



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling
1st Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

10 March 2026

Ms Laura Bradford
Senior Coroner, East Sussex Coroner Service

Dear Ms Bradford,

Response to Regulation 28 report following the inquest into the death of Mr Oliver Long

1. I write in response to the Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths (the Report) dated 14 January 2026, made following the inquest into the death of Mr Oliver Long (Ollie). I write on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and the Department for Education (DfE) as the Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling.
2. In providing this response to the Report, the Central Government Departments (CGDs) wish to repeat their sincere condolences to Ollie's family and friends on their tragic loss. The Government has a continued commitment to protecting people from gambling-related harm and preventing future tragedies under similar circumstances. The CGDs have carefully considered the concerns you highlight, and will continue to take action to make gambling safer and increase protections for those at risk of harm.
3. The Report arises from the Inquest into the death of Ollie which finished on 13 January 2026 and the particular matters of concern identified in the Report were that:
 - i. The UK self-exclusion scheme, GamStop, which allows customers to bar themselves from all forms of legal and licensed online betting, does not capture overseas unlicensed sites and people who have self-excluded may be able to access these sites or are being deliberately targeted by them.
 - ii. Consumers may not be aware that they have accessed an unlicensed site and in doing so have moved outside of the realm of the regulated area. Consumers are unlikely to check that a site is licensed prior to accessing it, particularly if the advert for the site is in a trusted space, such as on social media. The result is that people who are at risk of gambling-related harm in accessing these sites are not protected by features such as limit setting and slowing down of gains, and they may not be aware that these features are unlikely to be present on the site they are using.
 - iii. There is a lack of adequate public health information and warning relating to the risks posed by unlicensed gambling sites.
4. The concerns are addressed by the appropriate CGDs, drawing upon their relevant policy knowledge and expertise.

Background

5. The Government recognises that harmful gambling can wreck the lives of individuals, families and communities. Ensuring that when gambling takes place, it does so safely is a top cross-departmental priority.
6. From December 2020 to April 2023, the previous Government undertook an extensive review of the Gambling Act 2005. This culminated in the white paper entitled '[High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age](#)', published in April 2023. This is the most comprehensive review of gambling legislation in Great Britain for 20 years, outlining a package of new protections to build on existing controls and help safeguard customers.
7. A number of the proposals in the white paper relate to the protection of those who gamble online, which are being introduced in addition to the measures outlined below in relation to your concerns. For example, in April 2025, the Government introduced online slot stake limits of £5 per spin for adults aged 25 and over. The Government has also introduced the statutory levy on gambling operators, which will raise upwards of £100 million annually to see increased, independent and sustainable funding for research, prevention and treatment of gambling-related harm.
8. The Gambling Commission also continues to implement a range of measures, including financial risk checks, strengthened rules on marketing, and improving access to pre-commitment tools, like deposit limits.

Concerns I and II: GamStop does not capture overseas unlicensed sites and people who have self-excluded may be able to access these sites or are being deliberately targeted by them, and consumers may not be aware that they have accessed an unlicensed site and may be unaware that they are not protected by features such as limit setting and slowing down of gains

9. Licensed operators must provide facilities to allow gamblers to self-exclude. In 2020, the Gambling Commission mandated all licensed online operators to sign up to GamStop, the national self-exclusion scheme, taking regulatory action against operators who fail to comply.
10. DCMS and the Gambling Commission are aware that some illegal websites are targeted at people who experience significant harms from their gambling and self-excluded gamblers, such as Ollie. We have committed to taking action to tackle this problem as part of wider efforts to address the risks posed by the illegal market.
11. As part of its 2024 to 2027 Corporate Strategy, the Gambling Commission has committed to increase investment, resource, and capacity to tackle illegal gambling, and the Government has committed to provide the Gambling Commission with an additional £26 million over the next 3 years to do so. The Gambling Commission has conducted research to improve its evidence base around the unlicensed gambling market, using web traffic data and gambling behaviour data to estimate the size of the online unlicensed market and qualitative research to understand consumer motivations for participation in illegal gambling.
12. The Government is acutely aware of the risks associated with unlicensed gambling and is committed to working with the Gambling Commission to ensure it has all the powers it needs to tackle illegal gambling. The Crime and Policing Bill, introduced in Parliament in February 2025, will grant the Gambling Commission new powers to more quickly and effectively take down illegal gambling websites.
13. DCMS also launched the Illegal Gambling Taskforce in January 2026, which brings together a wide range of stakeholders to take action against the illegal market. It will focus on 3 main areas:

advertising of illegal gambling, preventing payments associated with illegal gambling, and improving cross-agency collaboration and enforcement.

14. DCMS recognises that more work needs to be done to ensure that gambling advertising does not exacerbate harm and is working closely, across Government and with industry, to ensure everyone, including the most vulnerable, are protected from the potential harms associated with unlicensed websites.

Concern III: There is a lack of adequate public health information and warning relating to the risks posed by unlicensed gambling sites

15. In April 2025, the statutory levy on gambling operators came into effect, under which the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) is the commissioner for the prevention of gambling-related harm in England, working alongside Public Health Scotland and Public Health Wales. OHID is working at pace to develop an effective and co-ordinated public health approach to gambling harm prevention which is evidence-based and has real impact.
16. Given this is a new programme of activity, OHID will employ a ‘test and learn’ approach to better understand what interventions are most effective in preventing gambling harms at a local, regional and national level.
17. In January 2026, OHID launched the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector Gambling Harms Prevention Grant Fund for organisations wishing to deliver prevention activity to support people at risk of gambling related harm, which may include activity to deliver public health campaigns in different localities. OHID will evaluate the impact of successful bids over the course of the next 2 years to inform longer term policy decisions around effective harm prevention measures.
18. Additionally, OHID plans to fund upper tier local authorities from financial year 2026/27 to deliver on prevention related activity for gambling-related harm, which will include understanding the local need and working to ensure there is a holistic approach to gambling harms prevention. A number of pilot projects have been funded in quarter four of financial year 2025/26, including the development of a media campaigns toolkit which will be a helpful resource for local areas going forward. OHID have also funded 2 national symposiums for local authorities to share knowledge of best practice for gambling harm prevention.
19. The levy also provides the opportunity to build the evidence for effective campaigns to tackle gambling-related harms. As part of their ongoing work, OHID intends to raise awareness of the risks of harmful gambling and support behaviour change through national campaigns. As per the 2023 white paper commitment, OHID also continues to work with DCMS and the Gambling Commission to strengthen informational messaging, including on the risks associated with gambling, with a view to replacing the current narrative based around ‘individual responsibility’. OHID will consider how best to include health information and warnings relating to the risks posed by unlicensed gambling sites, as part of this workstream. Further information will be shared on this as work progresses.
20. Within schools, statutory ‘Relationships, Sex and Health Education’ supports children and young people to manage risk and make informed decisions in relation to their mental wellbeing and online behaviour.
21. DfE published revised [Relationships, Sex and Health Education statutory guidance](#) on 15 July 2025, which sets out a comprehensive and age-appropriate curriculum for all pupils in England. The revised guidance will become statutory on 1 September 2026, replacing the existing guidance which has been in force since 2020. Curriculum content to be covered by the end of secondary education includes: the risks related to online gambling and gambling-like content

within gaming, including the accumulation of debt; that gambling can lead to serious mental health harms, including anxiety, depression, and suicide, and that some gambling products are more likely to cause these harms than others; how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online, understanding the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation online.

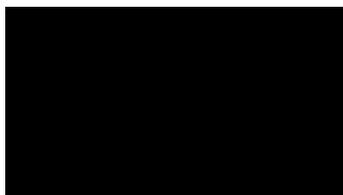
22. The Government recognises the need to be at the forefront of emerging risks for children and young people as the gambling landscape evolves. To inform the approach to education and support materials, OHID is working to build the evidence based upon the outcomes of the prevention work currently underway across the voluntary sector and planned for local authorities.

Conclusion

23. The Government remains committed to tackling gambling-related harms. Working with the Gambling Commission, DCMS is committed to strengthening protections for those at risk through a range of new safer gambling requirements. DCMS and the other CGDs will continue to review the best available evidence to inform our decisions on how best to fulfil our commitment to tackle gambling-related harm.
24. DCMS recognises the unique opportunity presented by the introduction of the statutory gambling levy to build an independent, robust approach to the research, prevention and treatment of gambling-related harm that is rooted in the principles of public health. DCMS has confidence that the commissioners under the levy, including OHID, are best placed to maximise the impact of the dedicated funding made available to them, and will continue to work together to ensure this.

DCMS, DHSC and DfE hope that the matters set out above address, in sufficient detail, the concerns raised in the Report. If, however, further information or clarification would be of assistance the CGDs will of course endeavour to provide this, as required.

With best wishes,



Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling