


Report from the Chief Executive

For Board approval	
For Board briefing	
For Board steer	
For Board information	

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Chief Executive

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Introduction

1. This paper is intended to provide an overview of how we have deployed our resources since the last report in delivery of the business plan. The report is structured around the key objectives agreed in the strategic narrative with individual workstreams grouped wherever possible. Workstreams that were identified as business plan priorities have been reported individually.

Key issues

2. In my March report I noted that the transitional measures we had put in place last year to carry the Commission through to the coming autumn were not capable of sustaining performance and development at the pace we had hoped. We were having reprioritise to keep making progress in critical areas and deferring highly desirable but not absolutely essential initiatives and improvements. The perennial issue of trying to balance dealing with the immediate with investment in the longer term has if anything become more acute with continued diversion of senior staff time on recruitment and on fire fighting.
3. The pressures on the Commission's effectiveness have been exacerbated by the further loss of key staff (variously through resignation and injury), the three month delay in the CEO recruitment process and the growing caseload of licensing and complex cases requiring more experienced staff input. **[Exempt information under section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act]**
4. Nevertheless we have found some additional experienced staff and are making some progress in securing and building on the progress we were starting to make in delivering our strategic objectives. The implementation of the extended remote remit has gone well to date with some tangible successes on the payment blocking and grey market fronts as most stakeholders concede. We have just secured the five-year lease extension and had a very positive staff conference and even a few compliments from stakeholders about our e-services and the helpfulness of licensing officers which all helps keep my very real concerns about the extent of basic operational effectiveness improvement work still needed in some perspective.

Events (not covered elsewhere)

5. Philip
 - attended the RET Chairs meeting in London
 - met Steve Hawkins (retiring President) to introduce new President of BACTA, Jason Frost
 - John Brackenbury, Vice President of Gamcare to introduce Ian Prosser the new Chairman
 - Neil Goulden, Chairman, Responsible Gambling Trust for a catch up and
 - Martin Cruddace, Interim CEO at ABB similarly.
6. Philip and I had separate introductory meetings with Hugh Harris, DCMS Director taking over from Sam Foley at DCMS the responsibility for Gambling.

7. I also
 - attended the DCMS Chairs and Chief Executives meeting at Old Admiralty House
 - opened the final Guidance to Licensing Authorities consultation event in mid Wales
 - took part in a panel session: Evolution of eGaming – the Regulators view at the KPMG Gibraltar eSummit 2015
8. Other meetings and events are included under the relevant headings in this report.

Licensing and Compliance

Licensing and online applications

5. We have achieved the following

	OL Lifecycle (April)	PL Lifecycle (April)
Applications received	36(includes non transitional software applications)	290
Applications determined	80 (excludes transitional)	290
Variations received	75	4
Variations determined	84	4
Change of corporate control received	8	N/A
Changes of corporate control determined	35	N/A
Sign-up to e-services in total	2,739	5,967
Payments made on line since launch of e-services:	558 (483 are annual fees)	217

9. Out of the 82 software application received 74 have been determined with seven still in progress.
10. We received 5,873 enquiries in April 2015 compared to 3,840 during the same period in 2014. We have continued to receive calls relating to the ongoing issues of Metroplay (666bet), with over 200 enquiries being received since the licence suspension.

11. We completed a licence re-issue in advance of the LCCP changes that took effect on 8 May 2015. We re-issued 3,949 individual licences with 91% of operators receiving their licences by email and are recruiting to fill vacancies.

Licensing of remote operators

12. We have continued to process applications received under the transitional arrangements. Of the 176 applications received:
 - eleven were withdrawn
 - we determined 93 (64 of these included software)
 - with 81 applications left to determine. Around 20 of them present possible cause for concern (some have been referred to Complex Case Group. We are working our way through the others):

High impact compliance

13. **[Exempt information under section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act]**

Annual Assurance Statement supplementary consultation:

14. We received 25 formal responses to the supplementary consultation (which closed on 19 April) on the structure and content of assurance statements. Half of the respondents agreed that the structure and content were appropriate, while the remainder did not agree (they viewed it as an unnecessary requirement being placed on large operators), and continued (as per the previous consultation) to oppose the proposal in principle.
15. The most contentious topic remains reporting indicators on tackling problem and at risk gambling. Respondents unanimously disagreed, sometimes on the basis of misunderstanding or mischaracterisation, with the proposal to include an estimated amount or proportion of revenue received from consumers who either had a problem with their gambling or were at risk of developing problems.
16. Whilst some disagreement still exists with the principle of introducing assurance statements, the majority of respondents understood and agreed with our implementation proposals - piloting the assurance statement in its first year; reviewing in advance of year two, and our facilitation of sharing best practice amongst operators.
17. We continue to analyse the responses, with a view to addressing the concerns raised, in particular relating to reporting indicators on tackling problem and at risk gambling, and indicating how we will take forward the proposal.

