



January 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about online gambling.

I recognise that gambling is for many people an enjoyable pastime, but equally that for many people it can become a serious problem. While we all want a healthy gambling industry that makes an important contribution to the economy, we must also do everything we can to protect those that use it from harm.

Operators providing gambling facilities to customers in Great Britain must be licensed by the Gambling Commission and comply with the conditions of their operating licences. In recent years, the Gambling Commission has also introduced a number of licence conditions specifically in relation to online gambling to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable people. In 2019, the Gambling Commission introduced new age and identity verification rules to ensure operators verify customers' age and identity details quickly and robustly. Furthermore, in 2020, the Government and Commission strengthened these protections further, including a ban on credit card gambling, making participation in the self-exclusion scheme GAMSTOP mandatory for online operators, as well as issuing new guidance for operators to address the potential for some customers to be at heightened risk during the Covid-19 pandemic. For further information on GAMSTOP, please search:

<https://www.gamstop.co.uk/>

The Government recognises that it is increasingly apparent that the Gambling Act 2005 is an analogue law in a digital age. The review of the Gambling Act 2005 was launched in December 2020 with the publication of a wide-ranging Call for Evidence. This review is examining online restrictions, marketing and the powers of the Gambling Commission. Furthermore, specifically in regard to online gambling, protections for online gamblers like stake and spend limits, advertising and promotional offers and whether extra protections for young adults are needed are also being explored. I understand that the Government aims to publish a White Paper setting out any conclusions and consulting on next steps in the coming months.

I appreciate the concerns over the impact of the Gambling Commission's consultation, specifically in regard to affordability checks. I want to stress that the proposals focused on more prescriptive requirements for operators to identify and intervene with customers who may be at risk of harm. This included a specific process for assessing affordability and particular consideration will be given to the spending/loss threshold at which it might be proportionate to require operators to complete affordability checks.



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The Gambling Commission's report can be found online at:

<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/strategy/raising-standards-for-consumers-compliance-and-enforcement-report-2019-20/triggers-and-customer-affordability>

As you will see, in response to evidence showing some gamblers maybe at greater risk of harm during lockdown, the Commission published new guidance for online operators to help reduce the risk of harm in these unprecedented circumstances.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY