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# Gambling Related Harm APPG

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## Latest News

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### **PRESS RELEASE: Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group questions Neil McArthur, CEO of the Gambling Commission**

 14 Feb 2020

The Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group questioned Neil McArthur, Chief Executive of the Gambling Commission on 12<sup>th</sup> February on its role as a regulator and its duty in protecting the most vulnerable from gambling related harm.

Chair of the APPG, Carolyn Harris, along with Vice Chairs Sir Iain Duncan Smith and Ronnie Cowan and Lord Don Foster pressed the Gambling Commission's Chief Executive on a range of issues including asking if the Gambling Commission was fit for purpose and about the ineffectualness of fines on the behaviour of online gambling companies.

After pressing Mr McArthur on a review of online stakes, he confirmed for the first time that the Gambling Commission would be reviewing online stakes within six months. The APPG has previously called for stake limits for online gambling including a £2 stake limit for slot content, which has been shown to be highly addictive. The APPG recommended in its November report a ban on the use of credit cards in gambling. The APPG is pleased that this has now been taken forward, and is hopeful the Group's further recommendations are now adopted as policy without further delay.

The Gambling Commission also said that if action wasn't taken by companies to reduce the harm caused by lucrative VIP accounts then the Commission would need to ban them. The Commission agreed also that something needed to be done about the volume of gambling advertising.

**Carolyn Harris MP, Chair of the All Party Gambling Related Harm APPG said:**

*"A review of stake limits online has been clearly recommended by the All Party Parliamentary Group and is long overdue. I am very pleased that the Gambling Commission has finally seen sense on this. Online slot content games should be reduced to £2 a spin in line with the rules in betting shops. The Gambling Commission must stop being reactive and take action to protect the vulnerable from harm in line with their licensing objectives."*

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## Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group Sets Out its Work Programme for the Year

 23 Jan 2020

The Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group (GRH APPG) met this week to re-elect its officers and set out their work programme for the year. The Group, which has been highly effective, agreed to continue to vigorously campaign to reduce gambling related harm during this Parliament and to ensure that the new Gambling Act delivered better regulation.

Carolyn Harris MP was re-elected as Chair of the Group. The Rt Hon Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP, Ronnie Cowan MP, Lord Foster and Sammy Wilson MP were also elected as Vice-Chairs of the Group, demonstrating the cross-party support for the group.

The APPG welcomed the Government's decision this month to ban gambling with credit cards. This was a recommendation made by the APPG in its interim report on online gambling, published in November 2019. The Group agreed that it would now be campaigning to ensure that the remaining recommendations set out in its report were also actively taken forward including restrictions on the staking levels online, on gambling advertising and the statutory 'smart' levy to fund research, education and treatment.

In completing its current inquiry into online gambling, the APPG will call upon the Gambling Commission and the Gambling Minister to appear before the Group to contribute to the APPG's final report, which will be published in the coming months.

This year, the group will also be undertaking evidence sessions to provide recommendations to the Gambling Review which is due to be undertaken by Government ahead of the new Gambling Act.

Evidence sessions will look at all aspects of harm in the industry including at areas such as the age level for purchasing scratch-cards, the normalisation of gambling, gambling advertising and the 'gamblification' of sport.

Carolyn Harris MP said:

"I am delighted to have been re-elected Chair of the GRH APPG. Gambling related harm is an issue that is very close to my heart and one I am extremely passionate about. The APPG is not anti-gambling, we support a safe and sustainable industry. Our primary concern is to continue to champion the cause for better regulation and we are determined that all parts of the industry should operate openly, fairly and in a way that does not prey on vulnerable people".

#### Notes to Editors

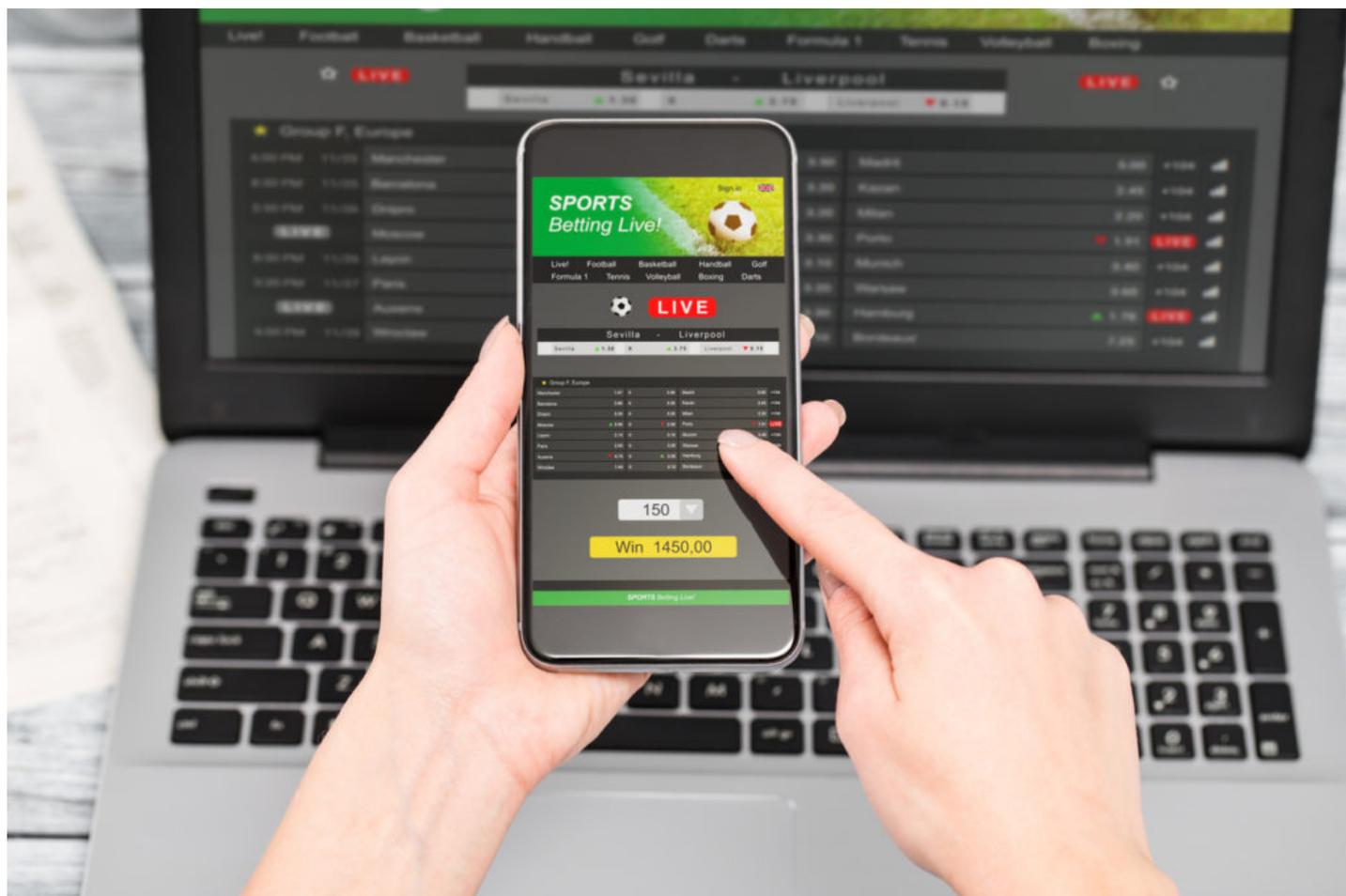
1. The Gambling Related Harm (GRH) All Party Parliamentary Group has been created to provide a forum for discussion and further investigation into the impact gambling harm, in our communities. This group, powered by the passion of the members in both houses of Parliament on this issue, allows a coordinated effort among politicians of all political parties, to come together to discuss how best to address the issues that gambling harm is causing in our communities.
2. The Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group undertook an inquiry into the harm caused by online gambling in 2019. The Group's interim report on online gambling was published on 4 November 2019 and can be accessed here <http://www.grh-appg.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Interim-APPG-Report-November-final-1.pdf>
3. For more information, please contact Carolyn Harris MP, the Chair of the Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group or the Secretariat for the Group: Holly Ramsey  
[Holly.Ramsey@interelgroup.com](mailto:Holly.Ramsey@interelgroup.com) T: 020 7592 3832
4. The newly elected members of the Group are:

- Carolyn Harris MP – Chair
  - Ronnie Cowan MP – Vice Chair
  - Rt Hon Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP – Vice Chair
  - Lord Foster of Bath – Vice Chair
  - Sir Mark Hendrick MP – Vice Chair
  - Stuart McDonald MP – Vice Chair
  - Sammy Wilson MP – Vice Chair
  - Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning – Vice Chair
  - Stephen Timms MP – Treasurer
  - Gerald Jones MP – Secretary
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# PRESS RELEASE: Cross Party MPs call for £2 limit on online slot machine games to tackle gambling harm

📅 04 Nov 2019

## Cross Party MPs call for £2 limit on online slot machine games to tackle gambling harm



betting bet sport phone gamble laptop over shoulder soccer live home website concept – stock image

The Gambling Related Harm All-Party Parliamentary Group (GRH APPG) has today (Monday 4 November) called for stake and deposits limits to be introduced on online gambling products, in its interim report (</wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Interim-APPG-Report-November-final-1.pdf>) into the online gambling sector.