Proactive compliance

18. Proactive compliance activity is planned, delivered and reported quarterly. We are in the process of delivering the work plan for Q1 2015/16. The plan is to deliver 155 assessments. As at 5 May:
 - 29 (20%) of the Q1 assessments were completed;
 - 49 (30%) are scheduled for site visits this month with 77 (50%) to be scheduled.
19. We received 828 lottery submissions received, one of which failed to comply with the minimum returns to good causes and subsequently surrendered their licence.
20. As of 5 May, 469 regulatory returns were received out of the 500 expected by 28 April and are being assessed. Those who have not submitted are being chased.

21. We have started work on the assessment of the security audits submitted by those operators who applied for licences following the implementation of the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014. The 34 operators who have not submitted their audit have been advised they are now in breach of their licence and need to submit the audit or face regulatory action.

Complex cases - Reactive compliance (complex); enhanced compliance; criminal enforcement activity

22. Details of individual cases are at Annex A.

Reactive compliance (non-complex)

23. Six new Section 116 reviews were allocated for investigation;
- two remote operator licence holders who respectively failed to produce a security audit or to cooperate and who appeared to lack openness and honesty
 - four personal functional licence (PFL) holders, casino dealers whose behaviour is allegedly unsuitable
24. Ten reviews were closed.
- Four cases involved operators, three of which resulted in formal warnings or advice to conduct (ATC) for persistent non-compliance and non cooperation; the third resulted in no further action.
 - Six PFLs cases of those, three surrendered their licences during their reviews, two were given formal warnings or an ATC and the last was revoked for non cooperation in the review.
25. The AML workstream is continuing to make progress against the objectives set out in the two-year plan agreed in May 2014, this includes the following.
- developing our evidence based assessment of money laundering risks in the gambling industry focusing on casinos and the betting sector during this period.
 - **[Exempt information under section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act]**
 - briefing colleagues in DCMS concerning the nature of the ML threat, the Commission's response and the short and long term implications of the EU 4th ML Directive for the gambling industry and the Commission.
 - discussing the EU 4th ML Directive with the Association of British Bookmakers presenting on the EU 4th ML Directive to a (Gambling Compliance) regulatory briefing, and to the Lotteries Council annual conference
 - A Lloyds Bank MLRO addressed the Commission's AML champions, setting out the bank's AML approach and exploring its interaction with the gambling industry.
 - We commenced a review of the AML Guidance for casinos and embarked on the next wave of AML training to Licensing staff.
 - **[Exempt information under section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act]**

Evidence and Analysis

Betting integrity

26. Nick Tofiluk chaired the European Network of Regulators meeting in April and was re-elected as chair of the Network for a further two year term.
27. Nick also chaired an International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Group Integrity Working Group conference in Lausanne and presented recommendations of the Group for policy adoption at the IOC Executive International Forum for Sports Integrity in Lausanne.
28. We attended and contributed to the European Union (EU) Directorate-General Experts Group on Gambling and EU Directorate-General Education and Culture Experts Group, which include match fixing as part of their agendas.
29. Nick also spoke at Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (emergent transnational crime that includes illegal gambling and match fixing) and participated in Sports and the Law conference Panel Discussion on corruption, gambling and match-fixing.
30. We have produced the (draft) second version of the Sports Betting Integrity (SBI) Action Plan which has been circulated for consideration by national (sports, betting and law enforcement) partners and we met the Interpol Director for Sports Integrity to discuss efforts to improve international law enforcement SBI awareness and operational capabilities. Productive meetings were also held with new CEO of the Association of British Bookmakers, to brief him on SBI matters and discuss continuing support for the SBI Action Plan and with the Tennis Integrity Unit to discuss how we might improve collaborative working arrangements.
31. We have been working with the DCMS Sport and Gambling teams to ensure effective coordination of information and engagement with regards to progress of the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention and SBI Action Plan.
32. We delivered an SBI webinar with guest speaker Professor David Forrest on behalf International Association of Gaming Regulators (IAGR). We are also working with the IAGR Board of Trustees to progress improvements to the IAGR website, including translation of key web pages and arranged and delivered a SBI information session at the Gaming Regulators European Forum (GREF) conference.

