

## **Gambling-related Harm QSD on 11 September 2019**

### **Summary**

On 11 September 2019, Lord Chadlington (Conservative) will “ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the convergence of gaming and gambling on the level of gambling-related harm in the United Kingdom”. This is a 90-minute debate.

- Although there is no explicit definition for gambling-related harm, the Gambling Commission, which is responsible for regulating gambling and supervising gaming law in Great Britain, define the term as covering “adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society”. Gambling-related harms can include: financial instability; disruption or erosion of partnerships and familial relationships; physical ill-health; and psychological distress.
- Gambling in gaming is varied and can comprise many forms. This includes gaming machines and in-game purchases. For example, loot boxes provide players with the opportunity to acquire an unknown quantity and quality of items for use within the game.
- Examining participation data through quarterly telephone and online surveys on gambling behaviour in Great Britain in 2018, the Gambling Commission found that 46 percent of respondents aged 16 or over had participated in at least one form of gambling in the month prior to the survey. The commission noted that this figure had remained stable since the previous year.
- The latest annual survey by the Gambling Commission found that 14% of 11 to 16-year-olds (450,000) spent their own money on a gambling activity in the week prior to the survey. The commission also found that 31% of young people had paid or used in-game items to open a loot box. This is compared to other potentially harmful activities, the rate of gambling in the past week among young people (14%) is higher than the rates of drinking alcohol (13%), smoking cigarettes (4%) and taking illegal drugs (2%).
- In 2016, the Government launched a review into gaming machines and social responsibility measures. As part of this, it published a consultation in October 2017 focusing on the maximum stakes at gaming machines and measures for the industry to reduce gambling-related harm. In response to the consultation, the Government made several proposals, including reducing the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals from £100 to £2.
- In February 2019, the Labour Party proposed controls on online gambling, including caps on the amount that consumers can gamble. Tom Watson, the deputy leader of Labour, has also called for the Gambling Commission to have oversight of gambling in gaming. The Gambling Commission has previously stated that loot boxes in games did not meet the Gambling Act 2005’s definition of gambling.
- NHS England has announced that the first gambling clinic for children will open in September 2019 as part of a new network of services for addicts being rolled out as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

- The House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee is currently running an inquiry examining the links between gaming and gambling, with a report expected in the next few months.

## Key Information

- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Consultation on Proposals for Changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures](#), October 2017, p 5; and [Government Response](#), May 2018, pp 5–9

*Executive summary from a consultation examining changes to the maximum stake of B2 gaming machines and the introduction of social responsibility measures towards gambling; and the government response to the consultation, which confirmed that it would be reducing the maximum stake on B2 gaming machines.*

- Gambling Commission, [Gambling Participation in 2018: Behaviour, Awareness and Attitudes](#), February 2019, pp 4–5; and [Young People and Gambling 2018](#), November 2018, pp 4–8

*Executive summaries from reports into gambling participation in 2018, including the involvement of young people.*

- NHS England, [NHS to Launch Young People's Gambling Addiction Service](#), 24 June 2019

*Press release announcing the establishment of the first gambling clinic for children, as part of the National Health Service's Long Term Plan.*

## Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- [Oral Question on 'Gambling-Related Harm'](#), HC Hansard, 23 May 2019, col 794–5
- [Debate on 'Gambling-Related Harm'](#), HC Hansard, 19 March 2019, cols 296–320WH
- [Debate on 'Online Gambling Protection'](#), HC Hansard, 12 March 2019, cols 90–97WH
- A selection of written questions from both Houses: [277807](#) (22 July 2019); [HL16963](#) (17 July 2019); [241420](#) (12 April 2019); [228669](#) (13 March 2019); [HL12664](#) (17 January 2019); [HL12059](#) (17 December 2018); and [908188](#) (13 December 2018)

## Press Articles and Comment

- Simon Jack, [Bookmakers Pledge £100m to Avoid Gambling Crackdown](#), BBC News, 19 June 2019
- Lulu Freemont, [The Rise of Skin Gambling: How Outdated Legislation Allows Thousands of UK Children to Gamble Online](#), London School of Economics and Political Science's Parenting for a Digital Future Blog, 17 April 2019
- Rob Davies, [Problem Gamblers at 15 Times Higher Risk of Suicide, Study Finds](#), *Guardian*, 13 March 2019

- Department of Health and Social Care, '[Gambling Related Harm is No Longer in the Shadows](#)', 1 March 2019
- Rob Davies, '[Tom Watson Calls for Crackdown on In-game Gambling](#)', *Guardian*, 28 February 2019
- Lord Chadlington, '[Evidence is Mounting That We Are in the Grip of a Gambling Epidemic](#)', *The House*, 7 February 2019
- Mark Griffiths, '[Gambling: 'Loot Boxes' in Video Games Could Be Conditioning Children](#)', *The Conversation*, 4 December 2018

### Further Reading

- House of Commons Library, [Gambling-related Harm](#), 15 March 2019; and [Loot Boxes in Video Games](#), 15 February 2019
- House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, '[DCMS Committee Launches New Inquiry into the Growth of 'Immersive and Addictive Technologies'](#)', 10 December 2018
- Gambling Commission, [Gambling-related Harm as a Public Health Issue](#), February 2018; and '[Loot Boxes Within Video Games](#)', 24 November 2017

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