Producing a business plan (waivers cannot be applied to this request).
77. Companies will not agree to an assignment unless the above requirements have been complied with, but consent will not be unreasonably withheld.
78. The person selling the agreement (assignor) shall comply with all the requirements made of them to provide trading and other information to either the company or the prospective assignee under the terms of the agreement.
79. Where an agreement imposes a repairing obligation, the assignee must prove to the pub company they have carried out a full structural and conditional survey of the premises.

## Termination

80. Companies will advise whether there is an obligation for the purchase of fixtures and fittings on termination of the tenancy and, if so, what arrangements for payment should be made.

## Surrender

81. Companies will set out how they will deal with any requests for surrender of the tenancy outside agreed notice periods.

## Complaint Resolution

82. Companies should explain the procedures to be adopted where either party feels that the provisions of the Code have not been followed. Where the tenant believes that he/she is the aggrieved party, the procedures should ensure that the matter is properly considered at an appropriately senior level of management in the company concerned, and at a level of management higher than that at which the relevant decisions were initially taken.
83. Firstly, the tenant should make their initial complaint in writing to their BDM. If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached it will then be escalated in accordance with the company's own grievance procedure. However, the written complaint must be formally concluded by the senior manager within thirty-five working days of receipt, unless another timeframe is mutually agreed.

## Pub Independent Conciliation & Arbitration Service (PICA-Service)

84. For other types of dispute, with the exception of contractual rent review, where a resolution is not considered possible or is not achievable the complaint may be referred either to the Courts or where the complaint concerns the adherence to the Code to PICA-Service for independent resolution, provided that the company complaints dispute mechanism has first been completed.
85. PICA-Service provides an independent service, available at low cost to tenants. Disputes may be referred either after pursuing remedies through the company and failing to reach a satisfactory resolution or where the company fails to respond to an initial written outline of grievance, and in accordance with [PICA-Service protocols](#).
86. Where the process described in section 82 does not bring about a conclusion satisfactory to the tenant, the company is obliged to give the tenant the right for a referral of the dispute to an independent panel through PICA-Service, or through arbitration, or through due legal process in the courts.
87. Where the tenant elects to refer the dispute to the PICA-Service, as part of the application process the dispute will not be able to progress to the final hearing stage



if the tenant does not sign an acceptance form to the terms and conditions of the service. The relevant company will be required to sign an acceptance form to the same effect and will abide by the findings of the Panel.

88. The acceptance of PICA-Service terms and conditions cannot forfeit the tenant's or landlord's rights under the tenancy agreement, nor can the acceptance of the terms and conditions prevent the parties seeking further redress through the courts. However, it is expected that both parties participating in PICA-Service will abide by the findings of the PICA-Service Panel.
89. A link to PICA-Service will be made available on company websites ([www.picaservice.com](http://www.picaservice.com)).

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## Tenant's Commitment

1. Clean beer lines weekly
2. Train staff
3. Keep the pub clean and tidy
4. Maintain financial book keeping records, using a trade accountant and stock taker
5. Attend free courses laid on by Trust Inns, all courses to be completed within 12 months
6. Protect the Premises Licence

