

INDUSTRY WEEKLY DIGEST

#HOSPITALITYatSurrey



'EAT OUT TO HELP OUT'

ITS SUCCESS MAY BE IN KEEPING HOSPITALITY FRONT AND CENTRE IN CONSUMERS' MINDS THROUGH GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE SECTOR

As the 'Eat Out to Help Out' campaign came to an end, **Mark Ashton** shares his opinion about the success of this government scheme and how it has had an impact on the hospitality sector. Did you participate in this scheme as provider or consumer? Share your experience with us.

Have a great weekend!

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What's in this issue:

'EAT OUT TO HELP OUT' - HOW DID IT GO?

'Eat Out to Help Out' - How Did it Go?

MARK ASHTON

Listening to Kate Nicholls, CEO of **UKHospitality** on the final instalment of the **Propel Navigating the Crisis Interviews**, I was taken by the unwavering support she has provided the sector during the pandemic and her tenacity (and success) in gaining government recognition of the importance of hospitality both through a reduction in **VAT** rate from 20% to 5%, but also with the **Eat Out to Help Out Scheme** – a mechanism designed to protect jobs, but also to encourage diners back to restaurants through a 50% discount on food and soft drinks at participating restaurants during August on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, which ended earlier this week.

Whilst not without its critics and some **operational challenges**, the scheme has been an undoubted success in a multitude of ways: **kickstarting the economy**, through encouraging diners back out to their local eateries; **capitalising on holidaymakers eating out**; providing increased knock-on footfall to high streets and attracting ongoing mass press



coverage, **comment** and **analysis** both at home and **abroad**; all whilst preserving jobs and restaurants, some of whom enjoyed **record results** particularly over the **final Bank Holiday**, Monday of the incentive.

The widespread **calls** for an extension to the scheme have **divided opinion** with others fearing further discounting is not a sustainable way forward, leading to some operators continuing their own extensions to the scheme, both in hard hit **London** where certain **landlords** are actively incentivising extensions, as well as further **afield**. I argue, the long-term success of the scheme may be in keeping hospitality front and centre in consumers' minds through government recognition of, and support for the sector and not solely the short-term benefits. Despite this, the road ahead is undoubtedly a **tough one** - the sector needs our **continuing patronage**.

IMPORTANT STATISTICS

(as of 27/08/20)

- Total number of registered restaurants: 84,700
- Estimated Percentage of registered restaurants vs. those eligible: 75%
- Total amount claimed: £522m
- Number of covers claimed for: 100m