

Fiona Godlee
Editor in Chief
The BMJ

7 July 2020

By email: fgodlee@bmj.com

Dear Fiona,

Re: Independent funding for prevention and treatment of gambling harms

We are writing in response to the recent open letter submitted by Wardle et al (*BMJ* 2020;370:m2613).

For some years, GambleAware has advocated for gambling to be acknowledged as a public health issue and that effective prevention of the harms that arise requires a 'whole system approach'. Only then will appropriate referral routes and care pathways be in place to ensure those individuals in need of support, including treatment, can receive the right intervention at the right time.

GambleAware has a proud record as an independent charity commissioning prevention and treatment services in England, Scotland and Wales underpinned by research and evaluation. Guided by an independent expert Board of trustees, the majority of whom work in the health sector, we have established a range of governance processes and procedures that ensures the industry has no influence over our commissioning decisions.¹

Notwithstanding that GambleAware is an approved National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) non-commercial partner, we support the recommendation of the House of Lords Select Committee that the Government should work closely with UKRI and ESRC who can advise on a structure for the commissioning of gambling-related research, funded by a mandatory levy.²

Also, we agree with the Select Committee's recommendation that the Government should develop a strategy to ensure that the NHS and other statutory health bodies work in partnership with charities to provide treatment, and to determine how resources will be allocated and patients referred between services.³

In the meantime, the recent £100 million pledge from gambling operators will help us maintain this work in prevention and treatment to keep people safe from gambling harms. We will continue to make sure funding

¹ <https://about.gambleaware.org/about/governance/>

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/406/gambling-industry-committee/news/147122/time-to-act-to-reduce-gambling-related-harm-says-lords-report/>

³ Ibid

is allocated efficiently and independently, as would be expected of other health and social care commissioning and grant-making bodies.

With very best wishes,



Kate Lampard CBE & Professor Siân Griffiths OBE
Chair & Deputy Chair of Trustees, GambleAware