
PRESS RELEASE

Reference:	0126
Release date:	Embargoed until 07:00am on Friday 30 November 2012
Available for interview:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marc Etches, Chief Executive
Images available:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible Gambling Trust logo• Marc Etches, Chief Executive

Landmark research programme into British gaming machines launched by the Responsible Gambling Trust

The Responsible Gambling Trust has today announced that it is to commission the biggest ever programme of academic research into Category B gaming machines - that is those that offer the highest stakes and prizes in Britain which can be found in betting shops, bingo halls, adult gaming centres and casinos - to understand better how people behave when playing these machines and what helps people to stay in control and play responsibly.

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

“99% of British adults who gamble do so without getting into difficulties. Some unfortunately do have problems and we have a responsibility to fund and commission appropriate research, education and treatment services.

There is significant consumer and political interest in Category B gaming machines, which are those that offer the highest stakes and prizes in Britain, but there is a lack of robust evidence about how people play on these machines and what helps people to stay in control and play responsibly.

The £500,000 research programme that we are commissioning will be the largest programme of academic research into gaming machines ever undertaken in Britain and represents a unique opportunity to provide high quality, empirically-sound and peer-reviewed research to inform future policy-making.”

continued/...

Launched in April 2012, the Responsible Gambling Trust will raise a minimum of £5million every year from the British gambling industry to spend on research, education and treatment services. How the money is spent will be guided by a national responsible gambling strategy agreed with the regulatory body, the Gambling Commission, and its independent advisory body, the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB).

Following the appointment of Dr Jonathan Parke on 1 November 2012 – as the Responsible Gambling Trust's Director of Commissioning – the charity will begin its gaming machine research programme in January 2013 with the commissioning of the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to investigate the machine-related data that different gambling operators hold. This initial phase of the research programme is expected to take six months and will create a data-rich platform on which to build further research.

Dr Parke explained:

"This research initiative is hugely significant and the Responsible Gambling Trust is now well placed to commission NatCen to begin the process of filling the evidence gap. Our aim is to describe and understand patterns of gaming machine play in various locations; to explain the impact on player behaviour of various factors; and to identify where there is robust evidence that consumers may be experiencing problems.

While research involving collaborations with industry and use of player data have been done before, nothing has ever been attempted on this scale involving such a range of gambling providers nor has it ever involved such a complex and advanced industry environment where there are various operators, gambling environments and types of gaming machine. Although it is early days, we are hopeful this landmark research is an important first step to making a vital contribution to understanding consumer behaviour related to gaming machines in Britain."

The key to the success of this research initiative will be the industry's co-operation in allowing researchers access to industry-held data.

Etches added:

"By its keenness to give researchers unprecedented access to gaming machine data and then to stand back from the research process, the industry has given a mandate to the Trust to commission research that will be rigorously objective and independent of the industry. A panel of independent experts will provide the necessary academic oversight to underpin stakeholder confidence in both the quality and the objectivity of the research.

continued/...

We expect to publish some initial analysis as early as June 2013, but the scale and significance of this work and the importance of getting it right means that the overall research programme is likely to take 18 months.”

The research programme will be commissioned within the context of an 'assurance and governance framework' that is agreed between the Trust, the Gambling Commission and the RGSB, and supported by the Government. A key part of these arrangements is that the Trust will share with the RGSB a panel of independent experts to provide academic oversight of the research programme, which will give all stakeholders confidence in the transparent and independent nature of the research. Furthermore, there will be a rigorous and entirely independent peer-review process for all research outputs before publication.

Sir Brian Pomeroy, Chair of the RGSB, said:

“RGSB has highlighted the need for independent research on gaming machines in successive Strategies and this significant research programme is well overdue. While we don't expect it to provide all the answers, it is an important piece of work that we expect will develop a much better understanding of what helps people to gamble responsibly and stay in control”.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

To request a copy of the images or to arrange an interview with Marc Etches please phone 07944-617-774 or email marc@responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk.

- The Responsible Gambling Trust is a national charity committed to minimising problem gambling and gambling-related harm in Britain (www.responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk).
- The Responsible Gambling Trust commissions research, education and treatment services as prioritised in a national responsible gambling strategy advised by the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission, the industry's regulatory body. The evidence-based strategy will be a three-year rolling strategy that will be developed in a collaborative, open manner between the RGSB and Responsible Gambling Trust.
- The RGSB was set up in late 2008 to advise the [Gambling Commission](#) and, in turn, the [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#), on research, education and treatment programmes needed to support a national responsible gambling strategy and associated funding requirements.

continued/...

- In August 2012, a ‘governance and assurance framework’ was published describing the new arrangements for prioritising, commissioning, funding and evaluating research, education and treatment (www.responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk/PDFs/statementofintent.pdf).
- Dr Jonathan Parke is the Responsible Gambling Trust’s newly appointed Director of Commissioning. Jonathan was previously a Senior Lecturer in Consumer Behaviour at Salford Business School, University of Salford. He has published over 30 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, government reports and other publications and has given over 40 conference papers and talks regarding internet gambling, gambling-related risk, self-regulation and sustainable practices in gambling provision. In addition, Jonathan has provided consultancy services to regulators, industry and other stakeholders and held a number of advisory roles including as Chair of both the National and International Expert Panel of Gambling Machines (Gambling Commission) and as Expert Advisor on internet gambling and gaming machines (Responsible Gambling Strategy Board).
- The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) is Britain’s leading independent social research institute in Britain, based in London. It has expertise (Heather Wardle) in gambling research having designed, conducted and analysed all three studies in the British Gambling Prevalence Survey series and conducted a number of other important related studies focusing on exploring gambling behaviour in Britain in depth.
- The gaming machines that offer the highest stakes and prizes in Britain are referred to in legislation as Category B gaming machines and are restricted to the following types of premises:
 - B1 - Casino
 - B2 - Casino + Betting premise and track occupied by pool betting
 - B3 - Casino + Betting and track + Bingo + Adult gaming centre (AGC)
 - B3a - Clubs and Miners’ Welfare Institutes
 - B4 - Casino + Betting and track + Bingo + AGC + Clubs and Miners’ Welfare Institutes

Machine category	Maximum stake (from July 2011)	Maximum prize (from July 2011)
B1	£2	£4,000
B2	£100 (in multiples of £10)	£500
B3	£2	£500
B3A	£1	£500
B4	£1	£250