


Many constituents have emailed me about gambling.

I am concerned about gambling and I fully support the MPs in the APPG on Gambling's statement that addictive betting machines stakes should be reduced. When betting machines were first introduced in the 1990s there was no legal control over them whatsoever. Labour ministers persuaded the industry to accept a code of practice which limited stakes and numbers of machines, and then made those restrictions part of the law in the 2005 gambling Act. But canny operators have made a mockery of those controls by tactics such as opening shops next door to each other to increase the number of machines on a high street.

I and other Labour MPs have campaigned for restrictions on these machines for a number of years. As a consequence the coalition government acted in 2015, changing regulations to ensure that gamblers playing with stakes of £50 or more would have to load money into the machine via shop staff or by setting up an account. However, this has not had enough effect. Now a group of MPs chaired by my Labour colleague Carolyn Harries, has called on the government to reduce the maximum stake and to bring in rules to slow down the speed at which the machines operate.

Yours,



Fiona Mactaggart