



Press release - for immediate release
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Government misses opportunity to acknowledge benefits of bingo in response to Portas review

The Bingo Association has expressed its disappointment that in its response to the Portas Review the Government has failed to recognise Mary Portas' enthusiastic support for bingo. In her report Mary lists ten 'simple ideas' she believes could work on our high streets, the last of which was, '*Bingo is a brilliant way to bring people together for a bit of old fashioned community fun. Why can't we encourage more bingo nights on our high streets?*'

Association Chief Executive Paul Talboys said:

'One of the highlights of Mary Portas' report was her perceptive recommendation that the Government should encourage more bingo to be played in order to bring communities together. Unfortunately, the Government has ignored this excellent idea from Mary in their response, which demonstrates once again the lack of interest the Government has been showing in bingo.

This comes on the back of the Budget last week, which once again punished bingo clubs up and down the country by imposing a new regressive tax on machines in bingo clubs.

Despite substantial evidence to the contrary, this government has continued to treat bingo unfairly, perpetuating an unfair tax regime, which not only inhibits bingo's natural growth, but has been contributory to its recent decline. This has led to some communities losing their bingo clubs and prevented others from benefiting from bingo, both socially and economically. For as long as bingo remains unfairly taxed, paying higher rates of Gross Profit Tax (GPT) than other land based forms of gambling, it is a sector that will be unable to realise its full potential as a builder of communities and driver of growth.'

Ends

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Notes to editors

Review of High Streets

The report sets out Mary Portas' recommendations which include:

- Free car parking in all town centres and a national league table of the best places to park in England.
- Introduction of 'Town Teams' made up of landlords, shopkeepers, businesses, local politicians and residents to put in place a visionary management structure to create high streets that people want to use.
- Empower successful Business Improvement Districts (BID) to take on more responsibilities and powers and become 'Super-BIDs'
- A new 'community right to try' allowing local people who do not have the means to buy empty property to test co-operative ventures.
- Making explicit a presumption in favour of town centre development in the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- A new national market day to encourage the talent of the future and bring people into our high streets.
- A number of pilots across the country to put the recommendations of the report into practice.

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