

GambleAware Written Submission for the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the 'Decline in National Lottery Income'

16th January 2018

About GambleAware

1. GambleAware is an independent charity committed to minimising gambling-related harm. Our aim is to prevent people from getting into problem gambling, and to ensure those who develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support.
2. We do this through funding education, prevention and treatment services and commissioning research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. All of GambleAware's research can be found at: <https://about.gambleaware.org/research>
3. Our funding of approximately £8 million comes primarily from voluntary donations made by licensed gambling operators who are required to make a contribution towards research, education and treatment under the terms of their licence.

Submission to the enquiry

4. Although the scope of this inquiry is related to the decline in lottery income for good causes, GambleAware wanted to take this opportunity to raise two significant issues related to Camelot's operation of the National Lottery.

Promotion of safer gambling

5. Lottery products are, among gambling products, uniquely available to 16 and 17 year olds. For some people, gambling addiction begins by buying scratch-cards at a young age.
6. Given its widespread popularity, there are likely to be more problem gamblers amongst lottery and scratch-card customers than any other single gambling product. We believe that this means that Camelot has a particular responsibility to promote safer gambling and to promote sources of help for problem gamblers.
7. However, Camelot is reluctant to promote safer gambling and to highlight sources of help for gambling addiction, such as BeGambleAware.org and the National Gambling Helpline, at the point of sale, in advertising campaigns or on their products.
8. We understand that this is because they would like to distance themselves from the image of being a gambling product. However, lottery products are recognised forms of gambling and in other jurisdictions lottery products have clear messages on them to promote safer gambling.

9. Camelot is already investing heavily in online sales, and distancing their product from gambling may be one way to maintain or increase overall sales. However, it is important to recognise that the National Lottery website is in many ways now indistinguishable from other online gambling websites. For example, on the homepage, there are links to Gamestore instant win games such as the £4 million jackpot or the £20 million Cash Spectacular, which anyone 16 or older can play – the only safeguard is a limit that is initially set to *“75 Instant Win Games you can play or try in any 24 hour period, and a £350 weekly limit on how much money you can add to your account”*.¹
10. We would therefore encourage the Committee to recommend that, however it seeks to increase its sales, Camelot should promote safer gambling in line with the rules for the rest of the gambling industry. This means highlighting sources of help for gambling addiction, such as BeGambleAware.org and the National Gambling Helpline, at the point of sale and in their advertising campaigns, as well as on their products.

Contribution to education, research and treatment

11. GambleAware is reliant upon voluntary donations to conduct its work. Last year, GambleAware-funded services treated 8,000 people struggling with a gambling addiction, just 2% of the 430,000 with a severe gambling addiction. This low number is due, in part, to the lack of funding and the lack of certainty about such funding.
12. To date, Camelot has made a relatively small contribution for education, research and treatment for gambling addiction. In our discussions with Camelot we have suggested that the responsibility for safer gambling messaging and financial contributions to GambleAware ought properly to be shared between Camelot and the owners and operators of its network of 40,000 retail outlets.
13. However, their donation, along with many others within the gambling industry, has not met what we regard would be a reasonable minimum contribution to GambleAware to enable it to deliver its responsibilities as identified in the National Responsible Gambling Strategy. Industry funding is critical, as despite problem gambling being a recognised mental health condition, treatment for it is not funded by the NHS.
14. To ensure the correct amounts are donated, GambleAware is calling for a statutory levy on the gambling industry. We believe it is essential Camelot is included in any future plans for a levy.

Contact Details

If the Public Accounts Select Committee has any questions regarding this consultation or on the work of GambleAware, please contact iain@gambleaware.org.

¹ National Lottery Service Guide <https://www.national-lottery.co.uk/service-guide>