

Problem Gambling, a Shared Responsibility  
A summary of the first 500 comments submitted to the  
Gambling Watch UK website

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# Gambling Watch UK – Manifesto

*There needs to be:*

- **A National Strategy for gambling that recognises gambling as a public health issue**
- **A full impact assessment of any proposed new form or mode of gambling**
- **A minimum age of 18 years for all gambling**
- **Tighter regulation of sports sponsorship and television advertising of gambling**
- **A national programme of treatment for gambling disorder**
- **Reformation of the present system of industry financing of gambling treatment, prevention and research**

# Gambling Watch UK website

- August 2012 – May 2018
- Comments made in response to a previous comment, resulting in chains of comments e.g. *Campaigns, Real Life Stories*
- Over three-quarters of all the comments are from people who are having, or have had, problems with their own gambling
- About 10% identify themselves as those who have relatives with gambling problems

# Main Themes

## Personal

- Large financial losses
- Loss of control, addiction
- Effect on mental health
- Hide, shame
- Effect on family

## Political

- Critical of advertising
- Critical of operator methods
- Critical of government

# Personal

- I see a little of myself in every story mentioned on here, I somehow hope that with this post, it will take the huge weight off my shoulders that is currently dragging me slowly and slowly into **suicidal thoughts**. I love the big win buzz, nothing fazes me when I am betting I don't care about anything and this state of mind has carried onto my everyday life. I have **lost all joy in life** and simply don't care about mine or anyone else's wellbeing. I am **about to tell my whole family** that I have lost £20,000 in 3 months through gambling. This is what gambling does, this is the end of the tunnel.

# Personal

- This is the first time I am posting regarding my gambling addiction. I can go on without gambling for months and one slipup, and all the savings are gone, ends with me **feeling worthless and suicidal**. I **hide the habit from everyone** and make up some stories when I cannot afford something. How do I get out of **this death grip**? When will this end?

## Personal and A Bit Political

- I can't fully account for all I have **lost to date but it's over €100k**. If anybody reads this please try & understand we are addicted to it. There have been times I have **been so down & desperate**. I have become a person who cheats lies & hides my gambling addiction from my wife family & friends. I **have hidden this for years**, it really breaks my heart to see what I have become! The pure despair & a stress it causes me, **feeling so low & depressed**, I now know how others feel & what they are going through. I have **nobody to blame but myself** who has lost complete control of this **horrible addiction**. I haven't sought help as I am too afraid to be exposed as what I really am but these stories I know are real. I **hate gambling & bookies** but again this is **all my fault** as nobody forced me to start on this road of pure self destruction. I just wish I never ever took up gambling as it has completely **destroyed my life to the point of being suicidal**.

# Personal and A Bit Political



## Political: Critical of Operators

- I have come to terms with the awful shame and anger of what I have done I don't even want to know how much I have lost. I stupidly **became addicted to online gaming sites**. They make it so easy for you. But the my anger for these sites has made me want to do something. **One company has let me open three different accounts** with them and they have let me carry on losing and losing. They say they are a responsible site and train their staff to identify anyone becoming addicted but **at no time did they step in and exclude me**. Don't get me wrong, I am adult and I should know better but how do these companies get away with it.\*

## Political: Parents Critical of Operators

- As a parent who has just found out her son has a gambling addiction and I am devastated. I was naive to the pull of so called free gambling apps that entice children in with virtual wins. **My son has stopped but he is still hounded by betting companies** trying to entice him back with a free bet! This problem in society is only going to get worse and the government is not doing enough to protect our young people. From a concerned parent.
- I am horrified by **the relentless way my son is targeted by gambling sites and loan companies**. His phone rings and beeps constantly with offers of money or free gambles.

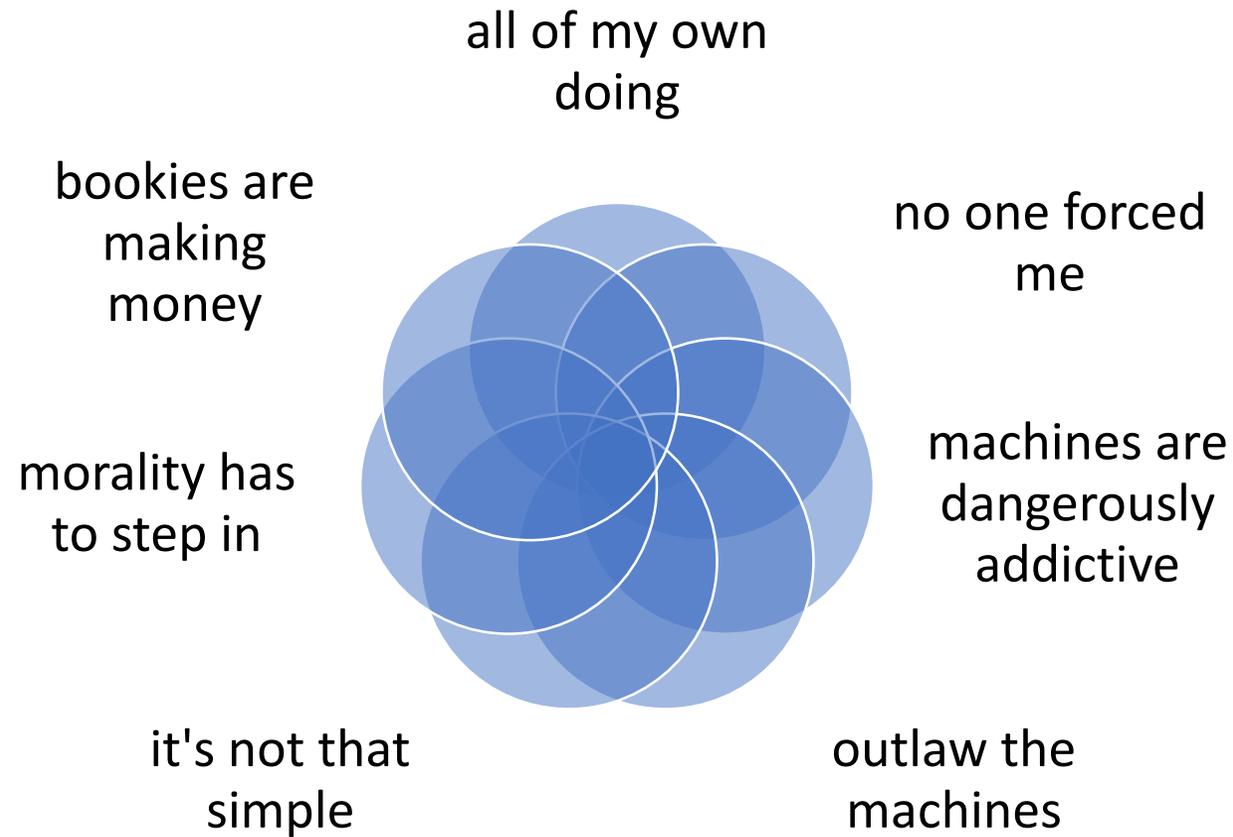
## Political: Critical of Advertising

- It disgusts me that gambling ads are allowed on tv and online, so many lives have been and will be destroyed if something isn't done to stop vulnerable people being sucked into this horrible addiction. All it takes for bad , greedy people to succeed is for good people to sit back and do nothing! **They banned smoking ads**, why is gambling so seemingly acceptable in our society.
- Just watched an 8 hour gambling ad interspersed with short bursts of cricket. **If this government cared** about anyone but themselves they would act. They won't of course.

# Personal and Political: A Shared Responsibility

- I'm sitting here suicidal. No I won't take my own life but that's the way I feel today. I've neglected my family due to my gambling and I need to stop but I've tried so many times and failed. Gambling is an addiction which is so hard to beat but the authorities do nothing to help. **Yes, it's the gambler who places the bet but it's the organisations which make it easy to gamble.** I once deposited £100 thirteen times on my phone whilst working. That's how easy it is to gamble now.
- **Of course it was all of my own doing, no one forced me to do this. But these machines are dangerously, dangerously addictive.** If I could outlaw the machines I would, I think they're absolute poison, but I know it's not that simple. But morality has to step in somewhere here, where the bookies are concerned. They're making their money but at what cost? I'm sure there will be (if there haven't been already) suicides as a direct result. Someone needs to be accountable for all this, because it's not as simple as blaming the gambler for just being weak-willed.

# Personal and Political: A Shared Responsibility



## Personal and Political: A Shared Responsibility

- My son is well on his way to running up a huge debt - £5000 at the last count. I understand that **he has a responsibility** as it is his addiction to these dreadful FOBTs [machines] that is taking him down this destructive road **but surely the gambling industry have to take some responsibility too** for making it so easy to gamble on these machines.

## Conclusions: Where Does Responsibility Lie?

- People who have gambling problems and their affected family members ascribe to the individualised concept of addiction to gambling and its effects on mental health
- But they can at the same time express the opinion that they are being exploited by the providers of gambling and their Government supporters
- The idea of shared responsibility is well understood by people who have gambling problems and their affected family members
- This has implications for gambling policy: their role in relation to service providers and policy makers is not confined to that of people who need treatment and support; they are potentially campaigners and trouble-makers