

Bingo in clubs and alcohol licensed premises

Bingo is a class of equal chance gaming that will be permitted on Alcohol licensed premises, and in clubs and miners' welfare institutes, under the allowances for exempt gaming in Part 12 of the Act. These allowances replace what was permitted by section 6 and Part II (clubs) of the Gaming Act 1968. There will be regulations setting controls on this form of gaming, to ensure it remains a low-level activity.

In addition, new rules are laid down in the Act about the playing of bingo specifically in alcohol-licensed premises, clubs and miners' welfare institutes. Where the level of bingo played in these premises, under the exempt gaming allowances, reaches a certain threshold, it will no longer be authorised by these allowances, and a bingo operating licence will have to be obtained from the Commission for future bingo games. The aim of these provisions is to prevent bingo becoming a predominant commercial activity on such non-gambling premises.

The threshold is that if the bingo played during any seven day period exceeds £2,000 (either in money taken or prizes awarded), all further games of bingo played on those premises for the next 12 months will require an operating licence to be legal. This applies to future games which are over the threshold of £2,000. If, after a single incidence of "high turnover" bingo, all further games are below the threshold, no operating licence is needed. There is a legal duty on the licensee or club to inform the Commission if at any point its bingo in any seven-day period exceeds this threshold. That allows the Commission to monitor the bingo activity on the premises, and discuss with the relevant licensee or club the need to obtain a bingo operating licence.

If it comes to the attention of licensing authorities that alcohol-licensed premises or clubs or institutes are playing bingo during the course of a week which involves significant stakes and prizes, that makes it possible that the £2,000 in seven days is being exceeded, authorities should inform the Commission.

Gambling Commission:- Guidance to Local Authorities April 2007