Information Management Strategy

33. Our submission to the accreditor for the transition to the Public Services Network (PSN) has been made and this remains the focus of our efforts at present. The accreditor has responded and requires some further work to be done to satisfy the requirements for accreditation. This work is currently underway, in addition to a number of technical changes we are making to our IT infrastructure as a result of our IT Health Check.
34. Two members of this workstream are attending an ISO:9001 Quality Management System implementation course in May. They will be reverting to IAG with a proposal detailing the costs and benefits of implementing an ISO:9001 compliant system.

Risk assessment development and integration (assessment matrix)

35. We have now integrated the data in the risk matrix with the HIO profile data.

Gathering and sharing evidence

36. We have:

- Published the participation data in a new excel format showing trends in participation (30/4/2015).
- Completed a review of the secondary analysis of participation data which we will publish following the end of purdah.
- Completed data collection of problem gambling rates in Wales for Q1 and have begun reviewing the data to test robustness of approach when compared with health surveys.
- Completed Q1 data collection for the new stand-alone participation and perceptions survey March 2015 and participation survey March 2015.
- Completed Q1 data collection of the survey of online gambling behaviour. We have circulated results internally and begun developing a presentation suitable for external stakeholders. We confirmed with DCMS that the results of this survey can be released as experimental official statistics from January 2016.
- Met DCMS to discuss involvement and remit for an arms-length body (ALB) statistical planning group which will meet six monthly and share best practice amongst ALBs.
- Confirmed with DCMS that the 2015 Young Person's Omnibus core data will be released as an official statistic.
- Confirmed with DCMS that the PGSI mini-screen data will be released as an experimental official statistic from January 2016.

Gambling Statistics

37. We have checked the initial data cut in detail and contacted operators to clarify individual queries. This involved the re-submission of erroneous returns, where appropriate and means we have been able to start the final downloads for each sector.

RGSB

38. We have supported the process of recruiting three new RGSB members and Rachel Lampard's appointment to the RGSB. Contract extensions have been made for Henrietta Bowden-Jones and Richard Ives (both one year) and David Miers (two years) and offers made to three new members.
39. RET Chairs have now agreed a joint approach to encouraging the industry to take a systematic and transparent approach to trialling and evaluating new harm minimisation approaches.
40. RGSB Advisory Group also met in April; Chris Kelly announced a process of consulting on the next iteration of the Strategy.
41. Jon Watkin and Matthew Hill attended the Responsible Gambling Council's Discovery Conference in Toronto.

Sector and Thematic

Social responsibility

42. Following Board agreement we issued a briefing note on the national online self-exclusion scheme on 8 May. The aim of the note was to demonstrate progress and to seek views on the architecture and estimated costs and benefits. Any views that we obtain in response to the note will inform the formal consultation later in the summer. The consultation will also cover options on how to manage and fund the scheme.
43. We have continued to monitor closely the betting sector's response to the challenge of implementing multi-operator self-exclusion arrangements and have been encouraging the development of an interim proposal (now adopted). This involved a service under which a single operator would respond to individuals registering an interest in self-exclusion by facilitating self-exclusion from a number of premises across operators *appears* to have a number of advantages:
 - Self-exclusion can be tailored to the individual.
 - It avoids individuals being excluded from shops that they would never visit (making identification of those attempting to breach easier).
 - It will be cost effective and proportionate, allowing all types of operators to participate (because the five largest operators will subsidise smaller operators' participation). Consequently, it should make it easier for the sector to dedicate appropriate resource to upstream harm minimisation measures, which would help a larger group of people at risk of gambling related harm.
 - The sector should be able to deliver the approach relatively quickly and significantly in advance of April 2016.
44. With the new social responsibility code provisions taking effect in May, we have engaged with a number of medium-sized operators who have not previously provided us with any evidence of underage gambling test purchasing, to understand how they are planning to comply with the new code provision. Most such operators will be looking to use their trade association's established test purchasing programmes.
45. Planning has continued for our 2015 round of work supporting local authorities' test purchasing exercises across England and Wales. Many of the exercises this summer will be conducted under the Primary Authority arrangements, i.e. at premises operated by some of the major bookmakers, as a means of cross-checking those operators' independent test purchase data. We have also continued to recommend that authorities test independent arcades and bookmakers.
46. **[Exempt information under section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act]**

