

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

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Source Christian Institute

One of the UK's best-known betting companies has been fined nearly £6 million over safeguarding failures, but its boss has claimed "the industry is doing well at looking after its customers".

The Gambling Commission ordered GVC – which has owned Ladbrokes since March 2018 – to pay £5.9m following an investigation into problem gambling and money laundering failures between 2014 and 2017.

It comes as a BBC documentary-maker says sports betting is a "one-way street" which only works in the bookmakers' favour.

Responsibility

Ladbrokes did not carry out any social responsibility checks on a gambler who lost £98,000 over two and a half years, despite the punter asking the operator to stop sending them promotions. In another instance, Coral, also owned by GVC, failed to ask a customer about the source of their £1.5m spending.

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It could also not provide evidence of undertaking social responsibility checks on the same individual – even though they logged in an average of ten times a day at one point and lost £64,000 in a month.

Arrogant

The Commission said there were "systemic failings" which meant customers were 'harmed and stolen money flowed through the business'.

However, speaking in recent months to the Daily Mail, GVC's Kenny Alexander claimed, "fundamentally the industry is doing well at looking after its customers, and it has certainly made great strides in the last two years".

Conservative MP Iain Duncan Smith said Alexander's comments were "typical" of the arrogance of the gambling industry.

'Dire'

In a recent BBC Three programme, Can You Beat The Bookies?, Lloyd Griffith attempted to double £7,500 in one month through sports betting.

However, he ended up with less than £4,500 and in one instance lost £1,700 on one football match.

Griffith said he hoped the programme would open people's eyes to the reality that betting is a "one-way street", which works only in favour of the bookies.

He warned, "as more of us are enticed into the gambling world, more of us will suffer the dire consequences of addiction".

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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