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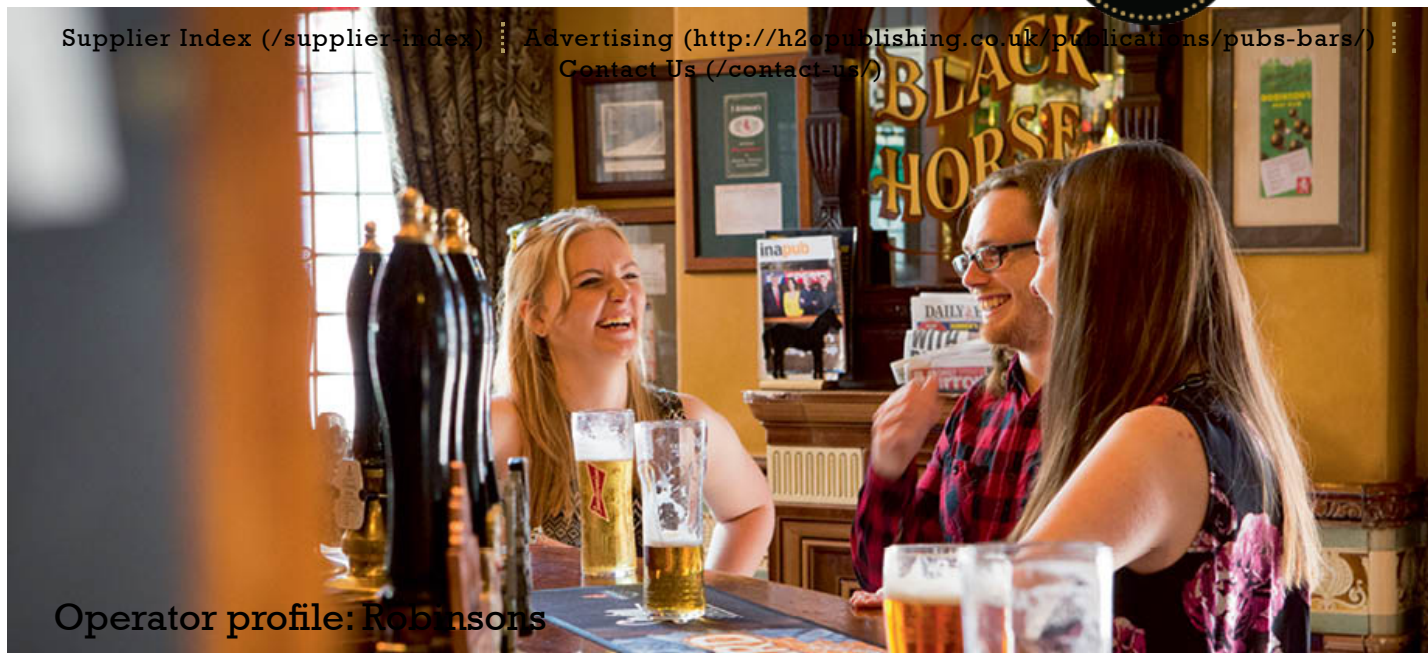


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LEGAL: Concerned about underage pub machine play? (/news/2018-11-16-legal-concerned-about-underage-pub-machine-play)

By David Clifton, Clifton Davies Consultancy Limited

The Gambling Commission has revealed serious failures to stop children playing on 18+ pub gaming machines.

Tests conducted at a sample of pubs in England have indicated that almost 90% failed to prevent children accessing Category C gaming machines with a maximum stake of £1 and a maximum prize pay-out of £100.

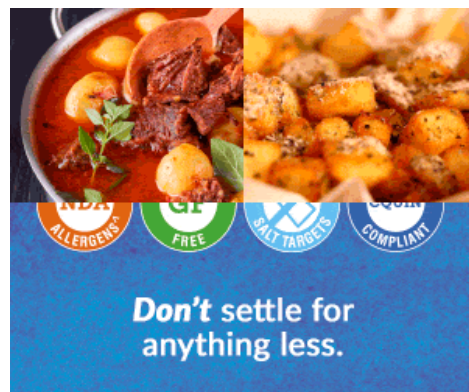
The failure rate identified in the tests (89%) compares to an average failure rate of 15% to 30% for other age restricted products such as alcohol or tobacco.

Addressing the Institute of Licensing National Conference, Helen Rhodes, programme director at the Gambling Commission, said: "We are extremely concerned that pubs across England are failing to stop children playing gaming machines designed for adults.

"We urgently call on the pub sector to take action immediately to enforce the laws in place to protect children and young people.

"We expect to see significant improvement in further tests and will continue to work with licensing authorities to support any action required against those failing to adhere to the requirements."

In a letter written to the pub industry trade associations calling for urgent improvements (which operators can read [here](https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/news/2018/Gambling-Commission-highlights-failures-to-stop-children-playing-on-18-pub) (<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/news/2018/Gambling-Commission-highlights-failures-to-stop-children-playing-on-18-pub>).



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[gaming-machines.aspx](#))), the Commission said: “The failure rate did not vary significantly between licensing authorities nor between [large] pub companies and independents. The results were uniformly poor.”

Anyone in doubt as to their responsibilities may wish to consult the Gambling Commission’s [Gaming machines in pubs – Quick Guide](#) (<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/PDF/quick-guides/Gaming-machines-in-pubs-quick-guide.pdf>) that draws attention to its [code of practice](#) (<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/PDF/Code-of-practice-for-gaming-machines-in-clubs-and-premises-with-an-alcohol-licence.pdf>) for gaming machines in clubs and premises with an alcohol licence that particularly emphasises:

- The importance of preventing under-age access to machines not suitable for those under 18.
- The responsibility of the Designated Premises Supervisor to ensure that any machines made available on the premises are supervised either by staff or other means, in order to prevent under-age access on 18+ machines.

For more about gaming machines in pubs, see Suzanne Davies’ forthcoming article on the Legal Page in the next edition of Pub & Bar magazine.



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