

6 March 2026

Senior Coroner Laura Bradford
Coroner's Officer
East Sussex Coroners Service
Westfield House, County Hall
Lewes,
East Sussex
BN7 1UE



Dear Senior Coroner Bradford,

Response to Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths - Oliver Long

1. I write on behalf of the Gambling Commission ("the Commission") 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 Anderson Long (hereinafter referred to as "Ollie" in line with the family's wishes).
2. The Commission and I wish to reiterate our sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to Ollie's family following their tragic loss.
3. The Coroner's inquiries revealed matters giving rise to concern, which are set out in section 5 of the Report and summarised as follows:
 - 3.1. GamStop, the UK self-exclusion scheme, 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 be deliberately targeted by them.
 - 3.2. Consumers may not be aware they have accessed an unlicensed site and in doing so have moved out of the regulated area. Consumers are unlikely to check that a site is licensed prior to accessing it, particularly if advertised in a trusted space such as on social media. The result is that, in accessing these sites, people at risk of gambling related harm are not protected by features such as limit setting and slowing down of gains and may not be aware that such features are unlikely to be present.
 - 3.3. There is a lack of adequate public health information and warning relating to the risks posed by unlicensed gambling sites.



4. The Commission's understanding is that the matters of concern described at paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 above arise from both a lack of, and inadequacies within, existing public health information. To allay those concerns and thereby prevent future deaths, the Coroner considers appropriate action should be taken to ensure that public health information and warnings about the risks posed by unlicensed gambling sites are increased and improved.
5. The Commission's principal function, and the statutory powers that support them, are set out in the Gambling Act 2005 ("the Act"). In summary, the Commission has statutory powers to:
 - 5.1. license gambling operators and individuals.
 - 5.2. prepare and publish a number of key documents that set out the responsibilities of those that hold operating or personal licences and our approach in regulating the gambling sector. This includes outlining operator requirements and expectations within the Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice, comprising licence conditions, codes of practice, and social responsibility code provisions.
 - 5.3. undertake activities for the purpose of assessing compliance with the provisions made by or by virtue of the Act.
 - 5.4. carry out formal licence reviews of operating and personal licences for specified reasons.
 - 5.5. publish guidance to licensing authorities on the exercise of their functions.
 - 5.6. provide advice to the Secretary of State on matters relating to gambling.
 - 5.7. investigate whether an offence has been committed under the Act, and to pursue criminal proceedings if this is the case.
6. In exercising its powers, the Commission imposes strict obligations on those it licenses and enforces those obligations appropriately. For example, failure to comply with any of the requirements placed on a licensee can lead to the commencement of formal licence reviews, which may culminate in the imposition of a formal sanction including licence revocation. It can also lead to criminal action in cases.
7. The Commission also works with a wide range of other regulators, public health bodies, the third sector and businesses to reduce gambling related harms. The Commission currently has two independent expert advisory groups, who provide independent advice to support the development of our regulatory approach. These are the Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) and the Digital Advisory Panel (DAP). Further, the Commission is continuously developing and strengthening methodologies to understand gambling harms through its own research.
8. As set out above, the Commission works under a statutory regime relating to the regulation of gambling. The Commission has not historically received taxpayer funding for its work under the Gambling Act. Its regulatory activities are funded through licence fees charged to regulated individuals and entities. Those fees are set by the Secretary of State. However, in November 2025 the Government announced in the Budget that they would provide additional taxpayer funding to the Commission specifically for the purpose of addressing risks from the illegal market and to build upon the existing programme of



work that the Commission does to disrupt illegal gambling and prevent unlicensed gambling operators from targeting consumers in Great Britain.

9. We agree that it is important for consumers to understand the risks that could be posed by sites, often based overseas, that are not licensed here in Britain. Such sites do not meet the same consumer protection standards that are required by domestic gambling operators licensed by the Commission. While this is important area, the Commission is not a public health body and does not have the statutory powers to design or deliver public health information or awareness campaigns. It is our view that responsibility for such action rests with the other recipients of the Report.
10. Reflecting the fact that the Commission does not hold statutory responsibilities for public information campaigns, the Government's 2023 Gambling White Paper recognised the importance of developing clear and systematic messaging to support consumers in making informed decisions, with a fuller understanding of potential risks. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport committed to working with the Department of Health and Social Care to develop a robust approach to informational messaging. Once suitable campaigns have been established, the White Paper sets out that the Gambling Commission will have a role in guiding how licensed operators should engage with and apply these messages.
11. We consider that messaging on the risks of unlicensed gambling sites could be developed as part of the Government's work. The Commission remains ready to consult on requirements for licensed gambling operators to apply any messaging that is developed by the Government.
12. Any decision to run a campaign, and its content, would need to be informed by an assessment of both the nature and scale of the risk posed by unlicensed sites, and whether, on balance, the benefits favour proceeding. By way of illustration, some consumers who access unlicensed sites do so deliberately because they are unlicensed and do not have the protections afforded by licensed sites. A public information campaign could have the unintended consequence of giving publicity to the existence of gambling sites which consumers who are self-excluded can access, and so may exacerbate the very problem it is designed to solve. These are matters which would need to be carefully weighed by the Government department responsible for the campaign.
13. In conclusion, as the action proposed in the Report falls outside of the Commission's remit, we are unable to implement it. Nevertheless, we remain willing to share information and cooperate with the relevant bodies within the scope of our functions.

Yours sincerely,



Executive Director

