



Parliamentary
All Party
Betting & Gaming Group

Press Release

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The Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group (APBGG) publishes the results of its Investigation into the Competence and Effectiveness into the Gambling Commission. From the evidence submitted it is clear that we are dealing with a seriously under-performing regulator that has acted beyond its powers, is in breach of almost all the Regulators Code and is incompetent and ineffective in its duties to the industry it regulates. The APBGG demands a significant change in the Gambling Commission's culture, strategy and practices.

Westminster, London: Today, the Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group (APBGG) publishes the results of its Investigation into the Competence and Effectiveness of the Gambling Commission.

Motivated by the anecdotal evidence the Group had heard from operators about the Commission's alleged poor performance, conscious of their concerns that there was no way to complain about it apart from via the Commission itself and mindful that there was palpable fear that if operators complained, the Commission would respond with arbitrary punishment, the Group invited submissions via their website and promised anonymity. Based on the stories we have heard, the complaints could be categorised into ultra vires, where the Commission has acted beyond its powers, alleged breaches of the Regulators' Code and examples of incompetence and ineffectiveness.

We received a significant number of submissions and would like to express our gratitude to those operators and advisers brave enough to do so.

As can be seen in the report, the results of the investigation are condemning of the Commission. We have numerous examples where the Commission is clearly over stepping its powers and conducting itself in a way that no regulator should or as was intended when the Commission was created by the Gambling Act 2005. The Commission has allegedly committed multiple breaches of almost all the sections of the Regulator's Code and to add insult to injury, appears to be offering the British gambling industry, an incredibly poor level of service often combined with incompetence and a basic lack of knowledge of the industry it regulates.

From the evidence we have seen, we believe that the Gambling Commission has become imbibed with an overtly anti-gambling ideology and is actively seeking to 'get the industry'.

From the evidence we have seen, we believe that the Gambling Commission has turned into what appears to be an industry-funded anti-gambling activist group.

We believe the regulator has gone 'rogue' and this anti-gambling culture comes from the top and permeates down and is even a reason for recruiting staff.

We also believe that unless the Gambling Commission grasps the opportunity of having a new Chair and CEO and resetting its strategy, focus and culture, if left unchecked, the Commission will destroy one of the most reputable gambling industries in the world and will force tens of thousands of people, some extremely vulnerable, into the illegal black market where they will get no protection from criminality or problem gambling.

We call on the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Better Regulation Executive to take heed of this report, digest the multitude of examples of poor practice, consider our six recommendations and intervene to turn this regulator into a competent and effective one, which the British gambling industry and the public it serves truly deserve. We all just want a competent and effective regulator, which is definitely not what we have at the moment.

Upon publishing the results of the Investigation into the Competence and Effectiveness of the Gambling Commission, Scott Benton MP, Co-Chair of the Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group said:

'As Co-Chair of the All Party Betting and Gaming Group, I am truly shocked to reveal so much evidence of bad practice by the Gambling Commission over the years. We have been hearing stories for years, but to

see it in black and white is pretty stark. To think that members of our gambling industry, one of the most reputable in the world, who pay the Commission's wages, have had to suffer such poor service from their regulator is of the utmost concern. Especially as it acts like it is an anti-gambling group, whose sole purpose is to destroy the industry. The Commission has been captured by ideological zealots who can't seem to understand that the majority of citizens of this country enjoy their gambling and do so happily. We of course want to support those who suffer from gambling addiction but this shouldn't be done so through excessive and unnecessary over-regulation that will force many into the arms of the black market. We call on the Commission and its sponsor, DDCMS, to make changes fast or we fear for the worst. As Co-Chair of the All Party Betting and Gaming Group, I pledge that our Group will do everything in its power to keep up the pressure on the Commission and DDCMS as to do nothing, to ignore the contents of our report, is to sentence the British gambling industry to certain demise and thousands of people into the trauma of being pushed into the black market.'

Copies of the Investigation into the Competence and Effectiveness into the Gambling Commission can be found at the APBGG website: www.apbgg.org

The Parliamentary All-Party Betting & Gaming Group was set up by a group of Parliamentarians, who had taken part in the numerous debates on what would become the Gambling Act 2005. They wished to continue their interest in the British gambling industry and have over the years become respected as some of the most knowledgeable Parliamentarians on the subject.

Members of the Group are often the main contributors to any gambling debate in either House and their views are highly regarded in Westminster, Whitehall and Downing Street. The Group maintains a view that gambling should be legal and well-regulated but beyond that, encompasses a wide spectrum of beliefs into the extent and scope of gambling provision that should be allowed. Above all the Group wishes to engage with the stakeholders in the UK gambling industry, learn from them to educate the debate, while maintaining an independence of views.

Notes for Editors:

1. This is not an official press release of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its Committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues.
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