



For immediate release
9 December 2009

'BINGO GETS A BREAK'

The Bingo Association welcomes the announcement in today's Pre-Budget Report that Gross Profit Tax (GPT) for licensed bingo clubs in the UK will be lowered from 22% to 20% with effect from April 2010. This is a positive step towards addressing bingo's unfair tax regime.

The decision by Treasury to lower the GPT figure of 22%, announced in the 2009 Budget in April, follows an industry wide campaign calling for fairer tax for Bingo. The increase in GPT to 22% placed operators under considerable financial pressure, resulting in many club closures.

Paul Talboys, Chief Executive of The Bingo Association said,
"We are pleased that Treasury has listened and digested the actual 'facts' of bingo tax and revised the GPT rate. However, the reasons for its delayed implementation until the next Budget is not apparent and will mean that the much needed benefit, particularly for smaller independent clubs, will not be felt until April 2010. I only hope that they can all make it.

The industry has fought hard for fair tax treatment and on this particular issue has been gratified by the support it has received from many leading MPs. We are grateful for their support of and faith in Bingo, a sentiment I know that is echoed by the bingo players across the UK. Industry and players alike will continue to fight for fair tax treatment of what remains one of the UK's most popular leisure activities, but which is subject to a higher tax rate than that applied to other forms of gaming and betting."

- ENDS -

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Key Facts

- Since 2006 119 licensed bingo clubs have closed.
 - 26 in 2006
 - 37 in 2007
 - 25 in 2008
- 31 in 2009 (as at 9 December)
- Year on year falling admissions:
 - 2007 Admissions - England and Wales down by an average of 11.6%
 - Scotland down by an average of 15.12%
 - 2008 Admissions - England and Wales down by an average of 16.22%
 - Scotland down by an average of 8.54%
- Declining Treasury receipts:
 - 2005 £83,914,000
 - 2006 £77,203,000
 - 2007 £73,380,000
 - 2008 £62,280,000
- Women make up 73% of the bingo audience.
- The age range of players runs from 18 to 80+, with England's oldest active regular player celebrating her 102nd birthday in April at her local club, with friends and family.
- The average (mean) age of bingo players is 52, with the modal age group being 38-48.
- Many players arrive at venues early in order to socialise, eat and play ancillary games.
- The average cost of an evening at bingo is £15-£20, excluding ancillary games and winnings.

Social Impact

- Research was conducted in October 2007 by Dr. Carolyn Downs from Manchester Metropolitan University into the communities and social interaction. Dr. Downs also contributed to the Henley Centre Headlight Vision research into the impact of club closures on players, staff and local communities.
- Bingo clubs were found to be not just places of employment and venues for leisure, but creators and providers of social networks for both staff and players.
- For some key player groups the social function provided by bingo clubs was a disproportionately significant factor of attendance, with some respondents stating that their social interaction would be severely damaged should their club close.
- Bingo was viewed as a 'socially inclusive' activity, welcoming of all ages and backgrounds, providing a safe environment for women to socialise on their own or with friends.
- Many bingo clubs are located in communities and areas that are not well served for social facilities, particularly those that cater to women and the elderly.
- The nature of personal relationships established at and through bingo provided many with their primary, and in some cases only, social interaction.
- Bingo address key societal issues, which appear on the public agenda, including social inclusion, intergenerational engagement and active aging.
- Club closures also have a negative effect on supporting services i.e. cleaning, food and beverage supply, in some cases leading to redundancies in those companies.