

# vfi

# PUBS OF IRELAND

## Vintners' Federation of Ireland Your Member Guide



## Advice Representation Support

# Unlocking the Power of Unity

**Welcome to the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI), the heartbeat of Ireland's hospitality industry.**

As a valued VFI member, you are part of a trusted community that has supported publicans across Ireland for more than 50 years. The VFI has grown and endured because of its deep commitment to the strength, success and future of its members, and to the shared belief that we are always stronger together.

This member booklet is your guide to the many ways VFI membership can support you, help you save money and give you access to the practical advice and services your business needs. Over the following pages, you will find out more about the VFI's:

- Strength in Unity
- Advocacy and Lobbying
- Expert Guidance
- Access to Resources
- Exclusive Member Savings
- And more!

From our dedicated support line, members can get help with a wide range of queries, from everyday questions to more complex business matters. We also offer trusted advice on HR, finance, licensing and succession, while continuing to lobby on behalf of publicans to protect and strengthen the sector at local and national level. Just as importantly, VFI membership connects you to a powerful network of peers who understand the challenges and opportunities facing the trade.

Thank you for being part of the VFI. Together, we will continue to support, represent and champion Ireland's pub sector for the future. We invite you to explore this brochure and discover the many benefits, savings and supports available to you through your membership.

# Membership that works for you

**A VFI membership is one of the smartest investments a publican can make.**

For a modest monthly subscription, members gain access to a wide range of support, guidance and representation that would be far more costly to source independently, making membership a clear no-brainer for anyone serious about success in the trade. The VFI will:

- Support members during crises and challenging times, including periods of uncertainty such as the recent pandemic.
- Provide free guidance on licensing legislation and laws relevant to running your pub, along with free legal advice.
- Represent members at local and national government level, ensuring the voice of publicans is heard where it matters most.
- Deliver training programmes to strengthen business operations and staff skills.
- Offer educational resources to help members stay compliant with laws and regulations.
- Give access to exclusive deals and discounts with suppliers.
- Include members in promotional campaigns at local and national level.
- Provide regular updates on industry news and trends.



The VFI represents thousands of publicans across Ireland, working every day to protect member interests and support stronger, more resilient businesses. When you compare the small cost of membership with the range of practical help, expert advice and collective strength on offer, the value is clear.

# Providing prompt and practical support

For many members, the **VFI support line** is the service they value most. It is the first port of call for publicans dealing with the day-to-day realities of running a pub, and every day our team is on hand to answer queries, provide reassurance and help members find the right way forward on issues affecting their business.

Whether the question relates to HR, finance, licensing, employment, taxation, grants, business matters or succession, members can rely on experienced guidance from a team that understands the trade and the pressures that come with it. That practical, trusted support is backed by the wider strength of the Federation, ensuring publicans are never facing challenges on their own.

Members also stay informed through a range of dedicated communication channels designed to keep advice and updates close to hand. These include our WhatsApp communities, regular email communications, the *VFI Voice* magazine and other member publications, all helping to share timely news, useful guidance and important sector developments in an accessible way.

Taken together, these services make VFI membership a valuable everyday resource, as well as a powerful long-term support network. From clear answers on complex issues to urgent updates and wider industry insight, the VFI is here to keep members informed, supported and connected at all times.



# VFI – political representation for members

**The VFI exists to represent you, our members, to a range of key stakeholders, including senior ministers and TDs, government departments and trade suppliers. We campaign for our members on a range of issues throughout the year while ensuring the concerns and interests of publicans are regularly featured in media.**

The VFI represents members on vital issues to the trade including:

- Sale of Alcohol Bill
- Government supports for the trade (Covid)
- National Budgets
- Expert representation on all legislation relating to the trade



Meeting government ministers on a regular basis is a key function of VFI executives

# Promoting pubs in the media



## Media

We work with media on a daily basis, giving voice to the concerns of our members while constantly seeking opportunities to proactively articulate the importance of pubs both to the local economy and the country's tourism infrastructure.



## Communications

Through our communications department, we seek out publicans from across the country to appear on a host of different radio and TV shows.



## Training

We provide training and briefing notes for all our spokespeople, while also using our President and CEO to speak on behalf of the wider sector.



## Social Media

Social media is also an important platform we use to disseminate our message, ensuring as wide a reach as possible with the general public and key stakeholders.

## VFI Website – a wealth of information for members

**The VFI website is much more than an information source - it is a central hub for members and an essential online resource for running and strengthening your business.**

For members, the website is the gateway to the VFI Members' Area, a valuable portal designed to put key tools, advice and resources at your fingertips. This is where members can access exclusive benefits and discounts, practical templates and notices, business supports, guidance documents, training opportunities and a wide range of content created to help publicans manage their pubs with confidence and efficiency.

The website also keeps members connected to the wider work of the Federation. It provides access to industry news, policy updates, operational guidance and information on key initiatives such as training programmes, submissions, campaigns and events, ensuring members can see both the day-to-day value of membership and the wider advocacy being delivered on their behalf.

