

Break Through for FOBTs

Problem gambling can devastate individuals' lives, families and communities, so I welcome the decisive action being taken to ensure a responsible gambling industry protects players appropriately.

Reducing the maximum stakes on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals from Â£100 to Â£2 will help stop extreme losses by those who can least afford it. Following analysis of all the evidence received, the Government concluded that a Â£2 stake limit would most substantially impact on harm by reducing the ability to suffer high session losses, while also targeting the greatest proportion of problem gamblers, and mitigating risk for the most vulnerable players for whom even moderate losses might be harmful.

There are of course other factors which influence the extent of harm to the player. That is why this change is not being made in isolation. Other actions that will be taken in this area include: protection measures on other gaming machines; increasing player protections around online gambling; doing more on research, education and treatment of problem gambling and enhancing protections around gambling advertising. Ministers will also be considering the issue of 16-year-olds playing National Lottery products as part of the next license competition.

I hope these measures will help maintain a healthy gambling industry that contributes to the economy, but that also does all it can to protect players. Whilst I understand that bookmakers are concerned of the negative impact the policy may have on their business, the implementation will be rolled out slowly, to allow for adjustment and to mitigate any job losses.

This is an opportunity for the industry to redouble its efforts to promote responsible gambling. The Government is committed to continuing to work with the industry and with the Gambling Commission to monitor betting products and promotions, and ensure that gambling is a safe and enjoyable pastime for everyone who chooses it, without unintended impacts on society.Â