



Peers for  
Gambling  
Reform



## A proposed new group

### Who we are

Gambling in Britain has developed in ways that threaten the lives of many people, especially the young. Peers for Gambling Reform is a new cross-party group in the Lords that will work in Parliament and with others to promote the recommendations of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Gambling Industry to ensure that Government and the Gambling Commission take early action to implement the necessary changes.

### Why change is urgent:

The Select Committee set this out:

- ◆ One third of a million of people in the UK are problem gamblers. On average, one problem gambler commits suicide every day.
- ◆ The young are most at risk; 55,000 problem gamblers are aged 11–16.

- ◆ Two million other people are harmed by the breakup of families, crime, loss of employment, loss of homes and, ultimately, loss of life.
- ◆ The gambling industry spends £1.5 billion a year on advertising, and 60% of its profits come from the 5% who are already problem gamblers or are at risk of becoming so.
- ◆ Addiction to alcohol or drugs is well known and remedies resourced. The comparable harm caused by gambling addiction has not received the same attention and is only beginning to be recognised.
- ◆ The Gambling Act 2005 liberalised gambling, but an even greater impact came from the subsequent advent of smart phones and with them, on-line gambling and on-line, targeted marketing. Individuals could gamble unsupervised 24/7 in an “analogue” regulatory regime unprepared for the digital age. Gambling operators have exploited this laissez-faire regime and successive governments and regulators have failed to keep up with the revolution in UK gambling.

# What changes are needed?

All political parties at the last General Election committed to reviewing our outdated gambling legislation and this is the policy of this Government. The Select Committee report made over fifty recommendations to be implemented by the Government and Gambling Commission. Most need no primary legislation and require action primarily by the Gambling Commission, but government must also play a role. The Group's priorities are listed below. There should be:

- ◆ Speed of play and stake limits for on-line gambling – with a triennial review of all stake limits.
- ◆ Testing for harm and classification of all new gambling products
- ◆ A mandatory “smart” levy on the industry to fund the costs of treatment and research
- ◆ A ban on direct marketing and all inducements and an end to sports sponsorship by gambling operators
- ◆ Effective affordability checks for gamblers to prevent harm
- ◆ An enforceable “duty of care” on the gambling industry to seek to avoid harm
- ◆ A Gambling Ombudsman to redress wrongs
- ◆ Gambling regulation for Loot Boxes, which develop gambling in children
- ◆ A Reform of “VIP schemes”
- ◆ An NHS-led and commissioned treatment system to treat gambling addiction

## Our aim

### To get Government and/or the Gambling Commission to implement the changes

The Select Committee's report has made the case for urgent and wide sweeping reforms but there will be well resourced campaigns from a wealthy industry to oppose or water down the proposals. A group of peers committed to promoting these changes is needed, working with other groups and bodies which share the same broad goals.

To ensure the Government and the Gambling Commission implement the changes we will:

- ◆ Develop an influencing strategy and plan
- ◆ Form a Coalition with groups in Parliament and outside
- ◆ Reinforce the position of all political parties on the need for reform
- ◆ Promote persistent media and parliamentary activity for gambling reform
- ◆ Brief the group on gambling media coverage and parliamentary activities and opportunities
- ◆ Brief members of the group to submit questions, amendments, oral questions, PNQs etc, speak in relevant debates etc
- ◆ Issue media releases, letters to newspapers etc about activities of members
- ◆ Promote amendments to the legislation and regulations where needed.

## Governance and funding

The provisional Executive of Peers for Gambling Reform includes B. Armstrong of Hill Top, L. Butler of Brockwell, L. Filkin, L. Foster of Bath (Chair), L. Layard, Bishop of St. Albans and L. Smith of Hindhead. They will be supported by independent expert assistance for which funding has already been identified.

## How you can help?

Peers for Gambling Reform invites you to join us in undertaking this vital work. We appreciate that some may wish to join merely to indicate to government and others the strength of support for the reforms the group is seeking. Others may wish to take a more active role.

If you wish to give your support to this work in any way, please email our Secretariat:

**[info@peersforgamblingreform.com](mailto:info@peersforgamblingreform.com)**

*This is not an official publication of the House of Lords. It has not been approved by the House or its committees. Peers for Gambling Reform is an informal group of Peers with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this document are those of the group.*