

GBG NEWSLETTER 6TH NOVEMBER 2024



REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Whilst this is not an exhaustive list of what GBG has achieved and completed this last year, we thought Members would be interested to see a summary of some of the achievements over the past 12 months and our thoughts on some of the challenges for the coming 12 months. Your continued support and input at meetings have been invaluable and we look forward to saying thank you in person at the GBG's Land Based Hub at ICE in February, if not before.

LAST QUARTER 2022

1. Charlotte Meller joined us 12 months ago as GBG General Manager, bringing with her new capabilities, insights and an unsurpassed knowledge of Local Authorities and how they function.
 2. Attended 2022 Tory conference, met with Michelle Donelan and Damian Collins & their advisors with the help of the team at Henham.
 3. Carried out a 12-month review of the GBG Strategic Aims & Road Map.
 4. Produced an Industry Standard for the use of contactless transactions with change machines (and the 7995 merchant code).
 5. Networked with the national audience of Local Authorities at the Institute of Licensing (IOL) Training week in Stratford-on-Avon.
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6. Attended cross-party Parliamentary dinner with Merkur and Novomatic UK in the Palace of Westminster.
7. Carried out communications survey with GBG Members and adjusted our practices accordingly.
8. Acquired detailed (previously unseen) regulatory returns data from the Gambling Commission as part of our data work.
9. GBG Exec completed the YGAM Responsible Gambling Training modules.
10. Established the GBG Licensing Group of licensing lawyers and lead counsel, which has grown in membership during 2023.

FIRST QUARTER 2023

1. First stages of GBG's Fact-Checking initiative, evaluating the PHE and OHID reports into gambling related suicides (amongst many other things) exposing the inherent political bias.
 2. Alerted the DCMS to the 'false facts' being presented in their 'call for evidence' for the Gambling Act Review.
 3. Met with Carolyn Harris, MP, Chair of the APPG on Gambling Related Harm.
 4. Presented in the Innovative Technologies Webinar on the use of Biometric Technology in Gambling.
 5. Provided detailed submission on behalf of Members to the CMS Select Committee Call for Evidence for the Gambling Review.
 6. Raised questions in The House regarding the status of the Regulators' Code in Government.
 7. Hosted the very successful High Street Hub at ICE – attended by most Members, the DCMS and invited guests from Westminster.
 8. Launched the GBG Responsible Gambling Charter, which is endorsed by Gordon Moody.
 9. Started questioning the governance of the +£40m (£90m according to the Racing Post) approved spend by the Gambling Commission on anti-gambling research exposing serious shortcomings.
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10. Attended a series of Ministerial 'round-table meetings' with the new Minister and established regular meetings with the DCMS officials leading on gambling.
11. Published an article from Merkur in the IOL's quarterly LINK magazine (distributed to most Local Authority licensing officers).

SECOND QUARTER 2023

1. More Fact-Checking with analysis of the GC approved anti-gambling CfGS report that (as an example) advised Local Authorities to 'create local area maps to show where certain groups reside, including 'people of low IQ...''
 2. Started to raise concerns with the DCMS about the lack of effective governance in gambling regulating (preceded by the NAO report and the Public Accounts Committee enquiry).
 3. Supported MSAs in responding to a challenging letter from Carolyn Harris and her APPG.
 4. GameNation hosted a training event for the Metropolitan Police, and the MSAs facilitated visits of Local Authority licensing officers.
 5. Responded to the Gambling Commission's consultation on the mandatory reporting of 'gambling related suicides'.
 6. Attended the launch of the cross-party Regulatory Reform Group.
 7. Attended various meetings, interviews and conferences regarding the publication of the White Paper.
 8. Meet with members of the HOL Select Committee for Gambling Reform to ask them to stop using 'false facts' ("one gambling related suicide every day") in their rhetoric.
 9. More Fact-Checking with the Gambling Commission approved NEISR report, put together from research that was purposely designed to trick the Treasury by exaggerating the cost of Gambling Related Harm to society – using an unproven and implausible methodology. This was subsequently 'outed' publicly in the Racing Post.
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10. Presented at the IOL's Summer Conference (attended by over a 100 licensing officers).
11. Buzz article in the IOL's Link magazine (distributed to most Local Authorities).

THIRD QUARTER 2023

1. GBG attended another Ministerial round-table meeting regarding the next steps for the White Paper.
 2. Head of Land Based Gambling at DCMS attended the GBG Board meeting.
 3. The GBG Exec attended the GamCare Customer Interaction training along with MSA Operator Members.
 4. The GBG MSA Group hosted the Gambling Commission's Director of Strategy and facilitated a MSA site visit.
 5. The GBG Machines Group and Tech Forum produced a scope and functional spec for linked jackpots on Cat B3 and Cat C machines.
 6. GBG took the Industry lead on dealing with DCMS' request for Machines Data to support changes proposed in their consultations.
 7. Started liaising with the Betting and Gaming Council regarding the formation of an Industry Ombudsman for dealing with customer (RG initially) complaints.
 8. More Fact-Checking into the Gambling Commission's new methodology for measuring Gambling Prevalence and Problem Gambling.
 9. GBG working with Operators and supporting Members to create an effective and practical approach to administering customer interactions.
 10. Successfully secured the High Street Hub for ICE 2024 with Clarion Events. Building on the success for ICE 2023, there will be a greater involvement from Local Authorities, and we have already had positive reactions to 'save the date' from MPs and Government Officials.
 11. GBG Member working groups formulated our response to the relevant questions in the DCMS consultation documents and also the Gambling Commission consultations.
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12. GBG spoke at the IOL Gambling Conference at the Hippodrome in London, attended by all South East Local Authorities and the Gambling Team from the DCMS.
13. GBG articles in the IOL's LINK magazine (on the White Paper) and its legal Journal, on Statements of Policy.

A busy final quarter of 2023 is well underway with more consultation deadlines; engagements with licensing authorities and plans for ICE 2024.

NEXT 12 MONTHS

Turning to the next 12 months, the industry is facing another period of considerable and intense change. These are some of the known challenges we are expecting;

- Implementation of the changes being consulted on (current and future) by both the Gambling Commission and the DCMS.
- Creation and implementation of an Industry Ombudsman and the implementation of the Statutory Levy.
- More consultations from the DCMS and the Gambling Commission.
- Implementation of the DCMS's machines data sharing request and subsequent analysis of outcomes.
- Changes being made to the Gaming Machine Technical Standards (GMTS) documentation (phase 1).
- Consultation on the proposed changes to, and extension of the contents of the GMTSs (phase 2)
- General Election.

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