



**Press release - for immediate release
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**A Missed Opportunity For Growth and Another Blow For Bingo –
Machine Tax Hits Hard**

The Bingo Association has expressed concern in response to the announcement made in today's Budget Statement that the rate of Machine Games Duty, due to be introduced on 1st February next year, will be 20%.

This new duty will help ensure that bingo's potential for growth is substantially reduced, with some smaller independent operators seeing potential growth translated to contraction. To penalise a sector that makes valuable contributions to both the economy and communities cannot be viewed as positive progress.

The new duty replaces Amusement Machine Licence Duty (AML) and is only one of a number of taxes and duties paid by licensed bingo operators in the UK.

Association Chief Executive Paul Talboys said:

"This move is extremely disappointing. Here is a sector that potentially could deliver so much more at so many levels, helping to drive the economy forward and make a greater difference in communities and towns.

Government has failed to keep its promise to make this change fiscally neutral, for a sector that already struggles under a punitive tax regime. The decision to introduce a replacement duty has clearly been a ploy to increase tax income from the bingo industry, rather than a genuine desire to simplify a complicated process and aid sector and economic growth. This 'new' duty at 20% will only serve to worsen the position for licensed bingo operators, which in some cases will prove fatal for smaller operators.

The Association has been lobbying Government for a number of years to address the inequitable position of the current Gross Profits Tax regime, which sees bingo unfairly taxed in relation to other land based forms of gambling.

Revising the duty applicable to gaming machines, while failing to address the punitive rate of Gross Profits Tax paid by bingo, is little more than tinkering and provides no benefit in support of growth or investment in the sector.

Club Bingo holds a unique place in the fabric of our communities. It is unfathomable why it should be hounded. I urge the Chancellor to address this issue as a matter of urgency to help deliver growth in the sector and safeguard the futures of bingo clubs, those who work in them and the communities they sustain.”

Ends

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Notes to editors

Bingo in Communities

A wide variety of research has identified the important contribution that bingo makes to issues of social cohesion and inclusion, including work done by The Henley Centre. The Portas Report on the state of the high street also acknowledged to role that club bingo could play in regenerating communities and high streets.

Gambling Tax Rates

| Activity | Duty |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Bingo (in a licensed club) | 20% |
| Bingo (online) | 15% |
| Casino & poker (online) | 15% |
| Sports betting (betting shops) | 15% |
| Betting Exchanges | 15% |
| Football Pools | 15% |

- Since 2005 industry data indicates that 137 Bingo clubs have closed, including 12 in 2011. Research shows that the most of these have been small, often independently owned clubs

The Bingo Association

- The Bingo Association is the trade association of the licensed bingo industry in Great Britain, representing the proprietors of bingo clubs licensed under the Gambling Act 2005.
- There are 50 proprietors in membership. Membership profile ranges from the large operators, including Mecca (98 clubs) to smaller operators like Carlton Leisure (14 clubs) and many single unit businesses.
- Around 70% of all Bingo players are women and overall, 10% of all women in the UK play bingo