

Rt Hon the Lord Foster of Bath
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

MoJ ref: SUB131106

21 January 2026

Dear Don,

GAMBLING HARMS IN THE CJS

As the passage of the Sentencing Bill enters its final stages, I wanted to extend my personal thanks for the work you have done to bring gambling addiction and harms within the criminal justice system to my attention. Your efforts shone necessary light on an area which has too often been overlooked, and I am grateful for your constructive approach and engagement.

I am committed to ensuring that the Ministry of Justice takes a strong, evidence-based approach to this issue, identifying offenders' gambling addictions and ensuring they can access the support they need. You have made a compelling case that there is more we can do to build on the existing opportunities for identification, including through the further development of ARNS. We will take this forward over the coming months, with support from Dr Gaskell, and from wider academics and practitioners.

I am also committed to improving access to mutual aid and want to build on the great work these fellowship organisations are doing across the prison estate. There is much more to do to achieve my objective of weekly Gamblers Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings in every prison, and I take this opportunity to correct my speech in the House on 6 January, where I stated that Gamblers Anonymous (GA) are active in 11 prisons. The latest information reported by prisons indicates there are GA meetings in at least 7 prisons, and I am aware a further 2 prisons are making alternative provision for mutual aid meetings on gambling. My officials are taking steps to improve the reliability and regularity of this reporting, to track progress towards my ambition.

Alongside this, my Department will continue working with health partners to scope and develop future work undertaken through the treatment strand of the Gambling Levy Programme, and to support the work led by NHS England and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities to build our understanding of prevalence and the evidence base on treatment interventions.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on this, and with the wider stakeholders and experts who share your commitment to this issue.

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I recognise that there is much more to do on this important issue, and Minister Dalton and I will write to you before summer recess on the joint progress we have made. I will deposit a copy of this letter in the House library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

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