Marketing and Advertising

47. We met the Independent Betting Adjudication Service (IBAS) to discuss a shared concern about the rising number of customer complaints regarding potentially unfair terms and conditions, particularly in relation to complex free bet and bonus offers.
48. We had a very constructive meeting with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to discuss the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (due to come into effect on 1 October) and associated guidance for consumers on unfair terms and conditions. We also spoke with

the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) about their approach to managing contract-related complaints from consumers.

49. We contacted ten 'marketing' Personal Management Licence (PML) holders regarding adverts for their brand appearing on copyright infringing websites. We reminded them of their obligations under the Act and LCCP and are awaiting the outcome of their investigations. We subsequently met with the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT), the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) and the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU), who are very pleased with our interventions and approach.
50. We contacted seven marketing PML holders regarding probable breaches of the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) rules on Twitter. We have received positive responses with operators removing offending tweets and committing to reviewing their approach to marketing via social media.
51. We are continue to work very closely with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regarding possible breaches of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR), relating to unsolicited or 'spam' text messages. We have contacted seven Marketing PML holders who are investigating and reviewing their arrangements with marketing affiliates.

Protection of player funds

52. We continue to consider issues raised during the consultation on reporting of customer funds, particularly those relating to group reporting. These issues will be reflected in the response document in due course.

Work with LAs and other regulators

53. Shared Regulation have continued a programme of external engagements including an update meeting with British Beer and Pub Association, alerting them to the most recent developments regarding bingo and pubs licensing and providing an overview of the GLA consultation. They agreed to circulate to members a reminder of the Codes of Practice on poker in pubs and gaming machines in alcohol licensed premises.
54. The GLA consultation closes at the end of June and in support of this a final two GLA consultation events were held – one in Wales with the support of the Welsh Local Government Association and the other in Birmingham with the support of National Association of Licensing and Enforcement Officers as a part of their AGM. In total over 350 licensing officers have attended these events which have all been well received.
55. Productive partnership working continues supported by the Commission publishing an updated version of the Consolidated Codes of Practice which incorporates LCCP updates and which is specifically designed for LAs to assist them with their compliance and inspection regime activities.
56. We are completing the LA Annual Returns process and we are checking the data submitted and sending final reminder letters to those who have yet to submit information.

Complaints and disputes

57. We have made a number of significant steps towards implementing the ADR Directive, including publishing:

- an ADR mini-blog on our website to provide advice and address frequently asked questions
- an application form for ADR bodies to complete in order to apply to the Gambling Commission (as competent authority) to become approved ADR entities
- minor amendments to LCCP which are consequential to the ADR Regulations.

58. We are now continuing with wider communication messages, and holding a series of meetings/discussions with ADR applicants to help them prepare their applications before the end of May deadline. This should give us time to process applications by the implementation date of 9 July.
59. We are expecting more regulations in May or June relating to implementation of the Directive and possibly provision for the Commission to charge ADR entities application fees.

Regulation of lotteries

60. The Lotteries team continue to focus on providing advice and maintaining standards in the sector, attending the Lotteries Council Annual Conference with around 200 delegates, mainly licensed society lotteries and external lottery managers (ELMs) but also representatives of the fundraising sector and service providers such as ticket printers. Clive Mollett, Chair of the Lotteries Council and Grant Baskerville, Head of Public Relations at the People's Postcode Lottery spoke to the Conference about the importance of their lobbying of the DCMS and the CMS Select Committee in the last 12 months in relation to the relaxation of the requirements for lotteries, in particular the monetary limits, the Council have spent £70k on lobbying in the last 12 months. The Lotteries team hosted a stand in the exhibitors' hall and held three workshops during the course of the Conference. Topics covered in the workshops included the new LCCP requirements for lotteries in particular changes to social responsibility codes relating to customer interaction and self exclusion. The Council welcomed the changes as being proportionate for the sector. Tim Tyler gave a well received presentation to the Conference on the 4th EU Money Laundering Directive and the implications for the lottery sector.

61. **[Exempt information under section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act]**

Providing advice

Lottery sector – market policy debate

62. We have been working with DCMS and our economics consultants on the next phase of our advice on the lottery market and the implications of technological and product convergence for raising money for good causes.

