



Craig Whittaker MP

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Response to Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) and Gambling Advertising – January 2017

Thank you for contacting me about fixed-odds betting terminals and gambling advertising.

I am assured that the Government understands the public concerns around fixed odds betting terminals and wants to see a responsible gambling industry which protects players. It has already put in place a number of measures around FOBTs, for example, in 2015 Government took action to introduce a new requirement that those accessing higher stakes (over £50) on these gaming machines must load cash via staff interaction or use account-based play.

However, Ministers recognise further action might be necessary to strike the right balance between enabling people to bet responsibly and ensuring consumers and communities are protected. In October, the Government launched a review into gaming machines and social responsibility, which is looking closely at FOBTs and specific concerns about the harm they cause, be that to the players themselves or the local communities which they are located. The call for evidence closed at the beginning of December and the Government will now review the evidence to assist in its decisions.

It is vital that people, particularly the young and vulnerable, are protected from being harmed or exploited by gambling, and I am encouraged that my colleagues in Government are committed to ensuring this continues. Responsibility for the oversight of advertising is shared between the Advertising Standards Authority, Ofcom and the Gambling Commission. In 2014, some of the provisions around advertising in this area were strengthened. However, I am pleased that the current review, is also looking at gambling advertising to understand whether the right measures in place to ensure that the young and vulnerable are protected.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP