

British MPs concerned about parliamentary boozing

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One quarter of British lawmakers believe there is an "unhealthy" drinking culture in the Houses of Parliament, according to a survey published on Friday.

Some 26 percent acknowledged concerns, rising to 36 percent among female MPs, according to the ComRes survey of 150 lawmakers.

Eric Appleby, chief executive of the charity Alcohol Concern which commissioned the survey, said the parliamentary authorities should act on the findings.

"If a quarter of employees reported an unhealthy drinking culture in any other organisation it would provoke immediate action by bosses," he said.

"Surely it's time for parliament to rethink its drinking culture and lead by example."

The Houses of Parliament have a number of watering holes where the price of alcohol and food was until the last few years kept low thanks to generous taxpayer subsidies.

But concerns have grown about drinking among MPs and [peers](#), highlighted by the arrest in March of MP Eric Joyce for an alleged brawl in a House of Commons bar.

The Scottish former soldier had previously been given 12 months' community service after headbutting a Conservative MP in a fracas in another bar. Joyce quit the opposition Labour party after the incident, and will step down at the 2015 election.

Last year, the House of Commons' supervisory body published an action plan to "promote responsible alcohol use" on the premises.

This included increasing the range of non-alcoholic drinks and lower strength beers provided in bars and restaurants, asking catering staff to top up glasses less frequently at receptions and events, and training staff to deal with people who have drunk too much.

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