

Gambling Business Group confirms High Street Hub residence at ARE Expo in April

It is expected to be the largest delegation of local authority licensing officials and police force representatives at an industry exhibition when the Gambling Business Group stages its High Street Hub at ARE 2026 on 28-29 April in Manchester.

Last year almost 50 northern based officials attended the GBG's Hub for a series of presentations, Q&A sessions and a tour of the show floor to view the new player protection innovations currently being rolled out at high street AGCs, bingo clubs, betting shops and pubs.

And this year, preparations are ongoing with the Institute of Licensing for special delegate tours of industry manufacturers during its own annual gambling conference for licensing officers which has been arranged to coincide with the Hub at the Cotton Sheds in Victoria Warehouse.

Charlotte Meller, GBG's General Manager, is the organisational brain behind the High Street Hub, and she has been working on developing this annual GBG/licensing authority assembly.

"This is now our third year of bringing licensing authorities into the High Street Hub and enabling officials to engage first hand with industry innovators on player protections and new developments," she explained.

"There will be demonstrations of age verification systems, player protections, self exclusion innovations on display at our members' stands and it will serve as an ideal one-stop centre for local and police officials to see and test how far measures to protect vul-

EXHIBITION

The annual GBG High Street Hub will take place at the ARE Expo in April with a strong showing from local authority and police forces expected. Working with the IoL, the **Gambling Business Group** will be using the Hub as an opportunity to highlight the significance advance in player protection technology and also raise the issues facing high street businesses today.



nerable players have progressed."

Part of the evolving relationship between the GBG and IoL, this year's Hub tours come at an opportune time as the debate on high street gaming and gambling, and notably the Aim to Permit rule, becomes more vocal amongst politicians and councillors.

In an interview with the IoL's magazine coming up in Spring, GBG chief Peter Hannibal noted: "The Hub provides an important opportunity for machine manufacturers and our systems innovators to show the technological developments and reintroduce a balanced context to what is a very febrile debate. The power of age verification and data systems for player protections has become so far advanced that it has responded to and moved beyond many of the arguments offered against licence applications. And the High Street Hub enables officials to explore the pioneering player protection technologies available and also to discuss and challenge the gambling industry on the measures required to ensure these innovations support their own licensing criteria."

Professionals at Play appoints Ben Turnock as managing director

APPOINTMENT

Professionals at Play, the experimental leisure operator behind Roxy Ball Room, has appointed Ben Turnock as its new managing director as the group accelerates its expansion across the UK and Ireland.

The company said Turnock has worked closely with founders Matt Jones and Ben Jones since 2020 and formally joined the business in



2023. It added that he played a "central role" in strengthening the group's financial,

commercial and operational functions during a period of rapid growth.

Most recently serving as finance director, Turnock's responsibilities expanded to include operational delivery and strategic execution, culminating in his promotion to managing director.

"Over the past year, the scale and complexity of our operations have grown significantly," said Matt Jones, chief executive of Professionals at Play. "Ben has

played a pivotal role in laying the foundations for this growth, and his appointment as managing director ensures strong continuity as we continue our expansion across the UK and Ireland."

The group also confirmed it has secured its first site in Ireland, with Roxy Ball Room Dublin scheduled to open in Q2 this year. During 2026, Professionals at Play plans to open at least five new venues, taking its estate to 31 sites nationwide.

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