Policy implications

Recommendations for regulators:

• Ban all esports gambling advertising. Esports gambling adverts are considerably more appealing to children and young people than to older adults. As most esports fans are under 30 any advert related to esports – including gambling – has an almost inherent appeal to children and young people.

• Clarify and tighten regulations for content marketing. We recommend that all content marketing ads are clearly labelled to signal to users that this is commercial content. New, strict regulations for content marketing must be introduced.

• Ask children and young persons directly and frequently what appeals to them. To date, regulators have never asked children or young persons which aspects of gambling adverts appeal to them.

• Use the answers from children and young persons to clearly articulate what advertising features should not be allowed in gambling advertising.

• Expand the definition of “young persons” in the advertising codes from 16-17 to 16-24. 18-24-year-olds found gambling adverts more appealing than other age groups and are most vulnerable to developing gambling addiction.

Recommendations for social media platforms:

• Social media companies should use tools to ensure that people only see gambling ads when they opt in. This could be done by using a Sensitive Content tool, where users only see an ad after confirming that they recognise it as advertising and want to see it.
Key findings

Our research found that:

- 45.2% of 11-17-year-olds and 72.4% of 18-24-year-olds said they see gambling advertising at least once per week on their social media feed.

- Across a range of categories, gambling adverts are significantly more appealing to children and young persons than to adults. 19 out of 24 gambling ads were more appealing to children and young persons than adults.

- 15 out of 24 gambling adverts triggered positive emotions such as "excited", "happy" or "delighted" in children and young persons. In stark contrast, only 7 out of 24 ads triggered positive emotions in adults.

- Adults are four-times more likely than children and young persons to have intense negative emotions such as "distress", "anger", or "tension" when exposed to Twitter gambling advertising.

- Gambling content marketing is 3.9-times more appealing to children and young persons than adults. 11 out of 12 gambling content marketing ads triggered positive emotions in children and young persons – only 7 did for adults.

- Esports gambling advertising was substantially more appealing to children and young persons than to adults. Adults are four-times more likely to feel intense negative emotions towards esports advertising.

Further information


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