# Four million Brits admit to stealing pub glasses, threatening hospitality sector



As the bank holiday weekend approaches, many in the UK are gearing up for celebrations at their local pubs. However, this festive atmosphere is marred by a troubling trend of theft, particularly the pilfering of glassware. A survey conducted by Bionic reveals that a staggering four million Brits admit to stealing tableware from hospitality venues each week, with glass theft emerging as a particularly troubling issue. Such incidents threaten not only the financial health of establishments but the very social fabric of communal dining and drinking experiences.

A striking 77% of pub operators report encountering glassware theft, according to additional research by The Morning Advertiser. This phenomenon appears most pronounced among younger patrons, particularly those aged 18 to 24, with 34% of respondents in this demographic owning up to having taken glasses or other items. The financial impact of this behaviour is significant, with estimations suggesting that theft from pubs and restaurants results in losses exceeding £186 million annually. Regrettably, glasses remain the most commonly taken items, underscoring both the prevalence and the trivialization of this crime in social settings.

The situation has prompted some pubs to engage creatively with their clientele to discourage such behaviour. Recent social media campaigns have humorously highlighted the absurdity of stealing pub glasses, like the Marquis Arms in Swansea, which cheekily asked patrons, “You wouldn’t steal our chairs.” Despite these entertaining approaches, the underlying issue persists, with many establishments continually facing the burden of replacing stolen items.

Prominent figures in the hospitality industry, such as Jeremy Clarkson, have also drawn attention to the issue at their venues. Clarkson's pub, The Farmer's Dog, experienced a stark instance of glass theft when 104 pint glasses were reported missing in a single day. In response, Clarkson implemented measures including beer mats that implore customers not to steal glasses, directly addressing the financial repercussions of such thefts on pub operations.

The broader implications of this trend reflect a rising tide of concerns around crimes affecting businesses as detailed in the 2023 Commercial Victimisation Survey. This findings suggest that 26% of premises experienced customer theft in the last year, echoing the persistent challenges affecting the hospitality sector. As pubs brace for increased foot traffic during the bank holiday, the call for patrons to respect communal resources has never been more urgent.

While many relish the atmosphere and camaraderie found within pubs, the increasing frequency of petty thefts could jeopardize the very essence of these social spaces. The challenge now lies in fostering a sense of responsibility among patrons, encouraging them not to take for granted the very tools that enhance their experience, like a simple glass. If the current trend continues unchecked, the conviviality of British pubs may find itself overshadowed by the consequences of widespread disregard for communal property.

Understanding this issue and taking personal responsibility can contribute to preserving the vibrant culture that defines British pubs, ensuring they remain cherished spaces for generations to come.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059727/4-million-brits-admit-committing), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2022-commercial-victimisation-survey/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2022-commercial-victimisation-survey)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2023/09/08/impact-of-glassware-thefts-at-pubs), [[3]](https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2019/04/18/How-many-glasses-are-stolen-from-pubs-each-year)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2025/01/03/jeremy-clarkson-warns-guests-not-to-steal-glasses-at-his-pub), [[5]](https://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2025/01/jeremy-clarkson-pub-rocked-by-pint-glass-theft)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2023-commercial-victimisation-survey/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2023-commercial-victimisation-survey)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059727/4-million-brits-admit-committing), [[2]](https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2023/09/08/impact-of-glassware-thefts-at-pubs)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2059727/4-million-brits-admit-committing> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2023/09/08/impact-of-glassware-thefts-at-pubs> - A survey by The Morning Advertiser revealed that 77% of pub operators experience glassware thefts. Research from Nisbets indicated that over 4 million Brits steal tableware from pubs, bars, or restaurants more than once a week. Additionally, 17 million British adults (27%) admitted to stealing tableware from these establishments, with the highest incidence among 18 to 24-year-olds (34%).
3. <https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2019/04/18/How-many-glasses-are-stolen-from-pubs-each-year> - Research from Nisbets found that customers steal approximately £186 million worth of tableware from pubs and restaurants annually, with glasses being the most commonly taken items. Over one in three people (36%) admitted to taking at least one glass, leading to significant financial losses for establishments.
4. <https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2025/01/03/jeremy-clarkson-warns-guests-not-to-steal-glasses-at-his-pub> - Jeremy Clarkson's pub, The Farmer's Dog in Oxfordshire, has faced significant glass thefts, with 104 pint glasses disappearing in a single Sunday. To deter this, Clarkson introduced beer mats urging customers not to steal Hawkstone pint glasses, highlighting the impact of such thefts on pub operations.
5. <https://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2025/01/jeremy-clarkson-pub-rocked-by-pint-glass-theft> - Jeremy Clarkson's pub, The Farmer's Dog, has been affected by widespread glass thefts, with 104 pint glasses disappearing in one Sunday. Some stolen glasses have appeared on online marketplaces, prompting Clarkson to implement measures to address the issue.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2022-commercial-victimisation-survey/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2022-commercial-victimisation-survey> - The 2022 Commercial Victimisation Survey estimated that 28% of business premises experienced crime in the previous 12 months, with theft being the most prevalent. Customer theft was reported by 11% of premises, highlighting the widespread nature of such incidents.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2023-commercial-victimisation-survey/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2023-commercial-victimisation-survey> - The 2023 Commercial Victimisation Survey found that 45% of premises that experienced any crime had a single incident in the previous 12 months. Customer theft was the most common, experienced by 26% of premises, indicating a significant issue for businesses.