Innovation

63. Details of cases in hand under this workstream are attached at Annex B.

National Lottery

64. **[Exempt information under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act]**

Finance and Business Planning

Business planning

65. Following the March Board meeting we made some updates to the business plan. The business plan has now been published on intranet and Gambling Commission website.

Finance

66. Draft financial accounts, and supporting documentation have been prepared and KPMG is currently on-site undertaking the audit of the annual report and accounts, including segmental analysis of gambling and National Lottery regulation.
67. The first draft of the standard financial information section of the annual report and accounts is included on the Board agenda at item 7. The main narrative will follow early next week.

Fees development

68. **[Exempt information under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act]**

Support Services

HR policies, guidance and consultations

69. The review of people policies, including the development of guides for managers, quick guides, and FAQs has been moving at a pace.
70. The flexible working, family leave (which incorporates the new shared parental leave changes) and working hours policies have been signed-off by Executive Group. Briefings and training sessions for managers and employees have commenced with positive feedback so far and detailed questions showing high levels of interest from employees.
71. Further policies on alcohol and substance abuse, probation and induction, and recruitment have been developed and agreed. Further policies are planned for sign-off over the next couple of months.
72. This significant activity is likely to be completed entirely by the summer, although work will continue to ensure any policies are understood, applied appropriately, and work effectively for the Commission.

HR support to management

73. As of 1 May, we were recruiting to 13 vacant posts. In the reporting period we made 14 appointments (five internal and nine external applicants).
74. The management of case work covering disciplinary, grievance, absence, and performance management continues. There is currently one formal case and a small number of informal cases.
75. The new Civil Service Pension Scheme, 'Alpha' went live on 1 April 2015 and the majority of employees transitioned across. Contribution rates for employees changed depending on set salary bands. Significant work was undertaken through our HR

department and colleagues to ensure accurate records and information was provided in a timely way. There have been no identified issues during or after the transition so far.

76. Work is underway to conduct an employee survey in 2015 using the Civil Service Employee Survey Accommodation management and health and safety
77. The negotiations for the renewal of the lease on Victoria Square House continued to require significant effort but have been successful.
78. We are reviewing desk allocation to support the current recruitment and investigating additional hot desk solutions.

IT infrastructure management

79. We have completed the new connection and IT hardware move to the new Camelot data centre. We are continuing to refinement of ICT Infrastructure Strategy including a number of technical changes as a result of our IT Health Check. We have began recruitment for a senior officer – infrastructure.
80. BPPB has agreed the IT development priorities for the next two years, detailed plans are under way. We have recruited a system tester and two business analysts to support the development.
81. BSI has audited our transition to the ISO:27001:2013 Information Security Standard (from the existing 2005 version of the standard). The auditor has recommended that we are accredited to the new standard, which is now subject to verification from BSI. Once this is completed, a certificate will be issued and the Commission will then be fully accredited.

Publication and external communications

82. Details of our communications activity is attached at Annex C.

E-communications

Website

83. We are currently exploring the options available to us via external suppliers in redesigning the Commission website. The design will meet two main objectives, mobile optimisation and structuring the navigation to serve the varied audience the website attracts as visitors.
84. We are also looking at changing the service we use to broadcast the eBulletin for relevant tracking and the ability to build html emails more efficiently using templates that are also mobile optimised.
85. The migration of the NLC content will be planned in with the redesign, we hope to have a workshop facilitated by an external user experience consultant to help us map the navigation of the website. Though RGSB have decided against migrating content to the Commission website, we have been exploring the options of a more robust content management system for them

Social media

86. The Facebook page is now live but is not promoted anywhere. The social media working group will draft a document that will serve as guidance to those who will have access to the account and how it is managed.
87. The Commission approach to Twitter continues to be largely passive and we only tweet to promote updates on our other communication channels. The previous couple of months have seen peaks in users who mention the Commission on the subject of Metro Play and Canbet.

Internal communications

88. We have supported the employee conference steering group in communicating information and worked closely with HR on the roll out of new people policies. Mandatory training modules in Learning Pool are now ready for roll out to SMT who will complete them before they are rolled out to the rest of the employees.

Annex A - Complex cases update

89. **[Exempt information under sections 30 and 31 of the Freedom of Information Act]**

Annex B – Gaming machines / innovation issues

1. [Exempt information under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act]

- We continue to engage with BACTA regarding their requests for changes to technical standards in order to improve gaming machine innovation (entertainment). Stuart McPhee attended the BACTA's Midlands regional meeting where the matter was discussed.

2. [Exempt information under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act]

- We have been speaking to the industry about the categorisation of 'fun' machines whereby an element of skill determines whether a prize is won, but where the machines also utilise compensation or random control mechanisms to determine whether the machine will allow a prize to be won (where a game involves both chance and skill it is considered to be a gaming machine). The industry supports the Commission's position that such machines should be treated as category D gaming machines rather than (exempt) skill products. In most cases this will only require additional livery to describe the machines as category D gaming machines (with little impact on premises permitted to site such machines). But treating these products as gaming machines will require less scrupulous operators to comply with stake and prize regulations for category D (i.e. they will not be able to wrap £20 notes around toys, in breach of regulation). We intend to issue further guidance to the industry and local authorities accordingly.

Annex C – Communications report

1. Media

A total of 48 media calls were handled, with 35% concerning Metro Play Ltd/666Bet and a further 12% about general remote queries.

The Commission was mentioned in the media 89 times.

- Positive coverage included:
 - the appointment of three new Commissioners by DCMS
 - the Commission adding personal licence applications to our online services
 - the Commission reminding fairground operators of the rules for buying, maintaining and operating gaming machines
 - Rachel Lampard being appointed to the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board
 - Camelot's year-end figures, focusing on the National Lottery recording its best ever sales figures of £7.27bn last year.
- Neutral coverage included:
 - stories in the regional press relating to the amount of money spent in local areas on FOBTs, according to figures from the Campaign for Fairer Gambling.
 - numerous reports of remote gambling companies receiving their licence from the Gambling Commission to operate in Great Britain.
- Negative coverage included
 - a *Mail on Sunday* article which was critical of binary options regulation. It commented that a regulatory hole had opened up between the FCA and the Commission leaving binary options investors with no protection.
 - continuing trade coverage of the interim suspension of Metro Play Limited's operating licence. This has also been covered nationally and was reported on ITN. Coverage has concentrated on punters continuing frustration at a lack of payment by the operator. Mid-April saw claims by Metro Play that they were still seeking approval from the Gambling Commission to reimburse customers. We however refuted this suggestion saying "the Commission made it clear when it suspended Metro Play Limited's licence that it is authorised to settle any outstanding winning bets and return any outstanding balances to customers – and we expect it to do so". Towards the end of April it was reported that customers wishing to retrieve funds were finally being given access to their accounts.

2. Website

During March 117,643 users visited the site, which fell to 94,624 in April but this is still an increase of 185% and 129% respectively, on the average last year (41,215 users – 2014).

We believe this is down to the implementation of the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014 attracting more visitors to the site. 481 of those users provided feedback on the pages they visited as follows:

- 53% positive
- 18% neutral
- 29% unhappy

On average, visitors spent under two minutes on the site and looked at three pages per visit.

3. Social media

March

Of the 369 mentions of the Gambling Commission in March, 7% were positive (showed us in a good light or reinforced our messages), 2% were negative and 91% were neutral.

Positive sentiment (7%) in March can be attributed to the following:

- the Commission's suspension of the 666Bet/Metro play operating licence.

Negative sentiment (2%) for the same period can be attributed to the following:

- Twitter comments relating to the 666Bet situation and unhappiness with the Commission's response.

In March, 2,135 visits to our website came from Twitter. We increased our Twitter follower numbers from 1,751 to 1,854 – an increase of 5.8%.

On LinkedIn we increased our company page followers from 1,338 to 1,399 – an increase of 4.5%.

April

Of the 664 mentions of the Gambling Commission in April, 14% were positive (showed us in a good light or reinforced our messages), 17% were negative and 61% were neutral.

Positive sentiment (14%) in April can be attributed to the following:

- the Commission's statements and actions regarding the 666Bet situation.

Negative sentiment (17%) for the same period can be attributed to the following:

- Twitter comments relating Peter Lord and the lack of information/resolution of the Canbet situation.
- Twitter comments relating to the 666Bet situation and unhappiness with the Commission's response

In April, 355 visits to our website came from Twitter. We increased our Twitter followers from 1,854 to 1,931 – an increase of 4.2%.

On LinkedIn we increased our company page followers from 1,399 to 1,468 – an increase of 4.9%.

4. Publications

[Licensing compliance and enforcement policy statement](#)
[Statement of principles for licensing and regulation](#)
[LCCP sector summaries](#) these include the recent amendments to LCCP
[LCCP summary of key changes](#) updated for April
[Remote technical standards \(RTS\)](#) updated for April
[Consolidated codes of practice](#) updated for May

Four [e-bulletins](#) and two [licensing authority bulletins](#) and a GLA special were published in the period 18 March – 14 May.

5. Press releases

[Commission launches consultation on its 5th edition of Guidance to licensing authorities](#)
[Responsible Gambling Strategy Board – new appointee](#)
[Personal licence applications are now online](#)
[Interim suspension of operating licence - Metro Play Limited trading as www.metroplay.com and www.666bet.com](#)
[Gaming machines reminder for fairground operators](#)
[Licensing Authorities consulted on changes to statutory guidance](#)
[Binary options scam warning](#)
[Delay in appointment of new CEO](#)

6. Parliamentary questions

Parliament was dissolved on 30 March for the General Election. There were however still 15 written parliamentary questions of direct relevance to the Commission over this period. Eight of these came from Clive Efford (Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport) about betting shops, FOBTs, dormant betting accounts, lotteries and the horse racing betting levy. A further five questions came from Jim Murphy (leader of the Scottish Labour Party) mostly concerning FOBTs.

Clive Efford: If he will bring forward proposals to give local authorities additional powers to restrict the clustering of betting shops in their communities and to restrict the number of fixed odds betting terminals; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: The government consulted in summer 2014 on a range of planning measures to support our high streets, including bringing in a requirement for a planning application to be made to the local planning authority for any proposed change of use to a betting shop. An announcement on the outcome of this consultation and the next steps will be made in due course.

Clive Efford: If he will bring forward legislative proposals to prevent betting operators receiving licences for two betting shops which share the same premises; what discussions he has had on this issue with (a) representatives of local licensing authorities, (b) the betting industry and (c) the Gambling Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: The law already stipulates that no more than one betting premises licence may be in effect for any premises at the same time. Local licensing authorities need to ensure that when they grant premises licences, they do so only for genuinely separate premises. The Gambling Commission's statutory guidance to licensing authorities gives clear advice to licensing authorities on how to carry out this function. Details of ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the gov.uk website.

Mr Jim Murphy: What assessment he has made of the effect of fixed odds betting terminals on levels of gambling addiction.

Mrs Helen Grant: The problem gambling rate among adults in England and Wales, as assessed by the Health Surveys which are published by the NHS information centre, is estimated to be less than 1%, which is lower than in comparable jurisdictions such as the USA, South Africa or Australia. Successive British Gambling Prevalence Survey results - 1999, 2007 and 2010 - as well as the more recent Health Survey results in 2012, which cover the period from when FOBTs were introduced to present, demonstrate that levels of problem gambling have been static over this period. The Government is not complacent about levels of problem gambling. We consider the future of the regulation of FOBTs to be unresolved and will continue to be led by the evidence to devise effective measures to bear down hard on gambling-related harm wherever it is found.

Clive Efford: With reference to the Written Statement of 30 April 2014, Official Report, columns 53-4WS, on betting shops and gambling, when he expects local authorities to be given additional powers to restrict the clustering of betting shops; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: The government consulted in summer 2014 on a range of planning measures to support our high streets, including bringing in a requirement for a planning application to be made to the local planning authority for any proposed change of use to a betting shop. An announcement on the outcome of this consultation and the next steps will be made in due course.

Mr Jim Murphy: When he last met representatives of Gamblers Anonymous to discuss the regulation of fixed odds betting terminals; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: Details of ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the gov.uk website

Clive Efford: What plans he has to use money from dormant betting accounts and unclaimed winnings held by betting operators to invest in sport; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: The Government has stated previously that it would wait until it had delivered legislative changes for remote gambling before considering the recommendations of this report. Changes to remote gambling - under the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014 - came into force on 1st November 2014. The Government will consider all of the recommendations in the report once the legislative changes under the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014 have bedded in.

Clive Efford: How many times, with what organisations and on what dates officials or Ministers of his Department have discussed the use of money from dormant betting accounts and unclaimed winnings held by betting operators for investment in sport since the publication of the Use of Dormant Betting Accounts Report in December 2010; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: The Government has stated previously that it would wait until it had delivered legislative changes for remote gambling before considering the recommendations of this report. Changes to remote gambling - under the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014 - came into force on 1st November 2014. The Government will consider all of the recommendations in the report once the legislative changes under the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014 have bedded in.

