



Journalist briefing pack – August 2026 update

Gambling with Lives is a charity set up in 2018 by families bereaved by gambling-related suicide.

We support bereaved families, raise awareness of the devastating effects of gambling disorder, and campaign for change.

Our vision

A world free from gambling-related suicide.

Our mission

To support people bereaved by gambling-related suicide and to improve mental health and save lives through growing awareness of gambling harm and its causes.

To achieve our mission, our strategic priorities are:

- Support for families bereaved by gambling-related suicide
- Investigating and learning from every death
- Public health information
- Research and evidence of gambling harm

Gambling with Lives runs the UK's only [support service](#) for families bereaved by a suicide directly caused or influenced by gambling. Founded by families bereaved by gambling, we understand the devastation that gambling suicide causes and the traumatic impact of learning about what happened to the person you loved. Our service is free to use, independent of gambling industry influence, and is not time-limited.

We also run [Chapter One](#), an information, training and support hub for everyone affected by gambling.

Our background

Our co-founders, Liz and Charles Ritchie MBEs, lost their son Jack to gambling-related suicide in 2017 which led them to find and meet other bereaved families. Many of the loved ones lost to gambling were young, and for many gambling was the only challenge they faced.

Gambling with Lives' campaigning has had a remarkable impact on the discourse surrounding the risks of gambling. Thanks to the efforts of bereaved families, the clear link between gambling disorder is now widely recognised, with gambling included in the government's National Suicide Prevention Strategy for the first time, which was published in autumn 2023.

Also in 2023, Professor Sir Louis Appleby, Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group, [stated that gambling can be a dominant factor in suicide](#), without which a suicide would not have occurred, with [the Samaritans supporting this view in a public statement](#).

Gambling with Lives is free of the gambling industry's influence and we scrutinise the industry's role in facilitating and sustaining gambling addiction. We challenge the gambling industry's prevailing "responsible gambling" narrative which puts the responsibility to limit gambling harm on the individual and deflects attention away from the industry itself and its addictive products and predatory practices.

Gambling should be enshrined in law as a public health issue, and government should legislate accordingly. Those actions should include:

- Investigation of all gambling-related suicides and lessons learned to prevent future deaths
- Responsibility for gambling to be transferred to the Department of Health and Social Care to implement a population-based public health strategy
- Public information on the risk of gambling to health and life, and warnings for dangerous forms of gambling
- Dangerous products made safer, including slowing down speeds of play and stake limits
- Classifications and licensing conditions for gambling products based on the harm they cause
- Effective affordability protections
- An end to all gambling advertising, including sponsorship of sports
- An end to all inducements to gamble such as "free bet" bonuses, and VIP and similar schemes
- The implementation of a comprehensive NHS prevention and treatment programme
- Training for front-line health and other support workers to recognise, diagnose, prevent and treat gambling disorder in line with the NICE guidelines
- An independent ombudsman to enforce gambling operators' duty of care
- Gambling awareness education delivered in all schools, independently approved and delivered

Some key facts on gambling

- 117 to 496 gambling-related suicides in England every year, according to a [2023 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities report](#)
- 2.4% of GB adults are [suffering "problem gambling"](#)
- 10.4% of GB 18-24-year-olds who gamble [suffer "problem gambling"](#)
- 44% of people suffering "problem gambling" are [classified as at "high risk of suicidal behaviour"](#)
- 190,000 GB children [suffering from or at risk of "problem gambling"](#)
- 86% of [gross online betting profits come from just 5% of customers](#)
- 10.9% (1 in 9) of the GB population are [directly or indirectly harmed by gambling](#)
- 1 in 4 gamblers are at [substantially higher risk](#) of suffering serious harm
- 42.3% "problem gambling" and at-risk rates [for online slots](#)
- 35% [increase in mortality rate](#) associated with heavy gambling
- 78% of people engaging with micro sports ("in play") betting suffer "problem gambling", according to this [study](#)
- £15.6 billion gross annual [profit for the gambling industry](#)
- £2 billion spent by the industry on [advertising and marketing in 2024](#)
- 35% of people suffering "problem gambling" receive [daily incentives to gamble](#), compared to 4% of those not suffering gambling harm
- People suffering from gambling disorder are 15 times more likely to take their lives, according to [research from Sweden](#)

Spokespeople

Charles Ritchie MBE

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Charles co-founded Gambling with Lives in 2018 with his wife Liz after their son Jack took his life seven years after starting gambling while still at school. Charles has a strong research background, having been Head of Higher Education Research in the Civil Service.

Liz Ritchie MBE

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Liz is a retired psychotherapist who worked in the NHS for many years. She co-founded Gambling with Lives with her husband Charles after their son Jack took his life in 2017. She is a member of the NICE committee on Gambling: Diagnosis, Identification and Management.

James Grimes

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Using experience of gambling harm, leading national campaigns, and a career working in schools and sport, James leads Chapter One, overseeing UK-wide prevention work including education, training, and campaigns.

Bereaved families

Gambling with Lives supports several other families who have been bereaved by gambling-related suicide, some of whom may be available interview on a case-by-case basis.