

Companies must do more to ensure safe and responsible gaming and take action on 'loot boxes' to protect young people

- Government's call for evidence has unveiled a link between loot boxes and gambling harms, as well as wider mental health, financial and problem-gaming harms
- Government calls on games companies to step up and improve protections for children as well as players of all ages from the risk of harm

Video games companies and platforms must do more to make sure children can not make in-game purchases – known as 'loot boxes' – without their parents' consent, Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said today.

Loot boxes are a type of in-game purchase in some video games. Players can purchase a loot box with real money to receive random items, including "power-ups" to help a player compete better in the game and cosmetic items, such as virtual clothing.

The call for evidence on loot boxes, launched by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in 2020, found that players who have purchased loot boxes may be more likely to experience gambling, mental health, financial and problem gaming-related harms. The risk may also be higher for children and young people.

To protect players, the Government is calling for the purchase of loot boxes to be made unavailable to children and young people unless they are approved by a parent or guardian.

Some games platforms, such as Xbox, have already taken steps to improve protections, such as including options that require parental permission for under-18s to spend money within games. The Government wants to build on this with strong protections for children across the entire games industry and will not hesitate to consider legislation if companies do not bring in sufficient measures to keep players safe.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

We want to stop children going on spending sprees online without parental consent, spurred on by in-game purchases like loot-boxes.

Games companies and platforms need to do more to ensure that controls and age-restrictions are applied so that players are protected from the risk of gambling harms. Children should be free to enjoy gaming safely, whilst giving parents and guardians the peace of mind they need.

Games companies and platforms should provide spending controls and transparent information to all players. Protections should support the minority of players who spend a disproportionate amount of money on loot boxes, and who may be at a greater risk of harm.

A new working group, convened by DCMS, will bring together games companies, platforms and regulatory bodies to develop industry-led measures to protect players and reduce the risk of harm. This will include measures such as parental controls, and making sure transparent, accessible information is available to all players.

The call for evidence also found a need for better evidence to improve understanding of the positive and negative impacts of video games. The Government will launch a Video Games Research Framework to support this.

The UK has a world class video games industry which contributed £2.9 billion to the economy in 2019, growing hugely from £400 million in 2010. As the sector continues to innovate the Government is committed to supporting its growth, whilst also ensuring games can be enjoyed safely.

Dr Jo Twist OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Ukie said:

As a responsible industry, we have committed to exploring additional ways to support players and parents to build on our existing work developing and raising awareness of parental controls.

We look forward to engaging closely with the Government and other organisations in the working group and on the Video Games Research Framework.

Dr Richard Wilson OBE, Chief Executive Officer, TIGA said:

TIGA believes that games businesses should aim to ensure that games are safe to use for all players. In 2020, TIGA formally adopted its 5 Principles for Safeguarding Players, designed to embody the spirit of the approach that games companies should adopt in operating their businesses within the UK. Children and young people should not be able to buy 'loot boxes' in video games without parental consent. TIGA also believes that vulnerable adults need to be protected against potential harms arising from loot boxes. TIGA looks forward to contributing to the DCMS's planned working group to advance measures to protect players from potential harms.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The Government response is on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

- The DCMS response considered over 32,000 responses to a player survey, 50 direct submissions, and an independent review of academic studies.
-

[Transport Secretary sets out protections for passengers with new aviation charter](#)

- Transport Secretary announces new Aviation Passenger Charter to help passengers navigate their protections and rights when flying.
- Follows last month's publication of Government's 22-point plan to minimise disruption at airports.

The government has today (17 July 2022) published a new [Aviation Passenger Charter](#), developed by government, industry, consumer and disability groups in partnership, outlining what passengers can expect if confronted with flight delays and cancellations this summer.

The charter has been designed to give passengers the confidence they deserve as they head for their summer holidays, and follows last month's publication of the [government's 22-point plan](#) to help the industry minimise disruption at airports and ensure holidaymakers and travellers can enjoy their well-deserved breaks.

The new Aviation Passenger Charter will act as a one-stop shop so passengers know their rights for their entire journey – from booking, travelling to and through the airport, during the flight and returning to the UK.

It outlines what aviation passengers can reasonably expect from airlines, travel agents, tour operators and airports, and what do if things go wrong. This includes advice on what to do if flights are cancelled or delayed, or if baggage goes missing, as well as guidance on how to complain if passengers feel they have been treated unfairly.

The charter will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains as useful as possible for passengers, both over the busy summer period and beyond

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Passengers deserve reliable services, and to be properly compensated if things don't go to plan, and the chaotic scenes we've seen at airports scenes we've seen at airports are unacceptable.

"The new charter will help to give UK passengers peace of mind as

they enjoy the renewed freedom to travel, whether for holidays, business or to visit loved ones.

Our passenger charter builds on our 22 point plan to support the industry in backing holidaymakers and keeping disruption to a minimum this summer.

Disabled passengers and people with reduced mobility must receive the best possible service, and to be treated with respect and dignity so that aviation is accessible to everyone who wants to fly. The charter will ensure that disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility have immediate access to information about their rights and what to do if things go wrong.

The government will soon announce its response to its consumer policy reform consultation, which will outline how, together with industry and the aviation regulator the Civil Aviation Authority, it will bring real change for everyday aviation passengers.

Richard Moriarty, chief executive of the UK Civil Aviation Authority, said:

It is important that we at the Civil Aviation Authority and wider industry continue to work together in the interests of consumers.

A part of that is how we improve the information they receive and making sure it is clear and concise to help support and improve their overall travel experience.

Earlier this month the government [announced that mandatory aviation sector national security checks are being processed in record time](#), supporting the industry as it works to rapidly fill vacancies in the face of heightened demand for flights this summer.

97% of Accreditation Checks are being completed in around 5 days on average, with counter terrorist checks (CTC) in the aviation sector being processed in under 10 days on average. This is a reduction from the 20-day average turnaround for CTC checks in March, before the priority measures for aviation sector applications were introduced.

Last month the government [announced a one-off 'amnesty' on airport slot rules](#), enabling airlines to plan ahead and avoid last-minute cancellations. This was provided as an exceptional measure while industry makes progress in recruiting necessary staff.

The measures are part of the [government's 22-point plan](#) to help ensure passengers don't face a summer of disruption, as it called on the industry to do everything within its power to ensure there is no repeat of the problems experienced at Easter and half term.

It sets out all of the measures the government is taking to support the aviation industry, including to help recruit and train staff, ensure the

delivery of a realistic summer schedule, minimise disruption and support passengers when delays and cancellations are unavoidable.

UK and Republic of Korea set out desire to cooperate in Space

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, ROKAF, General Jung Sang-hwa, signed the Terms of Reference document this morning at the Royal International Air Tattoo.

This arrangement establishes a series of Space Engagement talks to strengthen defence space co-operation, integrating space capabilities as defence partners. This cooperation will cover areas such as operational knowledge sharing, collaborative exercises and training, and personnel exchanges. It also sets out a mutual desire for the sharing of space-related information, through future information-sharing agreements.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, Chief of the Air Staff – Royal Air Force, said:

Space is critical to our security, our prosperity and our modern way of life. The UK and the Republic of Korea share the same determination to ensure that space is there for the benefit of all, so I look forward to the deep cooperation between UK Space Command and the ROKAF that this arrangement will enable.

General Jung Sang-hwa, Chief of Staff of the Air Force – Republic of Korea Air Force, said:

The two countries have pursued their common values, including democracy, multilateralism and human rights.

In addition, ROKAF and RAF jointly responded to various global issues through military cooperation, such as Air to Air Staff Talks.

Based on the SET established today, I am confident that cooperation and communication between the air forces will expand further into the space field.

Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey, Commander – UK Space Command, said:

This agreement is the first step in developing UK Space Command's relationship with the ROKAF Space Centre to ensure that space is safe and sustainable for future generations.

This arrangement contributes to the [UK-Republic of Korea bilateral framework for closer cooperation](#), which was agreed by the UK Prime Minister and the President of the Republic of Korea at the NATO Summit in Madrid on 30 June 2022.

UK Space Command is the Defence lead for space operations, space workforce, and space capability. It's a Joint Command, based at RAF High Wycombe, and staffed by personnel from the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force, alongside civil servants, and contractors.

[Consultation launched to decide on future good causes to benefit from £738 million Dormant Asset Fund in England](#)

- Consultation seeks views on the social and environmental purposes of dormant assets funding in England
- £880 million for good causes across the UK, £738 million of which will be made available for England over time

The Government has launched a public [consultation](#) on what social and environmental causes should benefit from more than £700 million of dormant assets funding in England.

Currently, dormant assets funding in England is required to be spent on three causes: youth, financial inclusion and social investment. As the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic continues, as well as cost of living pressures, the Government believes that now is the right time to review whether these remain the right causes for where funding from dormant assets can be allocated.

It comes as the Dormant Assets Scheme was recently expanded from bank accounts to include the insurance and pensions, investment and wealth management, and securities sectors, estimated to unlock around £880 million for good causes across the UK, £738 million of which will be made available

for England over time.

Dormant assets are financial assets, such as bank accounts, that have been untouched for a long period. The Dormant Assets Scheme is led by the financial services industry and backed by the government with the aim of reuniting people with these financial assets. Where this is not possible, the Scheme unlocks this money for social and environmental initiatives across the UK.

Nigel Huddleston, Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, said:

This consultation will allow everyone's voice to be heard so that the Scheme can make a difference where it matters. With the cost of living crisis, it is more important than ever that we hear views from communities up and down the country on what causes we should support.

I encourage everyone to participate in this unique opportunity to have your say on the future of dormant assets funding in England.

To date, the Scheme has released £892 million, including £44 million allocated in England this year to tackle youth unemployment, to support communities in deprived areas, and give people in need access to finance.

In England, the scheme has already channelled £110 million to breaking down barriers to employment for disadvantaged young people and £100 million to increasing access to fair and affordable financial products and services for vulnerable individuals. This is on top of £485 million of much-needed funding for both charities and social enterprises since the scheme's inception.

This has included investment in thousands of social enterprises and charities working in the most deprived parts of the country through [Access – The Foundation for Social Investment](#) and [Big Society Capital](#), such as £150 million of investment into 305 organisations supporting young people at risk of unemployment. Bemix CIC in Kent received £80,000 to further develop their 'Discovery Catering' Cafe, which employs the young people they support and the Single Homeless Action Initiative in Durham (SHAID) received a £150,000 investment to support young people making the difficult transition to living independently.

Now, individuals, communities, and industry participants can have their say on what causes matter most to them. One option under consideration for views is a community wealth fund proposal that would see pots of money distributed over long periods of time in local communities in England, with decisions made by residents to make a difference where it is most needed.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The [consultation](#) is now open for responses and will close on Sunday 9 October.
- The government encourages all those with an interest – including the public, community groups, and industry stakeholders – to help shape the direction of the Dormant Assets Scheme in England over the coming years.
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not required to publicly consult on the broad purposes of their portions
- To have your say, please respond to the consultation using this [online survey](#).
- All responses to the consultation will be carefully considered, if you have any further questions please email dormantassetsconsultation@almaeconomics.com.

[Jobcentre closures in areas with red severe weather warning](#)

Benefit payments will be made as normal. We will make every effort to contact everyone who has an appointment on one of those days to have it over the telephone or to rearrange, so they need not contact us or worry about their claim.

Our telephony enquiry lines will be open as usual. Numbers to call can be found on www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

Press Office

Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

Follow DWP on: