

# GambleAware

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Harm-minimisation Conference

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2017

### Opening remarks by Kate Lampard, CBE, Chair, GambleAware

Thank you Chris.

Good morning and welcome all of you to what is our fifth annual conference.

I am especially pleased to have Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society join us, for the third consecutive year! Welcome, and thank you for your continued support for and interest in GambleAware's work. We look forward to hearing from you.

Welcome too to Tim Miller, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs and Research at the Gambling Commission. We are grateful to you and your colleagues at the Gambling Commission for being here today. I think it is right and important to say that we enjoy a good and strong working relationship with the Gambling Commission, as we do with Sir Chris Kelly and his colleagues on the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board.

It is really good to see so many people here, and to know that among you there will be wide-ranging interests, views and opinions regarding gambling and gambling-

related harm. I hope that you will take every opportunity to share and express your points-of-view during the course of the next two-days. There may be much to agree upon but equally we ought not to avoid discussing whatever we might disagree upon. As some of you will now be aware, I do say what I see and I expect no less in return.

The overall theme for this year's conference will be focused on how young people are gambling and gaming in a rapidly evolving technical and social environment, and asking what implications does this have for minimising gambling-related harm in the future.

The annual GambleAware harm-minimisation conferences are intended to help shape the direction of research and policy development, as well as informing industry practice in relation to promoting player protection and safer gambling behaviour. So we hope this year's topics help to do just that.

We will begin with a scene setting presentation from Dr Heather Wardle about **technological change and the health and well-being of young people**. This will be followed by sessions focused on:

- The rise of internet gambling and its effect on young people
- Where and when (video) gaming becomes gambling? And,
- E-sports

In the evening at the networking event, Micky Swindale (KPMG Partner) will share her perspective and opinions about the need for more diversity in the board room

and more widely across gambling businesses. A subject that I will return to in a moment.

Tomorrow we will welcome Rosena Allin-Khan, Shadow Minister for Sport and the sessions will be:

- Lotteries
- Gambling and its relationship with sport including advertising and shirt-sponsorship (for players and consumers)

In the light of current media and political attention on many of these issues, we hope that this programme is not only prescient but also helpful in informing future research and policy thinking.

Speaking of media and political attention, I must say that it seems to me that current public opinion represents a serious existential threat to the future success of the gambling industry in Britain. The Gambling Commission have reported that the proportion of the British population who regard gambling as fair and trustworthy has declined to just 34%. This is not a good place to be. In truth, my experience of the industry thus far is that it is not wholly undeserving of the flak that it gets.

I came to this industry afresh just 18 months ago. Some of you may know, I began my career as a barrister, and I've led enquiries into some of the more disturbing episodes in our national life. I am not easily shocked.

But I must say, I was at least very surprised by the first impressions this industry offered me. Some in very senior positions seemed upset that an independent charity might voice its concerns about the impact their business was having on vulnerable people. After my first interview with a national newspaper, some were brave enough to email me directly; others through our chief executive, to fire shots across my bow. Who did I think I was and what did I think I was doing?

Well, *gentleman*, it didn't work. I'm determined that GambleAware will continue to 'say what we see' in order to deliver on our charitable goals. The themes of this conference are good examples.

We are deeply concerned about the ever-closer relationship between sport and gambling. Role models setting poor examples, the threat to integrity, and the pressure to gamble not simply on the outcome, but on each move in the game.

Equally, we cannot ignore the dramatically changing gambling environment and its impact on children who see gambling online, at football matches both at the ground and on the television, and on their high street in arcades, bookies and, thanks to the lotteries, in their corner-shop.

In contrast, I was completely unsurprised by the proposals in the government's policy review. An industry that has devoted its energies to aggressively fighting amongst itself, served only to accelerate the rapidly falling reputation it has, and to secure essentially none of the changes to regulations each sector sought. I was struck when reading the consultation how clearly the government indicated that, had

the industry invested in better protecting its customers, many of their wishes would have been considered far more favourably.

I wonder what the cost and opportunity cost of all this lobbying has been? Trade association membership? The planning appeals? The fines levied on some companies because the board's eye has been off the ball of safer gambling, and focused instead on internecine turf warfare.

I hope the policy review serves as a loud wake up call for the industry and those that claim to argue for its interests. I am today calling for a massive change in attitudes. This may require some change in personnel, it definitely needs shareholders and non-executives to come along with us and what we are trying to achieve. Getting them to raise the game in the Board room.

The testosterone needs to make way for more enlightened women and men who take a long term view, caring not for short-term profits but instead for sustainable businesses that understand socially responsible behaviour, which is culturally embedded, and seen as a necessary foundation for success not a decoration to be flaunted on special occasions.

You may disagree. You may think this unnecessarily harsh. But this is what I think and it is for the industry to prove me wrong by their future actions.

So, once again, thank you all for coming along and supporting this event. I hope you enjoy the next two days of discussion and debate. Thank you.

Before we invite Tim to speak, I know Marc Etches would like to say a few words of thanks to all those who have helped to put on this conference.