

Government urges gambling industry to tackle risks of problem gambling during coronavirus outbreak

- The Minister has written to the Chief Executives of five leading online gambling operators asking them to take extra steps to protect players at this time of heightened risk.
- He will also host a virtual roundtable with major problem gambling treatment and support organisations on the impacts of coronavirus.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has requested regular intelligence from the industry on patterns of gambling during the coronavirus outbreak, including how operators are managing the risk of problem gambling and what more companies can do to promote safer gambling messaging during the current crisis.

Culture Minister Nigel Huddleston has written to the Chief Executives of five leading online gambling operators – Bet 365, GVC, Skybet, William Hill and Flutter – and the trade body the Betting and Gaming Council – to:

- Request regular and comprehensive internal data around online gambling habits as a result of the ongoing lockdown measures;
- Remind them of their responsibilities and encourage extra steps to protect players at this time of heightened risk;
- Call for a greater prominence of safer gambling messaging within their advertising aimed at existing and potential customers across television, radio, online and print media. This should more clearly warn of risks and signpost people to sources of support, such as GambleAware.

The latter action follows the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) announcing an increase in gambling-related complaints since the start of the coronavirus epidemic. DCMS has requested further details from the ASA on the scale and trends of these complaints.

These measures will support DCMS and the Gambling Commission to make a full assessment of the impact of the current circumstances on gambling habits, monitor whether risks are materialising, to what extent operators are taking action, and whether the current regulations and voluntary measures by the industry are sufficient to prevent an increase in gambling-related harm.

Although there is no firm evidence at this stage, there are concerns that the current social distancing measures could lead to an increase in problem gambling online with people in lockdown and internet usage up.

This follows reports received by the Gambling Commission of a recent increase in consumer activity around online slots, poker, casino gaming and virtual sports, following the cancellation of most live sport and the closure of all land-based gambling premises. Players of online casino games, for instance,

have been identified by the Commission as over three times more likely to be problem gamblers than those who take part in general sports betting.

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

As we stay at home and spend more time online, it is vital that no stone is left unturned in protecting people from gambling related harm.

Whilst overall gambling participation has fallen in recent weeks and the industry has made notable contributions to support the national response, we must take proactive steps now, and keep these measures under review.

I expect patterns of play to be closely monitored so we can move quickly if there is any evidence of problem gambling increasing. I also want more to be done to promote responsible gambling during the pandemic.

The Minister will also host a virtual roundtable with major problem gambling treatment and support organisations in the coming weeks. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the impacts of coronavirus, to assess trends in service use, how remote treatment provision is working and an assessment of current self-exclusion measures.

The government has already taken strong steps to ensure consumers are protected from gambling related harm including introducing a ban on gambling with credit cards, which came into effect across Great Britain on 14 April 2020. At the end of last month it also became mandatory for all online gambling operators to integrate with Gamstop, the online self exclusion tool, ensuring that consumers only need to sign up once to be blocked from all licensed online gambling.

The Government has also already announced that it will review the Gambling Act to ensure it is fit for the digital age. Further details about the review will be provided in due course.

ENDS

Notes to editors

On 25 March 2020 the Gambling Commission wrote to all online operators to make clear expectations on consumer protection and compliance with licence conditions.

On 7 April 2020 the Advertising Standards Authority introduced a new process for the public to report inappropriate advertising.

There are robust requirements for operators to safeguard players across every form of gambling. All operators must adhere to these rules if they wish to operate in the British market.

The Gambling Commission has a range of powers to take strong action against any company that breaks the rules, whether online or in land-based premises.

[First charter flight departed from Bangladesh to bring British travellers home](#)

The British High Commissioner Robert Chatterton Dickson and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen were present at the Shahjalal International Airport to observe the return process and speak with departing British travellers.

Earlier on 18 April, the British High Commission to Bangladesh announced four charter flights (21, 23, 25 and 26 April) from Bangladesh to bring home 850 British nationals to the United Kingdom.

For these return flights, priority is initially being given to vulnerable passengers, most at risk from the effects of coronavirus, including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

The flights are intended for British Nationals who are on holiday or are short-term visitors to Bangladesh. During this process, we will continue to prioritise vulnerable British nationals most at risk from the effects of coronavirus. We have undertaken checks to ensure those registering for these flights are eligible.

We have engaged heavily with the Government of Bangladesh, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh and airport officials, Bangladesh Police, local law enforcement and administration, to ensure British nationals safe return to the UK.

The UK Government committed up to £75 million to help thousands of British people return home. We have a responsibility to the UK taxpayer to deliver value for money so we can put on as many flights as possible. Anyone flying back to the United Kingdom on a UK Government chartered flight purchased their ticket. This approach is in line with other countries, who are charging similar fees for charter flights.

As of 21 April, The UK Government helped [number of British travellers] to returned home from [number of countries].

The British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson said

“I am very pleased that we have today enabled 269 British visitors to Bangladesh, many of them vulnerable and with underlying health conditions, to

return home to the UK on our first special charter flight, operated by British Airways. Working with Bangladesh Biman Airlines we were able to provide a connecting flight from Sylhet, where many of our nationals were staying. Our next flights will run from Dhaka on 23, 25 and 26 April, again with a connection from Sylhet.

“I would particularly like to thank the Government of Bangladesh, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, the management of Hazrat Shahjalal and Osmani International Airports and Biman Bangladesh Airlines for their exemplary support in ensuring the safe return of British visitors.

“The British High Commission in Dhaka remains fully operational and we will continue to provide full consular support to British nationals in Bangladesh.”

Notes to editor

- The charter flights are for UK travellers who normally reside in the UK and their direct dependants. A number of seats will be reserved for those deemed vulnerable.
- Movement within Bangladesh is currently very restricted. The British High Commission contacted those who have confirmed seats on the flight with further details.
- Those who are eligible to fly, and when their seat is confirmed, were sent information on getting to airports and flight itineraries.
- The British High Commission continues to provide consular support to any British nationals who remain in Bangladesh. Support is available 24/7 by telephone for all routine enquiries and emergencies: +88 02 55668700.
- Also, remaining British Nationals can send your consular enquiries through the [contact form](#)

Further information

British High Commission Dhaka
United Nations Road
Baridhara
Dhaka – 1212
Bangladesh

Email: Dhaka.Press@fco.gov.uk

Follow the British High commissioner to Bangladesh on Twitter: [@RCDicksonUK](#)

Follow the British High commission Bangladesh on Twitter and Facebook:
[@UKinBangladesh](#) and [UK in Bangladesh](#)

Carlisle City Council becomes latest local authority to join central Local Land Charges Register

From today (Tuesday 21 April) anyone requiring Local Land Charges (LLC1) searches in the local authority area of Carlisle City Council will need to get them from HM Land Registry rather than going directly to the council.

Karina Singh, Director of Transformation at HM Land Registry, said:

Everyone will now have instant, online access to local land charges search results in Carlisle, meaning it will be quicker and simpler to buy and sell property across the area. It is even more important at this current time that public services can be accessed digitally and instantly where possible and we are pleased to be able to contribute to that through the central Local Land Charges Register.

Councillor Gareth Ellis, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Resources at Carlisle City Council, said:

We are pleased to have worked with HM Land Registry to transform our paper-based LLC1 records – made up of tens of thousands of charges, including 51 charges affecting Hadrian's Wall alone – into a single, digital service. Once again, Carlisle is leading the way and striving to enhance the services we offer to the people we serve within our district and beyond. By updating, transforming and migrating our local land charges data to the central register, we have ensured that all those buying or selling, leasing or remortgaging property across Carlisle have instant access to our local land charges data. Our aim throughout has been, and continues to be, helping our residents and businesses to conduct their property transactions smoothly and efficiently.

Local land charges searches are normally required in the property-buying process. Most local land charges are restrictions or prohibitions on the use of the property such as planning permissions or listed buildings. The local land charges search will reveal whether a property is subject to a charge which then informs a buyer's decision to buy a property or parcel of land.

HM Land Registry is working in partnership with a number of local authorities in England to migrate their Local Land Charges data to a central, digital register as part of a phased approach. Once migrated, anyone will be able to get instant online search results using the [Search for Local Land Charges](#) service.

HM Land Registry's business customers can use their existing portal and Business Gateway channels or their usual search providers to access Local Land Charges data for those local authorities which have migrated.

Customers will need to continue to submit CON29 enquiries to the local authority.

For an overview of the service, watch [our short video](#).

For more information, read about the [Local Land Charges Programme](#).

Letter to front line staff providing essential banking services

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

AAIB Special Bulletin: Biocide treatment of aircraft fuel

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.