

Government publishes independent report into regulation of Football Index

Press release

An independent report into the regulation of BetIndex, the providers of the novel product Football Index which collapsed earlier this year, has been published.



- Gambling Commission has updated how it assesses risk so that novel products are properly considered
- Gambling Commission and Financial Conduct Authority have developed a strengthened Memorandum of Understanding to improve cooperation in wake of review
- Review finds Gambling Commission could have worked faster to better regulate Football Index product
- Review's findings will feed directly into Government's ongoing review of the Gambling Act

A review was announced by the Government in April 2021 to examine in detail the actions taken by the Gambling Commission in the period from September 2015 up to the suspension of BetIndex's licence in March this year. It has been led by [Malcolm Sheehan QC.](#)

The Gambling Commission is also carrying out a separate regulatory investigation into BetIndex Ltd on which it will report in due course, and has referred the case to the Insolvency Service. Administration proceedings for BetIndex Ltd are also ongoing which are looking at the assets and liabilities of the firm and will likely result in some reimbursement to creditors.

While Football Index was never regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the review also looked at how it worked with the Gambling Commission during this period and how it considered whether Football Index should also be regulated under financial services legislation.

It found that:

- In the first instance, BetIndex did not properly notify the Gambling Commission of the nature of the product in its licence application, nor did it inform the regulator of changes to the product after launch as it was required to.
- The Gambling Commission could have better responded to the challenges that the novel product raised once launched, with earlier scrutiny, including of the language used by the product, quicker decision-making and action, and better escalation of issues.
- While Football Index was never regulated by the FCA, areas for improvement for the FCA have been identified, including in speed of response to requests from the Commission and consistency of messaging on regulatory responsibilities.

The report identifies lessons to be learnt and provides recommendations for both the Gambling Commission and the FCA, which they have already started responding to, and provides valuable insights which will inform the Government's ongoing review of the Gambling Act.

Gambling Minister Chris Philp said:

I'm extremely conscious of how devastating the collapse of Football Index has been on its many customers, which is why we moved quickly to launch this independent review.

We have been clear that we must learn lessons to make sure a situation like this does not happen again. I'm encouraged to see the Gambling Commission and the FCA are taking concrete steps on an action plan on how they will better work together.

We will ensure that the findings from this review feed directly into our ongoing Gambling Act Review which is looking at ways we can improve regulation of the gambling industry.

In light of the independent review, the Gambling Commission and the FCA are already taking steps to improve ways of working going forward:

- They have developed a strengthened Memorandum of Understanding, which includes new escalation routes to make sure regulatory impasses are identified and overcome quickly.
- The Gambling Commission has updated its framework for how it assesses risk so that product novelty is properly considered, as well as committing to consulting on tighter rules for the terminology used to describe gambling products. This includes making clear distinctions for consumers where products are gambling, rather than 'investments'.
- The FCA has additionally nominated an Executive Director to oversee the relationship with the Commission, and continue to pursue its programme of change as set out in its July Business Plan.

In addition, the report asks whether more should be done to assure that

gambling companies which offer long term bets are able to cover the payouts. This question will be considered as part of the Government's Gambling White Paper, which it intends to publish in due course.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The Independent Review of the Regulation of BetIndex report can be found [here](#).
- The [Gambling Act Review](#) Call for Evidence closed on 31 March.
- Football Index, operated by BetIndex Ltd, had a model that allowed customers to bet by buying 'shares' in footballers and receive returns based on their performance. The Gambling Commission suspended the firm's operating licence in March, and it entered administration shortly after.
- In line with the Government's manifesto commitment to review gambling legislation and ensure it is fit for the digital age, the Government will also look at the role and resources of the Gambling Commission as part of its [Gambling Act Review](#) and intends to publish a white paper in due course.
- BetIndex Ltd has been referred to the Insolvency Service by the Gambling Commission to ask that they consider whether the actions of the directors prior to administration breached insolvency or fraud laws. We are unable to comment on this matter further to avoid prejudicing any possible future legal proceedings.
- A Written Ministerial Statement has been laid in the House of Commons and a copy of the report will be deposited in the House of Commons Library.

