

**GENERAL SYNOD**

**General Synod Motion on Advertising and Gambling (GS 2125)**

The Clerk to the Synod wrote to Mim Davies MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport following the February 2019 Group of Sessions to inform them of the motion passed by Synod relating Advertising and Gambling.

The motion called on Her Majesty's Government to reduce the quantity and pervasiveness of gambling advertising and introduce a mandatory levy on gambling firms to fund independently commissioned research, education and treatment programmes.

The Clerk has received a response to her letter, and this can be found in Annex One.

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England  
The Archbishops' Council 2019**



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport

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 April 2019

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Your Ref: GS 2125  
Our Ref:  
MC2019/02951/GM

*Dear Dr Philips*

Thank you for your letter of 19 March advising that the General Synod debated advertising and gambling in February, and passed a motion calling on government to reduce the quantity of gambling advertising and introduce a mandatory levy to fund research, education and treatment.

I met with the Lord Bishop of St Albans in January and had the opportunity to discuss these proposals with him in person. As we discussed, government considered both these issues carefully in the Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures, published last year. Our review set out measures to strengthen protections across gaming machines, online gambling and gambling advertising and we are closely monitoring their implementation.

We have already seen excellent progress around gambling advertising protections. In February the multi-million pound "Bet Regret" safer gambling advertising campaign, which aims to reduce risky and impulsive gambling, was launched. The Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP) have brought in tighter standards on protecting vulnerable people and children. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) last week published initial results of its innovative new approach to ensuring rules on gambling advertising online are enforced. A small minority of operators were found to have broken the rules, and ASA took swift action to ensure operators removed these adverts. The Gambling Commission has made clear that operators are responsible for the actions of all the third parties who they contract for their advertising, and it has toughened the sanctions which it can apply in case of breach of the codes.

In regards to research, education and treatment, my department has formed an excellent partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care, and I am delighted that we have committed in the NHS long-term plan to expanding dedicated support for those experiencing problems with gambling. This is in addition to the second NHS clinic which is due to open in Leeds this year. The review set out a number of initiatives to build evidence on the need for treatment and its effectiveness and to strengthen the voluntary system for funding support. We are continuing to monitor the situation carefully. I understand that the Bishop has been successful in setting up a special inquiry and I look forward to hearing the progress of this.

I am pleased to see the other two motions from the Synod calling on churches to do more to support people experiencing harm from gambling. It is important that we raise the profile of gambling-related harm and educate all those who may come into contact with people who are experiencing problems or may be at risk. I would be glad to be kept informed of progress and would be happy to meet the Bishop of St Albans. I have asked my diary secretary to contact his office.

I hope this information is helpful.



Mims Davies MP  
**Minister for Sport and Civil Society**