



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Minister Tracey Crouch
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament St
London
SW1A 2BQ

19th December 2017
REF:MT

Dear Tracey,

Gambling Review Consultation

I write to support a reduction in the maximum stake for Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) to £2.

While I understand that there are choices involved in gambling, it can become an addiction and we should help reduce the risks for those that are addicted or likely to be addicted. I can see no benefit to anyone from having the current high stakes, and I do not believe that a £20 maximum does anything except enable gamblers to continue to get into trouble slightly more slowly.

I am influenced by the experience of my constituent Hussain Vorajee, who met me in October to raise concerns about FOBTs and the impact they had on his gambling addiction. Hussain wrote that reducing the stake for FOBTs would: *'long term (it will) help all the thousands of addicts who are keeping them (gambling outlets) in business as that's what they rely on. Fairer gambling is what we are campaigning on and FOBTs is not one of those... [I] will keep hoping and praying that £2 is the final decision.'*

He went on to write: *'There are over 20 betting shops in Gloucester and most are put in areas of people who are vulnerable and in areas where a lot young and poor hang around. They should not be allowed in our high St. The network of shops have been put there [be]cause they know they can rely on the income of those addictive compulsive gamblers which is increasing by the day.'*

I agree with this. Research has shown that these shops and terminals are often located in the poorer areas which exacerbates the problem. Gloucester has pockets of deprivation ranked among the highest in the country, and so I feel strongly that a £2 cap would better protect vulnerable constituents as well as those who suffer from gambling addictions.

I would also welcome further support from the industry for a Responsible Gambling campaign, as proposed by the Minister, to raise awareness of these risks.

