



Department for
Digital, Culture
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Lord Grade
House of Lords
London
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Dear Lord Grade,

I am writing in confidence to tell you that the government will publish its response to your former select committee tomorrow. This will be alongside launching the first part of our comprehensive Review of the Gambling Act 2005 with a Call for Evidence, and our response to the consultation on the minimum age to play the National Lottery. These will be made available on gov.uk tomorrow.

I am grateful to you and your committee for your thorough and considered report, which has been an invaluable resource to inform both the Review and our ongoing work to make gambling safer. Your report highlighted many important issues for government attention and I am pleased to say that work is underway to address many of these, with a number of initiatives set into motion by your committee's recommendations. This work is detailed in our response, which also sets out where issues raised by your committee fall within the wide scope of the Gambling Act Review.

As you know, our aim in reviewing the Gambling Act 2005 is to ensure that it is fit for the digital age. It will be a wide ranging, evidence led look at the industry as it stands today, and is an opportunity to ensure we have the balance right between giving individuals the freedom to choose how they spend their money, and protecting vulnerable people and communities from the potentially devastating harms of problem gambling.

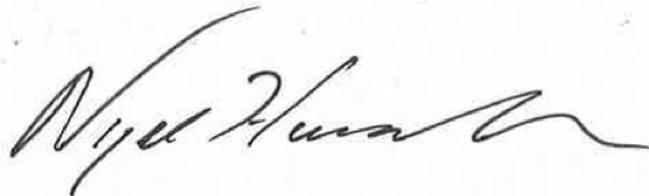
However, as emphasised by your former committee, we will not wait for the outcomes of the Review to make gambling safer where we need to. A key priority for both the Review and ongoing work is ensuring that we have the right protections for children and young people. To that end, we will also tomorrow be publishing our response to the consultation on the minimum age to play National Lottery games.

Since its launch in 1994, the National Lottery has raised over £42 billion for good causes and made vital contributions to arts, heritage, communities and sport. While the National Lottery's vision has remained steadfast since its launch, both its games portfolio and consumer behaviour have changed over recent years, with instant win games such as scratchcards making up a larger part of sales. The government launched a public consultation in 2019 on the National Lottery minimum age and, following this, we will tomorrow be announcing that the minimum age of sale for National Lottery products will be raised to 18.

Other work on gambling will also continue while the Review progresses. The Gambling Commission will continue to use its powers to regulate gambling and tighten rules to protect consumers where needed, as it did with the ban on credit card gambling in April and the new restrictions on VIP schemes in October. It will also respond soon to its consultation on strengthening rules on online slots game design, and has called for evidence on new rules for interacting with customers including through robust affordability checks. The Committee of Advertising Practice is currently consulting on new rules to minimise the appeal of gambling adverts to children and vulnerable people, and the Department of Health and Social Care is leading efforts to improve and expand treatment for problem gambling alongside other addictions such as drugs, tobacco and alcohol.

Once again, I would like to thank you and your committee for your report and to apologise for the unavoidable delay to our response caused by the impacts of Covid 19 on the government's work. I look forward to continuing our productive dialogue during the Review and beyond.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Huddleston', written in a cursive style.

Nigel Huddleston MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage