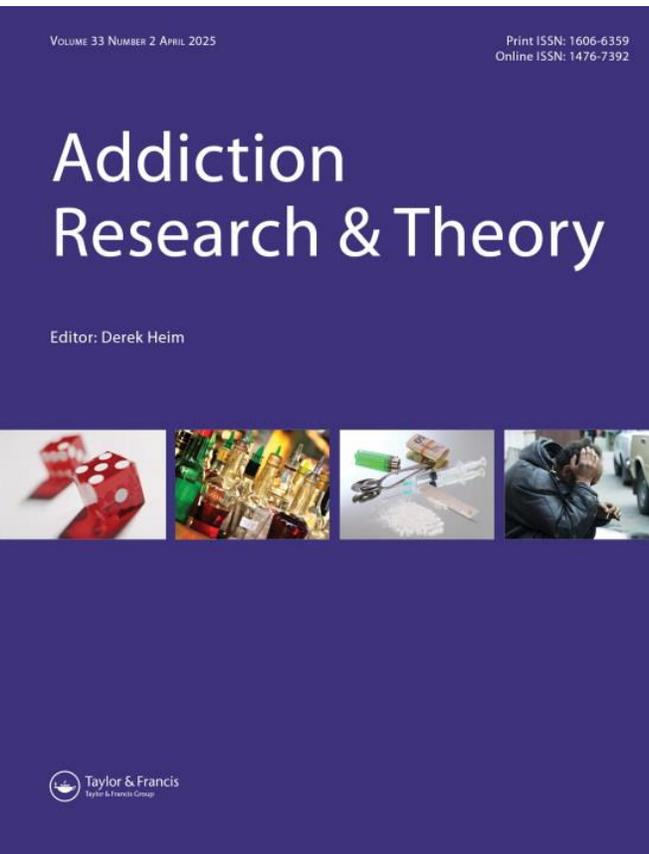


# 'Of course we make money, but it has to be in a responsible way': Safer gambling practices reported by state-owned gambling operators

Philip Newall  
Allegra Whybrow  
Jamie Torrance



# Declarations

PN is a member of the Advisory Board for Safer Gambling – an advisory group of the Gambling Commission in Great Britain. In the last three years, PN has contributed to research projects funded by the Academic Forum for the Study of Gambling, Alberta Gambling Research Institute, BA/Leverhulme, Canadian Institute for Health Research, Clean Up Gambling, Gambling Research Australia, and the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation. PN has received honoraria for reviewing from the Academic Forum for the Study of Gambling and the Belgium Ministry of Justice, travel and accommodation funding from the Alberta Gambling Research Institute and the Economic and Social Research Institute, and open access fee funding from the Academic Forum for the Study of Gambling and Greo Evidence Insights.

# Gambling in the UK

This article is more than 6 years old

## Children 'bombaraded' with betting adverts during World Cup

ITV ran almost 90 minutes of gambling ads from start of tournament until Croatia v England



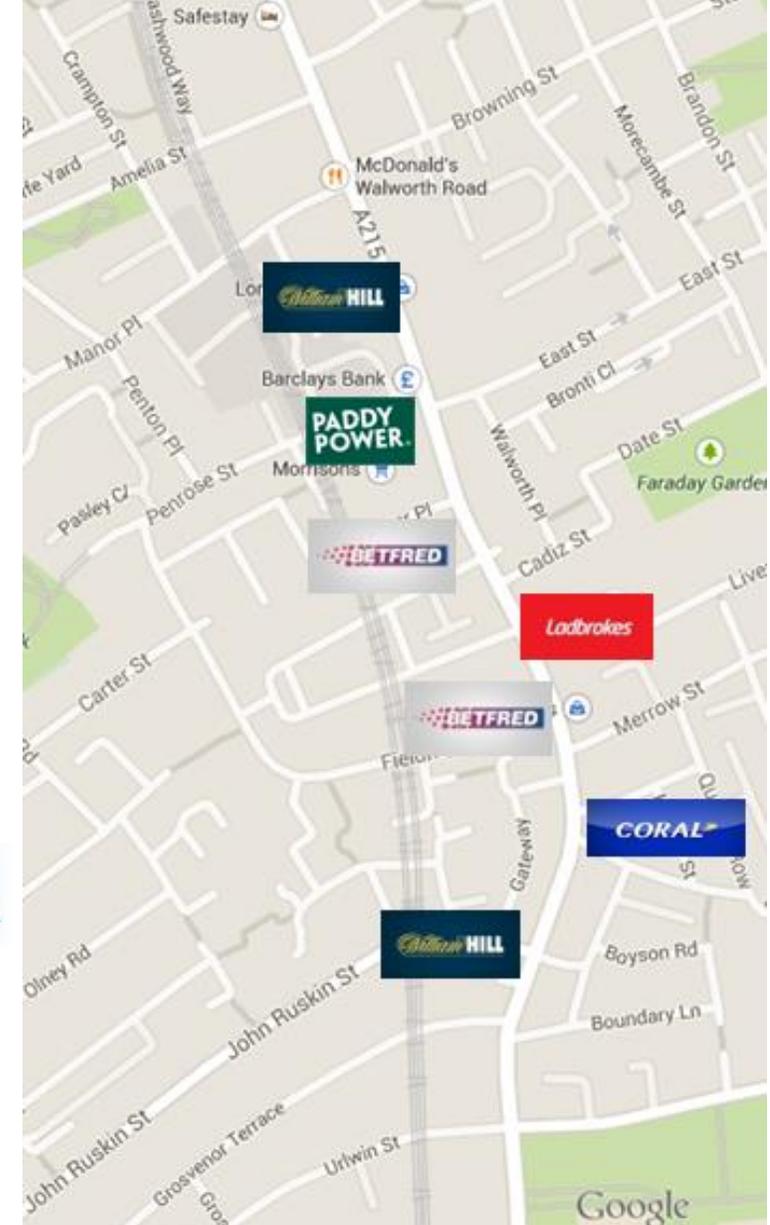
ADDICTION OPINION AND DEBATE

ADDICTION

SSA

Sludge, dark patterns and dark nudges: A taxonomy of on-line gambling platforms' deceptive design features

Philip Newall 



University of  
BRISTOL

# Admirable features of the state-owned model

Data-sharing with research community

Leading on robust randomized controlled trials

Universal harm-prevention initiatives

ADDICTION OPINION AND DEBATE

ADDICTION

SSA

**Beyond ‘single customer view’: Player tracking’s potential role in understanding and reducing gambling-related harm**

Philip Newall<sup>1</sup>  | Thomas B. Swanton<sup>2</sup> 



University of  
BRISTOL

# The illegal market argument

Many state-owned operators no longer enjoy monopolies; private industry has often successfully argued for market entry

However, UK operators have also often successfully prevented effective harm-prevention measures by warning about the illegal market

Market competition is clearly not a solution to this problem!

# The present study

## Aims

Learn more about what state-owned operators do to prevent gambling harms

## Method

Interviews with stakeholders at 10 state-owned gambling operators

Range of topics in safer (responsible) gambling

Transcripts first thematically analyzed, then subjected to a more critical analysis focusing on identity construction and ideological tensions

# Finding 1: Distinct Organizational Identities

“That's what our stakeholders say when we ask them ‘what is our primary responsibility?’ And they all say preventing gambling harm.”

“If you can create good trust with your customers, increased regulations aren't necessarily going to negatively impact us as an operator. It can actually increase trust further.”

“So we try to do the right things and to have a plan when we do these things, this often then causes other operators to follow.”

## Finding 2: Negotiating Responsibility Territories

“Safer gambling tools are integrated so they are right there, wherever you are on the website or app. You're always one click away from these tools and they are always visible.”

“We have proactive conversations with players. People can also request to be called up, but most often we just have the at-risk player list per age group and per game type that we call up ourselves. And people are really positive for the most part to that approach.”

“We do not advertise live betting, only fixed odds sports betting... and that's a conscious decision.”

## Finding 3: Positioning Within Competitive Markets

“Customers consistently play with us. They say they're gonna go to some of the unlicensed operators, but I keep seeing them. So what people say and what they do, we all know that it's different.”

“The private operators bombarded everybody from one end to the other with marketing and promotions. During COVID it was awful. You'd see an ad every 30 minutes.”

“You can be playing very little with one company and then you could be classified as high-risk with another company, and really have gambling problems, but you will be sent a lot of commercials due to the fact that you're not risk flagged at both companies.”

# Conclusions

In the UK, researchers have all of the will to prevent gambling harm, but none of the tools

UK (privately-owned) operators meanwhile have all of the tools, but none of the will

And policymakers say there is “no evidence” to motivate change!

State-owned operators do not face these roadblocks, and can help initiate conversations elsewhere if their good work is published!

Thanks for your attention!

[philip.newall@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:philip.newall@bristol.ac.uk)

<https://sites.google.com/site/philipnewallresearch>