

JERSEY GAMBLING COMMISSION

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Gambling machine consultation

Restrictions on the use of low-stakes gambling machines will be eased following the results of a consultation by the Jersey Gambling Commission.

The responses to the consultation on gaming machines, which began in August, have backed adopting a UK-style policy on low-stakes machines – including allowing machines with payouts of up to £100 in pubs. Pubs are currently allowed to have gambling machines with payouts of up to £50.

Under further changes that will take effect later this month, private members clubs will also be given the option of having higher value machines with prizes of up to £250.

There were calls within the consultation to recognise the problems caused by machine gambling, so the commission is going to keep the cap on the number of machines allowed in premises at two, despite a majority of respondents favouring an increase. The Commission currently funds a dedicated support service for problem gamblers in Jersey at www.gamblingtherapy.je and has required all bookmakers to sign up to a voluntary self-exclusion system that allows compulsive gamblers to effectively ban themselves from bookies.

Jersey Gambling Commission chief executive Dr Jason Lane said: 'We are very grateful for the responses that we have had and would like to thank all of those who took part in the consultation.

'The changes that we are going to make in pubs would only allow the same kinds of machines that have been allowed in UK pubs and clubs for 30 plus years with no problems. As we said at the start of this process, these are low stakes machines that are more for entertainment than gambling.'

There were 15 responses to the eight-week consultation, including submissions from faith groups and the gambling industry.

The Commission has been running consultations on various elements of Jersey's gambling regulations as the process of reforming and modernising those regulations continues. The next consultation is likely to be on a licensing regime for commercial card clubs and commercial bingo.

About the Commission...

The Jersey Gambling Commission was established in September 2010 and is funded by licence fees, not the taxpayer. Its remit covers the regulation of gambling in the Island and advising the Economic Development Minister, Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel and the States on policy and legislation. It also operates a dedicated gambling therapy service for Jersey residents at www.gamblingtherapy.je. The commission works to three guiding principles enshrined in law, namely that gambling services should be conducted responsibly and with safeguards necessary to protect children and vulnerable people; that they should be regulated in accordance with generally accepted international standards to prevent fraud and money laundering, and should not be permitted to be a source of crime; and that they should be verifiably fair to consumers of those services.