Workplace pensions law has changed. All employers have new legal duties to help their employees save for their retirement.

On 1st July 2012 a new law came into force which prohibited employers from inducing or offering incentives to their staff, or prospective employees, to abandon retirement saving. This is part of a process that will see far reaching changes for pensions responsibility come into play during.

Later this year further changes to pensions law will come into effect and will impact all employers with at least one employee in the UK. In short, employers will need to:

• Automatically enrol certain employees into a pension scheme
• Make contributions on their employees’ behalf
• Register with The Pensions Regulator (‘the regulator’)
• Provide employees with certain information about the changes and how they will affect them.

Staging Date
Employers will have new duties which will be introduced in stages starting from October 2012, with each employer allocated a date from when the duties will first apply to them, known as their ‘staging date’. This date is based upon the number of employees you have. Employers with the largest number of workers in their PAYE schemes will have the earliest staging date.

Finding out when your staging date is likely to be is the first thing an employer should do, so that you can plan what you need to do to be ready in good time.

Check your staging date
You can check your provisional staging date with The Pensions Regulator using their website www.tpr.gov.uk/staging

In preparing for these changes employers will need to:
• Assess their work force
• Identify who to automatically enrol
• Choose a pension scheme
• Register with the Regulator
• Make contributions
• Keep accurate records

Information Requirements
In addition to these key stages there are also requirements regarding provision of information to employees regarding the changes. These requirements are quite specific and even where the process is being handled for an employer by an Independent Financial Adviser, they still require the employer to take responsibility for ensuring that the information provided is accurate, complete and on time.

A wealth of information and range of useful guides to each stage can be found on The Pension Regulator’s website at www.tpr.gov.uk.

The site also offers the facility to sign-up for email updates, helping to ensure that you don’t miss any new information.

Visit The Bingo Association online at www.bingoassociation.co.uk
Welcome to BingoLINK!
It’s back and in a new e-format.

Following an absence of four years, the only publication for the land based bingo industry, BingoLINK, is back!

Changes at the Association and the costs of producing BingoLINK in a traditional paper format had meant that by August 2008 it was no longer economically viable to continue publishing. However, interest in the title has not disappeared.

Technical advances in web based publishing and the creation of a NEW website for the Association mean that we are now able to publish BingoLINK more economically.

The new BA website provides Members with an easy and quick means of accessing up to date information on the latest bingo business news, legislation and operational issues. Bingo LINK is back to provide news on broader issues of interests and stories about the companies and people who make up the business.

We want to know about:
• Your great staff
• Charity events
• New clubs/refits
• Lucky winners
• New products
• Special events
• Party nights
• Heroes
• Great Callers
• Star players
• Events

Anything and everything that makes club bingo great is what we want to know about, whether it’s a fundraising event or a visit from the Mayor, email your stories and pictures to bingolink@bingo-association.co.uk.

If you have an idea for a feature, or are a reader from outside the UK, and wish to send details of club bingo in your particular part of the globe, drop us an email.

If you are interested in placing an advertisement in BingoLINK then please get in touch: it’s FREE for Members, with a nominal charge for non-members.

If you have a job vacancy, then why not post it on the Association’s website: it’s FREE.

As well as being a great way to share industry news and stories within the industry, BingoLINK is also a great way of showing organisations and those who do not work in the industry just what we are all about. The new e-format version of BingoLINK means that we are also able to reach a far wider audience than ever before.

Contact BingoLINK
bingolink@bingo-association.co.uk

BingoLINK
Editorial Policy and Contact Details

BingoLink Is Published by The Bingo Association Limited.

Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited without the express permission of the publisher.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of The Bingo Association. All prices and information correct at the date of publication but subject to change.

Unsolicited materials submitted to BingoLINK shall be assumed for publication.

BingoLINK Advertising

Advertising opportunities are available in BingoLINK with the facility to place a web link in your advertisement direct to you site/product. Advertising is FREE to Full Members of The Bingo Association, with a nominal charge made to all other advertisers.

We do not accept job advertisements directly, though the facility to advertise a job vacancy is available at www.bingo-association.co.uk in the JOBs section. For all advertising enquiries please contact us by email.

Contact Details

BingoLink
The Bingo Association Ltd.
Lexham House
75 High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire.
LU6 1JF
Tel: 01582 860921
Fax: 01582 860925
Email: bingolink@bingo-association.co.uk
In a party mood!
Castle Bingo celebrate the BIG wins!

Castle Bingo have been splashing the bubbly as they celebrate their players’ lucky wins.

Castle Bingo Neath celebrated a fantastic win for regular Jacqueline, who shared her big winnings with her sister and niece. Jacqueline said she was ‘over the moon’ to win and couldn’t wait to book a holiday!

Twenty-four year old Aimee hit the jackpot, calling ‘house’ on number 13 and winning £23,000 at Castle Bingo in Newport Road. She shared her fantastic winnings with her best friend and mother, who were both playing at the time.

Stacey from Castle Bingo Barnes Hill couldn’t believe her luck when she called number ‘45’ on the C45 Jackpot link game, taking away £27,000!

Lady Luck shone on one very special 22 year old player at Castle Bingo Nantgarw, where she won the prize of a lifetime - £72,000. She was shocked by her win and asked to remain anonymous, but said that the timing was perfect as she was due to give birth just days after her win.

The winnings and celebrations have also been happening online, with five lucky online players winning VIP nights out at clubs and one very lucky online regular scooping a fantastic £20,000 playing a online scratch card game.

New Chairman

Mark Jones appointed as Association Chairman

Mark Jones has been Managing Director of Mecca Bingo for the past three years, a post he will retain, and joined The Rank Group Plc in 2009. His duties as Chairman formally started on 27th June this year. Prior to joining Mecca Bingo he was Executive Chairman of Premium Bars and Restaurants. He has held a number of other senior management posts in the Leisure industry, including Chief Executive of the Yates Group - a fully listed company on the Stock Exchange. While at Yates he led a management buy out (MBO) of the business, through to the successful sale to Robert Tchenguiz’s R20. Prior to this he spent 8 years with Whitbread, culminating as CEO of Pizza Hut UK Ltd. Mecca is a long standing member of the Association and firmly committed to working with other operators to shape and further the industry agenda. Mark said: “I am delighted to have been appointed to the position of Chair of the Bingo Association. My primary focus will be to continue the Association’s campaign to secure a fairer tax deal for bingo and to continue to change people’s perceptions of the industry.”

The Association’s previous Chairman, Brian Mattingley, was appointed in June 2009. Association Chief Executive Paul Talboys said ‘We are highly appreciative of Brian’s contribution to the work of the Association over the past three years and I have greatly enjoyed working with him. The industry still faces a number of significant challenges, specifically in regard to securing a fair tax regime. Mark’s experience in the leisure sector will be a great asset in helping the Association navigate the road ahead.’

Mark Jones

Mark Jones, Managing Director of Mecca Bingo has been appointed as the new Chairman of The Bingo Association.
The Alzheimer’s Society’s annual awareness and fundraising week took place in May this year and for the first time The Association and many of its Members took part.

Following a review of The Association’s charity support earlier this year, it was agreed to spread The Association’s good will to a new and worthy cause. The decision was not an easy one to make, but was steered by the desire to support an increasingly significant cause that affected society and a charity that was equally committed to making a real difference to those affected, their carers and the longer term issue of research.

Dementia is a difficult topic to raise and greatly misunderstood, with relatively little known about its cause and progression. However, it is an issue that increasingly touches a great many people, not only those affected by the disease, but also their carers, who in many cases must provide round the clock support. There are currently over 750,000 people with dementia in the UK, a figure that is set to rise to over a million by 2021.

- Dementia is not an inevitable part of aging.
- It is a disease of the brain
- It increasingly affects younger people

Alzheimer’s Society and Alzheimer Scotland work to support families affected by dementia throughout the UK. They provide practical support and services for those affected with dementia and their carers, in addition to research into treatment and campaigning for a better quality of life.

Prior to reaching a final decision to support dementia and Alzheimer’s Society, casual enquiry in a handful of clubs across the UK revealed that a lot of bingo players knew someone who was affected by dementia or someone...
who was a carer. This cemented the Committee’s decisions to support the Alzheimer’s Society.

**Getting Underway**

The formal announcement of the new partnership with the Alzheimer’s Society was made in April this year. With Dementia Awareness Week 2012 set for 20th May, this created a challenge in respect of making plans and preparations to support Association Members getting involved in the week. Despite the incredibly short lead time many clubs went the extra distance and managed to run events, raising awareness and much needed funds.

Alzheimer’s Society Ambassador, Lynda Bellingham heard that the Association had formally committed to support Alzheimer’s Society and stepped forward to support club bingo.

**Our First Annual Week**

Despite the rush to make things happen during Dementia Awareness Week it looks as though the hard work of supporting clubs and their generous players will have already helped raise over £50,000 so far this year. There are plenty of fun and exciting ways in which clubs can still add to this figure throughout the remainder of the year and the Bingo Team from Alzheimer’s Society will be contacting clubs after the summer with more information, details will also be available on the Association web site.

**PM’s Challenge**

The issue of dementia: treatment, care, cure and society, is becoming an increasingly important topic, both in respect of health care provision and planning for the future needs to society. In March this year the Prime Minister launched ‘The Dementia Challenge’. The key aims of the Challenge are:

- Give a boost to dementia research
- Address quality of dementia care
- Increase public understanding of dementia
- Make communities more dementia friendly.

Three Champion Groups have been set up to explore three key areas: health and care, research, and communities. Each will feed back to the PM in September on its area of work, making recommendations on next steps and projects to help shape and inform national policy in addition to directly driving real change.

In light of club bingo’s ability to create and sustain communities, The Association was invited to join the Communities Champion Group, which is co-chaired by Jeremy Hughes, Chief Exec of Alzheimer’s Society and Angela Rippon, who is an Ambassador for the Society.

The Group’s first meeting took place on 26th April at which the initial principles of the group and nature of the challenge were explored. A number of meetings have taken place since, including one during Dementia Awareness Week on 24th May, which the Prime Minister attended.

**Making A Difference**

The impact of dementia touches upon so many families and communities. The need for greater understanding and better care, for both those affected and their carers is paramount. There is so much that bingo as a community can contribute both to the work of Alzheimer’s Society and the broader work of the Dementia Challenge.

We will provide regular updates in BingoLINK. For more details on the Dementia Challenge visit: [www.dementiachallenge.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dementiachallenge.dh.gov.uk)

---

**Leading the fight against dementia**

**Alzheimer’s Society**

Visit the Alzheimer’s Society online at: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

---

Prime Minister, David Cameron
Changes to the law concerning pensions now means that every employer in the UK has a legal duty to help their UK employees save for retirement. This requirement affects all employers with one or more employees.

For larger organisations the issues of pension planning have been a regular feature on the business agenda, but for many SMEs it is something they may have tried to defer, as it has become such a complicated and fraught subject. However, these latest changes now force the issue to be confronted head-on, with all employers with an automatic enrolment duty needing to choose a pension scheme they can use.

The process of identifying and selecting a pension provider is not something that all companies are comfortable with, nor readily have the time for. Information from The Pensions Regulator is available to help inform this important decision and Government has set up the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST), which offers a pension scheme. This scheme has a public service obligation, meaning it must accept all employers who apply and has been established by Government to ensure that employers, including those that employ low to medium earners, can access pension saving and comply with their automatic enrolment duties.

As such it can provide assistance at every step of the way, including provision of information, with easy to use templates written in plain language. Whether the scheme an employer uses for automatic enrolment is new or not, it must meet certain legal standards. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the Government department responsible for introducing new workplace pension changes and further information is available at www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/pensions-reform.

NEST Website – www.nestpensions.org.uk
8 Key Pension Planning Points

1. Find out when your organisation needs to comply. Check your staging date at www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk. Your local Business Link also provides useful information for employers www.businesslink.gov.uk.

2. Understand which workers you need to enroll and make contributions for:
   - If they are at least 22 and under State Pension age - who earn more than £7,475 a year in January 2011 terms.
   You may need to enroll and contribute for other workers. Find out more at www.nestpensions.org.uk, on the ‘Your Duties’ page under Nest for employers.

3. Consider whether you can use your current scheme(s) to comply with new duties:
   The Government sets out certain legal standards that qualifying schemes need to meet, check at www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/pensions-reform.

4. Think about what you might need from a new scheme:
   How might it work alongside any existing scheme? Is it suitable for workers who have not saved in a pension scheme before? How does it invest members money? Would it support dealing with high staff turnover? How easy is the scheme to administer?

5. Be ready for minimum contributions:
   Qualifying earnings are those between £5,035 and £33,540 in November 2008 terms. Minimum contributions will rise from an initial 2% of qualifying earnings to 8% by 2017, of which a minimum 3% must be contributed by the employer.

6. Provide accurate up to date information to the qualifying scheme:
   You will need to provide accurate information to the scheme and will need to keep specific records about your workers and their pension arrangements for a minimum of 6 years.

7. Let your workers know what is happening:
   It is a legal responsibility to ensure that workers affected by the changes are informed in writing, either electronically or in hard copy.

8. Understand how opting out works:
   Workers who have been automatically enrolled into a pension scheme and those with qualifying earnings who have opted in, have the right to opt out within one month. Workers who opt out must be re-enrolled after a defined period (currently 3 years).
Scouting For Talent
The challenge to find and retain good people

Sourcing, recruiting and retaining great staff is a challenge for all businesses, but especially so for those that are service based and people focused, like bingo.

The process of recruitment is one that many dread. It can be time consuming, costly and fraught with many challenges, not least, ensuring that you comply with all current recruitment and employment legislation.

For many employers the fear of getting it ‘wrong’, and the costs associated with doing so, actively prevents them, at least subconsciously, from even considering those with disabilities. In doing so, they are missing out on some of the most committed, loyal and long serving employees they might ever have.

Many large companies have fully recognised the value of ensuring an inclusive recruitment and employment strategy, these include BT, South Easter Railways, Eon, Lloyds Banking Group, Sainsbury’s and The Home Office. Aside from minimising the risks associated with an inclusive recruitment and employment strategy, these include BT, South Easter Railways, Eon, Lloyds Banking Group, Sainsbury’s and The Home Office. Aside from minimising the risks associated with the legislative framework, as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and it being the right thing to do, there is a compelling commercial business case for employers who want the best talent working for them.

Recognising that job applicants are potential customers, as well as potential employees, provides a unique opportunity to influence consumer behaviour and affect purchase decisions. Many employers have found that disabled staff tend to exhibit greater commitment to their work and stay with the company far longer than other employees. In terms of consistency and retention of corporate knowledge that is a distinct advantage.

Development and Action
Before undertaking any recruitment or developing a disability strategy/policy it is essential to know and understand what the term ‘disability’ means in relation to the law and The Equality Act 2012.

Aside from minimising the risks associated with the legislation, as defined by The Equality Act 201, and being the right thing to do, there is a compelling commercial business case for employers who want the best talent working for them.

The Law - The Equality Act 201
Disability is specified as one of the ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2012. The Act states that ‘A person has a disability for the purpose of The Act if he or she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. If a person states that they have a disability then as an employer you should not be in any doubt as to whether or not the person has or has had a disability. It is important to remember that not all impairments are easy to identify.

There are a wide range of disabilities and impairments covered by The Act. These include:
- Those produced by an injury to the body or brain
- Organ specific including respiratory conditions i.e asthma, stoke, thrombosis.
- Sensory impairment, such as hearing and sight.
- Developmental, i.e. dyslexia, autism.
- Learning difficulties
- Progressive illness i.e.
- Tendency to physical or sexual abuse of others
- Exhibitionism
- Voyeurism

Alcoholism would not be included, but liver disease caused by alcohol dependency would count as an impairment, despite addiction to alcohol being the cause and excluded from the definitions. Therefore it is important to focus on the effect of the impairment not the cause.

As exampled by the previous paragraphs, working within and thoroughly understanding the Act is not necessarily easy. Yet the benefits that can accrue for both employer and employee are substantial. It is for these reasons that the Department For Works and Pensions (DWP) requested that tools be developed in order to open up the process of recruitment and offer support.

To address this need The Clear Company worked with DWP and BT, Eon, HMRC, The Home Office and SouthEastern Trains, over a three year period to develop the Disability ClearKit. The Disability ClearKit is the largest single resource portal for employers to access guidance and advice on best practice for inclusive recruitment. A new concept in support for employers, the toolkit gives guidance based on the principle of providing the ‘best possible solutions from the organisations best places to provide them’.

BingoLINK August 2012
In addressing the need for inclusive recruitment The Clear Company provides a range of products and services: Clear Audit, Clear Kit, Clear Assured and Clear Learning.

- ClearAudit is a unique comprehensive and deep-rooted evaluation of an organisation’s recruitment and retention strategies. It identifies risks, barriers and opportunities within policy, practice and process.
- ClearKit is a practical resource that provides access to thought leaders and employer case studies. With relevant and helpful tips and ‘must do’ check lists, which help dispel the myths that prevent many employers from giving disabled people an opportunity to join their team.
- ClearAssured is an evidence based accreditation process that recognises employers’ commitment to identifying and removing barriers from recruitment policy, process and practice, that have the ability to exclude disabled people.
- ClearLearning is a range of workshops and master classes tailored to the areas that are regularly identified as ‘sticking points’ in an organisations progress to addressing diversity.

The Clear Company has developed these products in response to employer needs, having worked with over 220 leading employers in order to explore and address issues. This includes E.on, the energy company.

E.on

E.on’s commitment comes from the fact that they firmly believe inclusion should be at the heart of recruitment practice, and there’s a good reason for that; beyond being the right thing to do, it makes good business sense. Ultimately E.on aspires to employ a workforce to match the diversity of their customers to support E.on’s business strategy of ‘becoming a trusted energy partner to deliver cleaner, better energy.

By going through the Clear Assured process E.on discovered:

- At the start of their journey there were no applicants who declared a disability, in the last six months this has now risen to over 700.
- Candidates seek disability confidence in the people assessing their skills and will perform better as a result.
- Hiring managers have a lack of knowledge about disability and are often afraid of dealing with difference for the fear of ‘saying the wrong thing’.

The benefits of employing disabled candidates speak for themselves:

- When disability and health are properly managed, disabled employees tend to take fewer sick days than their non-disabled colleagues and stay with employers for longer
- The cost of keeping a disabled employee by making reasonable adjustments will almost always cost far less than having to recruit and train a new employee.

In celebration of the 2012 London Paralympics, Members of The Bingo Association are being offered a 20% discount on all purchases made up until the close of the games on 9th September.

To find out more about The Clear Company and start your journey visit

www.theclearcompany.co.uk or www.clearkit.co.uk
WANTED

Vintage cinema sound equipment for restoration project

Western Electric

1930’s Western Electric
Contact John Carpenter: 01235 812038
email: bnbingo@btconnect.com

To advertise in BingoLINK

email:
bingolink@bingo-association.co.uk

Advertising in BingoLINK is FREE for Members.

Latest Games From Meeron

To find out more visit www.meeron.co.uk