

## *PRESS RELEASE*

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# **Talarius gets behind blanket ban on smoking**

**Nick Harding, CEO of Talarius plc, owners of the 167-strong Quicksilver chain of Adult Gaming Centres (AGC), has given his support for the introduction of a total ban on smoking across all sectors of the hospitality business and in so doing bring the proposed law in England in line with legislation being introduced in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.**

In a statement he urged: "It's imperative that we have a level playing field for business and for health. It would be ludicrous if a Bill which is promoted as protecting the health of workers, allows some to be exposed to smoke simply on the basis that their place of work doesn't serve food: it is a fatuous argument incapable of standing up to any level of scrutiny. I believe that most of the hospitality sector recognises that smoking is history and want to get on with the task of running smoke-free businesses."

Quicksilver, which is the UK's largest chain of AGC's with a 17 per cent market share, has been preparing for a smoking ban for over two years. One of its London sites has been operating a smoke-free policy since the Autumn and the impact on key performance indicators such as foot fall, length of visit, frequency and spend per head has allayed some early fears: "Income dropped initially but quickly came back," acknowledged Commercial Director Byron Evans. "We are now operating at a significantly higher level than before we introduced the ban."

75 per cent of gamblers class themselves as smokers and Quicksilver will not be ignoring those of its customers who choose to light up. Plans are in place to introduce continental-style, heated, outdoor smoking areas wherever feasible and the company is investigating the practicalities of dispensing stop smoking aids such as patches, inhalators and nicotine replacement chewing gum from the sites.

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