

Politics

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Is Healey the healer? GBG lodges members concerns to Chancellor on the impact of proposed MGD increase

TAXATION

The **Gambling Business Group** has written to Chancellor John Healey expressing “genuine concern” on behalf of members regarding a potential hike in MGD in the upcoming Budget, highlighting the numerous ways in which the increase would impact land-based venues as well as pubs, and “fly in the face of the Government’s growth agenda.”

The Gambling Business Group has written to Chancellor John Healey urging him to disregard proposals to increase MGD in the upcoming Budget, warning that any increase would have a devastating impact on jobs, local communities, and the sector’s total tax contribution.

In a letter sent on 8 September, CEO Peter Hannibal identified the negative impact the rise would have, particularly at a time when changes to local licensing authority powers and the uncertain economic climate are causing widespread damage to the gaming and amusement industry.

“Land-based gambling businesses are still struggling to recover post-Covid,” said Hannibal. “The added impact of employer NIC and NMW rises, inflation and the highest energy costs on record have led to the closure of businesses (over 500 betting shops alone since the



last Budget, with more closures pending), which flies in the face of the Government’s growth agenda.”

“From your discussions with the DCMS, I am sure that you are aware of the impact on our Members’ businesses and the wider land-based community if the rates of MGD were to rise.”

The letter lists the ways in which increasing MGD will adversely affect the sector, including closed pubs, gaming venues, and bingo halls, a drop in employment, vacant high street premises, and a reduction in the £4bn total tax currently delivered to the Treasury.

“The other big risk of regulated businesses clos-

ing is the migration to illegal gambling. If more premises are forced to close for economic reasons (or are refused to be allowed to open in the first place), then more consumers will turn to online gambling, which brings them one step closer to the growing online illegal gambling market.”

High street exit on the cards

Peter Hannibal said...

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Welsh tourist hotspot forced to pull back on visitor levy following fierce local objections

TOURIST TAX

The Plaid Cymru-controlled Gwynedd Council has suspended plans to introduce a Tourist Tax after a “heated” debate among cabinet members and a record 4,500 objections from local residents.

The authority had proposed a nightly charge of £1.30 for hotel and B&B stays and a 75p charge for hostels and campsites, however the vociferous response from visitors caused councillors to postpone the decision.

“It’s clear the council were surprised that the people who will actually have to pay the tax oppose it,” said UK Hospitality CEO Allen Simpson. “They shouldn’t be. Holiday-makers and people who work in the holiday industry know how silly this idea is.”

“Councils should see this as a warning - introduce a tourism tax and you should expect to lose one of your biggest industries to areas that don’t. And then you can explain to your residents why you thought that taxing away their jobs was a good idea.”



Gambling Commission redefines “informed choice” following latest “rapid desk review”

REGULATION

The Gambling Commission has updated its interpretation of “informed choice” following research undertaken through the Consumer Voice Programme by the regulator’s Behavioural Insights Team, proposing a new “consumer-led” definition.

The research, which consisted of a “rapid desk review” of 53 sources, three focus groups, and four “in-depth interviews,” extends the existing understanding of the term beyond fairness, transparency and the provision of clear



information.

“This research proposes a consumer-centred definition of Informed Choice to guide future work,” said a spokesperson. “Informed choice in gambling is a consumer’s ongoing ability to understand and act on information relevant to their decisions at each stage of play.”

“Rules, odds, mechanics, costs and risks should be presented with the same prominence as promotions and rewards, in ways consumers can understand and use. Information and support should adapt to a consumer’s experience, capability and changing circumstances, alongside a com-

mitment to protecting consumers, particularly those at greater risk of harm.”

The report adds that informed choice is “shaped by the wider information environment before play” and can be “undermined during play by product design, pace and emotional state.”

“This definition extends current approaches by treating informed choice as an ongoing state rather than a pre-play decision, emphasising understanding over information availability alone, strengthening the role of gambling companies in consumer protection, and recognising differences in literacy, capability and risk.”