David Cameron supports responsible gambling

Friday 15 May, 2015

The Prime Minister has supported a 22-year-old's calls for stricter control of the gambling industry following his family's tragic ordeal

Prime Minister and Leader of the Conservative Party David Cameron has said 'the gambling industry should do more to recognise and mitigate the dangers of excessive gambling and ensure that fewer people fall victim to gambling addiction'.

His words follow an open letter launched by 22-year-old campaigner Adam Bradford from Sheffield who, in June 2014, launched a campaign to bring stricter regulation and control of the gambling industry.

Adam's father David Bradford, 58, was jailed last April following a trial at Mold Crown Court in Wales. He pleaded guilty to fraud after stealing £53,000 from his employers to fund an out of control gambling addiction. He was sent straight to jail after his trial which his family were only made aware of on the night before his court appearance. David had stolen money to cover his tracks after racking up debts of hundreds of thousands of pounds including a re-mortgage of the family home and spiralling debts. David was in arrears with all of his household bills and had dozens of credit cards and payday loans to his name. The family knew nothing of his financial horrors until they were bombarded with letters from creditors after David was sent to jail.

Adam, 22, launched a campaign in June last year to bring stricter control over the industry and called for gambling organisations and the government to step in. He said: 'People need to realise that gambling is actually a problem and not just a bit of fun. Whilst my dad takes responsibility for stealing money, he was sucked into an industry which needs stricter regulation and control and was not prevented from racking up unsurmountable debt like he has done.'

When his father was released from jail at the end of November, the pair teamed up to continue the campaign and this April they launched an open letter to leaders of the main political parties asking for them to support their calls for change.

The campaign asked the leaders to consider stricter control over advertising and 'free bets' advertisements and to monitor users' behaviour more proactively to spot problem triggers earlier. Adam and his father also urged gambling operators to talk more openly about the problems gambling can cause.

Prime Minister David Cameron has responded by saying: 'This campaign raises some really important issues and the Conservatives agree with the general thrust of it. We support a responsible gambling industry which offers fun and enjoyment to its customers but which also ensures protection to players and works to prevent people gambling excessively and becoming addicted.

We have therefore introduced new mandatory player protections for people who gamble on high stakes gaming machines. These include suspensions in play when players reach limits they have set up and alerts when they have been playing for 30 minutes or when £250 has been spent. We have introduced tough new rules to insist anyone staking over £50 has to use account-based play or load cash over the counter – this will increase the potential for interaction with staff and the identification of problem gambling. In addition, we have given councils greater powers to restrict the numbers of betting shops on their high street. We have also launched a review of gambling advertising, covering both the watershed and sign-up offers.

We do, of course, want to see the gambling industry do more to recognise and mitigate the dangers of excessive gambling so that fewer people fall victim to gambling addiction.'

In response to the open letter, Wanda Goldwag, Chair of gambling industry self-regulator, Senet Group, has also said:

'Adam has clearly given this matter considerable thought and the measures which he is promoting are already (in part) in place.

The Senet membership (William Hill, Ladbrokes, Coral and Paddy Power) have all volunteered not to include sign-up promotions in their TV advertising before the 9pm watershed, and we would strongly urge other gambling operators to do likewise.

Media:





Conservatives

Mr Adam Bradford
1 Chervil Hill Gardens
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S20 7SP

Saturday, 2 May 2015

Dear Adam,

Thank you for your recent e-mail.

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We do, of course, want to see the gambling industry do more to recognise and mitigate the dangers of excessive gambling so that fewer people fall victim to gambling addiction.

Thank you, once again, for getting in touch and letting me know about your campaign.

Yours,
David

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Senet has also invested over £2m this year to date in an advertising campaign reminding gamblers that when gambling stops being fun then, they should call it a day.

We also know that a number of online operators are developing software to help at-risk gamblers stay in control, and this is an area where Senet intends to develop a greater understanding, with a view to promoting a best practice approach.'

Commenting on the Prime Minister's support of the campaign, Adam said: 'This is fantastic news and a response that we were really hoping for. Now, with commitment from the Prime Minister to push forward this social responsibility I am very confident that less people will fall victim to gambling addiction with the industry's support.'

His father David said: 'For me if we only save just one person from the kind of pain I have caused for my family then all of our efforts will have been worthwhile. It is pleasing to see these supportive words coming from David Cameron. I hope this marks the beginning of a strong effort by the Conservatives to better regulate this problematic industry.'

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