



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
15 May 2003

Current bingo duty changes not necessarily a full stop says Treasury Minister

John Healey, Economic Secretary at the Treasury, talking at The Bingo Association's Annual General Meeting yesterday, told the industry that "current changes are not necessarily a full stop".

He continued that the Treasury wanted future dialogue with the industry and that operators should provide comment and feedback on the new regime backed up by 'sound argument and sound reason'.

Sir Peter Fry, Chairman, The Bingo Association said: "The industry worked hard to provide every assistance to Customs and Excise in the period leading up to the Chancellor's announcement on 9 April, and welcomes the Minister's commitment to continue this relationship. We do feel that the government has not fully appreciated our case and welcome the opportunity to put this right. However, our members have genuine and valid concerns over the new tax regime and are anxious to press the case on behalf of bingo players. Inviting further consultation and requesting evidence from operators will only be taken as a real sign of progress if the information is acted upon."

Sir Peter continued: "The Association welcomed the amendments tabled by Conservative Shadow Treasury Minister Stephen O'Brien MP to the Finance Bill, and for his robust defence of the industry position. The amendments accurately reflected the needs of our clubs and players, who feel that reform is not delivering what was promised."

Stephen O'Brien MP said: "Britain's bingo players deserve a fair deal. The Government's promises of a fairer tax regime are ringing hollow in the ears of bingo players across the country. The proposed tax system will not even deliver the limited benefits previously promised. The tax burden on bingo remains significantly higher than on any other gaming product, and quite rightly, this is considered as discrimination against bingo players. We are supporting bingo players right across the United Kingdom and the bingo industry in securing a level playing field. We are true friends of bingo."

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

For further information contact:

The Bingo Association
Steven Baldwin
01582 860915
07939 241164
steven@bingo-association.co.uk

Stephen O'Brien MP
0207 219 6315
07970 264804
obriens@parliament.uk
<http://www.stephenobrienmp.co.uk>

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

pr-0016-ba