



*"Designed to promote Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and British Values in our teaching and learning seamlessly. Enhancing learning for individuals using current key stories in the local, national and international news".*

# This Month's *Hot Topic*

*"Gambling is a public health issue we can no longer ignore."*

Steven Wingate | RMN

## Gambling addiction: Calls to helpline see 30% increase

**The mother of a man who killed himself after battling a gambling addiction has likened the problem to heroin dependency.**

It comes as calls to a UK-wide gambling addiction helpline have risen by more than 30% over five years.

Liz Ritchie, whose son Jack died in 2017, said more was needed to be done to highlight dangers and regulate it.

The Gambling Commission said it was working with the industry to protect those at risk of harm.

New figures from the National Gambling Helpline show it took 29,889 calls in 2017-18, up from 22,875 in 2013-14.

Its chief executive Anna Hemmings said about two-thirds of calls were about financial problems, while about 50% of callers were worried about their mental health.

Liz and Charles Ritchie, from Sheffield, [helped found Gambling with Lives](#) after their 24-year-old son Jack took his own life in Vietnam in 2017.

They said he began gambling when he was 17, visiting betting shops during his school lunch break to use fixed-odds betting terminals.

By the time he admitted his problem a year later he had lost thousands of pounds, including £5,000 given to him by his grandmother, they said.

His parents said they thought their son would "grow out of it" and his death had come "totally out of the blue".

Funding for the National Gambling Helpline comes in part from Gamble Aware, an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry. It urged anyone with a gambling problem to make contact as soon as possible.

"We can work very effectively and in quite a short space of time," Mrs Hemmings said.

"That will help reduce the impact on family and the impact of gambling-related harm more broadly."

- [How one man's debts led to suicide](#)
- [Betting links on junior football fan pages](#)
- [Teenagers 'bombarded by gambling ads'](#)

Among the Gambling with Lives charity's campaigns is the immediate implementation of the [proposed £2 maximum stake on fixed-odds betting terminals announced in May](#).

Mrs Ritchie said: "Gambling on these fast-paced electronic machines, either in the bookies or online, is equivalent to a heroin addiction.

"This is a serious addiction and we need a serious public health message." "One of the scandals about this is the number of young people that take their own lives," he said. "Research estimates that could be anything between 250 and 650 deaths in the UK each year."



*Jack Ritchie took his own life seven years after he began gambling at school*



### Health and Safety – Christmas aftermath

For or many of us, the Christmas aftermath includes massive credit card bills that can take months to clear. Christmas doesn't have to be a financial headache if you plan ahead to reduce stress. Almost a third of people said they went over budget last month, and one in ten fell into debt or further into the red after overspending, the Money Advice Service has found.

It means around 13 million people have to wait longer than usual for January's payday. Men were more likely than women to overspend and put extra festive costs on credit, the MAS survey showed. The Government support bureau now expects millions of money and debt queries as people battle financial worries over the next three months as a result of Christmas.

The typical home spent £429 over Christmas on a mixture of food, gifts, socialising and travel.

*How much did you spend on Christmas? Christmas debts can cause serious stress and tension which is not good for your health, what are the options that are available to reduce the stress?*

By Sadaf Naqvi

### British Values Rule of Law – Media and betting

Gambling is everywhere. It is on our TVs during football games, on our smartphones and computers, in video games and on our high streets. For adults, this can be a serious issue, particularly if you suffer from addiction, or are at risk of developing a problem – which is the case for more than 2 million people in Britain. As we know and must be vocal about, gambling addiction can lead people to taking their own lives.

It is deeply concerning to learn that 55,000 11- to 16-year-olds are classified as problem gamblers – a number that has quadrupled in the past two years. Added to that, there are another 70,000 11- to 16-year-olds who are considered at risk of developing a problem. This underlines the need to treat gambling in Britain as a serious public health issue.

*It is our British Values to support freedom of choice, what can be done to reduce those at risk from further gambling? How can you restrict the advertising of betting?*

By Alba Mehuka

### Equality and Diversity – Financial sacrifice

The latest Disposable Income Index (DII) published by ISA provider Scottish Friendly reveals that many families feel pressure to create the perfect Christmas and are taking out loans or spending more on credit cards in order to buy gifts. Nearly six in ten households say they make sacrifices to buy Christmas presents and of those with children 31 per cent are relying on credit to fund their purchases. The pressure to have a perfect Christmas and the impact this has on spending habits comes from a range of sources, including other family members, TV advertising, friends, retailers and social media.

With this perceived pressure affecting many families, more than three quarters of households with children say they make some form of financial sacrifice in order to buy Christmas presents, compared to just 45 per cent of those without. Most worryingly, just over one in eight families who are making sacrifices say they delay paying household bills to buy presents, while one in ten postpone their rent or mortgage payments.

*How are you managing your money? What could be done to avoid going into debt?*

By Edward Vaughan

### Safeguarding – Gambling Act 2005

Opportunities to gamble have boomed in the UK in recent years, since the passing of the Gambling Act 2005.

We all know that some adults are addicted to gambling and that children and young people living with parents or carers that are affected, are likely to suffer as well.

However young people are also directly at risk of developing problems with gambling. Research tells us that 2% of young people aged between 12 and 15 develop gambling problems. That could be you or one of your friends.

In recognition of the danger that gambling can cause young people, the Gambling Act 2005 makes most gambling for under 18s illegal, with the exception of the National Lottery, and slot machines with low stakes, which is 16.

*Do you think the age restriction to gamble should be increased? Should more be done to safeguard vulnerable people from gambling?*

By Miguel de la Fuente

### Further Information:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/christmas-personal-debt-rise-family-social-pressure-advertising-credit-cards-disposable-income-a8107356.html>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/help-with-debt/>

<https://www.express.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/632797/One-in-four-struggle-to-survive-January-after-Christmas-spending-binge>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-44148285>



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### Safeguarding



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