

Any answers: GBG's High Street Hub at ICE to tackle industry's pressing questions

EVENTS

The **Gambling Business Group** has assembled industry experts in a wide range of fields at ICE 2024 next month with the aim of addressing some of the key regulatory issues businesses are facing now - and more importantly, are likely to face when the Gambling Review gets implemented.

Are you concerned about the Gambling Commission's rules on age verification in land based venues? Do you have questions about how to avert objections to new premises licence applications? Are you wondering how best to prepare your machines for cashless play?

Well, the answers could come in a series of Q&A sessions being staged by the Gambling Business Group at its High Street Hub which will be hosted at ICE London at the ExCeL over 6-8 February.

The trade body has brought together a panel of experts from the industry who will be able to help answer questions from operators and manufacturers on the opening two days of the world's largest gaming event. And it's an open house at the High Street Hub, as Charlotte Meller, general manager of the Gambling Business Group, confirmed to Coinslot: "People can just drop in on the Tuesday and Wednesday to find out more on subjects from age verification to technical standards through to licensing and compliance."

The Ask the Experts initiative has certainly go down well since it was unveiled last month. "There's a been a very positive response to our experts sessions so far. There's a lot of people in the industry trying to navigate their way around regulation and licensing which, at the best of times, can be a minefield. But with new rules heading our way later this year, it's going to take time to understand them. Our list of experts specialise in the key regulatory fields and have scrutinised the potential changes and can help guide a lot of our businesses away from the pitfalls."

And there will be many a pit to fall down. Gambling is already one of the most regulated industries in the UK economy and the proposed changes are only going to tighten regulatory rein. Overlay that with changes in other regulatory areas



such as GDPR and the introduction of Martyn's Law, and the landscape becomes even more challenging.

"We've spoken to a lot of our members and there's some common themes that have arisen across the board," said Meller, "but many are also keen to look beyond Responsible Gambling initiatives; there's real intent amongst operators to explore ways to demonstrate how gambling premises contribute positively to the mix of high street offerings."

Which explains why the Gambling Business Group are particu-

Ask the experts

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larly pleased with the attendance of Sylvia Oates, director of SixTill Six, the UK's leading leisure, hospitality and night time economy consultancy, who will be joining the experts.

"SixTill Six's work encourages collaboration in towns and cities creating safer, more attractive and vibrant places for people to visit and enjoy. Sylvia has worked to support successful leisure economies for over 14 years and has a particular passion for night safety, business friendly partnership working and

the broader Environmental, Social and Governance agenda which she will share with visitors to the High Street Hub."

The other areas to be covered by the two day experts sessions are: Age Verification (Tony Allen, Age Check Certification Scheme), Compliance (Howard Gant, Smart Hub - Boomerang Digital); Data Protection (Richard Dutton, ELIAS Partnership); Licensing (David Lucas, Institute of Licensing); Responsible Gambling & AML/ CFT (Kirsty Caldwell, Betsmart Consulting); Safety, responsibility and partnership working (Sylvia Oates, Six till Six); Security (Jim Leitch, Link Integrated); Technical Standards (Rob Wheeler, GBG).

Charlotte Meller added: "It's a broad set of areas and we're extremely grateful to our panel of experts for giving their time to address issues that businesses will be facing this year - if not already. I'm hoping a lot of our members and other industry stakeholders will come to the High Street hub and highlight the issues that they've been facing and are concerned about. The industry needs to be prepared for the proposed changes and our panel definitely understand how to prepare businesses for that journey."

Panel: Ask the Experts

GBG High Street Hub ICE 2024

Selection of Questions to be addressed

LICENSING LICENSING:

- How can I avoid objections when making a new premise licence application?
- What are the additional costs if my application has to go to appeal?
- Why are some Councillors so against new Gambling Premises?

TECHNICAL STANDARDS:

- Are there machines that will not be compatible with cashless?
- What would the latest version of the GBG TITO Protocol give me that I don't already have?
- What are the implications of the changes to Gaming Machine Technical Standards?

SECURITY:

- With machines being one of the few remaining points on the high street that there is cash available, what additional precautions should Operators be taking?

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

- How can information gathered as part of the interaction process

contribute to management of AML/CFT risk?

- How can we demonstrate to Local Authorities how much we look out for our customers and ensure we're really on top of managing AML/CFT risk?

COMPLIANCE

- How many of the obligations in the LCCP can now be managed via a mobile device?

DATA PROTECTION

- What will the impact be of the new UK Data Protection and Digital Information Bill on the current UK GDPR, DPA 2018 and the EU GDPR?

VisitBritain predicts £34.1bn visitor spend for 2024 as inbound tourism rises

TOURISM

VisitBritain has released its annual tourism forecast for 2023 and 2024, which predicts both a growth in visitor numbers and average spend-per-visitor over the next 12 months.

According to the report, 2023 has set "a record for spending," with the figures for 2024 expected to increase even further despite being offset by inflation.

"VisitBritain's estimate for the full year 2023 is 37.8 million inbound visits to the UK with £31.7bn spent, 92 percent and 112 percent of 2019 levels respectively



(spend 92 percent of 2019 when adjusted for inflation)" said a spokesperson. "This would set a record for spending in nominal terms."

"2024: VisitBritain forecasts 39.5 million visits and £34.1bn spend, 97 percent and 120 percent of the 2019 levels respectively, although spend would be 96 percent of the 2019 level when you adjust for inflation. Compared to 2023, this would represent growth of 5 percent in visits and 7 percent in nominal spend (4 percent in real spend.)"