

ABB Newsletter

Welcome from Paul Darling QC, Chairman of the ABB



I am very pleased to be able to welcome so many new members to the ABB, and this now includes 93 independent operators. I look forward to working with and meeting with you all in the coming months.

It was good to meet so many members at our AGM in March, held at Altitude London. One of the things I said was that this industry is about the people who work in it. I vividly remember being outside Downing Street with the betting shop managers delivering the million signature petition. I realised then that the job I had agreed to do was worth doing. The passion and commitment of the people who work in our shops is amazing. I look forward to making sure that passion and commitment is heard loudly and clearly in Westminster after the General Election, so whatever decisions are made by whichever Government are made on the basis of the facts and the evidence.



*Paul Darling QC
ABB Chairman*

Right to Bet

In this year's Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced plans for a right to bet on horseracing. This followed what was only a four week consultation by the Government.

The ABB's response was prominent in all [the media coverage of this announcement](#), and we are clear that this is an idea that is unworkable. In our statement we said:

"Our members already pay 10.75% of their gross profits from their UK horseracing business to Racing and, together with media rights and sponsorship, the transfer from our members to Racing is some £248m, an incredible amount that has to be enough.

It is therefore incredibly disappointing that DCMS and Racing appear to suggest 10.75% is a "low estimate" and that the Impact Assessment accompanying the Consultation models a 50% GPT rate, an increase of close to 500%.



We are concerned that the fact that Racing has not sought to publically distance itself from the modelled rates shows the very real danger of Racing over-pricing the Right resulting in yet more litigation. We do however believe in a continued sensible dialogue with Racing to try and achieve a solution that meets the concerns of both these great industries."

New Members

It is great to welcome many new members to the ABB. They are:

Afton Bookmakers
 Bet Extra
 Cloverdale Racing
 College Racing
 Geoff Banks
 Longville Racing
 Noble Leisure
 Moorfield Racing
 N Charles Bookmakers
 Scotbet

Election manifestos

The new measures for gaming machines came into effect on April 6th. The regulation requires any customer who wishes to stake £50 or more on a gaming machine to load money at the counter, or through account based play.

The ABB team have attended staff training sessions held by our members, to fully understand what happens when you try to play more than £50 and how staff will deal with the issue. We also coordinated visits by the Gambling Commission to several shops in Birmingham to see the measures in place, and will be doing the same with officials from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and we've [published articles on the subject](#).



However, the industry faces enormous challenges in the coming year for gaming machines that cannot be ignored, following the publication of political party manifestos for the General Election. The key points for the industry are:

Labour: "Communities will be able to review betting shop licenses in their area and reduce the number of fixed-odds betting terminals in existing betting shops – or ban them entirely – in response to local concerns."

UKIP: "We will update licensing laws in response to calls from local authorities to limit the maximum stake on fixed-odds betting terminals from £100 down to £2, to tackle problem gambling and anti-social behaviour."

Lib Dem: "Protect high streets and consumers by granting new powers to Local Authorities to reduce the proliferation of betting shops and substantially reducing the maximum stakes for Fixed Odds Betting Terminals".

Conservative: *"We have already introduced tougher regulation of gambling, with enhanced player protections and planning controls to prevent the further proliferation of high street betting shops."*

SNP: *"There is no doubt that Fixed Odds Betting Terminals cause harm and hardship in communities across Scotland. That's why the Scottish Government needs legislative powers to control the growth and impact of these machines, and we believe the UK government should devolve these powers in full. The problem of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals is linked to the proliferation of betting shops in some communities and so we will continue to argue for Scotland to have full responsibility for the regulation of gambling."*

Scottish Labour: *"We will use the powers from the Smith Commission to stop the spread of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals and we will set up a commission to examine the impact of gambling in deprived communities across Scotland. We will: Give new powers for communities to shape their high streets, including over payday lenders and fixed odds betting terminals."*

Robbery: Odds On You'll Get Caught

We held a successful event with Merseyside Police in March for the "Robbery – Odds On You'll Get Caught" campaign, at the Coral shop in Church Street, Liverpool.



The event was timed for the week of the Cheltenham Festival and ahead of the Grand National and attended by ABB members and Superintendent Jenny Simms who said *"Betting shops are not the easy targets that criminals in the past may have thought they were. We have been working closely with the industry over a number of months to introduce enhanced security measures and make sure that bookmakers hold the lowest possible amount of cash on the premises."*

All bookmakers in the area received copies of the updated campaign posters. Radio City, City Talk, BBC Radio Merseyside and Juice FM all came to the launch of the poster campaign along with the [Liverpool Echo newspaper](#).

We also supported the launch of a Betwatch scheme in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. PC Kam Samra from the Soho Road neighbourhood team launched the initiative and customers who engage in anti-social or abusive behaviour can be banned from all 12 bookmakers, as well as risking a criminal record. Staff from the businesses involved can also alert each other of suspicious activity and advise each other of customers who could prove problematic.

"Much of our work is about protecting the staff who work at these premises from the minority of trouble makers. To use a betting phrase - if you intend to cause trouble at a Handsworth betting shop then the odds are stacked against you," said PC Samra.



We've also published articles on the Politics Home website about [working in partnership with police](#) and how the [Safe Bet Alliance is protecting customers and staff from crime](#).

Self-Exclusion

By April 2016, the Gambling Commission will expect to see a nation-wide, cross-industry self-exclusion scheme operating. As part of the work towards this, the ABB sits on the Multi-Operator Self Exclusion Panel that is developing paperless systems.

Alongside the current pilot scheme taking place in Chatham, which was launched in December and allows someone who self-excludes from one shop to automatically be excluded from the other participating shops in the town centre, a digital pilot will soon launch in Glasgow and work is currently underway on introducing the blocking of debit cards by someone who has been excluded.

Gamble Aware Week Update

Just over 8.500 shops took part in Gamble Aware Week (GAW) earlier this year, which aimed to raise the awareness of our customers in the player protection measures in place. Our local and national media coverage reached an audience just in excess of 1.5million. The ABB team spent several days packaging up and posting thousands of posters and leaflets to our independent members and it was good to see so many shops with the yellow posters in their windows.



During the week, the number of people setting limits rose by over 300%, showing the success of the information push by shop staff and while that number has dropped off, weekly limit setting still remain stable. Customers fed back to shop staff that they liked the simple GAW information leaflets as they were so easy to understand.

As well as the new setting limits function, GAW highlighted the local free counselling available for problem gamblers around the country. The National Gambling Helpline saw a 50% increase in calls during January, and the numbers have remained at a significantly higher level in the last two months.

The ABB also worked with two of GamCare's counselling partners to set up drop-in centres for problem gamblers. Beacon Counselling Trust ran a drop-in centre in Liverpool while Breakeven Counselling ran one in Brighton and another in Eastbourne. Shop staff from participating operators – William Hill, Ladbrokes, Coral and Paddy Power - said that meeting with the local GamCare counselling teams had been very helpful for staff as they had not been aware that free help was available locally when their customers called the National Gambling Helpline.

Customers and members of the public interacted well with the trained counsellors in the more informal environment of the drop-in centres, taking away information packs. A significant number arranged for more formal interviews and referrals to the local services increased from around 4 or 5 a week to 25-30 as a result of the increased publicity.

ABB Contact details

Association of British Bookmakers, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PP

020 7434 2111 mail@abb.uk.com

Martin Cruddace, Interim Chief Executive
Hilary Douglas, Campaign Director
Peter Craske, PR Manager
Ursula Servis, Public Affairs Manager
Lauren Hilton, Public Affairs Executive
Nicola Thompson, Office Manager

020 7432 7601 / martincruddace@abb.uk.com
020 7432 7602 / hilarydouglas@abb.uk.com
020 7432 7606 / petercraske@abb.uk.com
020 7432 7609 / ursulaservis@abb.uk.com
020 7432 7608 / laurenhilton@abb.uk.com
020 7 434 2111 / nicolathompson@abb.uk.com

Did you know the ABB has provided our independent members with Think 21 badges, posters and leaflets as part of our commitment to increase pass rates on age verification testing?

