

GambleAware

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PRESS RELEASE

GambleAware report is a loud wake-up call for the gambling industry

London, 4 October: A new GambleAware report shows gambling operators, across the industry, are poor at giving staff suitable training in how to promote safe gambling amongst customers. The report also revealed customers felt existing responsible gambling messages are often confusing and unclear.

The research, requested by the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling (IGRG), and undertaken by Revealing Reality, revealed many staff had not had practical training in how to promote responsible gambling in their day-to-day jobs. It found that very few have the confidence to communicate effectively with customers how to minimise the risks of gambling, and at worst, could inadvertently encourage customers to “chase their losses”, or develop flawed “winning strategies”.

Staff surveyed said there is more emphasis on regulatory compliance than actually helping customers day-to-day. However, the research did point out that some operators are in the process of developing new training strategies for staff.

A minority of operators are also in the process of developing new responsible gambling messages. The research identifies the need for more creativity and investment into the development of responsible gambling material, and testing how well customers receive and understand these messages.

Customers say the amount of promotional and commercial content conflicts with messages about responsible gambling. Safety messages are often less obvious than promotional material. Most customers are unaware of the responsible gambling messages already in place. Even when they are aware, respondents said the language used in messages is often confusing and unclear, which means they are less likely to understand it or interpret the material as a means of help or support.

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Chair: Kate Lampard CBE

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Chief Executive: Marc Etches

Operators have challenged new responsible gambling material, as “too costly” or “risky”. Findings show the industry would require compelling academic evidence to support investment into new responsible gambling ideas, in stark contrast to a test and learn approach applied to new sales and marketing messages.

The project generated a wide range of innovative responses to address the shortcomings identified, which will now be formally trialled and evaluated as pilots at a variety of gambling venues and online. The ambition is for the best ideas to be adopted voluntarily across the whole industry, driving a significant reduction in gambling-related harm through a step-change in harm prevention.

Marc Etches, CEO of GambleAware said:

“This is a loud wake-up call to the gambling industry. The voices in this report crystallize the challenge of delivering effective social responsibility on the front-line. Frankly, the gambling industry must do much better to ensure staff and customers know when, how and where to seek help.

This report shows where the gaps are. Significant investment of time and effort is needed to protect players better from gambling-related harm in the first place. We hope the industry heeds the call to step up and give the wellbeing of customers much greater priority.”

Paul Hope from the Gambling Commission has said:

“This report is the first of its kind, and we welcome the approach taken by the industry to come together and work collaboratively to identify what areas need to be improved. We look forward to the next phase of trialling and evaluation, and to widespread commitment to implement the best practice approaches that emerge.”

John Hagan from the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling has said:

“The gambling industry is working tirelessly to promote responsible gambling. And it was industry recognition of the importance of raising standards of messaging and training which led to the commissioning of this report. We welcome the fresh and creative thinking of Revealing Reality and we look forward to the next stage when the best of their ideas will be trialled by industry in live environments.”

Becky Rowe, Head of Research at Revealing Reality said:

“It’s important that responsible gambling is seen as something for everyone – this includes all staff, from customer service to head office, and customers of all types. Our

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research showed that many customers are unaware of and unimpressed by current responsible gambling activity. Staff sometimes lack the confidence to know when and how to intervene with vulnerable players. A lack of suitable tools and training meant that some were even passing on the wrong messages – despite having players’ best intentions at heart. The same effort and creativity invested in acquiring and retaining customers needs to be reflected in the ways operators protect customers from harm.”

-ENDS-

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NOTES

About the research:

- The full report is available on the GambleAware website [here](#).
- The research was independently designed and led by the research team at Revealing Reality. The project was instigated by the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling (IGRG).
- **GambleAware** agreed to **IGRG's** request to commission the projects, which was supported by the **Gambling Commission** and the **Responsible Gambling Strategy Board** (RGSB), providing both funding and independent governance under the charity’s Research Committee. The **Senet Group** part-funded the Social Messaging project as part of this research.
- This project was supported by a wider range of operators and service providers including: (in alphabetical order) Aspers, Betway, Caesars, Castle Leisure, Essex Leisure, Gala, GamCare, Gambling Compliance, Genting Casinos, Jennings Bet, LadbrokesCoral, Paddy Power Bet Fair, Playtech, Pontins, Praesepe, Project Coin, Rank, Talarius, Tombola and Welcome Break.
- The projects have been advised by a coordination group which included representatives of RGSB, Senet, GambleAware and the Gambling Commission meeting regularly with the IGRG sponsors of the projects – John White (bacta) for staff training and Miles Baron (The Bingo Association) for messaging.
- For different parts of the project, Revealing Reality collaborated with: Future Thinking, who conducted additional research on social responsibility messaging; 18 Feet & Rising, who worked on creative message development; Together Creative, who worked on developing and communicating other new ideas for concept testing.

- This report builds on the evidence of a number of academics and researchers including: Professor Alex Blaszczynski, Dr Sally Gainsbury, Tracey Cochrane, Jamie Wiebe, John Kelly, Mike Kenward, Rachel Volberg, Dr Jane Rigbye, Janine Robinson and Professor Mark Griffiths.
- There were over 95 players and more than 90 staff interviewed for this report, from across a range of sectors.
- Phase two will involve further commitment from the industry and will have practical testing with players in “real-life” situations.

About GambleAware:

- GambleAware 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, GambleAware 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. For more information, please go to: <http://about.gambleaware.org/>.
- GambleAware aims to raise a minimum of £10 million each year in voluntary contributions from the gambling industry operating in Great Britain. This donation-based system was proposed under the Gambling Act 2005 and is prescribed by the Gambling Commission in its Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice.
- GambleAware’s programme of treatment, education, harm prevention and research is guided by the National Responsible Gambling Strategy, which is defined by the independent Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The RGSB, the Gambling Commission and GambleAware work together under the terms of an agreement in place since 2012: <http://about.gambleaware.org/media/1216/statementofintent.pdf>. Research is conducted under the terms of a ‘Research Commissioning and Governance Procedure’ agreed in 2016 by the RGSB, the Gambling Commission and GambleAware: <http://about.gambleaware.org/media/1270/research-commissioning-and-governance-procedure-may-2016-final.pdf>.
- The RGSB endorsed GambleAware’s £10m funding goal in January 2017: <http://www.rgsb.org.uk/press-releases/responsible-gambling-strategy-board-publishes-assessment-of-the-quantum-of-funding-required-to-deliver-the-national-responsible-gambling-strategy.html>.
- GambleAware funds the *Gordon Moody Association*, the *NHS National Problem Gambling Clinic*, *GamCare* and a network of charities across Great Britain to provide a full range of free treatment for problem gamblers and support for those affected by them. GambleAware also runs the website **BeGambleAware.org** which helps 2.7 million visitors a year, and supports the **National Gambling Helpline – 0808 8020 133**.

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