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**PRESS STATEMENT**

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**Responsible Gambling Trust publishes initial impact assessment of ABB Code**

The Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT) has today published an independent assessment by NatCen Social Research of the Association of British Bookmakers' (ABB) 'Code for Responsible Gambling and Player Protection'.

The assessment was commissioned by RGT and looks at the initial impact of the ABB Code and recommends a future evaluation model to ensure the ABB Code continues to be relevant to the needs of betting shop staff and customers.

The ABB Code was implemented in all areas of the UK on 1st March 2014 but rollout in the West Midlands was delayed by one month until 1st April 2014. The phased implementation allowed NatCen to collect early impact data from machines used by registered loyalty card holders. Researchers did not find statistical evidence of any early impact of the machine changes or the broader ABB Code on player behaviour but they warn that it is premature to conclude that the findings of this evaluation provides final evidence that the ABB Code is ineffective or effective.

To allow for the ABB Code to be more robustly evaluated in future researchers developed an evaluation 'logic model' by interviewing shop staff and customers. The model helps to identify the most appropriate outcomes for measurement, and to make decisions about what is measurable and what is not. It further helps to determine what data are needed and how it should be collected. Using the logic model to develop the evaluation framework will allow an assessment to be made on how well the ABB Code is functioning, whether it is achieving the desired outcomes and where delivery challenges have been encountered.

**Marc Etches, Chief Executive of the Responsible Gambling Trust, said:**

"The Code for Responsible Gambling is an initiative of the ABB and it is for them and their members to ensure that the Code is as effective as possible at protecting players and promoting responsible play. The phased rollout of the Code was brief and provided only a limited opportunity for NatCen to evaluate the Code's impact through the use of machine data but, by talking to staff and customers, researchers have been able to identify a framework for assessing the longer term performance of the Code. Since this work was commissioned the operational circumstances for LBOs have evolved but nevertheless it remains important that the ABB considers carefully how the Code is robustly evaluated, and we hope NatCen's work provides useful guidance."

**-ENDS-**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

- The Responsible Gambling Trust is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry, the Responsible Gambling Trust funds education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. The aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling, and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust raises a minimum of £5 million each year from the gambling industry operating in Britain within a voluntary (donation based) system and funds research, education, prevention and treatment services. Funding priorities are guided by the national strategy advised by the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The latest strategy was published in December 2012.
- The 'Code for Responsible Gambling and Player Protection' is a voluntary code published by the Association of British Bookmakers to "create a step change in responsible gambling thinking based around informed choice by adult customers, implementing new consumer protection measures that will make a difference". As part of the Code a range of new measures were planned and implemented in bookmakers that had signed up to the Code in Spring 2014. These measures included:
  - Window displays of responsible gambling messages, with 20% of window displays dedicated to these messages;
  - Responsible gambling advertisements displayed within bookmakers' premises;
  - Introduction of voluntary limits on machines in bookmakers allowing customers to set limits on how much money and/or time they want to spend on machines;
  - Introduction of mandatory messages on machines, whereby a message is displayed to customers telling them when they have gambled for 30 minutes and/or have inserted £250 or more into the machine and asking them if they want to continue;
  - Enhanced staff training around responsible gambling and the promotion of more direct intervention with customers;
  - Enhancement of existing practice around self-exclusion and age verification through improved staff procedures and practices.
- It is estimated that around 80% of bookmakers are members of the ABB, including the four biggest operators (William Hill, Ladbrokes, Coral and Paddy Power). All members signed up to the voluntary code and supported its implementation in March 2014. In addition, Betfred, which is not a member of the ABB, signed up to the Code.