

BET REGRET CAMPAIGN CONTINUATION

This campaign, commencing in February 2019, was initially planned, and funded to run for 2 years. It was delivered by GambleAware, on behalf of the independent Safer Gambling Board, with the support of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and voluntary funding and donations of media space from gambling operators, broadcasters, and digital media platforms (who had no involvement in decisions relating to the campaign).

The initial 2-year period – extended due to a suspension of live sport due to the pandemic – has now ended. The campaign will now be taken over and funded by GambleAware, with an intention to continue with a focus on behavioural ‘nudges’, helping younger sports bettors avoid gambling harms. A separate campaign aimed at preventing gambling harms amongst women is also in development.

The overall aim of the Bet Regret campaign is to help moderate the gambling behaviour (mainly online) of younger male sports bettors, recognising that any campaign is only one of several factors influencing the target group. Campaign objectives were defined as:

- Year One: To shift attitudes and provoke conversation amongst the target group on the moderation of sports betting, through the avoidance of impulsive, risky behaviours such as chasing losses in the heat of the moment (Broad audience of sports bettors)
- Year Two: To increase the numbers of risky sports bettors taking steps to cut down their gambling, both generally and by deploying specific moderation techniques and aids (Behaviour Change audience – more frequent bettors)

The second year of activity, just completed, focused on addressing the risks of impulsiveness by encouraging bettors to ‘tap out’ of their betting app and pause before deciding whether or not to place a bet – ‘Tap Out, Take A Moment, Avoid Bet Regret’.

Despite a relatively low share of voice (campaign weight running at 2-3% of total gambling operator advertising spend), the campaign has consistently delivered high levels of awareness. Over the past 2 years campaign recognition has averaged over 60% amongst the broader target audience of younger male sports bettors, rising to c.75% amongst those in the highest risk band. Message takeout and engagement ratings have also been consistently high.

Awareness of both gambling risks and how to moderate is fairly high amongst our campaign audience. In the latest wave of tracking (April 2021) ¹ 76% agree that they are aware of the risks of gambling more than they can afford; 70% that they would know the early warning signs that someone might be betting too much; and 76% that they know how to cut down if they want to.

But 55% still agree that they sometimes make impulsive bets in the heat of the moment, and we have learned that the biggest challenge – as in other public health areas – is to translate awareness and intentions into actual behaviours.

In Year One the campaign had some success in reducing the numbers betting in risky ways (when drunk, bored, and chasing losses); harder to read in Year Two due to the life impacts of the ongoing pandemic. In Year Two we have seen encouraging increases over 2 waves of activity in the behaviour of ‘tapping out’ and pausing before making a bet; our latest tracking (April 2021) shows that:

- The main message take outs from the campaign relate to ‘tapping out and taking a moment’ (53%) and ‘think twice before you make a bet’ (42%)
- This has translated into behaviour with 38% of our campaign audience are saying they try to ‘tap out’ of their app before deciding to place a bet; rising to 53% of those with higher risk profiles and some intention to cut down their betting
- 17% are actively using ‘tapping out’ as a tool to cut down

In the absence of an ‘Are You Sure’ button on betting apps, there is a continued need to promote behavioural nudges of this kind. We encourage gambling operators and regulators to make their own interventions to help reduce the risks that can come from impulsive betting behaviours.

The campaign has obviously run during a period heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Sports betting fell in Q2 with the suspension of live sport (with some spend shifting to other forms of gambling), causing the campaign to be paused. Since then, online betting levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels, and the potential risks of harms have increased: twice the number of matches televised live; enforced closure of physical locations pushing more online where betting tends to be more impulsive; lockdowns leading to boredom and increased risks of ‘bored betting’; a growth in mental health issues that impact heavily on those most at risk of gambling harms.

A detailed narrative report – Avoiding Bet Regret; an overview of the campaign to date – providing an overview of the context, development, implementation and impacts of the campaign up to December 2020 is available [separately](#). This will shortly be updated to include the latest data, with more detail about the research undertaken.

¹ Wave 8 (fieldwork 8-15 April 2021) of our tracking survey conducted by Ipsos MORI; with a nationally representative online sample of 1600 interviews per wave, 600 of whom relate to our campaign audience of men aged 16-44 who gamble regularly on sport, mainly online.