

Written submission from South Lanarkshire Licensing Board

Response to call for evidence on inquiry on Fixed-odds Betting Terminals.

South Lanarkshire Licensing Divisions have considered the issue of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT) and have also sought views from South Lanarkshire Council's Social Work Resources and would respond as follows:-

1. What would be the benefits and disadvantages for you as a consequence of the UK Government's proposed provision in the Scotland Bill 2015?

Benefits

The proposal to devolve power to vary the number of FOBT authorised by a betting premises licence granted by a Licensing Board where the stake is more than £10 is seen as a move forward.

From a Social Work point of view, the legislation is welcome in trying to limit the growth of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs). The FOBTs are an addiction and it is well researched the impacts that addictions have on an individual and family life. Similarly, from a community safety point of view, if someone becomes addicted to such terminals, they will turn to an alternative source of income to fund their habit, which will be crime. Ultimately, there will be an impact on Council Services as families or individuals will experience the same, for example, financial difficulties, family breakdown, as other individuals with an addiction problem (for example, alcohol, drugs).

Disadvantages

We would have preferred if this provision was extended to other types of gambling.

2. What would be the benefits and disadvantages to you as a consequence of the proposed alternative provision suggested by the Scottish Government?

Benefits

The Scottish Government's proposals would permit the variation to be extended to all betting premises licences (new and existing) and indeed to those found in other premises.

Disadvantages

There could be disadvantages for the trade particularly large companies who also operate in England and Wales as different rules might apply.

3. Which of these approaches do you prefer and why?

South Lanarkshire Licensing Divisions prefer the alternative proposal suggested by the Scottish Government as in their view these proposals are better able to deal with the proliferation of FOBTs.

4. Are there any changes in this area of law you would like to see which are not covered by either proposal and why?

In the view of South Lanarkshire Licensing Divisions the Scottish Government should look at ensuring Licensing Boards have greater powers to curtail the proliferation of other gambling premises such as betting office premises.

5. Please make any further comment you feel is relevant to Committee's inquiry into FOBTs.

None.