



Silence of Suicide

Stop the silence, start the conversation.

**3, Portobello House
Portobello Way, Warwick CV34 5GJ**

The Right Honourable Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

28 February 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

SOS Silence of Suicide is a charitable organisation who work to reduce the shame, stigma and silence around poor mental health and suicide.

We are becoming increasingly concerned about gambling addiction, along with the serious, and sometimes deadly effects on the mental health of those who are addicted and the ripple impacts on their loved ones.

Having failed to regulate itself, and with no well intentioned or robust plans in place to safeguard adults and children, its attempts to mollify the Government & the gambling commission with the 'Gamble Aware' charity are, in our opinion, thinly veiled attempts to disguise the industry's desire to make more money, with no regard whatsoever for human life.

The charitable sector & NHS cannot cope with the harm caused. The damage is well documented and those responsible for the repercussions of gambling should stand up, step forwards, take responsibility and be held accountable. Of this there should be no doubt. The very fact that these large money makers who generated a profit of £14.2 BILLION in 2020, appear to donate no money directly to charities devoted to helping addicts, and in fact, run employee EAP scheme to support those with poor mental health (at a cost to the employer) meaning they are free to print money from all directions.

Prime Minister, your conscience cannot be clear knowing that over 100,00 children are currently addicted to gambling, nor that in 2023, there were up to 496 deaths by suicide attributed to the effects of gambling.

There are clear and simple measures that can be implemented to begin the process of public awareness & prevention, as has happened with smoking and wearing car safety belts.

SOS will be working towards the following aims.

- a) Legislate to end pervasive betting advertising, and the enticements that accompany them
- b) Ensure all non-pervasive betting carries a public health warning, similar to cigarettes
- c) Robust, no nonsense, notices in any places where bets in the hope of returns are placed, must clearly display mental health warnings and this includes online betting platforms
- d) That you support our **Think it Over** concept, whereby anyone attempting to place a bet, whatever platform they choose, is subject to a minimum 10-minute cooling off period, to re-think their plans and hopefully walk away.

SOS thanks the Prime Minister for taking the time to read about our concerns and proposed resolutions and we welcome a supportive, positive, response from you.

Most respectfully

Yvette & Michael Mansfield



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**Yvette & Michael Mansfield KC
Opposition**

Cc: Keir Starmer, Leader of the

Notes for Media and contacts for comments should be directed to our founders:

**Yvette Greenway-Mansfield: 07802 884984
Michael Mansfield 07771 925007**

Notes & Stats courtesy of Gov.uk in all instances

In 2023 there were up to 496 deaths by suicide related to gambling in England, with 1.4 million adults and over 100,000 children currently addicted to gambling.

Other people affected by gambling

According to [2020 YouGov data on gambling treatment and support](#) (PDF, 1.4MB), around 7% of the population of Great Britain (adults and children) were found to be negatively affected by someone else's gambling.

Affected others are more likely to be women. The most severe impacts of problem gambling were felt most by immediate family members. Almost half (48%) of people who were affected by a spouse or partner's gambling reported a severe negative impact. This was followed by people affected by the gambling of a parent (41%) and the gambling of a child (38%)

Two quantitative studies (of moderate and high quality) reported that deaths from suicide were significantly higher among adults with gambling disorder or problems compared to the general adult population. One of these found that some participants, particularly women, had already experienced suicidal events before starting to gamble. This suggests that **gambling may trigger suicidal events** in some people already prone to suicidal ideation. The link between gambling and suicide and self-harm was supported by qualitative studies

Mental and physical health harms

The overall estimated excess cost of health harms is estimated to be £754.4 to £1,475 million. This is based on the direct costs to government of treating depression, alcohol dependence and illicit drug use, the quality of life impact of depression, as well as the wider societal costs of deaths by suicide.

The estimate of between 117 and 496 deaths by suicides associated with problem gambling or gambling disorder results in a cost of £241.1 million to £961.7 million. This cost represents the societal value of the life years lost as a result of excess suicides associated with gambling.

'I want my voice heard. My voice is that of generations past, present & future unless those in power take decisive action NOW to reduce the mental ill health & suicides attributable to gambling addiction. I want young people to grow up without addictions or becoming addicted. I want you, this Government, to significantly help to reduce gambling related suicides, self harm and other losses to gambling addiction My signature is my voice. Your actions should be yours. Please, stop un-necessary death & devastation to children and families across the UK'

*I stand with [SOS Silence of Suicide](#) and their [#TIO \(Think it over\) gambling reduction & re-think controls](#)

*I stand with SOS and want to see [robust, widespread mental health warnings across all platforms](#) used by those who make a living from offering gambling facilities ***END****

Also issued to:

**Keir Starmer, Leader of the Opposition
Stuart Andrew, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Gambling
Carolyn Harris, Chair, Cross Parliamentary Group examining gambling harm**

**Charity Registered in England & Wales number 1175795 – Contact Details and stats available
on addendum sheet**



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Brigid Simmonds OBE, Chair, Betting and Gaming Council

Denise Coates at Bet365

Per Widerstrom at William Hill

Joanne Whittaker at Betfred

Sadly, the Gambling Commission has no email address for general correspondence.