The bingo industry: looking into the future

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Over its fifty year history the licensed bingo industry in Britain has gone through successive changes, evolving to meet the changing needs and tastes of its customers.

In our clubs, different ways of playing bingo games, such as The National Bingo Game, provide variety and excitement as part of the Bingo experience. Many thousands of bingo players continue to play the game in a holiday park setting or in high street arcades.

Beyond our clubs, holiday parks, and arcades, bingo has spread to even more locations and taken on different forms. New and exciting varieties of bingo are emerging, drawing in a new generations of players, relying on modern marketing methods and using multiple social media channels.
Bingo makes a vital contribution to communities across Britain by providing a safe and secure place where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather and socialise.

Patrons play bingo for a variety of reasons, with the most popular being that it ‘is a fun (96%) and exciting (79%) activity which is an opportunity to socialise (85%).’*

Seven in ten patrons (69%) agree that they play bingo to be around other people. This was the case for 82% of those aged over 75.*

Over three-quarters (76%) of bingo club patrons agree that they play bingo because it is somewhere they feel safe, even if they go on their own.*

*The Responsible Gambling Trust
Bingo Research: Problem gambling in licensed bingo premises, 2016
Licensed bingo is a well-regulated and socially responsible form of gambling which takes place in a safe environment. Membership-only clubs operate with high staff-to-customer ratios.

For the very small minority of customers who may, from time to time, experience difficulties managing their gambling, the BA offers a voluntary scheme that enables customers to request exclusion from land-based licensed bingo premises.

The BA is proud to support and be part of the annual Responsible Gambling Week. This is a national, cross-industry initiative to raise awareness of responsible gambling. The BA actively promotes responsible gambling and supports its member organisations in developing socially responsible initiatives.

The Bingo Association (BA) Code of Conduct for Social Responsibility is reviewed regularly by the BA’s Standing Compliance Committee formed of senior compliance professionals from within the licensed bingo Industry.

The Bingo Association’s wider social contribution has included an active charity policy which has raised £1.5mn and has funded 22 sunshine coaches the past four years.
The bingo industry continues to evolve, with new clubs being opened, existing clubs being refurbished and new playing experiences being developed.

New Bingo clubs have been opened in Fleetwood and Ellesmere Port, and a brand new club will open in Blackpool in 2020. Furthermore, over the past five years, total investment in Bingo has run at an average of £38mn a year.

New ways to play have been developed and introduced, including the use of hand-held devices and tablets.

Social bingo venues are attracting a younger generation of players. The original joy of playing bingo is now combined with a modern emphasis on the role of music and lights, greater game variations and wider food and drink choices. This takes bingo right into the heart of the 21st century entertainment experience.
The bingo industry in numbers: 2018

Bingo continues to see record levels of investment. In 2018, bingo clubs spent a total of £32mn (54% of their profits) in refurbishing premises, acquiring new machines and other capital expenditure.

The number of employees in the industry slightly decreased by 7.8% compared to 2017. However, bingo clubs continue to employ over 10,000 people (10,072 in 2018), with the majority of our workforce coming from the local communities around our clubs.

The tax contribution of bingo remained steady in 2018, with a total of £193mn paid to the public revenue, being 30% of our total revenues.

We saw further consolidation in the number of clubs, reducing by 12 in total (from 350 in 2017 to 338 in 2018), but with some promising signs of new interest and investment from the independent sector.

Bingo has almost 31 million admissions per year, with 2018 showing a light decline of 6% per club compared to 2017.

The total net margin of the industry saw a slight decrease from 10% in 2017 to 9% in 2018.

These figures are based on data compiled by RS Business Modelling Limited for The Bingo Association on an annual basis.
Bingo: the national game
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