

Review of Gaming Machines – Call for Evidence  
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**United Kingdom Territory  
with the Republic of Ireland**

## **Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures**

**Public Affairs Team**

### **Call for Evidence**

Tel: 

The Salvation Army appreciates the invitation to respond to this call for evidence. We have worked closely on the issue of Gambling Policy with the Department of Culture Media and Sport and subsequently with the Gambling Commission over several years. In welcoming the DCMS call for evidence, The Salvation Army hopes that our contribution can lead to a more satisfactory evidence base being recognised as a spur to action on public policy. However, The Salvation Army believes the government already possesses sufficient evidence to take action on highly addictive gambling machines.

As a Church and charity The Salvation Army stands alongside people who are vulnerable or in need in every community and we believe the extant official statistics clearly demonstrate that FOBT machines constitute a problem which demands action. The Salvation Army has a long history of working with those whose lives are damaged by addictions, most notably to alcohol and drugs, and a number of those with whom we work also cite gambling among their addictions.

The Salvation Army believes that gambling is a socially harmful industry. In recent years its reach and negative impact has proliferated. Notably, since the 2005 Gambling Act was passed, the number of betting shops and of high-stake betting machines has significantly increased. Central to this observation is the rise in prevalence of gaming machines in the form of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs). In fact, according to Gambling Commission statistics there were 34,552 FOBTs in 2014/15 in Great Britain.

Betting shops and betting machines are clustering in the UK's most deprived areas, which deeply affects the lives of local residents as it reduces the vibrancy of their high streets and worsens gambling addiction.

Our submission aims to highlight the clustering of betting shops in areas where our Lifehouses (homeless hostels) are located. We analysed the prevalence of betting shops in a two mile radius of 30 of our Lifehouses (out a total of 96). This revealed that **73%** of these Lifehouses had at least *fifteen betting shops* in close proximity. In fact two Lifehouses two had forty five betting shops within their vicinity. All of the Lifehouses had at the very least three betting shops within close proximity.

The Salvation Army is particularly concerned that the current trend towards the societal normalisation of gambling could lead to an increase in the number of



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Founder: William Booth

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people experiencing the highly damaging consequences of the problem or pathological gambling, either directly or indirectly.

The Salvation Army warmly thanks the Department for the opportunity to respond to this Call for Evidence and we look forward to engaging with any subsequent consultations on this matter.

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Public Affairs Adviser, The Salvation Army