This report follows a six-month inquiry into the harms caused by online gambling. The inquiry was launched following growing disquiet among parliamentarians, charities, academics, families and individuals, at the high levels of harm caused by online gambling, in some cases tragically leading to suicide.

The report raises concerns about the lack of action from the Government and the Gambling Commission to effectively address the harms caused by the online gambling sector. This inaction has allowed the industry to continue to prey on vulnerable gamblers.

The report also highlights the disparity in content controls and stake and deposit limits between online and offline games. It notes that the Government has accepted the principle that harm can be reduced by reducing staking levels and it is clear that stake and deposit limits are needed in the online world to limit harm. The cross-party group argue that there is no justification for having slot machine style games online with staking levels above £2, in line with land based venues.

The report further notes that the Gambling Commission is looking at other aspects of regulation but has made no mention of what is clearly one of the key issues to address – stake and prizes online. As such, the Parliamentarians have raised concerns that that the Gambling Commission is not fit for purpose.

The group calls on online gambling operators to sign its 'Charter for Regulatory Reform', to signal their intention and support for the policy proposals and recommendations, outlined in its report.

The key recommendations of the report (</wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Interim-APPG-Report-November-final-1.pdf>) are:

- That the Government should urgently introduce new gambling legislation with a focus on harm prevention;
- That stake and prize limits be urgently introduced online. The report finds no justification for online slot machine style games with staking levels above £2, as it is offline;
- That the Gambling Commission needs to urgently improve its standards in the area of online gambling;
- That that there is an urgent need to ban the use of credit cards to gamble online. It is inconceivable that gamblers are able to fund their addiction using debt;
- That improved affordability checks is urgently needed and that banks be given an increased role in relation to affordability checks;
- That VIP accounts and the inducements offered to gamblers should be restricted;
- That online gambling operators significantly improve the measures they take to protect vulnerable and at-risk gamblers. Operators should also simplify their terms and conditions for easy comprehension;
- That the sector needs to urgently adopt a more responsible approach to advertising to protect children and the vulnerable;
- That a 'duty of care' be placed on gambling operators, and that they should commit to fund blocking software, offered without charge to gamblers who self-exclude from their website;
- That the treatment of gambling addiction and support for gambling related harm, be part of the NHS remit;
- That a 'smart statutory levy' of 1% be introduced to fund research and that the commissioning of research be transferred from GambleAware and the Gambling Commission to independent UK research councils and a public health setting.

The GRH APPG, chaired by Carolyn Harris MP, took evidence from, among others, academics, problem gamblers, banks, charities and online gambling operators.

Due to the political context, the group is yet to meet with the new Gambling Minister or any representative from the Gambling Commission. This therefore is an interim report, and the group will publish its full report after its final hearings.

**Commenting on the report, Chair, GRH APPG, Carolyn Harris MP said:**

*“This report highlights the urgent need for a root and branch review of the regulation of online gambling. Stakes and prize limits online would be a major step forward in reducing the harm caused by the sector. It is not at all clear why the Gambling Commission is not looking at this as a matter of urgency. It is an abdication of its responsibility as a regulator. There must be consistent and appropriate regulation of all forms of gambling. I also urge the Government to urgently review the provision of research, education and treatment in the sector. Gamble Aware are not effectively carrying out this function and it should immediately be brought into a public health setting.”*

**Commenting on the report, Vice-Chair, GRH APPG, Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith said:**

*“Gambling addiction is becoming a public health crisis. It is clear from this inquiry that the powers of the Gambling Commission need to be significantly strengthened. For too long, online gambling operators have exploited vulnerable gamblers to little or no retribution from the regulator. We cannot continue to fail vulnerable gamblers. I therefore urge the Commission to look into this issue in greater depth. It is outrageous that there are not stake limits online, that gamblers are still able to gamble using credit cards online and that operators are able to continue to offer inducements to the vulnerable without proper sanction.”*

**Commenting on the report, Vice-Chair, GRH APPG, Ronnie Cowan MP said:**

*“It appears that the business model of some of these online gambling companies encourages and drives harmful gambling behaviour. These operators use various marketing and technological tools to extract as much money as possible from vulnerable gamblers, then use NDAs to cover up wrongdoings. This cannot continue to happen. The next Government and the Gambling Commission need to take radical actions to reduce gambling related harm.”*

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Further information on the All Party Group can be found at [www.grh-appg.com](http://www.grh-appg.com) (<http://www.grh-appg.com>)

**Notes to Editors**

1. The Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group has been created to provide a forum for discussion and further investigation into the impact of gambling related harm in our communities. This group, powered by the passion of the members in both houses of Parliament on this issue, allows a coordinated effort among politicians of all political parties, to come together to discuss how best to address the issues and harms gambling causes to our communities.
- The newly formed Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group (GRH APPG) announced in March 2019 that it would be undertaking an inquiry into the harms caused by online gambling and looking at remedies and recommendations to address these. The inquiry examined the full impact of online gambling, the addictive and potentially harmful nature of some of the products on offer and their effect on the vulnerable, in particular, children. This inquiry will also explore the effectiveness of age and identity verification mechanisms as well as efficacy of self-exclusion schemes and current provisions for problem and at-risk gamblers. Amongst other areas, the Group looked at the use of credit cards online, difficulties in withdrawal of funds from online accounts, and the impact of the current level of stakes and prizes online.
- The GRH APPG, chaired by Carolyn Harris MP, took evidence from, among others, academics,

problem gamblers, banks, charities and online gambling operators. Due to the political context, the group is yet to meet with the new Gambling Minister or any representative from the Gambling Commission. This therefore is an interim report, and the group will publish its full report after its final hearings.

- For more information, please contact Carolyn Harris MP, the Chair of the Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group or the secretariat [Katherine.morgan@interelgroup.com](mailto:Katherine.morgan@interelgroup.com)

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## Minutes from 4th September 2019 meeting of the GRH APPG

 14 Oct 2019

Please click here (</wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Minutes-of-Meeting-04-10-19.pdf>) to download the minutes of the sixth evidence session of the Gambling Related Harm APPG's Inquiry into Online Gambling – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019. If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact the Group Secretariat.

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## Minutes from 10th July 2019 meeting of the GRH APPG

 09 Sep 2019

Please click here (</wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Minutes-of-Meeting-10-07-19.pdf>) to download the minutes of the fifth evidence session of the Gambling Related Harm APPG's Inquiry into Online Gambling – 10th July 2019. If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact the Group Secretariat.

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## Minutes from 12th June 2019 meeting of the GRH APPG

 07 Aug 2019

Please click here (</wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Minutes-of-Meeting-12-06-19-1.pdf>) to download the minutes of the fourth evidence session of the Gambling Related Harm APPG's Inquiry into Online Gambling – 12th June 2019.

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact the Group Secretariat.

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## Minutes from 8th May 2019 meeting of the GRH APPG

 12 Jun 2019

Please click here (</wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Minutes-of-Meeting-8-05-19.pdf>) to download the minutes of the third evidence session of the Gambling Related Harm APPG's Inquiry into Online Gambling – 8th May 2019.

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact the Group Secretariat.

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## Carolyn Harris MP calls out remote gambling operators on inaction to address online gambling harm.

 12 Jun 2019

**PRESS RELEASE:** 12 June 2019

On Wednesday (12 June), Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Carolyn Harris MP demanded online gambling operators address their failure to act on the harm caused by online gambling.

In an evidence session of the group's online gambling inquiry, the group heard from the representative organisation for the online gambling industry, the Remote Gambling Association.

Ms Harris, along with Iain Duncan Smith MP and Ronnie Cowan MP, questioned the industry on its actions and steps to address the harm being caused to individuals and families as a result of problematic behaviour.

Carolyn Harris MP said *"The industry has to start taking responsibility. This is about people's lives."*

She also called on online gambling operators to appear publicly before the committee to answer questions on the harm they are causing.

The group are calling on online operators to sign up to a strong code of conduct and immediately take steps to limit harm.

The group has extended invitations to online gambling operators to appear at an oral evidence session in September.

Former Gambling Minister Tracey Crouch MP was today elected as Vice-Chair of the APPG.

- End

Further information on the All Party Group can be found at [www.grh-appg.com](http://www.grh-appg.com) (<http://www.grh-appg.com>)

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- For more information, please contact Carolyn Harris MP, the Chair of the Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group or the secretariat for the Group: [Tosin.Adedayo@interelgroup.com](mailto:Tosin.Adedayo@interelgroup.com) (<mailto:Tosin.Adedayo@interelgroup.com>)

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## Minutes from 24th April 2019 meeting of the GRH APPG

 13 May 2019

Please click here to download the minutes of the second evidence session of the Gambling Related Harm APPG's Inquiry into Online Gambling – 24th April 2019 (</wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Minutes-of-Meeting-24-04-19.pdf>)

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact the Group Secretariat.

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## Minutes from 27th March 2019 meeting of the GRH APPG

 10 Apr 2019

Please click here to download the minutes of the first evidence session of the Gambling Related Harm APPG's Inquiry into Online Gambling – 27th March 2019 (<http://www.grh-appg.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Minutes-of-Meeting-27-03-19-1.pdf>)

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact the Group Secretariat.

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