

Annex D - Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility - Submission template

Name:

Organisation: Newcastle City Council

For all respondents:

Q1. What, if any, changes in maximum stakes and/or prizes across the different categories of gaming machines support the Government's objective set out in this document? Please provide evidence to support this position.

In the Authority's opinion a reduction in maximum stakes or prizes would dis-incentive the use of FOBTs which appear to be in high demand in betting premises and have led to clustering in order to supply and increase machine availability. By reducing stakes and prizes the Authority believe that this would positively shift operational style from machine based betting to the traditional intention and reduce clustering and high concentration. Attached are maps and statistical information showing the clustering of betting shops in Newcastle City Centre and South Heaton ward of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Q2. To what extent have industry measures on gaming machines mitigated harm or improved player protections and mitigated harm to consumers and communities? Please provide evidence to support this position.

Industry measures in the view of the Authority have positively controlled betting and potential issues improving player protection. The restrictions imposed to restrict gambling on machines and to require staff interaction undoubtedly will mitigate harm and the subsequent effect this may have on socio-economic measures away from the premises. The Authority cannot evidence that this has had a positive effect on problem gamblers and protecting vulnerable persons however.

Q3. What other factors should Government be considering to ensure the correct balance in gaming machine regulation? Please provide evidence to support this position.

The Authority support the proposal to reduce the stakes or prizes of gaming machines located in licensed betting premises. Higher stake machines should in the Authority's opinion be limited to licensed casino premises. Regard should additionally be had to the implementation of Cumulative Impact policies in respect of gambling premises on a whole and specific to certain types / categories of premises (see research published by Responsible Gambling Trust - 2015 which confirmed that '*areas close to betting shops tend towards higher levels of crime events, resident deprivation, unemployment and ethnic diversity.*').

Q4. What, if any, changes in the number and location of current gaming machine allocations support the Government's objective set out in this document? Please provide evidence to support this position.

Higher stakes machines are currently too readily available via betting premises (on the high street). The Authority is of the opinion that these machines should be restricted in availability to casino premises only.

Q5. What has been the impact of social responsibility measures since 2013, especially on vulnerable consumers and communities with high levels of deprivation?

This has evidently and correctly imposed social responsibility on operators to improve awareness and to recognise their responsibilities for identifying vulnerable persons and talking safeguarding measures. Inspections of premises has seen risk assessments in place and evidenced by logs of customer interaction and remedial measures taken. Guidance for trade and operators could be improved and responsibilities more clear and prescribed.

Q6. Is there anything further that should be considered to improve social responsibility measures across the industry? Please provide evidence to support this position.

Key to this would be the implementation of Cumulative Impact to recognise social responsibility / socio-economic issues specific to a locality. Improved trade uniformity in policies and procedures to avoid barring from one licensed premises and later failing to be recognised and addressed at another licensed premises (similar to self exclusion schemes).

Q7. Is there any evidence on whether existing rules on gambling advertising are appropriate to protect children and vulnerable people from the possible harmful impact of gambling advertising?

Advertising of gambling is in the Authority's view increasingly prevalent in normal society increasing exposure to children and vulnerable persons. This however cannot be evidenced by the Authority.

Q8. Any other relevant issues, supported by evidence that you would like to raise as part of this review but that has not been covered by questions 1-7?

Newcastle City Council has sought to provide evidence using statistical data together with mapping of betting premises combined with 2016 crime and disorder overview.