*Scan the QR code to visit the website.*



Within the Members' Area, users can access resources such as downloadable pub signs, the *VFI Voice* archive, reports and submissions, pub management tools, employment law guidance, GDPR advice, health and safety information and training access, and so much more.

The VFI website is your place to find support, save time and unlock the full value of VFI membership.



Please visit [www.vfipubs.ie](http://www.vfipubs.ie)

# More support. More savings. More value

**VFI membership gives publicans practical support where it matters most – expert advice, strong representation and meaningful savings across the day-to-day costs of running a pub. For less than €1 per day, members get access to services and benefits that can save time, reduce pressure and deliver real value back into the business.**

We are here to help with the issues publicans face every day, from licensing and HR to finance, taxation, planning, succession and wider business challenges. We also represent members at local and national level, ensuring the voice of publicans is heard and protected through the strength of a national organisation.

## **Where VFI can help**

- Insurance savings and guidance, including access to the VFI member insurance scheme.
- Finance and payment solutions, helping members access favourable rates and better value.
- Energy savings, including helping members find the best heating oil deals to reduce running costs.
- HR, employment and compliance support, with practical guidance on workplace and legal issues.
- Licensing, legal and operational advice, helping members deal with the realities of running a pub.
- Grants, resources and business supports, helping members identify opportunities and make better decisions.

## **Savings that add up**

VFI now offers **more than 50 different member benefits** across a wide range of areas, including insurance, finance, staffing, compliance, procurement and day-to-day operations. These benefits are there to be used, and the more members engage with them, the more value they can get back from their membership.

The Federation is also constantly expanding its supplier network and affinity deals, creating more opportunities for members to save money, improve service and access trusted partners who understand the trade. That means the value of membership continues to grow over time.

**Any one discount or deal can save you more than the cost of your membership.**

# Membership that works for your business



**The value of VFI membership is not only in the support available when something goes wrong, but in the everyday advantages it brings to your business. Services and benefits that can save time, reduce pressure and deliver real value back into the business.**

It is about having a trusted organisation behind you, helping you solve problems, save money and make the most of the opportunities available to you.

A strong example is insurance. The VFI through various discounts and deals, have helped members collectively save over €500,000 in recent years. It is a clear example of how the Federation can use collective strength to deliver practical savings for members.

**Stay connected. Use your membership.**



# A strong community, in every county

**The VFI is built on connection. Alongside providing national representation and support, it is also a strong in-person community of publicans across Ireland, with local committees, county structures and regional activity helping members stay involved and connected.**

That local network matters. It creates opportunities for members to meet regularly, share experience, build relationships and stay close to the issues affecting their area and the wider trade. From county meetings to golf outings and social events, the VFI community is active, welcoming and well connected.

## **Flagship events that shape, celebrate and innovate**

The VFI calendar is anchored by a number of major in-person events that bring members together from across the country. These events are important not just because they gather people in one place, but because each one plays a different role in strengthening the trade and the Federation.

### **AGM**

The AGM is one of the most important events in the VFI year and gives members a real voice in shaping the organisation's work and direction. It is a chance to come together, hear key updates, discuss priorities and ensure the Federation continues to reflect the needs of publicans around the country.

### **Future Forum**

The Future for Pubs Forum is about innovation, ideas and the future of the sector. It brings together publicans, industry leaders and experts to explore trends, share insights and discuss the changes that will shape the next chapter for Irish pubs, helping members think ahead and adapt with confidence.



Together, these events show the full strength of the VFI community - local at its roots, national in its reach, and united by a shared commitment to the future of the trade.

# Irish Pub Awards

## Celebrating the best of Ireland's pubs

The pubs of Ireland are rightly regarded as the best in the world and the Irish Pub Awards serve to remind both the trade and the general public about the quality of our bars nationally. The VFI is delighted the awards have grown so quickly to the point they are now regarded as the benchmark for recognising Ireland's outstanding pubs.

**The Irish Pub Awards are jointly presented by the Vintners' Federation Ireland (VFI) and Licensed Vintners Association (LVA).**



**The Irish Pub Awards are open to all members of the VFI and LVA. Entry to the awards is free – anyone interested in entering can do so via the dedicated website:**

**[www.irishpubawards.ie](http://www.irishpubawards.ie)**



# Bar Manager Degree Apprenticeship Programme

**The degree programme was developed by the VFI in conjunction with Griffith College in an effort to develop confident and effective bar managers who can work autonomously while managing all aspects of a bar trade and delivering an excellent customer and staff experience.**



## Who is the course for?

- Employees who are identified by their employer as somebody who has the potential to become a senior manager and who they wish to retain and develop
- Candidates who have acquired at least two years prior experiential learning in the Bar Trade
- Candidates who have completed the FET NFQ level 5 and 6 hospitality or business programmes and are looking for a progression route in the bar trade
- Candidates who wish to change career
- School leavers with experience of working in the bar trade, who have a desire to pursue a long-term career at managerial level in the sector

## Benefits of the programme to a bar business

- Development of creative and innovative managers
- Maximise business performance
- Retention of talented employees
- Motivation of team members and improved employee engagement
- Strengthen the organisation's culture of learning
- Increased sharing of knowledge
- Recruitment advantage by showing support for staff development
- Access to Government incentives for apprenticeships

For more information about the course, please visit [www.griffith.ie](http://www.griffith.ie)



# Training programmes for VFI members & their staff

**The VFI provides access to a range of training and upskilling programmes available to members and their staff**

## **Bar Smarts – IDL**

Courses can be accessed online, and they are free of charge for all VFI members and their staff (normal price €29 per applicant).

## **Bar Academy – Diageo**

Training and education, bar news, cocktail trends, drinks inspiration, a global network of experts and insights from some of the industry's leading influencers and world-renowned bartenders.

## **Responsible Serving of Alcohol**

Provides participants with the knowledge and confidence to handle difficult situations surrounding the service of alcohol and most importantly to deal with customers in a safe and lawful manner.

## **Kirby Fire Safety Training**

We have partnered with Kirby Fire Safety to provide a user-friendly online Fire Safety Training course which is a cost-effective solution to getting all your staff trained and certified in Fire Safety.

## **Food Safety Company**

The Food Safety Company (FSC) is Ireland's leading provider in complete training and compliance solutions for Food Safety and Health and Safety in Ireland. FSC provides a range of discounted courses for VFI members.

## **The Business of Food**

As well as courses for the newcomer to the industry such as The Business of Food, they also offer courses for existing operators such as The Business of Pub Food in partnership with the Vintners Federation of Ireland.

## **Safefood**

Safefood's role is to promote food safety and provide nutritional advice on the island of Ireland in accordance with its legislative remit. It promotes behaviour change in the overall interests of improved public health.

# Working with industry partners

**The VFI works closely with key industry groups to ensure our members' interests are taken into account when new policies are created. Some of the groups we work with include:**

## Alliance for Insurance Reform



The Alliance for Insurance Reform brings together a range of civic and business organisations from across Ireland in highlighting the negative impact of persistently high insurance premiums and calling for real reforms that will quickly reduce liability and motor premiums to affordable levels and keep them that way.

## Drinks Industry Group Ireland

The Drinks Industry Group of Ireland is the umbrella organisation for the wider drinks industry in Ireland. DIGI's primary focus is to highlight the economic contribution of the drinks industry to Ireland.

## Fáilte Ireland



The VFI works closely with Ireland's tourism board to ensure the importance of the pub sector to the country's tourism offering is understood at government and key stakeholder level. Fáilte Ireland runs joint courses with the VFI, such as Taste the Island, promoting best food practise in pubs.

The VFI also works with other organisations in the hospitality sector, including:

- Irish Tourism Industry Council
- Licensed Vintners Association
- Irish Hotels Federation
- Restaurant Association of Ireland
- IBEC

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Who does the VFI represent?

The VFI represents publicans **across 25 counties in the Republic of Ireland**, excluding Dublin. It is the national trade organisation for pubs outside the greater Dublin area, working to promote and protect the interests of members throughout the country.

## How many members does the VFI have?

The VFI has **over 3,000 members**, making it one of the strongest and most established representative bodies in the Irish pub trade. That scale also strengthens its voice and bargaining power on behalf of members.

## How is the VFI structured?

The VFI is organised on a **national, regional and county basis**, ensuring members have access to support and representation at every level. Each county has its own branch structure, while key decisions are made through the National Executive Council, supported by the wider management structure of the Federation.

## How many staff or regional representatives are involved?

The wider VFI support network includes **more than 60 people**, made up largely of committee members alongside a small central team. Together, they help deliver representation, communication, events, local engagement and day-to-day support for members.

## What member benefits are available?

VFI membership includes access to **more than 50 member benefits** across areas such as insurance, finance, energy, staffing, compliance, training and wider business operations. These benefits are designed to help members reduce costs, access useful services and get more practical value from their membership.

## How do members get support?

Members can contact the VFI directly whenever they need help, making it a first port of call for day-to-day trade queries and more complex issues. The Federation's team is there to provide guidance, reassurance and practical support across a wide range of topics affecting pub businesses.

## How do members access discounts and resources?

The VFI website is a key hub for members and includes access to the **Members' Area**, where discounts, templates, notices, guidance, training and other practical resources can be found. It is designed to make the benefits of membership easy to access and easy to use.

## How much does membership cost?

Membership costs little more than the price of a pint each week, while giving members access to expert support, valuable discounts, strong representation and practical resources throughout the year. When weighed against the savings, advice and backup available, it represents excellent value for most publicans.

## How do people join?

Joining is simple - **call the VFI team at 01 492 3400** and they can talk you through the process, answer any questions and help you get started.

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**Vintners' Federation of Ireland**

VFI contact details:

 01 492 3400  [enquiries@vfipubs.ie](mailto:enquiries@vfipubs.ie)