

Find Your Voice Pressure Group:

Health & Social impact of Betting Shops in Haringey

In September 2007, the Gambling Act came into force.

Since its passing, the effects of the Act have raised concerns for local authorities and communities throughout the UK. Issues such as the increase of people being treated for gambling addiction, and the inevitable cost to the NHS, as well as the saturation of betting shops in areas of deprivation and crime are a reality for local residents and businesses.

For the residents of the London Borough of Haringey, the Act has resulted in an explosion of betting shops in pocket areas, despite strong opposition. It is evident that Haringey Council, local residents and businesses' protests are being overlooked by a law that limits local authorities' powers to restrict the amount of betting shops opening in an area.

Find Your Voice Pressure Group

Find Your Voice Pressure Group (FYVPG) was created to spearhead a campaign to oppose the proliferation of betting shops in the London Borough of Haringey.

Planning Authority

In July 2010, FYVPG was delighted to hear that Haringey Council's Planning Department had denied planning permission to bookmaker, Paddy Power, to open a store on the premise of 261 High Road Tottenham.

In agreement with the London Borough of Haringey's decision, FYVPG is concerned with the idea of a betting shop opening on a prime corner site, for the following reasons:

- The premise is situated 15 metres from one of the main exits of the Seven Sisters London Underground Station;
- The real risk of deterring other potential commercial investment
- The proliferation of betting shops in the London Borough of Haringey decreases and replaces quality local small businesses that limit commercial choice for local residents;
- The negative impression a betting shop will have situated on a prime site on the area overall.
- The site is in close proximity to a private nursery, Earlsmead primary school, North East London College, estates covering Sevens Sisters and South Tottenham areas Tottenham PCT Mental Health Trust, Gladesmore School in South Tottenham/Stamford Hill and schools in surrounding areas.

Since learning of Paddy Power's intention, FYVPG has galvanised support from:

- Residents
- Business Associates
- Residents Associations
- Community groups

Since the London Borough of Haringey's announcement, Paddy Power has appealed against the decision and the Planning Inspectorate is presently reviewing the case.

Reasons for concerns

William Hill chief executive has championed the benefits of betting shops in Haringey, citing the opportunity of employment and that they provide a legal platform for an activity that would otherwise be illegal.¹

In response, FYVPG counteracts this argument due to:

- The limited diverse commercial investment in the London Borough of Haringey. At present there are

¹ Haringey Independent, "William Hill boss says betting shops brings benefits to Haringey", Elizabeth Pears, 15 October 2010

71 betting shops in the borough, with ten of these clustered in the areas Northumberland Park, Bruce, Seven Sisters & West Green wards.

- The London Borough of Haringey is ranked 18th as the most deprived authority in England and the 5th most deprived authority in London. It is common knowledge that with high unemployment there is plausible risk of increase of crime and anti social behaviour;
- The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index 2007, states that the London Borough of Haringey has the fifth highest level of child poverty;
- Disadvantaged groups, such as those that are unemployed or on welfare benefits are most likely to suffer the adverse effects of problem gambling. The association between problem gambling and disadvantaged groups is clearly evidenced, as those on the lowest income are three times more likely to suffer from addiction ²*Research on the Social Impacts of Gambling, Scottish Executive Social Research, 2006*.
- The proposed shortfall of £60 million to the London Borough of Haringey's budget, due to potential cuts, applies additional pressure in providing a sufficient service to gambling addicts requiring treatment to overcome their addiction;
- It is estimated that local businesses lose £300 million in revenue due to the gambling industry. ³*Morse Report 2007*
- There is also evidence to support that gambling impacts on work performance, stolen time from work through unexplained or unsanctioned absences. ⁴*Manchester University Gambling and Debt Pathfinder Study 2009*
- It is estimated that 127,500 young people aged under 24 have a gambling problem in the UK. Gamcare recent reports that 2% of the 35,000 of calls received to its helpline in 2009/10 were from under 18s, with an increase of 22% from those aged 18-25. Most of the 'under 18s' who called Gamcare's confidential helpline reported gambling in 'arcades' and 'betting shops'.
- The rate of problem gambling is over three times as high in young people as it is in adults ⁵*Journal of Child Adolescent Substance Abuse, 8, 55-68*.
- Evidence suggest that the highest prevalence of problem betting would appear to occur in relatively new forms of betting activities Fixed Odds Betting (FOTB). ⁶*Preventing UK Gambling Harm, Responsibility in Gambling Trust, 2007*.
- Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT) have contributed to significant loss to gamblers estimated at £10bn per annum. ⁷*Guardians September 2007 Report: 'Cost of UK's Gambling Habit'*
- The average percentage of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) in Bruce Grove, Noel Park and White Hart Lane (Tottenham) is 8%, with the highest NEETS rate is 8.8%. ⁸*Haringey Children and Young People's Plan 2009*.
- Metropolitan Police figures for 2007/2008 reported 735 incidents of criminal damage occurred in Haringey's betting shops, as well as drug related and public order offences. In view of the
- The guardian article of 14th 2010 addressed the issue of disadvantage groups, which identifies black men who are disproportionately represented in prisons in England
- ⁹Guardian article of 14th October refers to the [Equality](#) and Human Rights Commission report *How Fair is Britain?* Which and Wales, equating to almost 7 times more likely to be imprisoned their share of the population, compared to 4 times the American population. The report highlights to state that three quarters of ex-prisoners re-offend and highlights the need to address issues of school exclusions, mental health and substance abuse It is not difficult to surmise the also consider the social costs to the courts (Including bankruptcy) police, probation services local authority and health

² Research on the Social Impacts of Gambling, Scottish Executive Social Research, 2006

³ Morse Report 2007

⁴ Manchester University Gambling and Debt Pathfinder Study 2009

⁵ Journal of Child Adolescent Substance Abuse, 8, 55-68.

⁶ Preventing UK Gambling Harm, Responsibility in Gambling Trust, 2007

⁷ Guardians September 2007 Report: 'Cost of UK's Gambling Habit'

⁸ Haringey Children and Young People's Plan 2009

⁹ Guardian article of 14th October refers to the [Equality](#) and Human Rights Commission report *How Fair is Britain*

services in a time of recession that affects all communities.

Nationwide Statistics

- In 2009 the estimated spend on gambling was £7.8bn or around 1% of GDP (the value of all goods and services)¹⁰;
- The NHS has estimated that there may be as many 350,000 people identified as problem gamblers in the UK¹¹.

Conclusion

Despite the gaming sector's arguments that betting shops present increase of employment and financial investment in deprived areas, their impact on the local community is a far outcry for those who are faced to deal with their realities.

FYVPG's campaign is not a moral crusade and the group respects individuals' choices, however the proliferation of betting shops in deprived areas with health inequalities and social deprivation is a real problem that FYVPG is deeply concerned with.

We question the assertion of increased crime and gambling being driven underground through lack of betting shops facilities. The Licensing authority is tasked with approving gambling licenses for other business premises i.e. clubs which addresses this need. The Licensing Authority in conjunction with Safer Neighbourhoods also the powers to close down illegal venues. Clubs which have gambling licenses also required to ensure that there is adequate security to deal with social disorder and to meet these costs. It reasonable that the Local Authority has the discretion to ensure the health and safety of residents pertaining to all licensed premises, as it could be perceived as unfair competition for other licensed establishments.

It is entirely appropriate for personal well being and social objectives to be material considerations to achieve outcomes which enable social, environmental and economic objectives to be effected together.

The saturation of Betting shops poises an increased high risk of addiction and with the potential cuts to the London Borough of Haringey's budget, it is reasonable to question how the council will provide adequate treatment for those who need it the most.

In addition, the stated evidence that highlights the increase of young people with problem gambling is alarming considering the recent application for a premises license

FYVPG would like to see the recent premises license for 261 High Road, revoked, and would like to request that Haringey seek immediate amendments to the Gambling Bill.

In accordance with the new Government's focus on localism, the opposition of the local community in objecting to the granting of gambling licenses should be a major consideration. In view of the risk to children, adolescents and vulnerable members of the community, FYVPG would like to see the Overview & Scrutiny Committee report widened to address these vulnerable communities.

With 71 betting shops in the borough and 10 within Tottenham, the awarding of the planning appeal would set a regrettable precedent.

On behalf of

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¹⁰ In 2009 the estimated spend on gambling was £7.8bn or around 1% of GDP (the value of all goods and services

¹¹ The NHS has estimated that there may be as many 350,000 people identified as problem gamblers in the UK