

## Gambling charity call for an end to 'mud-slinging' in open letter

Wednesday 20 November, 2019

Today, in an open letter to the gambling industry and politicians, Adam and David Bradford from the Safer Online Gambling Group have called for an 'end to the mud-slinging' and for political parties to include 'moderate and person-centred' gambling policies in their manifestos.

Writing this morning on their website, ahead of their joint appearance in Channel 5's documentary Robbing Your Relatives this evening at 10pm, the pair made an emotional appeal.

'It is high time that the moral high horse is set free. Nobody in the debate on gambling addiction is looking to ban anything, nor is anyone looking to take anyone else's enjoyment of gambling away.

Our focus should solely be on protecting customers and making gambling safe and enjoyable for those who wish to take part in it.

The ground is fertile now for operators and politicians to look practically at ways that intervention projects and player protection measures can step up to the next level. With the recent launch of the Betting and Gaming Council, it is clear that the industry is ready to move and in some cases is already moving.

Progress is being made and sometimes the industry gets an unfair press for its efforts. Taking out betting sponsorship from football clubs, a whistle-to-whistle advert ban, more investment in affordability measures and a commitment to safer gambling measures. We are pleased to see the dial of the national debate changing as these measures emerge.'

Adam and David called on the industry to continue to use the experiences of those who have been through the addiction who are willing to make a difference, in order to make sure the needs and experiences of families and communities are at the heart of any intervention.

In a strongly worded statement, David's son Adam, who had to pick up the pieces aged 21 when his father was jailed for stealing money to fund his gambling addiction, said: 'But for anything to work this factionalism needs to die a fast and painful death. Throwing daggers will not achieve change. Focusing on impact and remembering every word we say, every policy we make, every intervention we carry out when it comes to gambling addiction, has to focus solely and delicately on the mental health of the addict, their family and their community.'

The journey to recovery from gambling addiction is long and continuing for the Bradford family, who still make their way through the mountain of debt David Bradford left behind and he still receives counselling and support for his addiction.

The Safer Online Gambling Group works as a cross-sector platform to bring together gambling operators, addicts, health and social care professionals and politicians. It strives for greater awareness of gambling addiction in all sections of society and runs projects which provide direct support for addicts founded on the lived experience of others.

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