

GBG refutes need for increases in Gambling Commission fees

The Gambling Business Group has published its response to the Gambling Commission's latest fee consultation, which dismisses the supposed need for an increase in licensing costs by criticising the regulator's administrative and economic reasoning.

The industry body refused to align itself with any of the three proposed increases between 20 and 30 percent, suggesting by way of concession "a small inflationary increase" alongside an interrogation of the Commission's own cost management.

"Based on the information provided, we do not believe that the Gambling Commission's proposals are thorough or robust enough when evaluating 'value for money,'" states the response.

"First annual, application and maintenance fees have no link to increases in the size of the black market, therefore it is not logical to expect them to contribute towards the Commission's activities in this area."

REGULATION

The **Gambling Business Group** has dismissed claims put forward by the Gambling Commission that an increase in licensing fees is a necessity, highlighting the fact that the cost of "nonsensical" decisions made by the organisation are being unfairly borne by operators who already contribute significantly to regulatory administration.



One key element the GBG takes issue with is the Commission's statement that its move to a government hub will double accommodation costs, noting "the business case for such a move does not make sense," particularly as most staff are hybrid or

home-based workers. "It should be recognised that those that the Commission is expecting to pay for this nonsensical proposal would not entertain such change in their own businesses as it would be regarded as irresponsible." The proposals to allow

the Commission to consult on its own fee changes in future were also questioned by the group, which could lead to "much more frequent (and potentially uncontrolled) increases." Noting a lack of detail and transparency in the Commission's intention

to raise an additional £2.6m to counter illegal activity, the GBG added "how much are the Department for Business and Trade, the Department for Science Innovation and Technology, HMRC and the Home Office contributing to help tackle black market activity?"

"All of these government departments have a vested interest in stopping this illegal activity and yet the consultation suggests that only the licensed gambling industry will be contributing."

Additionally, the GBG's response highlighted the substantial contribution operators already make to regulatory activity as part of their local authority licensing requirements, adding that operators will still be expected to maintain and likely increase their own compliance activity with a dramatically-reduced budget.

Without justification

GBG consultation response said...
"Based on the information provided, we do not believe that the Gambling Commission's proposals are thorough or robust enough when evaluating 'value for money ... annual, application and maintenance fees have no link to increases in the size of the black market, therefore it is not logical to expect them to contribute towards the Commission's activities in this area..."

GambleAware's final report highlights its inevitable downfall - and who paid for lavish rewriting of history

CHARITY

GambleAware's final "legacy report" sets out an ambitious account of its impact, yet critics say it ultimately underscores why the charity's role has come to an end. Too much money spent on itself, some say, and the arrogance of misplaced praise for its own achievements...and a vital question: where did the money come from to fund this lavish rewriting of the GambleAware story?

In its conclusion, GambleAware states: "As the sector shifts, GambleAware's legacy is clear: it built a sector rooted in collaboration, expertise, and innovation."



However, the report glosses over the failures that defined its final years.

Writing in the Player Protection

Hub, Steve Hoare argued GambleAware had "adopted the prohibitionist rhetoric of anti-gambling campaigners and lobbied itself

out of existence". He added: "The closure of GambleAware is, in many ways, a scandal shaped by misinformation and misjudgement."

Others point to strategic missteps. Dan Waugh said: "At times, however, the charity appeared more focused on PR and lobbying than on evidence-based harm prevention. By the end, it had lost the trust of a wide range of stakeholder groups."

The report itself acknowledges pressure, noting criticism from anti-gambling prohibitionists took an "emotional toll" and "affected the wellbeing" of staff.

Ah diddums: what about the emotional toll its venomous vitriol

had on the industry, its employees and its players.

As GambleAware wraps up operations this month, the real lesson learned is you can never negotiate with prohibitionists. Unlike the industry, they were unwilling to compromise and were never satisfied unless their specific targets were erased from existence.

All said and done, there should be a chorus of boos as they exit their offices, and anyone looking to employ GambleAware staff, just speak to the industry; that's the best reference you can ever get for former GambleAware operatives.

They were a cult.