Clive Efford: Whether he plans to introduce a cap on the amount private lotteries can raise for charities under the Legislative Reform (Exempt Lotteries) Order 2015; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: The Government has no plans to introduce a cap on the amount private lotteries can raise for charities. The existing protections in the Gambling Act 2005, including no external advertising and limitation to single sites only, will continue to apply. There were 16 responses to the Legislative Reform (Exempt Lotteries) Order 2015 consultation. These, together with the Government's response to the consultation, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-incident-non-commercial-private-society-work-and-residents-lotteries>

Mr Jim Murphy: What assessment his Department has made of the potential effects of the Gaming Machine (Circumstances of Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I., 2015, No. 121) on (a) gambling addiction levels, (b) the total amount of money staked and (c) the profits of bookmakers and fixed odds betting terminal providers.

Mrs Helen Grant: The Gaming Machine (Circumstances of Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I., 2015 No. 121) were laid alongside an Impact Assessment carried out by DCMS. In assessing the potential impact, the Impact Assessment took into account problem gambling levels as measured by Health Surveys for England and Scotland, the potential impact on staking behaviour and the profits of bookmakers.

Clive Efford: By what date he plans to implement the Horse Racing Betting Levy for online gambling; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: This Government wants to ensure that offshore-based online gambling operators pay their fair share to the funding of horseracing. We have identified two options for achieving this: reforming the existing Horserace Betting Levy or replacing the Levy with a Horserace Betting Right and have published three consultations, the third of which closed on 12 March. We are currently analysing the responses. Implementing either option will require legislation.

Clive Efford: What representations he has received on the changes proposed in the Legislative Reform (Exempt Lotteries) Order 2015; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: The Government has no plans to introduce a cap on the amount private lotteries can raise for charities. The existing protections in the Gambling Act 2005, including no external advertising and limitation to single sites only, will continue to apply. There were 16 responses to the Legislative Reform (Exempt Lotteries) Order 2015 consultation.

Mr Jim Murphy: When he last met representatives of the gambling industries to discuss the regulation of fixed odds betting terminals; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: Details of ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the gov.uk website

Mr Jim Murphy: When he last met representatives of Gamblers Anonymous to discuss the industry practice of offering free bets to young adults and the inclusion of messages regretting that they had not gambled in a while.

Mrs Helen Grant: Details of ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the gov.uk website

Sir Hugh Bayley: What timetable he has set for introducing the new horse race betting right; what assessment he has made of the potential benefits that betting right will bring to York Racecourse; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Helen Grant: No timetable has been set for introducing legislation to bring in a new Horserace Betting Right. Draft legislation will be developed following a thorough economic analysis and discussions with the Competition and Markets Authority, HMRC and others. The Horserace Betting Right will apply to all bookmakers, wherever located, who take bets from British customers on British racing and provides a modern and sustainable future for the funding of racing. The flagship race at York Racecourse, the Group 1 Juddmonte International, has recently been confirmed as the best race in the world by the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities. The Horserace Betting Right will allow York Racecourse, and every racecourse across Britain, to build upon current successes and continue to offer a great experience for race-goers.

Lord Browne Of Belmont: further to the remarks by Baroness Jolly on 4 March 2014 (HL Deb, col 1316) that the Gambling Commission was aiming to make "significant progress within six months towards the establishment of a national remote gambling exclusion scheme", what progress was made in that six-month period; what progress was made in the subsequent six-month period; and when the national remote gambling exclusion scheme will commence.

Lord Bourne Of Aberystwyth: Following a public consultation from August to October 2014, the Gambling Commission introduced a new licence condition which will require online gambling operators, other than society lottery operators who do not offer instant win games, to participate in a national online self-exclusion scheme once it is developed and available. The Commission and the Remote Gambling Association have established a Working Group, which is working through the technical, operational and legal issues that need to be resolved in order to create a robust scheme. The Commission will be publishing a briefing note shortly. A consultation will be issued this summer seeking views on the draft architecture of the scheme, its estimated cost and how the scheme should be managed and funded. Following the consultation there will be a competitive tender process for the development and running of the scheme. As previously indicated the Commission aims to have the scheme operational by 2017.