

Due to the impact that Coronavirus is having, we have had to reduce our phonenumber opening hours.

Our phonenumber are open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 10 am and 4 pm.

You can use the [contact us service](#) to get answers to common questions or send us a contact request.

If gambling problems are affecting you or those close to you, support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through GamCare. You can call them free on 0808 8020 133 or go to [gamcare.org.uk](#).

You can also read our [Guidance and FAQs](#) for more information.

Gambling Commission and industry collaboration makes progress on safer gambling

- **Under 25s to be restricted from joining VIP schemes**
- **Tightened controls to be introduced for other VIP customers**
- **Online advertising rules strengthened to better protect vulnerable groups**
- **Progress made on safer product design but industry must go further**

Collaborative work with the industry has led to progress following three challenges laid down by the Gambling Commission to make gambling safer and reduce harm across the sector.

The work will lead to restrictions and prevention of under 25s being recruited to VIP schemes, a reduction on intensity of play such as the speed of spin and removing turbo buttons, and a joint effort to shield children and young people from online gambling advertising.

The Gambling Commission welcomes the recommendations made by the industry on safer products but challenges the industry to go further.

This new approach to accelerate progress to protect consumers from gambling harm was set by the Commission's chief executive, Neil McArthur, in October 2019. Working groups made up of senior leaders from the industry were formed in January 2020 – concentrating on **use of VIP incentives, safer advertising online** and the use of **safer product design**.

The Industry working groups featured over 30 operators, co-ordinated by the Betting and Gaming Council (BGC). As part of this work, the Commission ran workshops with people with first-hand experience of gambling harm, as well as collaborating with GamCare to ensure that its service users' experience would also help inform any outcomes.

Those involved in the work will continue to develop and rapidly implement the proposals, with some measures around VIP customers being implemented as soon as April 14.

The Commission will now launch formal consultations on these areas to ensure that the new measures are incorporated into its regulatory framework – which means that all operators will have to abide by the new consumer protection rules.

Neil McArthur, Gambling Commission chief executive said: *"We have been encouraged by the progress on VIP incentives, safer advertising and safer products. We set these challenges in order to deliver real and rapid change for consumers in key areas of risk. However, it is important these commitments are implemented as soon as possible. It should not take months to implement safeguards many would expect to be in place already."*

"By working together with operators and seeking the views of people with lived experience of gambling harm we have been able to make significant progress, although there is always more to do. We will now consult on the necessary changes to our rule book to ensure all operators have to meet the new standards."

"Whilst we are encouraged by industry proposals for making gambling products safer we now call on operators to implement those proposals rapidly; but the proposals do not go far enough and we will now consider what additional measures we should impose on operators."

"I recognise that the Covid-19 outbreak will impact on next steps and actions, in particular land-based operators. I welcome the fact that the operators involved and the BGC have remained committed to progressing this work during these difficult times. That is a positive sign of their commitment to make the industry safer."

"Ultimately actions speak louder than words and any operator that does not put consumer safety first will find itself a target for enforcement action."

Industry progress so far in these areas, and the Gambling Commission's response and next steps:

Use of VIP incentives

This group was established to develop an industry code which addressed poor practices around the treatment and incentivisation of high value and high spending customers also known as 'VIPs'. The industry has agreed to:

- Restrict and prevent customers under 25 years of age from being recruited to high value customer schemes.
- All customers must first pass thorough checks relating to spend, safer gambling and enhanced due diligence before becoming eligible for high value customer incentives.
- Reward programmes will also be required to have full audit trails detailing decision making with specified senior oversight and accountability.

The Gambling Commissions response:

- The Commission will now consult on permanent changes to the Licence conditions and codes of practice (LCCP).
- The Commission expects the industry to implement its code as soon as possible and considers most measures should be implemented within 3 months.
- The Commission will monitor and support implementation of the industry's code as an interim measure.

Safer advertising online

This Advertising Technology challenge was aimed at reducing the amount of online advertising seen by children, young people and vulnerable adults. Actions taken immediately by the industry and to be in place by July 2020 include:

- A common list of negative search terms (e.g. how do I self-exclude from gambling?) and suppression websites, which will help shield vulnerable groups from online gambling ads.
- Better and more consistent use of customer data to ensure paid-for-ads are targeting away from vulnerable groups across social media platforms, instead of targeting for business
- Implement an approach which means that advertising is only targeted at +25 age in social media and "Pay Per Click" advertising where platform facilities permit. This will protect young people and increase confidence in the social media platforms' own age-gating
- Age-gating YouTube channels and content
- Adopting and rolling out to all affiliates a code of conduct which will be amended and updated on a regular basis to ensure all measures undertaken by the industry will be implemented equally by affiliates.

These measures will be adopted across the industry as soon as possible and in any event enshrined in the IGRG's Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising (subject to consultation with Bingo Association and BACTA) and effective by July 2020.

Further, the Working Group will:

- Establish a permanent cross-industry Adtech Forum to ensure an on-going focus on making further progress in this area, including conducting and evaluating trials of advertising technology.
- Continue the proactive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders (including platforms) on agreed areas of work, with the aim of continually setting the highest standards in responsible digital advertising and marketing and ensuring that all relevant technology is utilised to achieve that.
- Work with the Gambling Commission to publish and promote consumer advice, and work with online platforms and broadcasters to identify a more effective, simple and consistent approach, with regard to blocking gambling advertising.
- Commit to monitoring and evaluating all actions to ensure only effective solutions are pursued.

The Gambling Commission's response:

- The Gambling Commission's view is that the industry has developed an appropriate set of commitments which should help further limit exposure to online gambling adverts by vulnerable groups.
- The Commission recognises that the online advertising ecosystem is complex, and some progress will be dependent on third parties, such as the social media platforms. In these instances, we expect industry to work collaboratively with the platforms to identify and implement further solutions.
- By virtue of their inclusion in the Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising, The Commission will now hold operators to account for these commitments from July.

Safer products

These groups were tasked with developing an industry code for responsible product and game design. Industry commitment from this work so far includes:

- A minimum spin speed of 2.5 seconds on all slots.
- Removal of game features which may encourage intensive play such as slam stops and turbo buttons.
- Removal of split-screen slots which have been associated with potential loss of control.
- A more detailed work plan which will include in-game messaging and the creation of a Betting and Gaming Council Testing Lab to look into other game features.
- Publication of the final code in September 2020.

The Gambling Commission's response:

- The Gambling Commission's view is that while some progress has been made, this work must now go further and faster, in particular around using demographics and behaviours to indicate risk.
- The Gambling Commission will now consult on the priority areas for immediate action as soon as possible.

Brigid Simmonds, Chairman of the new standards body the Betting and Gaming Council said: *"I am pleased with our members' hard work and continued commitment to delivering substantial progress on the three safer gambling challenges set by the Gambling Commission on high value customers, advertising and game design. The progress reported today including restricting under 25's from qualifying for high value customer accounts; strengthened advertising rules and games with slower speeds and the removal of some functionality comes despite difficult operating circumstances during the COVID-19 crisis. These measures, along with our recently announced 10 pledge action plan for COVID-19 safer gambling and our 22 industry safer gambling commitments will significantly transform and improve the environment for our customers and the wider public. We agree with the Gambling Commission that there is still more work to do and we will rise to the ongoing challenge."*

Today's update coincides with the publication of the Gambling Commission's 2020/21 business plan which includes commitment to driving forward these areas of work in regulatory requirements for the whole industry.

Ends.

Notes to editors:

1. Statistics show that [24 Million adults gamble in Great Britain](#) with over 300,000 classified as problem gamblers.
2. Useful [statistics on the gambling industry](#).
3. Press release to [launch industry challenges](#).
4. [Neil McArthur Raising Standards CEO Briefing](#).
5. The [Licence conditions and codes of practice](#) set out the requirements gambling businesses must meet in order to hold an operating licence or personal licence.
6. Journalists can contact our press office on 0121 230 6700 or email: [communications@gamblingcommission.gov.uk](#)

Posted on 01 April 2020

Other news

[Gambling Commission publish 2020/21 business plan outlining ongoing commitment to making gambling safer](#)

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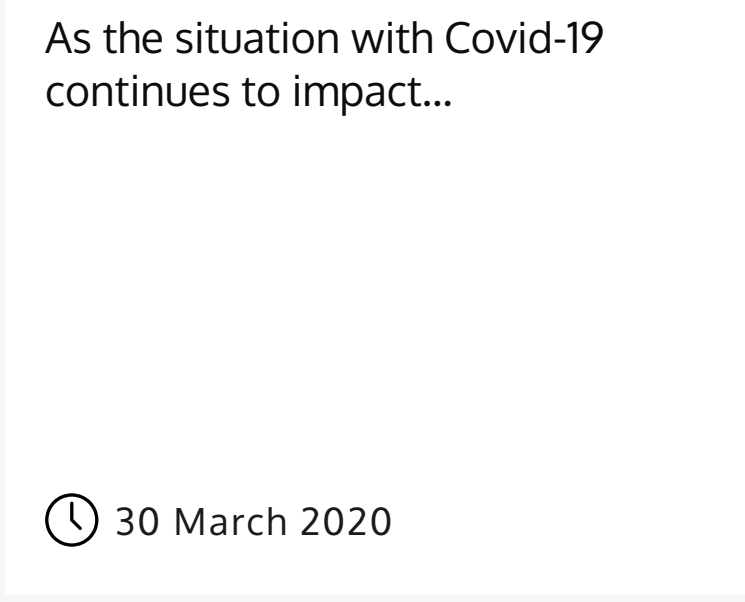


Business plan 2020-2021

Gambling Commission publish 2020/21 business plan outlining ongoing commitment to making gambling safer

The Gambling Commission has today published its 20...

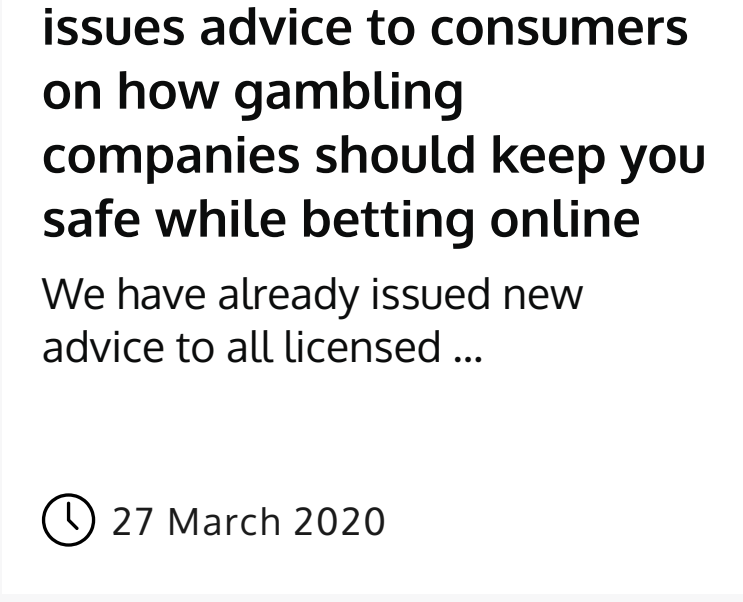
🕒 01 April 2020



Covid-19 Guidance & FAQ's

As the situation with Covid-19 continues to impact...

🕒 30 March 2020



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We have already issued new advice to all licensed ...

🕒 27 March 2020

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