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[Animal medicine seizure notice: Parcel addressed to Paddington, London](#)

News story

Details of a seizure notice served following a parcel addressed to premises in Paddington, London stopped by a courier company.



The following veterinary medicines were identified by a courier company. The products were detained and subsequently seized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

This parcel was addressed to premises in London and was shipped from Kuwait. The parcel contained the following medicines:

- 2 x Omoguard paste for horses (33g)
- 3 x Pentosan Equine injection (6ml)
- 1 x Halo injection (6 x 6ml)
- 1 x Cortiso (100ml)

These products are intended for use in horses and are not authorised veterinary medicines in the UK.

The medicines were seized under Regulation 25 (Importation of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013

- 2 x GastroGard oral paste (370mg/g) – UK expired product

This medicine is a Prescription Only Medicine – Veterinary (POM-V). It is for the treatment and prevention of gastric ulcers in horses.

Unauthorised possession of POM-V veterinary medicines are offences under Regulation 7 (Classification, supply and possession of the product) of the VMR.

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[Partners agree 20-year vision for Purbeck Heaths super NNR](#)

The Purbeck Heaths NNR is a product of long-term collaboration for nature recovery. The partners, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Forestry England, National Trust, Natural England, Rempstone

Estate, and the RSPB have now agreed a 20-year vision, a Memorandum of Understanding and the first ever joint management plan for a 'super' NNR.

The management plan will allow the partnership to work at a large landscape scale and use natural processes and animals to sustain this dynamic and ever-shifting kaleidoscope of habitats – a wild quality long missing from much of the British countryside, but vitally important to its wildlife.

Already, the partners are moving forward these ambitions for nature and people. The area grazed by cattle and ponies is being more than doubled in size, encompassing 1,370 hectares and stretching to RSPB Arne. Led by the Dorset AONB team, with grant support from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund and the Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Fund, new fencing and cattle grids are being installed, allowing for the introduction of rare breed pigs alongside the cattle and ponies, rooting the landscape for the first time since the extinction of wild boar some 300 years past.

Rachel Williams, Natural England Area Manager, said:

This is a fantastic example of partners working together to make nature recovery a reality. Purbeck Heaths NNR is an inspirational place for people from all walks of life to enjoy the natural world. By giving wildlife space to thrive and restoring natural processes across the landscape, we can reverse the decline in nature.

Douglas Ryder of the Rempstone Estate said:

We are delighted to be working to help deliver a landscape that gives space for nature, working together to appropriately manage Purbeck Heaths using tried and tested agricultural methods, such as grazing with native cattle, to enhance habitat and species recovery is hugely important.

David Brown, National Trust Landscape Partnerships Manager, said:

The Purbeck Heaths NNR is the latest milestone on the journey to recover nature across Purbeck. Conservationists have been working here since the 1950s and have helped safeguard some of Europe's most precious heathland sites, gradually reconnecting them back into one huge nature-rich landscape. The NNR has brought together 7 landowners under this common vision.

Leanne Sargeant, Forestry England Senior Ecologist, said:

This strengthens our ambitions to do more for biodiversity and our new 5-year plan will feed into improving our forests for wildlife. We recognise the importance of working at a landscape-scale and

this partnership will really help us utilise our knowledge to build a better landscape for nature.

Dr Phil Sterling, Dorset AONB Chairman, said:

Functioning ecosystems and abundant wildlife are the cornerstones of natural beauty, and the scale at which the Purbeck Heaths NNR partners are working makes such a contribution to the nationally-important landscape of the Dorset AONB.

By working together, partners benefit from each other's strengths and expertise to recover nature and restore natural processes across Purbeck Heaths NNR. In doing so, it will become more resilient to climate change, creating a wilder, richer, and more complete experience for people enjoying the reserve.

In the years to come, the Purbeck Heaths NNR will continue to be a beating heart of nature conservation, supporting nature recovery beyond its boundaries and into the wider landscape to strengthen the emergent national Nature Recovery Network.

