



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

7<sup>th</sup> February 2022

*Jean Contrevent*

**RE: GAMBLING REGULATION**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of gambling regulation; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

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 the Gambling 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/>.

I am delighted that 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 is 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 your concerns over the impact of the Gambling Commission's consultation, specifically with 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. 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 may be at greater risk of harm during periods of lockdown, the Commission published new guidance for online operators to help reduce the risk of harm in these unprecedented circumstances.

On the wider subject of sports betting, I appreciate your concern that skilled betting is being considered alongside non-skilled betting, such as slot machines and bingo, under the Government's review of the *Gambling Act 2005*. This review is examining protections for online gamblers (including stake and spend limits), advertising and promotional offers, and whether extra protections for young adults are needed. I do, however, understand that the Government is aware that online gambling on slots, casinos, or bingo games, is associated with a higher rate of problem gambling (9.2 percent), compared to online betting with a bookmaker (2.5 percent). Furthermore, I have been assured that the review aims to make certain that the *Gambling Act* is fit for the digital age, striking the right balance between protecting vulnerable people from gambling related harm, while also respecting the freedom of adults to choose how they spend their money and leisure time.

I have the utmost confidence that the Government is taking these points into account as it conducts the review. For further information on the review, please search:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-gambling-act-2005-terms-of-reference-and-call-for-evidence/review-of-the-gambling-act-2005-terms-of-reference-and-call-for-evidence>.

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**