

GBG seeks member feedback on Gambling Commission's proposed amendment for quarterly returns

REGULATION

The Gambling Business Group

has called on members to submit responses to plans by the Gambling Commission to change its annual reporting requirements to a quarterly schedule, a move which "will impact virtually all GBG members" - and not in a helpful way.

The Gambling Business Group has called for feedback from members on the Gambling Commission's proposal to amend licence condition 15.3.1, which would require operators to submit financial returns quarterly as opposed to annually.

According to the Commission, the alteration would give its officers "a timelier, more accurate picture of the gambling sector," however, the GBG has noted the significant implications it would have on operators' administrative costs.

"This proposal to file more frequent returns will impact virtually all GBG Members, and therefore we need your feedback to inform the GBG response," said GM Charlotte Meller.

"The consultation suggests that there may be a reduced question set to offset the increased reporting frequency...GC will also stop



the additional voluntary monthly submissions that some licensees have been providing since lockdown," she noted. Although detail on this regulatory concession was not disclosed by the Commission.

The proposed schedule of quarterly return due dates would require reports on the periods April to June, July to September, October to December, and January to March to be delivered within 28 days of the end of the period.

The GC believes the changes will lead to "an improved ability for the Commission to budget based on more timely reporting of financial information."

'Timely', however, is not necessarily a two way street when it comes to the regulator; there are growing demands from within the industry that the Commission itself should be more active in its reporting process. A number of analysts have argued that the body should

be reporting its own performance rates on licence applications, for example, and that these should be made public on a quarterly basis. At present, there are no updates provided by the Commission unless questioned by politicians in the House of Commons.

But the focus now for the GBG is the bureaucratic burden the regulator's new initiative will have on businesses. The proposals, as they stand, only ease the Commission's burdens: quarterly returns, they say, will deliver "a timelier, more accurate picture of the gambling sector as we would no longer need to estimate quarterly comparisons based on annual returns, [and] improved data quality for official statistics."

From early responses to date, it seems it will make a significant contribution to the burden overload currently imposed on gaming and gambling businesses.

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