

Industry Responses



RACHEL REEVES MAKES HISTORY AS THE FIRST FEMALE CHANCELLOR DELIVERING HER INAUGURAL BUDGET AS AIRED BY BBC

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sized operators, their rates bills will still go up in April.
 All of this means that 2025 will be painful for hospitality, with an increased annual tax bill of £3 billion for the sector.
 However, there are reasons for longer-term positivity.
 I am pleased that the Chancellor is implementing UKHospitality's recommendation for a permanently lower level of business rates for hospitality.
 Levelling the playing field in this way recognises the importance of the high street and the role it plays in our communities and economy.
 We need to see the detail and the Government must work with the sector in the design and delivery of this significant change to get it right.

Gambling Business Group

Peter Hannibal: “What is now important is that our attention turns back to working with the Government and the Gambling Commission to deliver the proposals contained in the White Paper”

PETER HANNIBAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE GAMBLING BUSINESS GROUP

Peter Hannibal, Chief Executive of the Gambling Business Group, was not moved by the Budget this week. His response was simple: with the exception of a freeze on MGD, there were no opportunities in the statement. All the more reason to push hard for movement in the Gambling Review, because that, he argues, is where the counter-force to a tax hiking budget can best be mounted.



Coinslot: It was the government's first budget of their new term - what were the key stand-outs for the industry and business in general?

Peter Hannibal: We are pleased to see no change to gaming duty, despite attempts by the anti-gambling lobby to have them increased.

Increases in gambling duties only negatively affect our members and their ability to provide good service to their customers.

It's a potent argument that, regrettably, requires constant reinforcing.

Coinslot: Threats or opportunities? How will your members be weighing up the chancellor's offerings in her first budget?

Peter Hannibal: The reality is, there are no opportunities in this budget that are not already set out in the White Paper.

We only see overheads increasing, at least in the short-medium term. Sadly, for many businesses in the land-based sector, the short-term is currently where opportunities are needed most.

Business rates, NICs and the National Minimum Wage will add to outgoings significantly. And there is no means of balancing this out for many gambling operations - stakes and prizes haven't risen for years, and any benefits of the Gambling Review are stuck in departmental traffic.

Coinslot: Is this a budget for growth or does it signal concerns for business investment and development over the coming year?

Peter Hannibal: The biggest concern for land-based gambling is the increase in employment costs.

This government has a manifesto that says they wouldn't increase National Insurance, but they clearly have.

This is not a policy for growth and we wait whilst our members calculate the full impact that this increase in tax is going to have on their businesses.

Similarly, the structural changes to the minimum wage are going to increase employment costs.

Coinslot: There was little in terms of concessions from the chancellor. Given the delay in the Gambling Review and a number of areas still to be determined, do you think the budget has presented the industry with a strong case for greater urgency, expanded modernisation and more incentives for economic growth in the final Review?

Peter Hannibal: In a word; 'no'.

The new Government will progress the Gambling Act Review as they see fit and we see no correlation between that and the outcomes in the budget.

The whole of the Gambling industry now needs to put their full support behind these opportunities for growth.

Coinslot: Where do you think the Budget will have most impact on the industry - the high street, seaside towns, the supply chain, arcades, pubs, employment, R&D...?

Peter Hannibal: The more labour intensive the business, the harder they will be impacted, wherever they are geographically located.

However, what is now important is that our attention turns back to working with the Government and the Gambling Commission to deliver the proposals contained in the White Paper, proposals that include better consumer protections and greater consumer choice.

If we get these changes through in a timely manner, then the impact of the budget will be far easier for businesses to deal with.