Parliamentary

All Party

Betting & Gaming Group

Press Release

## Embargoed until Midnight 29/10/21

## **The Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group extends the deadline of its** **inquiry into the competence and effectiveness of the regulator of British gambling, the Gambling Commission (UKGC).**

### Overwhelmed by the volume and severity of the evidence submitted to its investigation into the competence and effectiveness of the gambling industry’s regulator, the UKGC, the Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group has today extended the deadline for submissions from the 31st October to the 1st December 2021. Any operators and their advisers who are yet to submit their evidence are invited to contribute.

**Westminster, London**: Today, the Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group (APBGG) announced that due to the amount of evidence being submitted and the seriousness of the alleged actions by the UKGC, it is extending the deadline of its inquiry by another month. The inquiry was initiated due to the All Party Group receiving so many criticisms of the regulator from members of the industry that the Group felt that the comments made about the UKGC in the reports issued by the Public Accounts Committee, National Audit Office and House of Lords Select Committee on the Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry in 2020 did not cover the full breadth of the allegations they had heard made against it. The results of the independent investigation into the collapse of Football Index further compounded their view that the regulator was definitely not as ‘world beating’ as the regulator regularly likes to claim.

The APBGG is inviting all UK licensed operators and their advisers who haven’t yet done so, to go to the website ([www.apbgg.org](http://www.apbgg.org)) and submit any evidence they have of the Gambling Commission acting in a way they feel is unacceptable of an industry regulator.

The APBGG have categorised the types of complaint that may be submitted:

* Where it is felt that the Gambling Commission has acted *Ultra Vires* – or beyond the powers of a regulator
* Where it is felt that the Gambling Commission has acted in breach of the Regulators Code - a code of conduct for industry regulators enforced by the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006
* Where it is felt that the Gambling Commission has provided to the industry a level of service that is either of poor quality and/or incompetently delivered to a level that brings into question its ability to adequately function

On the website, the APBGG provides examples of allegations made against the UKGC that they have heard over the last few years. The APBGG is particularly concerned that members of the industry may be too scared to publicly criticise the UKGC due to its power over them and that the only way to submit a complaint against the UKGC is to submit a complaint to the UKGC. The APBGG is therefore providing a platform for criticisms and complaints to be made in an anonymous manner. Industry members will have to declare themselves on their submissions so that the APBGG can verify their veracity but all submissions will then be anonymised. Anyone who submits evidence will be able to view the report pre-publication to confirm their comfort in the level of anonymity provided.

**The new deadline for submissions is 1st December 2021**

The APBGG shall be writing a report to present its findings and will submit this to:

* to the DCMS Review of the Gambling Act
* to whichever Minister in BEIS holds responsibility for the oversight of industry regulators
* publication on the APBGG website to have the report distributed to whoever wants it
* the CEO of the Gambling Commission who has agreed to attend an invited industry audience meeting of the Group to respond to the report.

Upon extending the deadline of the Investigation, Scott Benton MP, Co-Chair of the Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group said:

‘We have been shocked by two things since we launched this investigation, the sheer scale and severity of evidence that has been submitted to us and the abject terror that the industry has of recriminations by the regulator. Much of our efforts so far have been of assuring operators and their advisors of their anonymity. Without wishing to pre-judge the outcome of our investigation it does appear that this regulator has not been acting like any normal regulator for quite some time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have submitted evidence of what is showing to be numerous examples of often incredibly tortuous, arbitrary and expensive dealings with the UKGC and reiterate our promise of absolute anonymity to any remaining operators or advisors to submit their experiences without any fear of retribution. As a Group we stand wholeheartedly behind the British gambling industry’s desire to be well regulated by a competent and fair regulator.’

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.
2. Press enquiries should be made through the relevant part of the website: https://www.apbgg.org/press-enquiries
3. Contact details for the Parliamentary All Party Betting & Gaming Group are:

Public Enquiry Point:

Steve Donoughue

Email: sdonoughue@gamblingconsultant.co.uk

Parliamentary Registered Contact:

Mr Scott Benton MP

Office of Scott Benton MP,

Lancaster House,

Amy Johnson Way,

Blackpool,

FY4 2RP.

Tel: 01253 361 350