



Gambling Related Harm APPG

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Date: Thursday 25th February 2021

Time: 2:00pm

Location: Virtual

Chair: Carolyn Harris MP

Minutes taken by: Chloe Sercombe, Interel UK

Members Present

- Carolyn Harris MP
- Ronnie Cowan MP
- Lord Foster of Bath
- Ronnie Cowan MP
- Margaret Ferrier MP
- Gerald Jones MP
- Iain Duncan Smith MP
- Mark Hendrick MP

External Speakers

- Rob Davies – The Guardian
- Joey D’Urso – The Athletic
- Peter and Steph Shilton
- Paul Pettigrew – Gamtalk
- Kieran Maguire
- Tim Payton – Park Street Partners
- Mark Palios – Tranmere Rovers
- James Grimes – The Big Step

External Guests

- Katherine Morgan – Interel Consulting UK
- James Olney – Interel Consulting UK
- Chloe Sercombe – Interel Consulting UK
- Merlyn Holkar – Money and Mental Health
- Will Chambre – Chambre PA
- Kate Haigh – Gloucestershire Council
- Tom Oldfield – DCMS
- Liz and Charles Ritchie – Gambling with Lives
- Simon Thomas – Hippodrome Casino
- Anthony Franklin
- David Coverdale – Daily Mail
- Danny Cheetham
- Prof Henrietta Bowden Jones – National Problem Gambling Clinic
- Harrison Sayers – Vixio
- Dr Matthew Gaskell – NHS Northern Gambling Clinic
- Alistair Magowan – BBC
- Paul Goodwin – Scottish FSA
- Michelle Gillies – Public Health Scotland

Minutes of the Meeting – 2:00pm – 3:30pm

CAROLYN HARRIS MP welcomed everyone and said that **ROB DAVIES** would be chairing the meeting.



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ROB DAVIES introduced himself as a business correspondent from the Guardian. He said his interest in gambling began around 5 years ago and found that it wasn't that hard to find stories. He said that gambling had an interesting relationship with football.

ROB DAVIES asked **JOEY D'URSO** from the Athletic to talk about his investigation into Asian football sponsorship.

JOEY D'URSO said that he started working in sports journalism a couple months ago and that whilst watching sports he saw companies like William Hill and such. He said there were also companies where there are no entities that exist, such as the sponsor of Wolverhampton Wanderers.

JOEY D'URSO said that this was related to China, where gambling companies are illegal. He said that there is an industry of firms based in other Asian countries that market to Chinese gamblers as you can't advertise in a Chinese newspaper – the Premier League becomes your billboard.

JOEY D'URSO said that this means nobody has any idea where these companies are based or who the directors are. He said that there is sometimes 3 layers of offshoring.

ROB DAVIES asked **JOEY D'URSO** how much of an interest these companies have in English punters.

JOEY D'URSO said that companies like Sports Bet, Fun 88 – if you type them into Google you will come across a legitimate website but they are all based in the Isle of Man. He said that the UK is not relevant and that it acts like a smokescreen – the UK is just the advertising space.

ROB DAVIES asked what the significance of white labelling was – how do these companies access the UK market?

JOEY D'URSO said that the Gambling Commission grants licenses to companies. He said that the White Label system makes it that companies can grant licensees to companies in the Philippines and such.

ROB DAVIES asked **PETER AND STEPH SHILTON** to talk about their experiences and the gambling culture in football.

STEPH SHILTON said that having supported **PETER SHILTON**, she learnt the seriousness of gambling harm. She said she labelled it as the silent addiction and that it was not recognised and misunderstood by some. She said that it was difficult when you are bombarded with adverts daily and a constant pressure to place bets. She said that footballers are 3x more likely to become addicts.

PETER SHILTON said that he was addicted for 45 years. He said that football used to be a family sport and that football and gambling are now side by side. He said it was not about your team winning anymore but having a bet on the match and other outcomes. He said that prevention is better than the cure and that we need to protect football's image as a family sport.

PAUL PETTIGREW said that he previously played for Molton in his local area and that he was a very dedicated player. He said that he was released at 18 and played at a casino 2 weeks later – within 6 months he was a VIP member. He said that he completely lost interest in football and had replaced his interest with gambling.

PAUL PETTIGREW said that by 19 he was in £32,000 of debt and had lost friends, girlfriends, and was kicked out of university. He said that he was bombarded with free bets, offers to join VIP schemes and that he was being preyed upon. He said that he set up Gam Talk, a prevention service that goes to schools, sports clubs and youth groups to educate about gambling.

KIERAN MAGUIRE said that the revenue for football comes from tickets, broadcasting and commercial. He said that the Premier League is dominated by broadcasting and that Bet 365 owns Stoke City Football Club. He said that there was blurred lines in terms of finance between gambling and the football industry as entry into the market is very simple. He said that since opening an account on Monday, he has had half a dozen adverts from William Hill.

KIERAN MAGUIRE said that the social costs of gambling has a big impact – 37% increase in mortality. He said that as soon as money comes into the game it comes out in the form of wages. He said that different sponsorships could be done but that they are harder to do.



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MARK PALIOS said that the relationship between gambling and football had gone too far. He said that the demographic of Tranmere shows some of the poorest and richest areas of the country – with the majority of gambling profits coming from the poorest areas. He said that they were approached by a betting company to put as many terminals as they could on the football ground.

MARK PALIOS said that they have worked with **JAMES GRIMES** to use the club as a stigma free portal/gateway to direct people to the help that is available. He said that they have tried to educate people on the effects of gambling and how it hits at the heart and trust of family relationships. He said that the funding of football will be replaced as cigarette advertising disappeared, but it didn't kill of sports that were funded by it. He said that there needs to be a regulator in terms of the financial issues within football.

ROB DAVIES asked what would happen without gambling sponsorship in football.

TIM PAYTON said that there was an imbalance and unfairness between sports and gambling. He said that sport is being used by gambling companies in their product without any payment. Fixtures will be used by gambling but no payment is made to the football companies. He said that only in 1981 did football start earning more from television than copyright.

TIM PAYTON said that we are no longer tied to the EU database directive or state aid which could have interfered with levys. He said that Parliament should look more widely at the relationship between gambling and sport and that we should give sports the opportunity to go back to earning for its use.

TIM PAYTON said that this would need primary legislation such as a product fee or authorisation right. He said that betting companies would need the approval of the sports event organiser to get the content for the bet. He said that the EA and the Premier League were working on a policy paper to put forward to the gambling review.

MARK PALIOS said that cricket is controlled by a governing body which determines how inventory is shared – content of football is split between multiple stakeholders. He said that there was a failure to regulate football wages.

TIM PAYTON said that there was financial vulnerability within the game as there are several clubs who are thousands of pounds away from survival.

ROB DAVIES said that there was a massive PR win for football clubs to come out against supporting shirt sponsorship and that it was also an easy olive branch for the industry to offer but that it would have to be put into legislation as those not based in the UK will continue to sponsor shirts.

JOEY D'URSO said that gambling firms which have UK consumers would love to draw a red line between decent UK firms and foreign ones.

PETER SHILTON said that if you look at the gambling industry there have been more companies coming from nowhere or abroad into the UK and that the industry has grown since online gambling started. He said that these companies haven't been kept it check or regulated properly. He said that it was now obvious the harm associated with gambling and that children were very vulnerable.

ROB DAVIES asked **PETER SHILTON** how he felt about well-known sports stars being involved with the industry and those who are active promoters.

PETER SHILTON said that he had just finished a book called Saved. He said that those who are taking money from gambling companies wouldn't do so if they had their own association with those who have problems.

TONY KELLY spoke about his gambling addiction in the 90s and said that it was important to educate from young – even before 18 years old.

JAMES GRIMES said that the Big Step partnership with Tranmere Rovers is based around education. However, he said that education was not sufficient alone or the silver bullet whilst there was still advertising everywhere.



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TIM PAYTON said that it was useful to look at the model that the government introduced for horseracing. He said that overseas companies now have to make a contribution for using the product and that Parliament could introduce a levy like this to fund research and education.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP agreed with this and said that the APPG also wants a levy to be introduced.

ROB DAVIES asked if the horseracing levy was to replace sponsorship and advertising?

TIM PAYTON said that it is fair that the gambling industry pays a percentage of what it earns off of the sports industry. He said that gambling companies are the only companies that can “free load.”

GERALD JONES MP asked what the panel thought about the viability of football post gambling sponsorship and how football can learn from other sports.

MARK PALIOS said that it was important to go back into the community and that there are lots of assets within clubs that aren't utilised – for example, stadiums are only used once a week – so clubs should let communities use these assets to deliver their services. He said that one of the major benefits in focusing on the community is that you build a great relationship with local authorities too.

TIM PAYTON said that there was concerns as other sports are nervous that if football sponsorship goes away then there is less money for everyone else. If sports have less money, this can equate to less revenue and expenditure on coaches etc.

KIERAN MAGUIRE said that it can be done but that it's harder – sponsorship will just transfer to other forms of advertising.

STEPH SHILTON said that the football industry has a responsibility to its fans and to the vulnerable – they should be collectively working towards safe guarding people.

PETER SHILTON said that the wages that clubs pay drain money away from areas that it should be used for and that clubs are throwing money at players just to get a bit of success.

JAMES GRIMES said that the public won't mind if players lose 5% of their wages.

RONNIE COWAN MP said that there should be a complete ban on advertising for gambling and that we should stop the damage in the first place rather than introducing a levy. He said that if there is no pressure then the industry won't implement any changes – for example, the gambling industry did not mention advertising once.

PAUL PETTIGREW said that it was evident that children were aware of gambling and that shirt sponsorship opens the door to gambling.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP thanked everyone for their attendance and to those who spoke.

CAROLYN HARRIS MP closed the meeting at 3:30pm.