



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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No surprises, just concerns, over new gambling legislation

Following last weeks launch of the 400 page draft Gambling Bill The Bingo Association has expressed a number of very real concerns, both on behalf of its members and the broader gaming industry.

Sir Peter Fry, Chairman of the Association said:

“The Association welcomes those proposals for change which will benefit all our members. However, although it is a fact that the two major companies in the industry, who are both casino operators, welcome the proposal to allow bingo in casinos, for many of our smaller members this is still a matter of real concern. The Association is very uncomfortable that soft gaming such as bingo should be included in the hard gaming arena. This has been a consistent view and one which is supported by research which shows the negative impact on bingo, if included in casinos.”

“The BISL and PION reports both refer to the potential negative impact on bingo, a fact that is recognized in the Government’s own Impact Assessment.”

“There is the danger that smaller bingo halls will be forced out of business by the new competition. This will endanger the social benefits that bingo brings to many of our customers.”

Sir Peter continues:

“The greater cost of administration is a further concern, particularly the enormous amount allocated to local authorities, as this will considerably increase operational costs for our members. The fact that there will be no statutory rights to consult the gambling industry on the kinds of conditions that will be laid on local authorities, in the way that they are to exercise their function also causes concern. However, we

are pleased that it will be the Gambling Commission that will lay down the guidelines that will have to be regarded by local authorities.”

“We do not believe that the bingo industry has anything to fear in relation to the new regulations that are being put on us, as it is already well run, clear of criminal involvement and in the vast majority of our clubs under 18s are not allowed. What we are not certain about is how far the changes will improve the profitability of many of our members.”

“As the Government has now made it clear that there will be a forced levy, unless the Gambling Industry Charitable Trust (GICT) can provide sufficient funds to deal with problem gambling, it does re-enforce the point that all gambling companies should be contributing to the trust if they wish to avoid another overhead.”

“There are a number of proposals in the Bill which require further detail and each clause will need careful and full consideration, to ensure that the legislation fully reflects the Government’s stated policy. There are some elements of existing legislation which should be retained and we need to ensure that they are not inadvertently lost in redrafting.”

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

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About The Bingo Association:

The Bingo Association is the trade body for the licensed bingo industry in Great Britain, representing the proprietors of bingo clubs licensed under the Gaming Act 1968. The purpose of The Bingo Association is to promote and develop the interests of the licensed bingo industry and to represent members’ interests in contacts with third parties, in particular with various government departments, other trade associations and the media.

There are 110 proprietors in membership and between them they operate 538 bingo clubs. Membership profile ranges from the very large operators with well over 100 clubs, to many single unit businesses.

www.bingo-association.co.uk

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