Notes to editors

- Declared on 21 February 2020, the Purbeck Heaths NNR covers 3,331 hectares (8,231 acres), including Studland and the Arne peninsula, and is the first 'super' NNR in the country, combining a number of existing nature reserves. Nestled in the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), it is now the largest area of lowland heath managed as a single nature reserve in all of England.
- Visit www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/project/wild-purbeck, and www.nationaltrust.org.uk/studland-bay for more information.
- Natural England is the government's advisor on the natural environment. Established in 2006, our work is focused on enhancing England's wildlife and landscapes and maximising the benefits they bring to the public.
- Learn more about [Landscapes for Life Week](#).

[Veteran suicide figures to be recorded for the first time](#)

A new method of recording veteran suicides in England and Wales has been announced, alongside a 10 year look back to examine veteran deaths through suicide.

For the first time, numbers of ex-service personnel who take their lives will

be recorded officially by the government, following an agreement between the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA), the MOD and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

This data will be used to further understand where there is a need for dedicated services in England and Wales. The data will allow the government to ensure that these targeted services are signposted to veterans, where they are needed most.

The new reporting method will use data collected from the recent veterans question in the 2021 Census and match it with ONS-held data on suicides. This will allow the government to produce a statistic, known as a national measure, of the total number of veterans who die by suicide each year. This is the first time such a figure will be produced. It is expected that the first annual statistics will be published in 2023.

To better understand the lives lost prior to 2022, the government is also conducting a 10 year look back to examine veteran deaths through suicide. This research will be published in 2022.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said:

Any suicide is a tragedy and collecting better data on these instances will help government better target support for those who need it.

This builds on a number of studies which are already taking place to better understand why some veterans take their lives.

Support is out there and hope that today's agreement will help us reach more people who may be struggling.

Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, said:

The Office for National Statistics is constantly working to provide new insight that can be used to make a real difference to some of the most vulnerable in society.

Understanding an issue is the first step to solving it and producing this new measure will help inform decisions to tackle deaths by suicide of our incredible armed forces veterans.

It is important that we invest the time and effort to produce high quality estimates that properly shine a light on this critical issue.

Hannah Blythyn, Wales' Deputy Minister for Social Partnerships, including veterans' support, said:

One life lost is always one too many. Their service for our country has enabled us to live in the safe communities we have today.

Preventing suicide is complex and no one organisation can tackle the issues in isolation. Strengthening the data is a key element of helping us to understand the risk factors and to better target preventative approaches.

We continue to prioritise the mental health of our veterans and have recently invested an additional £235,000 annually into Veterans NHS Wales.

This ensures that specialist, priority support is available for individuals who have served in the Armed Forces and are experiencing mental health difficulties related specifically to their military service.

Current data on veteran suicide is drawn from bespoke research projects examining specific veteran cohorts. The new data from the census will offer a new opportunity to identify veterans and match this information to other datasets to better understand veterans' experiences. Approaches for replicating this in Scotland and Northern Ireland are being investigated. It is a robust solution that will allow for high quality and consistent data to feed into future policy making.

The statistics will be kept up to date through a new agreement between the OVA, MOD and ONS on data sharing for those leaving the military each year.

The new work will continue alongside existing research into the mental health and frequency of suicide within the veteran community. In addition to this new reporting method, the OVA is funding the next stage of a study by Kings Centre for Military Health Research looking at all aspects of the lives of veterans, including mental health.

Through the statistics and data from the 2021 Census, the government will be able to ensure that support services will be targeted to regions of higher levels of suicide in veteran populations.

The government is also providing £2m from 2019/20 to 2020/21 to the Zero Suicide Alliance, which aims to achieve zero suicides across the NHS and in local communities by improved awareness and prevention training and developing a better culture of learning from deaths by suicide across the NHS.

The MOD continues to monitor deaths in those who served in the 1982 Falklands campaign and the 1990/1991 Gulf conflict to understand the long term impact of military service. They are also finalising a study to track the cause of deaths, including suicides, in all personnel who have served in the UK armed forces since 2001.

This work forms part of the government's commitment to improve the collection and analysis of data on veterans to inform future policy, as set out in the

Strategy for our Veterans.

For veterans who may be struggling with their mental health, there is support available across the United Kingdom for them and their families:

- in England, veterans and their families in England can get specialist help from the NHS Op COURAGE service
- in Wales, you can reach out to Veteran Therapists in each Local Health Board through Veteran NHS Wales
- in Scotland, veterans can access veteran-led mental health and welfare support through Veterans First Point, part of NHS Scotland
- in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office links individual veterans, veterans' groups, statutory and non-statutory bodies, and charities supporting veterans
- anyone in the UK or overseas can also contact the Veterans' Gateway helpline on 0808 802 1212, or visit the website for advice and signposting to further support, including for families and the bereaved

If you are a journalist covering a suicide-related issue, please consider following the [Samaritans' media guidelines](#) on the reporting of suicide because of the potentially damaging consequences of irresponsible reporting. In particular, the guidelines advise on terminology to use and include links to sources of support for anyone affected by the themes in the article.

[UK vaccine swap with South Korea in joint effort against COVID-19](#)

- First shipment of Pfizer vaccine due to leave the UK in the coming weeks
- Follows similar vaccine swap initiative with Australia

The UK and the Republic of Korea will share COVID-19 vaccine doses to mutually support the rollout of the lifesaving vaccine in each nation, the government has announced today (Wednesday 22 September).

The UK is sending over 1 million Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines to the Republic of Korea to enhance their vaccination programme, with the first batch expected to arrive in the coming weeks.

By the end of 2021, the Republic of Korea will return the same volume of doses to the UK, as the government continues with its vaccine rollout and the booster programme over the winter months.

The swapping initiative will also help the Republic of Korea towards hitting its target of administering a second dose to 70% of its population by the end of October.

Similar to the Australia vaccine swap arrangement announced earlier this month, this new collaboration means the Pfizer/BioNTech doses – which are not immediately required in the UK due to robust supply management – are used to support vaccination through the health partnership we have with the Republic of Korea.

Almost 90% of over 16s in the UK have received one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and there will be no impact on the UK's ongoing COVID-19 vaccine rollout or booster programmes as a result of the dose sharing initiative. It will also have no impact on the doses the UK has already pledged to give to COVAX.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

By working closely with our friends in South Korea, this vaccine swap will maximise their rollout speed without having an impact on the UK's vaccine programme.

Separately, we continue to deliver on our commitment to donate 100 million doses to nations around the world by June 2022 to ensure as many people across the world are as safe from COVID-19 as possible.

Today's announcement follows the UK donating 10.3 million COVID-19 vaccines to other nations – including 6.2 million to vulnerable nations through COVAX – exceeding the target of 5 million by September.

The COVAX doses were a share of the 100 million vaccines the Prime Minister pledged the UK would share over the following year at June's G7 in Cornwall, with 30 million due to be sent by the end of the year.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:

The UK is playing a leading role in the global response to the Covid-19 pandemic – donating 100 million vaccine doses across the world and have committed £548m to COVAX.

The Republic of Korea is a strategic partner for the UK and the sharing of one million vaccines benefits both countries as we help build resistance against COVID-19 and save lives.

In July, the UK delivered 3 million vaccines through COVAX to 11 African countries, which were also part of the 100 million package of doses announced in June – Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia – and four million directly to countries in need including Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Cambodia, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Notes to editors:

- A total of 1,000,350 Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines will be shipped to the Republic of Korea.
- The doses going to the Republic of Korea are not part of the commitment to send 100m vaccines overseas.
- To date the UK has donated 10.3 million COVID-19 vaccines to other nations – 6.2 million doses have been donated through COVAX, with the remaining doses donated bilaterally to countries in need.
- The UK has led the international response to COVID-19, including through kick-starting efforts to establish COVAX in 2020 and providing £548 million to fund vaccines for lower income countries through the scheme. It has so far delivered more than 215 million vaccine doses to over 138 countries and territories, including in 84 lower-middle income countries. COVAX aims to deliver 1.8 billion vaccines to lower-income countries by early 2022.