EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE GAMING (VARIATION OF MONETARY LIMITS) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2025

S.R. 2025 No. 2

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 Articles 77(4), 106(3) and 108(16) of the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and is subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

2.1. This Order makes provisions for increasing the maximum amounts that may be paid by any one person for a chance to win a prize by means of gaming on a bingo club premises and gaming by means of a gaming machine in a registered club, on licensed premises within the meaning of the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, any licensed office and machines installed on premises in respect of which an amusement permit is in force.

2.2. This Order makes further provision for increasing the maximum entitlement to prizes for gaming on a bingo club premises, gaming by means of a gaming machine in a registered club, on licensed premises within the meaning of the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, any licensed office and machines installed on premises in respect of which an amusement permit is in force.

3. Background

3.1. Article 1 provides for the title and commencement.

3.2. Article 2 clarifies that all references to "the 1985 Order" in this Order means the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

3.3. Article 3 applies only to gaming which takes place on a bingo club premises. It does not apply to any gaming by means of a gaming machine that may take place at a bingo club.

3.4. For gaming that takes place at a bingo club other than by means of a gaming machine Article 3 increases:-
(a) the maximum amount that may be paid by any one person for any one chance to win a prize from £0.50 to £1;
(b) the limit on the maximum aggregate amount that may be taken by way of the sale of chances in any single determination of prize winners from £120 to £500;
(c) the maximum money prize from £25 to £100; and

(d) the limit on the aggregate amount or value of the prizes on any one determination of winners from £120 to £500.

3.5. Article 4 increases the maximum permitted charge for playing a game once by means of a gaming machine in a registered club from £0.50 to £2.

3.6. Article 5 increases the maximum charges for playing a game once by means of a gaming machine from:-
(a) £0.30 to £2 on a machine installed on a bingo club premises;
(b) £0.30 to £1 on a machine installed on a licensed premises within the meaning of The Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996;
(c) £0.30 to £2 on machine installed on a licensed office; and
(d) £0.30 to £2 on a machine installed on a premises for which there is an amusement permit in force.

3.7. Article 5 also increases the maximum entitlement to a money prize in respect of any one game played on a gaming machine from:-
(a) £25 to £500 on a machine installed on a bingo club premises;
(b) £25 to £100 on a machine installed on a licensed premises within the meaning of The Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996;
(c) £25 to £500 on machine installed on a licensed office; and
(d) £25 to £500 on a machine installed on a premises for which there is an amusement permit in force.

3.8. Article 6 revokes:-
(a) Article 4(a) of the Gaming (Variation of Monetary Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 1998(l) which relates to maximum charge for playing a game once and maximum entitlement to prizes in gaming by means of gaming machines in certain other premises ;
(b) Article 4 of the Gaming (Variation of Monetary Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 1999 maximum charge for playing a game once by means of a gaming machine in a registered club;
(c) Article 4 of the Gaming (Variation of Monetary Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2001 which relates to the conditions governing gaming for prizes on bingo club premises; and
(d) Articles 2 and 3 of the Gaming (Variation of Monetary Limits Order) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 which relate to maximum entitlement to prizes in gaming by means of a gaming machine on licensed premises to which paragraph 106(8), use of gaming machines in registered clubs, of the 1985 Order applies.

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 and for lotteries. 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. 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 this 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.

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 this Order complies 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 Great Britain legislation is 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. Under these regulations the maximum amount that may be paid by any one person for any one chance to win a prize at gaming, other than gaming by means of gaming machine, played at a commercial bingo club is £1. The maximum permitted prize is £100 and the maximum aggregate participation fees per game are £500 and aggregate prize fund (cash or in prize value) per game is £500.

10.3. 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. For B2 category machines in Great Britain (permitted in casinos, betting shops and tracks with pool betting) and B3 machines (permitted in casinos, betting shops, tracks with pool betting, bingo premises and adult gaming centres) the maximum stake limit is £2 and the maximum prize limit is £500. For B4 category machines in Great Britain (permitted in casinos, betting shops, tracks with pool betting, bingo premises, adult gaming centres and clubs) the maximum stake is £2 and the maximum prize is £400. For Category C machines in Great Britain (permitted in pubs and alcohol licensed premises and clubs) the maximum stake is £1 and the maximum prize is £100.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable