

UK 'being held back over labour shortages,' Fuller's boss says

THE boss of pub chain Fuller's has accused the [Government](#) of "holding back Britain" as the firm wrestles with labour shortages crippling the capital's hospitality sector.

[Simon Emeny](#) told the Standard: "The Government sees migration from [Europe](#) as a red line and that's a problem for us.

"We're holding back the economic prowess of Britain by holding back the supply of workers from Europe.

"I always wanted to understand what the benefit of coming out of the EU was going to be, all I've seen so far is the intention to reintroduce imperial measures."

The chain, which runs over 150 pubs in London, is seeking to fill between 500 and 600 positions, Emeny said.

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It comes after pub chain City Pub Group said it was recruiting chefs from India via the Government's skilled visa programme in a bid to plug shortages created by a lack of European recruits.

Executive chairman Clive Watson told the Standard: "It's the lack of labour that is holding back our expansion."

Fuller's hailed a return to profitability as the company saw sales exceed pre-pandemic performance.

The company posted revenues of £254 million in the year to March 26, 2022, a more than trebling on the previous year's revenues of £73.2 million, while profits topped £11 million. Julie Palmer, partner at business recovery firm Begbies Traynor, said: "Publicans up and down the country are still beaming from bumper sales over the platinum [jubilee](#) weekend and with the summer now upon us, Fullers must be looking forward to a period of uninterrupted trading.

"The question is, will British consumers sacrifice the pub to afford other luxuries? Fullers is looking to the future with some caution as consumers decide what is important to them."

The Fuller's CEO warned customers could expect price increases but said the cost of an average pint remained between £5 and £6.

The average pint price has risen 72% since the financial crash, according to hospitality industry consultancy CGA.

"We're very measured about price increases. It's important that pubs stay an affordable treat," Emeny said.