

# Industry leaders criticise level of gambling licence fees

Industry leaders have expressed disappointment at the high level of gambling licence fees set by the Government.

The Gambling (Premises Licence) (Fees) Regulations 2007, tabled in Parliament on 21 February, shows only a modest decrease from the fees proposed in last year, which were labelled “preposterous” by Business in Sport and Leisure (BISL).

Premises licence fees for gambling will be significantly higher than those for liquor licensing – for example a bingo club that would pay an annual fee of GBP 350 for liquor will have to pay up to GBP 1,000 for gambling.

The BISL has urged ministers to stress to local authorities that these levels are maximum fees and should not be used as a barometer of what must be charged.

Brigid Simmonds, chief executive of the industry group, said: “It makes no sense for gambling premises licence fees to be so significantly higher than those for liquor licensing as the two regulatory regimes are very similar.

“In his review of licensing fees, Sir Les Elton made clear that fees should only cover the cost of licensing and not any subsidiary local authority function. We are disappointed that this has not been reflected in the fee levels set for gambling.”