EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE GAMING (GAMING MACHINES IN REGISTERED CLUBS) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2025

S.R. 2025 No. 22

1. Introduction

1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the .Department for Communities to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under Article 106(5) of the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

2.1. These Regulations make provision for increasing the maximum prize entitlement in respect of any one game played by means of a gaming machine in a registered club.

3. Background

3.1. Regulation 1 provides for the title and commencement.

3.2. Regulation 2 sets a new maximum prize entitlement in respect of any one game played by means of a gaming machine in a registered club of £400.

3.3. Regulation 3 revokes The Gaming (Bingo (Amendment) and Gaming Machine (Registered Clubs)) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, removing the lower prize limit of £250.

4. Consultation

4.1. In December 2019, the Department for Communities launched a public consultation on the regulation of gambling in Northern Ireland. The consultation, which ran until February 2020, sought the public's views on the appropriateness of current gambling law here. This was to help identify areas of betting, gaming, lottery and amusement activity that might be included in any future primary and secondary legislation.

4.2. A clear majority of respondents expressed support for increases on monetary limits for stakes and prizes for high stakes and high prize gaming in registered clubs. A report on the results of the consultation and a summary of the responses received can be found on the Department's website - here:-https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/communities/dfc-consultation-regulation-gambling-survey-report.pdf

5. Equality Impact

5.1. In accordance with its duty under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, the Department conducted a screening exercise on the overall policy for

increasing stakes, prize, limits etc proposals and concluded that they did not have significant implications for equality of opportunity and that an equality impact assessment was therefore not necessary.

5.2. The Department specifically screened this policy to increase the maximum prize for any one game played by way of gaming machine in a registered club and concluded that they did not have significant implications for equality of opportunity and that an equality impact assessment was therefore not necessary.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1. The Department included in its consideration the potential regulatory impacts of these regulations as part of a regulatory impact screening exercise carried out on its overall policy proposals for the reform of betting, gaming, lotteries and amusements law. This concluded that no Regulatory Impact Assessment was required.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. There are no financial implications arising from the implementation of this regulation.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. The Department is satisfied that these Regulations comply with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (conventions, rights, etc).

9. EU Implications

9.1. Not applicable

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1. The nearest corresponding regulations in Great Britain are the Gaming Machine (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocation) Regulations 2018, The Gaming Machines (Circumstances of Use) Regulations 2007 and the Categories of Gaming Machine Regulations 2007.

10.2. Gaming machines in Great Britain are defined by different categories to Northern Ireland under the Gambling Act 2005. The machines in use in premises in Northern Ireland are broadly similar to B2, B3, B4 and C category machines that operate in Great Britain. B2 category machines in Great Britain are only permitted in casinos, betting shops and tracks with pool betting. B3 category machines are only permitted in casinos, betting shops, tracks with pool betting, bingo premises and adult gaming centres. B4 category machines are permitted in members clubs, miners welfare clubs and commerical clubs in Great Britain. The maximum prize entitlement in respect of any one game played by means of a B4 machine installed on such premises is £400. Category C machines are permitted in pubs and alcohol licensed premises, members' clubs and miner's welfare institutes in Great Britain. The maximum prize entitlement in respect of any one game played by means of a Catergory C machine installed on such premises is £100.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable