

Dear
Telephone:
Facsimile:
E-Mail:
Please ask for:
Our Ref:
Your Ref:

AC/SLS/

Sir/Madam,

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

On behalf of
Review of Gaming Machines – Call for Evidence
Gambling, Licensing and Lotteries Team
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Peterborough City Council, I am responding to the Government's call for evidence concerning the review of the gambling industry and determining what, if any, changes are required.

The council supports the Government's objective of striking the right balance between socially responsible gambling which provides entertainment, employment and contributes significantly to the economy whilst protecting those people who are vulnerable, have high levels of debt and for whom gambling can be a serious issue.

We acknowledge that for many people, gambling is carried out in a responsible manner and forms part of the leisure and entertainment offer within the UK. However, for other people, particularly those who are vulnerable, gambling can have a significant and negative impact.

Since the maximum stake able to be gambled was increased in 2013, Peterborough has seen a significant rise both in the amount gambled and the amount lost in gambling. Using data from the Campaign for Fairer Gambling, evidence shows that gambling in Peterborough has worsened since 2013. In 2013, the average amount all adults in Peterborough gambled on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT) was estimated at £868 (£1.28m in total). By 2015, this had increased by 35% - an average of £1155 for each adult in the city (£1.74m total).

More concerning however, is the level of loss incurred by gamblers. In 2013, the average loss per adult in Peterborough was £30.83 (£454k in total), by 2015 this had increased by 43% to £43.11 (£650k in total). These figures average out the amounts across the population of Peterborough. Assuming that not all adults in the city use FOBT, the losses for those who do will be significantly higher.

The evidence also shows that the position in Peterborough has worsened when compared to the national picture. In 2013, Peterborough was ranked 236 out of 346 Local Authorities for amount lost per adult. By 2015, the position had deteriorated significantly with Peterborough falling to 302 out of 346 Local Authorities.

In 2014, Landman Economics wrote a report into Fixed Odds Betting Terminals, 'Problem Gambling and Deprivation' (published by [Campaign for Fairer Gambling](#)). The report highlighted a correlation between Local Authorities in areas of high deprivation and the number of FOBT in those Authority areas.

"...the number of FOBTs per adult is higher on average for more deprived local authorities than it is for less deprived local authorities. The 50 most deprived local authorities in England average

0.90 FOBTs per 1,000 adult population, whereas the 50 least deprived local authorities in England average 0.38 FOBTs per 1,000 adult population – less than half the number of FOBTs per head.”

Peterborough has pockets of significant deprivation with 67.9% of its Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the 50% most deprived LSOAs in the country and 29.5% in the 20% most deprived. Mirroring the findings in the Landman Economics report, Peterborough also has a high level of FOBT for its population size (0.88 per 1000 adult population)

Further analysis of betting shops in Peterborough shows that they are located in some of the most deprived parts of the city. Where deprivation data is overlaid with unemployment data and betting shop licence density, the picture is even more stark with the most deprived areas of the city having 40 FOBT within 400 metres.

This proliferation of FOBT within such a concentrated area provides a huge opportunity for gambling and can have deep consequences for vulnerable people and their families.

For the reasons set out above, we would support more regulation and control over licensed betting shops and to reduce the amount people are able to gamble to pre-2013 levels. We would also recommend that there be a review of the maximum amount of FOBTs that each licensed betting shop is able to use and reduce the number from 4 to 2 per outlet.

We would also argue that irresponsible gambling can lead to a number of social problems, including increased crime, domestic abuse, debt and homelessness. Whilst gambling alone is unlikely to be the sole factor of these broad social issues, it will undoubtedly be a contributory factor in some instances.

I attach for your information a short presentation of FOBT which provides the evidence and data referenced above.

Yours sincerely

