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Press release

CMA secures changes from further gambling firm

The online gambling firm BGO has changed the terms of its promotions following a CMA investigation.

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Competition and Markets Authority (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority>)



BGO Entertainment Ltd has formally agreed to change the way it offers bonus promotions to customers playing casino-like games online. This means players will be able to access and release their own money.

This follows an investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), conducted in collaboration with the Gambling Commission, to make sure the £4.7 billion online gambling sector is not breaking consumer protection law in its promotions.

BGO has now given the CMA formal commitments that it will be clear in the terms and conditions of its bonus promotions, and that it will prominently flag any significant restrictions to players. It will not have terms which:

- Require people to play multiple times before allowing them to withdraw their own money
- Prevent them from withdrawing their full balance by minimum withdrawal limits
- Could oblige players to take part in publicity.

The commitments (<https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/online-gambling#further-online-gambling-firm-provide-undertakings-to-cma>) were made in response to the CMA's concerns that certain terms in these promotions were likely to be unfair, and that its practices could mislead consumers in breach of consumer protection law. This follows similar commitments given by 3 other operators - Ladbrokes, William Hill, and PT Entertainment – announced on 1 February 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gambling-sector-told-to-raise-its-game-after-cma-action>).

BGO has also separately agreed that it will not include terms which could be used to unfairly change promotions after players have opted in.

George Lusty, CMA Senior Director for Consumer Protection, said:

Gambling firms should not have terms that could be used to catch players out by unfairly changing their promotions after a customer has opted in.

We are therefore pleased that BGO has pledged to make these important changes. Following the CMA's action, the gambling industry is rightly taking steps to overhaul online terms and conditions that could be misleading or unfair.

Before entering into these commitments with the CMA, BGO had already made welcome changes to address some of the CMA's concerns – such as removing restrictions on winnings from cash deposits.

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter @CMAgovuk (<https://twitter.com/CMAgovUK>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CMAgovUK>), Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cma-gov-uk/>) and LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/3352301?trk=tyah&trkInfo=tas%3ACompetition%20and%20Markets%20Authority>).
2. The Gambling Commission regulates gambling in Great Britain in partnership with licensing authorities. It also regulates the National Lottery. Regulations are aimed at ensuring gambling is crime-free, fair and open and children and other vulnerable people are protected. It advises central and local government on the impact of gambling and its regulation. It holds operators to account; it ensures operators meet licensing standards and takes action against those that don't. It ensures that National Lottery returns to good causes are maximised.
3. The key pieces of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation are the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015.
4. The CMA opened an investigation (<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/594bccc7ed915d0baa000031/online-gambling-consumer-enforcement-case-information.pdf>) into the gambling sector's compliance with consumer protection law in October 2016 after hearing about a range of concerns that suggested some operators were not treating their customers fairly. This investigation heard from over 1,000 customers with concerns. The CMA investigation required companies to answer questions about how they operate, it closely examined the advertising and terms on a range of websites, and asked companies to give it demonstrations of the consumer journey and consumer play on their sites.
5. The CMA acknowledges the co-operation of BGO, and in particular that in October 2017 it made a number of welcome changes which addressed some of the CMA's concerns.
6. The CMA has produced a '60-second summary' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-gambling-promotions-dos-and-donts>) and further information (<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81a50240f0b623026986bd/cma-gambling-sector-overview.pdf>) to help all gambling operators review their practices and ensure their terms and conditions are in line with consumer protection law. It has also produced 'advice for gamblers' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-gambling-promotions-advice-for-gamblers>) and a short video guide (<http://bit.ly/2GysZWg>) for consumers.
7. If you are a member of the public with a query please email general.enquiries@cma.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 3737 6000.
8. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798. Media enquiries to the Gambling Commission should be directed to Ben Glass at bglass@gamblingcommission.gov.uk on 0121 230 6700.

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