

PRESS RELEASE

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New gambling watchdog launched

The Gambling Commission, the new independent regulator for gambling in Britain, is formally launched on 1 October 2005.

The establishment of the Commission brings the control of different types of gambling together for the first time. It takes over the role previously played by the Gaming Board for Great Britain in regulating casinos, bingo, gaming machines and lotteries, and will also have responsibility for regulating betting and remote gambling. Its core objectives as a regulator are to keep crime out, to ensure that gambling is conducted fairly and openly, and to protect children and vulnerable people.

The Gambling Commission will advise both central and local government on gambling in Britain. It is fully independent, operating at arms' length from government and will be funded mainly by income generated from licence fees. It has been established under the Gambling Act 2005, which comes fully into force in 2007.

Richard Caborn, Minister responsible for gambling regulation, hailed the launch of the Commission as the start of a new era: "The Gambling Commission will work to three key principles laid down in the Gambling Act - keeping out crime, protecting children and the vulnerable and ensuring gambling is fair. It will do so armed with new powers to investigate, prosecute and levy unlimited fines. I'm confident that the Commission will be seen as a model for gambling regulation around the world in the years to come."

Commission Chairman Peter Dean said: "The launch of the Gambling Commission is a major milestone in the most radical overhaul of gambling in half a century.

“The Gambling Act 2005 is significantly updating the laws governing gambling. It will be the Commission’s job to make sure that those laws are obeyed, and that gambling in Britain is fair, safe and socially responsible.

“The provisions of the new Act come into force in stages between now and 2007. One of the first tasks for the Commission will therefore be to ensure that the new licences and codes of practice governing gambling which will be issued under the Act best meet the interests of both the public and the industry. We have already been working with gambling industry organisations and bodies such as Responsibility in Gambling Trust and GamCare during the drafting of these regulations, and will be consulting formally on them early next year.

“We will be monitoring the gambling industry, both under the current regulations and, in time, under the new Act. The Commission will have legal powers to levy fines or revoke licences, and to investigate and prosecute illegal gambling.

“We will also be launching a major new national study of the prevalence and social impact of gambling in Britain, which will help us ensure that government policy can respond to the changing patterns of participation in gambling and any concerns that it may cause.”

The Gambling Commission will be moving to a new head office in Birmingham early next year.

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Notes to editors

1. For press enquiries or to request an interview, please contact Jo O’Driscoll on 020 7306 6265 or 07802 181249, email j.odriscoll@gamblingcommission.gov.uk.
2. The Gambling Commission regulates gambling in the public interest. It does so by keeping crime out of gambling, by ensuring that gambling is conducted fairly and openly, and by protecting children and vulnerable people. The Commission also provides independent advice to government on gambling in Britain.
3. The Commission will not, however, license or regulate either the National Lottery or spread betting, which will remain, respectively, the responsibility of the National Lottery Commission and the Financial Services Authority.
4. Commissioners are:

Peter Dean CBE (Chairman); Jenny Williams (Chief Executive); Ben Gunn CBE QPM; Bill Knight; Robert Lockwood JP; Gill Milburn JP; Roy Penrose OBE QPM; Eve Salomon; Michael Steen
5. Further information from www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk.