



Gambling Related Harm APPG

Gambling Related Harm APPG Minutes

Date: Monday 4th May 2020

Time: 9am

Location: Virtual

Chair: Carolyn Harris MP

Minutes taken by: James Olney, Interel Consulting UK

Members Present

- Carolyn Harris MP
- The Rt Hon. Stephen Timms MP
- The Rt Hon. the Lord Foster of Bath
- Tracey Crouch MP
- Ronnie Cowan MP
- David Linden MP
- Owen Thompson MP
- Sammy Wilson MP (Joined at 9:04am)
- The Rt Hon. Sir Ian Duncan Smith MP (Joined at 9:06am)
- Richard Holden MP (Joined at 9:44am)

External Guests

- Professor Samantha Thomas – Deakin University, Australia
- James Grimes – The Big Step
- Shahriar Coupal – The Advertising Standards Authority
- Matt Wilson – The Advertising Standards Authority
- Matt Gaskell - NHS Northern Gambling Clinics
- Katherine Morgan – Interel Consulting UK
- Holly Ramsey – Interel Consulting UK
- James Olney – Interel Consulting UK
- Jo Lloyd – Office of Carolyn Harris MP
- Iain Fraser - Office of Ronnie Cowan MP
- Sophia Worringer – Office of the Rt Hon. Sir Ian Duncan Smith MP
- Priya Rockley – Office of the Rt Hon. Stephen Timms MP

Minutes of the Meeting – 9am – 10:05am

CAROLYN HARRIS MP opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

PROFESSOR THOMAS thanked the Group for inviting her to speak. She set out a rough structure of her remarks and said that her main point of discussion would be in relation to the issue of children and gambling marketing.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that over the last six years or so, her independent research team (not funded by the industry) have conducted a number of studies on young people aged 8 to 18, specifically focussing on the factors that influence their gambling attitudes and consumption intentions. She said that they have also conducted a number of studies that have examined the appeal strategies within gambling marketing



Gambling Related Harm APPG

campaigns, looking at which strategies may specifically appeal to children. She said that she would be able to provide copies of the studies if members would be interested.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that she wanted to begin from the premise that the UK and Australia are actually quite similar - both have highly competitive gambling markets in which multiple companies compete for a small number of valuable customers (valuable because they lose money). She said that it's important to recognise that the discourse that gambling is a socially and culturally accepted form of entertainment in our communities is perhaps not so accurate – most people in both populations don't gamble regularly and don't gamble online.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that the marketing for gambling brands takes multiple shapes and forms, is pushed through a range of media channels and is at the heart of what companies do to compete in a very limited market. She said that the co-operation between brands has led to a saturation of gambling marketing across multiple media channels – in particular in alignment with sport, both in the UK and Australia. She said it was the mechanism by which companies build brand awareness, receptivity, approval and loyalty, which may then encourage people to open accounts.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that though there are many similarities between the UK and Australia, UK gambling companies are ideally positioned via their alignment with football in particular, to develop brand recognition and loyalty not only in the UK but internationally as well. She said that this is important for policymakers to understand this, because the regulatory decisions that they take about gambling in the UK have an impact on people who view sport around the world. She said that in Australia they'd seen self portraits drawn by children wearing British football jerseys which also contain the brand names of gambling companies not registered in Australia. She said that she could provide examples of pictures if that would be helpful.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that though there are well recognised impacts of gambling marketing on adults, her team's specific concern from a public health perspective was that children are being caught in the crossfire of the extensive and pervasive marketing strategies that companies are using to retain their existing customer base, grow their market share or to replace customers who no longer regularly gamble. She said that though they hear concerns about gambling companies specifically targeting children, from a public health perspective their primary focus is on how children's exposure to multiple forms of marketing across multiple media channels may play a role in positively shaping and influencing their gambling attitudes and consumption intentions.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that in the UK a lack of comprehensive regulation and curbs on all forms of gambling marketing and advertising, and a heavy reliance on industry self-regulation, suggests that the Government has decided that the costs associated with exposing children to gambling marketing are outweighed by the benefit they perceive it provides to businesses that may financially benefit from gambling. She said that those who benefit not only includes the gambling industry, but other industries with a vested interest in gambling marketing revenues such as sporting codes via sponsorship and broadcasters via commercial television advertising.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that the other thing to note is that a lot of people talk about gambling becoming normalised for children – her research has shown that gambling is already normalised for children, and that appears to be the case in particular in relation to gambling that is aligned to sport. About 75% of children in both their Australian and UK studies have showed that gambling is a normal or common part of sport, with most stating that this perception has been created because of the marketing for gambling they see within sport.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that she planned to draw attention to some specific examples from her research about how this process of normalisation happens via marketing and how it particularly impacts on



Gambling Related Harm APPG

children, as well as to advance a discussion about appropriate legislative responses from a public health perspective.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that they look for four things when talking to children about gambling advertising: environmental recall (exposure), brand and promotion recall and gambling knowledge (receptivity to the messages within marketing).

PROFESSOR THOMAS added that they also talk about how marketing shapes children's positive attitudes towards gambling, and then their future consumption and intentions – measuring their approval of gambling and whether they would like to gamble when they're older.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that exposure is the first building block of the marketing process – though it is important for people to understand that marketing incidences does not necessarily equal exposure. She has seen a number of studies in the UK recently that have confused those two concepts. For example - counting the number of adds in a football match is not a good way of measuring children's exposure to advertising, and is something that UK researchers get wrong a lot of the time.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that when they carry out studies to investigate exposure, they're interested in where children remember having seen advertising, where they recall having seen advertising in some environments more than others, and whether there are new marketing environments that are emerging over time that adults may not be away of but which children see – things like Snapchat and TikTok.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that the main findings from their research linked to exposure was firstly that children were exposed to gambling advertising across a range of media and community advertising platforms, and that secondly it can no longer be assumed that the only type of marketing that poses a risk to children is commercial break advertising.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that this is particularly important from a policy and legislative perspective given that most gambling policy and most self-regulatory proposals from the UK gambling industry only appear to cover commercial break advertising – particularly during sport. She said that there is no evidence that this form of advertising is any more or less influential for children than any other form of advertising.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that they know that children are very aware of gambling promotions in their everyday environment and that they can recall gambling promotions a lot more than promotions for other products. In the last two years, the biggest shift that they have seen is in exposure on social media platforms. In their most recent study, they found that half of young people saw gambling ads on sites such as Instagram, Youtube and Snapchat. In terms of rigour, they not only asked if children remember seeing ads on those sites, but also asked them to describe what they have seen so that they could make an assessment as to whether they were seeing advertisements that they already knew were present on those sites from an adult's perspective.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that they know that children report a range of types of ad on social media channels. They describe promotions that pop-up on their Snapchat and Instagram feeds, and they also describe pop-ups when they're watching YouTube videos. She said that these types of ads would not necessarily be caught by gambling ad filters, because there are not necessarily strict age verification processes on these sites.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that the most important thing they've found about marketing via social media platforms is that children quite often do not recognise these pop-ups as advertising – so they may say that they've seen a promotion for a betting company but they don't necessarily equate these with being advertisements, which is problematic in terms of the risk that they pose to children.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that their conclusions from their research into exposure is that any regulation that is implemented solely to deal with commercial break advertising is unlikely to have a significant impact



Gambling Related Harm APPG

of children's overall exposure to advertising. They'd also anticipate based on logic from parallel evidence from other areas of public health like tobacco or alcohol that if we only regulate television advertising that more advertising will emerge on digital platforms as companies seek to circumvent regulations – which is why, when taking a public health approach to marketing, a comprehensive approach is needed that is designed to protect children and that must take into account all forms of marketing across all channels which children may be able to access.

SAMMY WILSON MP asked, in reference to **PROFESSOR THOMAS'S** point about more advertising on social media, if the issue is that there is a higher volume of advertising on social media, which is more likely to be used by children, or if there is a conscious effort to direct advertising towards children.

PROFESSOR THOMAS replied that there is a lot of debate about whether or not companies are specifically targeting children. Her position is that it is inconsequential in terms of the effect because it's the level of exposure to these forms of marketing that is of interest that influences children's receptivity towards brands and towards gambling and makes them more likely to want to gamble when they're older. In terms of social media marketing they wouldn't necessarily say that there's more but would say that it is a very important mechanism and media channel for gambling companies to be able to promote their products and one that children use regularly. The other thing about social media marketing is that people cannot necessarily see it the same way that they see things on television – for example, when children are on their mobile phones, parents are not always aware of what they're seeing, but things on television are more obvious. The hidden nature of social media advertising is therefore difficult in terms of monitoring and it's one of the main reasons why she would advocate that it needs to be regulated as comprehensively as commercial television break advertising.

OWEN THOMPSON MP asked if there is now a distinction between the effect of TV and social media advertising given the changes in young people's viewing habits. He noted that YouTube in particular has dubious advertising policies.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that they know that children's media viewing patterns have changed quite significantly and some of the regulations we have around gambling advertising and alcohol advertising have not kept up with those changes in media viewing patterns. One of the things that she frequently talks about is the watershed - in Australia the ban of gambling ads and live sport is at 8:30pm - but children systematically stay up past 8:30 at night, particularly teenagers, to watch sport on television.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that they also know that the children's media viewing patterns are moving on to digital platforms and streaming services like Netflix. She believes that this is a really important point when talking about protecting children from gambling advertising, and it's important to ensure that we're not just thinking of the old school advertising but new media environments.

STEPHEN TIMMS MP said that **PROFESSOR THOMAS'S** research was very clear that all this advertising was having a big impact on young people. However, he would like to know how it affects their behaviour, either as young people or in the future.

IAN DUNCAN SMITH MP noted that the Betting and Gaming Council had agreed to remove terrestrial tv advertising during the crisis,. He also pointed out that they're also not doing anything about the online advertising. He wanted to know if, given the clear value of online advertising, should the Group be pushing further on online advertising aimed at children and young people or should they be arguing against online advertising full stop in a blanket approach as with smoking.

LORD FOSTER noted that in the UK much of the advertising spend is moving to online and many companies now recognise that the TV advertising slots were no-where near as effective. However, he would be interested to hear more about the distinction between generic advertising on social media as distinct from the direct marketing to individuals, and in particular to certain groups in society. He wondered if there was any evidence on the spend that the companies have, the distinction between generic



Gambling Related Harm APPG

advertising and direct to individual and whether there is a difference in terms of the likely impact that they have.

PROFESSOR THOMAS responded to the MPs questions stating that the first thing is that their potential target market is probably teenagers but research from both Australia and the United Kingdom show that children have a very clear recall of gambling brands, particularly if they're fans of sport, from a very young age (some as young as 8 years old). Brand recall and awareness is important in establishing brand loyalty which ultimately is what all of these companies are competing for, and is a sign of the strength of the brands presence in the consumers mind. During her studies with children, from the age of 8, she found in both Australia and the UK that three quarters of children 8 and older can recall, unprompted, at least one, and often multiple, gambling brands. Boys are also much more likely to recall more brands than girls. But

PROFESSOR THOMAS said the most important thing is that it also demonstrated a depth of recall of gambling brands - by way of example, if ads are presented with names obscured, three quarters are still able to identify the brand associated with the ad. Children can also recall things that are very important to the brands identity, such as their brand colour. When they gave children the names of a number of sports betting brands over 90% of children are able to tell us the colour of at least betting brand – such as that Ladbrokes are red. They can also describe plot lines and appeal strategies, they can repeat word for word verbatim the tag lines or slogans attached to the campaigns and they're also able to match appeal strategies for specific brands. For example, for Paddy Power that would be humours advertising, whereas others use celebrities, others use something more serious and so on.

PROFESSOR THOMAS also noted that children's awareness of advertising had changed, and that when she initially started, children mostly recalled ads that were based around odds. Now they are more likely to describe gambling in terms of deals that they've seen in marketing - for example that you can get free bets or inducements. This creates a reduced perception of risk associated with gambling, which is a very dangerous message for kids to be taking away from advertising because gambling is an inherently risky activity.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said one of the things she's seen that has a very big impact on children is sponsorship – which creates a presence of the brand in the child's mind. For example, children are able to match gambling brands with the correct football teams that they sponsor, and in a recent study conducted in London, a quarter of children selected a gambling brand out of a range of brands as their favourite - with some stating that this was because it was one of the most recognisable or that it had sponsored their football team.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that children often don't understand the persuasive intent of sponsorship - they don't see it in the same way that they see advertising. They see it as something that's beneficial for sporting teams and that the gambling companies are doing something to help their favourite athlete or team. She said that this is problematic because it's softens the perception of risk associated with gambling, and increases the perception of trust in those gambling companies.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that in Australia most of AFL football clubs no longer have shirt sponsorship from gambling companies and that it has made a real difference in terms of children's exposure to brand names through football.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that another major question is that of a blanket ban, and whether or not we need a tobacco style approach to gambling advertising. She said that she didn't have this perception originally when she started working on gambling, but as the evidence has emerged she has moved towards thinking that we need very comprehensive curbs or a ban completely across all platforms. One of the reasons for that is that in the most recent study that she did she found that a fifth of young people said that they would bet on sport when they were older. These children tended to have very certain profiles, they're normally boys (although now more girls are starting to say that they'll bet on sport when they're older)



Gambling Related Harm APPG

they're fans of sport, they have a perception of being knowledgeable about a particular sport (increasing their sense of mastery about gambling), and they have a perception of reduced risk associated with gambling so they're more favourable about marketing messages about inducements, promotions and celebrity endorsements.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that this actually influences which company they say they'll bet with when they reach the legal age of gambling. For example, she has many kids in their studies who say that they'll bet with certain brands and certain companies because they believe that they're fair or that they'll give them their money back.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said in terms of the broader question about direct targeted advertising, it plays into that - mainly because we know that inducement based marketing is so effective in terms of nudging people more than they normally would and on things that they normally would not gamble on. From a public health perspective, if we can create measures that protect kids it will inherently be protecting adults as well. From a personal perspective, she think the only marking that I think gambling companies should be able to do is to market based on price - no inducements, no VIP schemes, no grey area marketing that currently isn't covered by the regulations. That way it would remove all of those very clever marketing contacts we know are highly influential for adults and indeed for children as well.

TRACEY CROUCH MP asked if in her research there has been any particular brands that girls are drawn to or marketing tactics that girls are sympathetic towards?

PROFESSOR THOMAS said it's similar to what happened with tobacco - first of all they pitched to men and then they as that market became saturated they started to target women. They used lots of glamour, , and feminism sometimes in tobacco ads. However, in Australia and from what she's seen in the UK as well, is again an embedding of glamour and feminsation of gambling. However, more importantly girls watch sport almost as much as boys do. So one of the reason she thinks we're seeing an increase in the number of girls who say they'll bet on sport is because gambling has become just as normalised for them as it has for boys. She's recently completed a study with young women who are gamblers, and has seen an increase in the women who say they'll bet on sports. One thing that is interesting is that kids are quite black and white about gambling – they're either positive towards it or negative towards it - there's quite a polarisation with kids. However, there are a group of kids that they call "fence-sitters" - the ones who can't quite make up their mind if they'll gamble when they're older or not. Those kids are normally girls and when we ask them what would make them try gambling, they say they'll try gambling when they're older if they get a good deal from a betting company. Again, when we ask them which betting company they would sign up to, they don't normally tell us not the one's we'd think they'd tell us – those that are marketed as more glamorous and have female celebrities – but the ones that they see regularly on television or on social media. It's therefore quite a bit different to tobacco with gambling in terms of this really big impact of effect that we're seeing around deals and girls with their involvement with and love of sport.

RONNIE COWAN MP noted that if a sports shirt is sponsored in a UK football league they're seen around the globe, but the same issue applies the other way around in that even if you ban gambling advertising on UK football shirts, you will see them in the UK on the shirts of other international football teams. He questions if it would therefore be more effective to work via international organisations like Fifa and Uefa to tackle football gambling sponsorship.

JAMES GRIMES said that it's good point but that most of the leagues in Europe aren't as lax as the UK currently is with gambling shirt sponsorship - Spain and Germany have banned it already.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said in an ideal world she wouldn't want sporting teams anywhere in the world to have gambling or alcohol shirt sponsorship – but reality requires a phased approach. She doesn't think it's the sporting codes responsibility to make these decisions, but Government's decision to make and their responsibility. Government is charged with protecting children, and should create strong legislation to protect



Gambling Related Harm APPG

children - which means addressing marketing across the whole suite of channels that we see marketing across - sports sponsorship, digital advertising, ground logos, cup and trophy logos.

PROFESSOR THOMAS also said it's a fair point in that there is a global responsibility to look at this. However, a huge amount could be done in the UK that could set the standard for other countries – with countries in the world starting to take a tobacco approach, it actually sets the standard for other countries as well.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP asked if the Betting and Gaming Council's decision to suspend television and radio advertising would have any impact on the levels of problem gambling through the pandemic.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that she doesn't believe it will. Firstly, the voluntary ban came too late - you would have seen a number of people early in the pandemic sign up to accounts but that would have tapered off a bit as lockdown has gone on and people have adapted to new environments. Secondly, this relates to television advertising and radio and these forms of advertising are very expensive for gambling companies so those big companies which are well recognised brands are happy to not have to continue to put big money into advertising. In Australia the companies were happy to have some kind of a ban on advertising on television because they didn't have to continue spending the money to keep up with the smaller operators that were starting to enter the market. This means that digital advertising is more important and should be talked about more in this context - there are many mechanisms now that gambling companies can use to specifically target audience segments, such as AI on social media. But also below-the-line marketing which is targeted to individuals, comes through your mobile phone and links to a product that's open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP asked would the removal of advertising on social media platforms help?

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that she agreed and that advertising should be removed from all platforms. However, she said it's important to critique the reliance and acceptance that the UK has around the gambling industry themselves determining when they're going to do things. She said that self-regulation has a history of failure across a number of industries, including tobacco, alcohol, junk food and gambling. She said it also serves as a delay tactic from industry ultimately leads to calls for further regulation. The WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commission for the Future for the World's Children concluded that industry self-regulation associated with unhealthy products such as gambling and alcohol and tobacco and junk food does not work, that the existing global frameworks are not sufficient and that a stronger and more comprehensive approach to regulation is required. **PROFESSOR THOMAS** believes that's where the UK needs to be heading and that it's relied far too long on the industry determining what it would do and when. Government needs to step in and protect children and problem gamblers and stop them being exploited by some of these tactics.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP asked about the black market, nothing that the Gambling Commission said last week to the PAC that they didn't see that the black market is that prevalent in the UK.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that the only thing she can say on that is that they saw the same sort of arguments from the industry in Australia – that if there was a highly regulated industry that people would go offshore to gamble – but there's no comprehensive evidence for that at all. She says the other point to note is that very complicated restrictions on advertising is not a ban on the companies themselves. Herself and her colleagues working in public health are not anti-gambling nor do they support prohibition. In an ideal world they'd want a ban on all forms of gambling advertising but this does not stop companies from operating, offering markets on odds and being competitive with each other and even actually backing their product for success – so if their brand is honest, competitive and still offers a good price then customers will still come to them. She thinks this is important to bear in mind when moving to tackle schemes like the VIP schemes, inducements, and the corporate social responsibility strategies which are all just forms of marketing.



Gambling Related Harm APPG

TRACEY CROUCH MP noted that the industry commonly uses the National Lottery's lower age limit as an argument against regulation, and that the evidence shows that children's entry point into gambling is actually quite often the national lottery, and in particular scratch cards. However, that line of argument doesn't acknowledge the lottery's good work either. She also drew attention to the use of brand sponsorship by gambling companies, using an example of a Tottenham advert on Twitter sponsored by William Hill.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that it was a similar argument with tobacco. She calls it the TAPS – Tobacco Advertising Promotion and Sponsorship, and in gambling we call it GAPS - Gambling Advertising Promotion and Sponsorship. She thinks it's important to look across all of those rather than just gambling advertising. She said she does support raising the age to a standard across all gambling – which should be 18, though some would argue it should go to 21. She also agreed with **TRACEY CROUCH MP** that lotteries and scratch cards have traditionally been an entry point for children and so raising the age to access them would simply bring all the rules in line with each other. Lotteries are a soft form of gambling that tend not to be associated with significant amounts of harm, but it's important to raise the age and start to delay the demand for some of those products. She agreed that the point about illegal brands is a smokescreen from industry.

TRACEY CROUCH MP said it had been her intention as Minister to raise the lottery age to 18, but noted that DCMS has gone quiet on that front.

MATT GASKELL added that the National Lottery, twice weekly, is known as a soft product, but there are other lottery products that he's happy to mention next week that have more harmful properties attached which can lead to problem gambling.

LORD FOSTER added that the Lords Gambling Industry Committee recognise that some products are more addictive and concerning than others.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP remarked on when Neil McArthur appeared before the APPG and was astounded by how many questions he didn't have answers to. She invited **PROFESSOR THOMAS** to give her closing remarks.

PROFESSOR THOMAS said that ultimately, from a public health perspective, the priority should be to protect children from harm under the UK's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. To do this means thinking how to reduce demand for these products from children and advertising, as we know from tobacco, works to drive up demand for these products. As such, a comprehensive ban on advertising, is the way forward if you're truly trying to reduce harm to children.

JAMES GRIMES thanked the Group for having him and explained his background. He started gambling when he was a child and twelve years on it had destroyed his life. He now works closely with the Gambling with Lives (GwL) charity. He's passionate about the topic being discussed today, and as **PROFESSOR THOMAS** has already alluded to, as a child the advertising taught him how to gamble at the age of fifteen, the sponsorship of gambling then normalised it, and the marketing and promotion glamourised it. He believes that gambling is not a glamorous activity - it's a miserable, lonely, solitary addiction - not all singing and dancing as the adverts make out.

JAMES GRIMES noted that he's a Tottenham fan but they were sponsored by Mansion and when he started gambling he is certain the reason he used Mansion more than any other vendor was because of that sponsorship. He said that the brand effectively abused him as an addict – noting that he's an example of the outcome of what **PROFESSOR THOMAS** was saying about brand recall and brand addiction.

JAMES GRIMES said that there's no excuse for gambling shirt sponsorship. The project that he founded, the Big Step, (in conjunction with GwL), aims to get football to review their relationship with gambling advertising. As it's gone on, he now thinks that there needs to be more than a review of it - there needs to



Gambling Related Harm APPG

be a ban. He believes that there's an appetite for football clubs to try and do more to help their fans who are struggling with gambling. At the moment the only thing they have is responsible gambling measures and the narrative. For him, that did absolutely nothing and actually did the opposite and caused more harm by making him feel like he was out of control. That's why advertising campaigns like "When The Fun Stops, Stop" should be a thing of the past. He also drew attention to the current anti-gambling harm campaign, "BetRegret," noting that the whole association with innocent words like "bet" and "flutter" and "pint" and "lads" is to make gambling seem like an innocent social activity when it's not. In reality, it's a high risk, dangerous product that's being promoted on the front of football shirts and across social media.

JAMES GRIMES noted that it will be important to consider the footballing environment when it returns – and wider sport as well. He noted it's likely they'll be a lot of streaming, and given that gambling is a recession proof industry, it will be in a position to offer money to clubs at a when other brands will not. Furthermore, if the majority of games are streamed online that may allow companies to both get around the TV advertising ban and the whistle-to-whistle ban as well.

JAMES GRIMES spoke about the Big Step's recent partnership with Tranmere Rovers FC – the first partnership of its kind. Tranmere Rovers FC are also the first professional football club to partner with Matt Gaskell's NHS gambling clinics - to signpost fans with gambling problems to help. He noted that in recent surveys, only 10% of clubs think that their club is doing enough to support people with gambling problems, and that he hope other clubs follow the lead. He also said that on the matter of gambling advertising the issue is wider than just the issue with children (as important as it is) – with only 13% of football fans happy with their shirt sponsor being a gambling company. He also agreed with **PROFESSOR THOMAS'S** suggestion that if you start from the premise that this is bad for children, eventually it will affect everyone who has an issue with gambling.

TRACEY CROUCH MP asked **JAMES GRIMES** if he ever spoke to Tottenham about the issues with gambling promotion, noting that in her own experience she thinks that they understand the issue but are hampered by commercial considerations. She wondered if he had done a session with the premier league and the football clubs talking about his experience?

JAMES GRIMES said he hadn't done a specific session with Tottenham. The last Big Step event visited 6 clubs with gambling shirt sponsors – and met with 5. The only one that we didn't was with West Ham. He understands that they understand the issue and are becoming more receptive but that their hands are tied. Unfortunately, he knows that any kind of sponsorship or advertising ban is not going to come from football clubs but it's going to come from above their heads – though he does think football clubs now realise that they can do more to raise awareness of the genuine addiction risk and where to go for help. He also delivered an anecdote about well meaning executives constrained by commercial considerations.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP noted that her own local football team, the Swansea Swans, is sponsored by a gambling company (and **JAMES GRIMES** was due to do an event their prior to lockdown), but their leadership is also constrained by commercial considerations. She also flagged a potential emerging issue about Chinese gambling companies sponsoring UK football to get around Chinese gambling laws.

JAMES GRIMES said that the Premier League is the most global sporting product in the world, which is why these companies wanted to sponsor teams involved in it. He also said in relation to the points about the actions of the Betting and Gaming Council and it's constituent members, that half of the Premier League and Champions League shirt sponsors aren't UK based or UK registered and that any measure that comes from the BGC is redundant unless it covers a world-wide picture.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP said that the BGC's voluntary ban did not come into force until the following week, and that the timeline was now unclear as of the last letter to the Group. She noted their mixed messages and reiterated the Group were not in favour of prohibition.



Gambling Related Harm APPG

PROFESSOR THOMAS added that it's important to counter the proposition from industry that you can educate children out of harmful behaviours. Education needs to be independent of industry, sustained and evidence based. Most importantly, it needs to be backed by legislation to enforce a responsible framework. Without this, it may be doing more harm than good if it's merely reinforcing the problematic responsible gambling narratives that she spoke about earlier in the session.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP noted on Twitter that there is a lot of animosity between industry and non-industry funded bodies..

PROFESSOR THOMAS did not have anything specific to contribute. But she did note that there seems to be a different standard for the gambling industry compared to tobacco – the tobacco industry would simply not be allowed anywhere near children, but gambling is. It would therefore be worth considering why the industry is putting so much money into education, in part to act as a smokescreen against regulation.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP invited any final questions and thanked all attendees. She suggested that **STEPHEN TIMMS MP'S OFFICE** may wish to raise **JAMES GRIMES** issues with West Ham with the club.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP closed the meeting at 10:05am.