

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

6th December 2018

Dear Constituent,

RE: FIXED ODDS BETTING TERMINALS.

Thank you for contacting me recently about your concerns regarding fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs); your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I appreciate your concerns about the impact of the changes: FOBTs are important to the economic viability of many betting shops, but Ministers believe that we cannot ignore the evidence showing the impact these gaming machines can have on individuals and wider communities. They argue that reducing the maximum stakes on FOBTs from £100 to £2 will help stop extreme losses by those who can least afford it.

There has been a shift in attitudes within the industry, with more focus on social responsibility. However, the Government considers that self-regulation has not had a significant impact in tackling problem gambling. There are still large numbers of higher-staking machines in accessible locations, often in more deprived areas, where it is possible to lose a large amount of money very quickly.

Following the analysis of all the evidence received during the review, the Government concluded that a £2 stake limit would most substantially impact on harm. The change will come into effect in April 2019 and Ministers expect the industry to work with them, as well as engage with the cross-Whitehall group that has been set up, to reduce any impact on jobs and to support staff that may be affected by the measure being brought forward. Ministers are confident that this innovative sector will step up, be able to adapt, and help achieve the right balance between enabling people to bet responsibly and ensuring consumers and communities are protected.

Of course, there are other factors which contribute to problem gambling, which is why the Government is not making this change in isolation. Other actions include strengthening protections around gaming machines, online gambling, gambling advertising, and treatment for problem gambling.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE