

Scrutiny Committee  
meeting  
Southampton

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Gambling Commission

# The role of the Commission

- Established by the Gambling Act 2005 as the national regulator for gambling
- Our 'parent' department being DCMS
- We issue operator licences, as well as management licences for senior management staff across the industry and personal functional licences for certain staff in casinos eg. croupiers
- We issue Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice (LCCP) for all operators to follow. Most of these are obligatory and failure to comply can result in sanctions. Ultimately it can include the loss of an operator licence. LCCP relies on the powers enabled by the Act

# The role of the Commission

- We are co-regulators of the Act with local authorities – of which more in a minute
- We have certain powers to deal with illegality in gambling – although very often other agencies such as police and HMRC are actually best suited. It is case by case as to who has the most appropriate powers. Having said that:-
- Football-themed website Sorare.com is due to appear in court next week charged with providing unlicensed gambling facilities to consumers in Britain. The hearing, which is being prosecuted by the Gambling Commission, will take place at 10am on 4 October at Birmingham Magistrates' Court. Sorare is charged with providing facilities for gambling without holding an operating licence contrary to [section 33\(1\), \(4\), and section 36\(3\), \(3A\) of the Gambling Act 2005 \(opens in new tab\)](#).
- Most activity happens under the radar!
- Tens of millions of pounds in regulatory settlements have been imposed over the last few years on operators

# The regulatory framework

- So, we are co-regulators. You issue premises licences, permits and permissions and we issue operator licences.
- However there is very considerable overlap. For example, an illegal casino/poker club network in the Hampshire region was closed down by us working together with a number of LAs, a current similar set up in the NW that we are working on , and illegal machine suppliers is another example. Ongoing case In Sandwell.
- We are also a responsible authority in terms of applications for gambling premises, so we have the power to make a representation against an application for a premises. We do this to establish principle and precedent.
- We publish the Guidance to Licensing Authorities – a statutory document – which tends to form the backbone of your own Statement of Gambling Policy.
- We also publish the three monthly Licensing Authority Bulletin, hold a regular nationwide Teams meeting for all LAs to keep them updated and discuss matters of mutual interest, as well as publish various quick guides and inspection templates
- We also handle many queries from individual LAs on a very regular basis

# The regulatory framework

- As mentioned GC has a range of sanctions – that includes regulatory settlements (fines), imposing conditions on an operator licence, suspension or withdrawal of an operator licence.
- As I noted before the majority of this happens under the radar
- Monitoring – operators are required to submit quarterly returns to us of certain data. We also conduct inspections of premises and online operators. We receive consumer info and intel as well as from other agencies such as police and HMRC.
- The majority of cases in the last few years have related to AML and social responsibility issues
- On occasion other agencies are the most appropriate to deal with a case – that might be the ASA or the ICO for example with whom we work closely.

# The protection of consumers and the promotion of responsible gambling

- This is a 2 way street. Tools for consumers and measures by operators.
- Self exclusion schemes for consumers – enable them to opt in
- Setting limits to spend for consumers – opt in
- Blocking gambling payments with banks – opt in
- Blocking exposure to gambling adverts via social media – opt in
- Operators to identify activity which suggests problematic gambling behaviour and intervene - obligatory
- Operators to work further to identify source of funds for gambling - obligatory

# *Possible/impending changes*

- GamProtect – single customer view for online gambling (GC)
- Further Public Health engagement (DCMS/GC/LAs)
- LA fees (DCMS)
- Liberalisation of machines ratios for AGCs, bingo premises and casinos (DCMS)
- Changes to the gaming machines technical standards (GC)
- Changes to LA powers regarding gambling machines in pubs (DCMS)
- Something similar to the Cumulative Impact Assessments (which is deployed for alcohol premises) applied for gambling premises (DCMS)

# With thanks to Southampton's licensing team

- A demonstration of how a licensing team works with the GC
- Whether that be cruise ships or pubs (on the latter the age verification testing)
- However the next challenge is the revisions to the Act and changes to Guidance to Licensing Authorities and your own Statement of Gambling Policy
- Also to further engage Public Health partners in gambling harms data and interventions for our most vulnerable citizens
- Potential gambling related cumulative impact assessments as is the case for pubs
- Despite the enormous financial pressures faced as an LA, to ensure that gambling is crime free and we protect the young and vulnerable