



quests to help reveal the full extent of the link between gambling and

Bishop Alan, who has played a leading role in a series of high-profile efforts to limit gambling-related harms, wants coroners to record gambling addiction among the circumstances in which someone has taken their own life.

He has introduced a Private Members' Bill to the House of Lords which would make a simple change to the coroners' rules requiring them to consider whether gambling addiction has been a factor.

The information the change would reveal could "shock policy makers from their complacency", he said.

The Coroners (Determination of Suicide) Bill 2020, received its first reading in the House of Lords today [Thursday 16 January 2020].

He said: "I have introduced this common-sense piece of legislation so the Government can begin to get a handle on the consequences of gambling-related harm.

"This new legislation will mean, for the first time, each instance where gambling is a factor in suicide coroners will record it in conclusions.

"I have met far too many families whose lives have been destroyed by the loss of a loved one, often young adults who have their entire lives ahead of them.

"As there is no accurate, up-to-date, data linking gambling with suicide, their desire to get the Government to take action has often been stymied.

"This Bill would change that. For the first time we would have annually available, accurate records showing gambling as a cause in every suicide in the country.

"I expect the first data-set will shock policy makers from their complacency and help to stop our society from continuing to sleepwalk through this crisis.

"Campaigners estimate two suicides every working day of the year are linked to gambling, while the Government and the industry cites lack of data as a reason for making slow progress in reducing harm.

“Therefore, I expect the Government and gambling firms to strongly support this Bill as it will provide the data they claim is lacking.

“The NHS has called for more preventive action as opposed to just a treatment-first approach to tackling gambling-related harm.

“This Bill will support healthcare professionals who see an under-funded NHS spending an estimated £1 billion every year on treatment, and will help them understand the scale of the problem and strengthen their case for more action.”

Notes to editors

The Bishop of St Albans previously used a Private Members’ Bills to push for a ban on gambling with credit cards. The changes envisaged in the Bill will come into force in April 2020.

He was also a prominent leader in the successful campaign to reduce the maximum stake on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs).

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