



The BGC Responsible Gambling Code

INTRODUCTION

This is the third edition of the Betting & Gaming Council (BGC) Responsible Gambling Code. Since the Code was first published in September 2013, each edition has included new responsible gambling measures ensuring that our members in the high street betting industry remain world leaders in responsible gambling and consumer protection measures, to protect the minority of people at risk of gambling-related harm. This edition includes technical changes to responsible gambling measures and updates to ensure the enforcement of the Code.

The BGC represents over 80% of the high street betting industry and our members include William Hill, Ladbrokes Coral and Paddy Power Betfair, as well as around 100 independent operators.

The first introduction of the Code demonstrated members' commitment to responsible gambling and led to the successful roll out of consumer protection measures based on the principle of informed player choice combined with help for those at risk of developing a problem with gambling.

The purpose of the Code is for operators to ensure the reduction of problem gambling, including through helping customers make informed choices, the maintenance and development of a system of self-exclusion, maintaining a safe environment including through enforcing age limits, and the sponsorship and development of research and new methods to reduce problem gambling. Through regular monitoring of the measures already in place, the BGC has been able to identify and introduce numerous additional measures and improvements.

This revised Code continues to build on the progress made. New mandatory alerts on time and money spent have been introduced on all gaming machines. A multi-operator self-exclusion scheme has been rolled out nationally and Player Awareness Systems continue to be developed to improve early identification of those who might be at risk and better support those who have developed a problem in controlling their gambling.

As an industry, we are committed to ensuring the continued development of these measures which provide our 6 million customers with the tools they need to stay in control of their gambling whilst improving the ability of staff to detect customers at risk and ensure they have the information to access support services if they need to. The BGC also continues to pilot other further improvements to better identify customers who may be at risk.

IMPLICATIONS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

- Complaints and breaches of this Code are dealt with by the BGC. The full complaints process is available to view on the BGC website.

ENFORCEABLE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements necessary to meet the industry aims and commitments to responsible gambling, which all BGC members must adhere to, are set out below as numbered rules for each section.

BGC members are also required to uphold the Gambling Commission Licensing Conditions and Codes of Practice (LCCP), and some BGC Code measures in the sections below build on these requirements.

Provide customers with the tools to stay in control of their gambling

LIMIT SETTING ON GAMING MACHINES

The ability to set time and money spending limits on gaming machines was introduced by BGC members in the first Code. In response to evidence which showed that over 75% of those setting a limit stuck to it, the BGC made it mandatory for players to decide whether to set a limit before they can start to play. Within the gambling industry this measure is unique to betting shops.

In this updated Code, our members have taken further action, with mandatory time alerts on gaming machines after 20 minutes of play (previously 30 minutes) and money spend alerts after £150 spent (previously £250).

The rules for limit-setting on gaming machines are as follows:

1. Operators must ensure that all players are required to choose, via the terminal, whether or not to set a voluntary time and money spending limit (or both) before they can start playing on any machine session.
2. When any player reaches their limit, they must be given the option, via the terminal, to stop or to set new limits and continue playing.
3. Whenever a mandatory alert is triggered by a voluntary time or money limit set, staff must be alerted behind the counter, to have an overview of that player's behaviour and encourage interaction where appropriate.
4. Staff must be trained in how and when to interact with customers who trigger behind the counter alerts.
5. Shops or operators must be able to provide a player statement for those who participate in account-based play, providing a detailed record of the time and money spend history, when players request it.
6. All players must be subject to mandatory reminders, automatically delivered via the terminal, for every 20 minutes played or £150 spent playing on the machine.
7. Customers must remain able to set a customised voluntary limit at any stage during play if they do not choose to do so before.

8. To give customers the opportunity to think about whether they want to continue or not, on reaching a voluntary set limit there must be a mandatory 30 second break in play, automatically administered via the terminal, before the player can start playing again.

SELF-EXCLUSION

Self-exclusion agreements between a customer and betting shop operator allow the customer to voluntarily ban themselves from the betting shop(s).

The nationwide Multi-Operator Self Exclusion Scheme (MOSES) allows customers to exclude from multiple shops across different operators using one single point of contact. Those wishing to self-exclude can call the Self-Exclusion Helpline on **0800 294 2060**.

The rules for self-exclusion are as follows:

1. BGC members must participate in and meet the requirements of the Multi-Operator Self Exclusion scheme.
2. Members must maintain a central self-exclusion register, monitor the number of self-exclusions in each of their shops, and conduct regular audits of their scheme's effectiveness.
3. All BGC members must have processes for self-exclusion in place.
4. As soon as is practicable following self-exclusion, customers must be removed from the operator's marketing databases and must be signposted to support services such as the National Gambling Helpline.

Promote information and responsible gambling messages to allow customers to make informed decisions about their gambling

ADVERTISING

Like all advertising, gambling advertising is strictly regulated and operators must adhere to the Advertising Standards Authority-administered Codes of Practice. The industry has committed to going beyond these requirements through implementation of the below BGC Code measures and the additional Gambling Industry Code on Socially Responsible Advertising. The rules are as follows:

- 1.** All BGC members must adhere to the cross-industry Gambling Industry Code on Socially Responsible Advertising.
- 3.** No BGC member will advertise free bets as a sign-up incentive on television before the 9pm watershed.

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING INFORMATION

Rules:

- 1.** Members must pro-actively promote responsible gambling messages in all shops (such as the begambleaware.co.uk website and the National Gambling Helpline).
- 2.** Operators with corporate websites must provide a click-through to the BeGambleAware website.
- 3.** Leaflets with responsible gambling information must be available in gaming machine areas.
- 4.** The top screens of all gaming machines must display responsible gambling information at least 25% of the time.
- 5.** Responsible gambling information pages on gaming machines must be regularly reviewed and updated.
- 6.** Customer help pages on gaming machines, containing information explaining concepts like 'Return to Player', must be maintained and updated to be as clear and relevant as possible.

Ensure earlier and more targeted interactions with customers who may be at risk

PLAYER AWARENESS SYSTEMS

All BGC operators have implemented Player Awareness Systems on machines, which apply data algorithms to account-based customers' play to monitor for any identifiable markers of harm and allow operators to interact earlier with those customers. Identified customers are sent tailored responsible gambling messages or interactions, delivered via SMS, email, a machine message the next time the player logs-in to play, or a person-to-person interaction for the most at risk.

Rules:

- 1.** Members must comply with the agreed BGC minimum standards for Player Awareness Systems, for both use of data algorithms and subsequent interactions with customers.

STAFF TRAINING

Rules:

- 1.** All staff must have received training in how to recognise a wide range of problem gambling indicators, enabling them to better identify customers at risk of gambling related harm, then interact with them.
- 2.** Members will have policies and procedures in place to encourage all staff to 'walk the shop floor', to allow them to initiate customer interaction in response to specific customer behaviour.
- 3.** In line with LCCP requirements, operators must ensure shop staff receive at least induction and annual refresher training in all areas of social responsibility, including responsible gambling interactions.
- 4.** The BGC will continue to offer a bespoke online social responsibility training course for independent betting shop members.

Prevent any access to gambling in betting shops by anyone under 18 years of age

AGE VERIFICATION POLICIES

Rules:

1. All members must continue to conduct regular third-party age verification (AV) testing to check the implementation of the Think21 policy in shops and share the results with the Gambling Commission.
2. The BGC is to fund a similar programme of AV testing for independent members and share the results with the Gambling Commission.
3. All members must maintain a standard within AV testing with a clear focus on challenge on entry.
4. Major operators, and the BGC on behalf of independent members, will enter into Primary Authority relationships on age verification, with a chosen local authority to ensure consistency in operator-led test-purchasing and support the continued development of policies to prevent underage gambling on any licensed betting shop (LBO) premises.
5. Members will, where appropriate, instruct staff to use behind-the-counter functionality to disable the machine where required.
6. All machines must be sited where they can be adequately supervised from the counter or via CCTV.
7. Members must encourage all staff to 'walk the shop floor' and implement the Think 21 policy amongst machine players and other customers.

Ensure the safety of our staff and customers by keeping betting shops free of crime and disorder

SECURITY POLICIES

The Safe Bet Alliance (SBA) helps ensure betting shops are safe for staff and customers, with agreed voluntary standards of workplace safety and security for the betting industry to reduce the risk of robbery and any violence in betting shops.

The guidelines were developed with the Metropolitan Police, Crimestoppers, the Institute of Conflict Management and the Community Union, were recognised by a Home Office Tilley Award in 2011, and formally endorsed by the Association of Chief Police Officers in 2014. In 2016 the BGC received an award from the Metropolitan Police for intelligence sharing which lead to a reduction in crime.

Therefore:

1. All members must abide by the standards set out in the Safe Bet Alliance.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING

The industry continues to develop best-practice and information sharing in collaboration with the UK Government and local and national security forces, and the Gambling Anti-Money Laundering Group (GAMLG), to combat the few attempts to launder money in LBOs in the UK. The BGC provides regularly updated guidance on anti-money laundering policies to our members.

This means:

1. All BGC members must adhere to the BGC guidance on anti-money laundering.

Ensure the continued financial support of the industry to tackling problem gambling

RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND TREATMENT OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

1. All members must fully support and co-operate with the work of Gamble Aware (formerly the Responsible Gambling Trust, or RGT) and make an appropriate annual financial contribution to the research, education and treatment of problem gambling.

Work in partnership with local stakeholders to ensure betting shops play an active role in their local community

WORKING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The BGC has signed a partnership agreement with the Local Government Association (LGA) to encourage more collaboration between the industry and local authorities.

Therefore:

1. The BGC and members must respond proactively to any concerns raised by local authorities and will continue to promote the agreements made under the LGA-BGC betting partnerships agreement.

COMPLIANCE AND EVALUATION

Complaints and breaches of this Code are dealt with by the BGC. The full complaints process is available to view on the BGC website.

