



Polanski calls out Labour plan for ‘more gambling, more addiction, more devastation’

## Description

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Zack Polanski, baroness Twycross of Labour, gambling fruit machines

Labour’s gambling minister has said she’d like to see the industry ‘grow’. This provoked criticism, because the gambling sector has profited by preying on those who are most vulnerable to addiction. Among said critics is Green Party leader, Zack Polanski:

Labour’s plan for growth

More gambling, more addiction, more devastation to household finances.

Utter shambles. [pic.twitter.com/tCoQek9TdF](https://pic.twitter.com/tCoQek9TdF)

‘ Zack Polanski (@ZackPolanski) [June 18, 2026](#)

## Growth

Baroness Fiona Twycross made the comments in a Lords’ committee, [where she said](#)

‘It’s a regulated licensed sector we would like to see grow.

Twycross was talking about it growing in opposition to the illegal gambling sector. The problem is that whether we’re talking about illegal or legal gambling, the product is ‘as Polanski highlighted’ ‘human devastation.’

As Polanski also highlighted, this was reported on by the *Sun*, which wrote:

THE Gambling Minister wants to see the regulated betting industry grow, amid ongoing fears [that affordability checks] could drive punters away.

This is a funny thing to say, because surely the purpose of the affordability checks *is* to “drive punters away,” specifically the punters who can’t afford to gamble. The argument, though, is that it will drive cash-starved gamblers into the hands of illegal bookies. In other words, it’s a classic case of “let us get away with it or someone else will”. Notably, Polanski’s views have added another layer to the debate.

Speaking on this, Twycross said the government wants to:

make sure that we don’t push people, or see people pushed from the licensed, regulated, taxed sector through to the illegal sector

She also said:

We’ve done a lot of work to ensure we understand the pressures we can take that will help us reduce illegal gambling.

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It should be noted that the gambling industry doesn’t universally disapprove of “affordability checks,” as Clean Up Gambling representative Matt Zarb-Cousin highlighted:

Bookmakers have always restricted people who get an edge over them, the only difference now is they have been given a ready-made excuse that it’s because of an “affordability check”. Meanwhile I’m still seeing cases of people gambling with proceeds of crime on online slots! <https://t.co/gRNJmPdIKi>

“ Matt Zarb-Cousin (@mattzarb) [August 28, 2025](#)

I think operators are abusing affordability checks due to poor oversight from the Gambling Commission, to the extent they are not applied effectively enough to slots and casino players, and used to withhold winnings or restrict bets in horse racing. Worse of all worlds situation

“ Matt Zarb-Cousin (@mattzarb) [August 14, 2025](#)

“Misery”

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Polanski wasn't the only Green to speak out, [as Politics UK reported](#)

Green MP Hannah Spencer says Labour is "out of touch" after the Gambling Minister said she would like to see the betting sector grow

"An industry that relies on people's misery to grow needs action against it, not encouragement"

For an idea of how these gambling companies cause misery, [Clean Up Gambling wrote](#)

Clean Up Gambling (CUG) is calling on the Gambling Commission to act after the recent High Court ruling against Flutter owned Sky Betting & Gaming for unlawfully using the data of someone clearly suffering with a gambling addiction, which led to them receiving more inducements and marketing messages so they would gamble more.

Clearly, the legal gambling industry is weaponising data and influence to achieve things that some backstreet bookie never could.

Featured image via the Canary

By [Willem Moore](#)

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11. polanski

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