
PRESS STATEMENT

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Available for interview	Malcolm George, Chief Executive, Association of British Bookmakers
Images available	Responsible Gambling Trust logo

Responsible Gambling Trust issues public tender for independent evaluation of Player Awareness Systems

The Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT) has issued an open invitation to tender for an independent evaluation of the new Player Awareness System (PAS) which is intended to help people avoid gambling-related harm. This initiative was launched by the Association of British Bookmakers (ABB) at the Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT) Harm Minimisation conference in December last year.

PAS is a response to the ground-breaking research published by RGT in December 2014 that showed it was possible to distinguish between problem and non-problem gambling behaviour by players using gaming machines in licensed betting offices. All members of the ABB have signed up to the initiative, which is believed to be a world first in retail betting.

How PAS works

- Systems analyse the behaviour of those playing on gaming machines when they are logged in to a customer account
- Customer behaviour is then assessed against a range of possible markers of harm
- Alerts (via text, email, or on-screen) can subsequently be sent to players. These include signposting to responsible gambling tools such as setting limits on machines or self-exclusion, and directing customers towards the National Gambling Helpline / gambleaware.co.uk or to speak to a member of staff
- PAS encourages customers to think about how they are gambling and continued problematic play may result in direct interaction from a member of staff
- Currently, a variety of analytical algorithms are being used by the ABB's member companies which, it is hoped, will lead to more effective processes for each operator as best practice and learnings are shared

The initiative was developed during 2015 by an ABB-led working group that included representatives of Coral, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, William Hill and machine manufacturers SG and Inspired (on behalf of independent bookmakers) with the RGT and Gambling Commission as observers.

This invitation to tender has been issued publicly to ensure that all capable parties are given the opportunity to participate in the programme of research. Tenders will be reviewed and funding

awarded by the RGT's Research Committee, chaired by its senior independent trustee, Professor Jonathan Wolff, and advised by RGT's Independent Research Oversight Panel. The evaluation programme is expected to begin in March 2016 with completion due by August 2016.

Marc Etches, Chief Executive of the Responsible Gambling Trust, said:

"We are pleased that the ABB has asked us to commission this evaluation. Ground-breaking RGT-funded research published in 2014 has encouraged the industry to identify harmful player behaviour and to intervene more effectively. For there to be sufficient confidence in the industry's initiative, it is important that it is robustly and independently evaluated."

Professor Jonathan Wolff, Chair of the Responsible Gambling Trust's Research Committee, said:

"All research including this evaluation is commissioned by Independent Trustees sitting on the RGT's Research Committee in order to ensure that it is free from the potential for industry influence. We are keen to receive proposals from anyone with relevant expertise and have issued this public tender to ensure we reach the widest possible audience."

Malcolm George, Chief Executive of the Association of British Bookmakers, said:

"We are grateful to RGT for agreeing to commission this important study, which will both evaluate the effectiveness of the new Player Awareness System and provide operators with valuable feedback to improve the system for the future."

-ENDS-

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The tender is published online at www.responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk/research.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry, the Responsible Gambling Trust funds education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. The aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling, and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support.
- The Association of British Bookmakers is the leading trade association for betting shop operators on the UK's high streets. The ABB aims to help create and sustain conditions in which socially responsible betting shop operators can compete and prosper. Its membership ranges from major national operators to single, family run businesses and collectively, it represents 80% of the sector.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust raises a minimum of £5million each year from the gambling industry operating in Britain within a voluntary (donation based) system and funds research, education, prevention and treatment services. Funding priorities are guided by the national strategy advised by the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The latest strategy was published in December 2012.

- All RGT research activity is wholly the responsibility of its Research Committee, which consists of its five independent trustees together with observers from government, the Gambling Commission and its independent advisers, the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board. This arrangement ensures that those trustees who may have a direct interest in any research outcomes are entirely excluded from directing or otherwise influencing any research activity that RGT undertakes to commission. RGT's five independent trustees are:

Jonathan Wolff, Professor of Philosophy and Dean of Arts and Humanities at University College London;

Chris Brady, Professor of Management Studies and co-director of the Centre for Sports Business at the University of Salford;

Annette Dale-Perera, a Home Officer advisor on the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs and former Strategic Director of Addiction and Offender Care at CNWL NHS Foundation Trust;

Alan Jamieson, former Deputy CEO of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and former Director of the National AIDS Helpline;

Patrick Sturgis, Professor of Research Methodology and Director of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods.