

# Sport and Sports Betting Integrity Action Plan

## 2020 Annual Progress Report





## Section 1: Sport and Sports Betting Integrity Action Plan

### Background and Introduction

1. The Sport and Sports Betting Integrity Action Plan (the Plan) was first published in September 2015. Revised versions are published annually. The Plan outlines Britain's approach to addressing risks to the integrity of sport and sports betting.
2. The Plan sets out the expected focus of the Sports Betting Integrity Forum (SBIF) stakeholders (who include sport governing bodies (SGBs), player associations, betting operators, gambling regulators, police agencies, prosecutors, Government and other key partners) in delivering timely and effective actions to identify and mitigate risks associated with competition manipulation and sports betting integrity.
3. Implementation of the Plan was agreed as part of the UK Anti-Corruption Plan, published in October 2014.<sup>1</sup> A progress update on the UK Anti-Corruption Plan was published in May 2016.<sup>2</sup> The Government's most recent Anti-Corruption Strategy (2017-2022) also includes a goal to work towards greater integrity in domestic and international sport.<sup>3</sup>
4. The SBIF, established in 2014, have responsibility for developing and maintaining the Plan, along with delivery of the key priority actions. More information on the SBIF can be found on their [website](#).
5. The SBIF committed to publishing an annual report on progress against the key priority actions. Progress is summarised in Section 2.

### Section 2 – Priority Action Progress Updates (2020)

6. The global pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to both sport and the betting industry. This led to changes in the operation of the SBIF, with meetings being held virtually and many key priorities put on hold whilst members focussed on addressing the impacts of those challenges on their day-to-day operations.
7. Many sporting events were postponed or cancelled, including major international tournaments such as the 2020 UEFA European Football Championships and the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic Games. The majority of national sporting competitions around the world were put on hold, which in turn reduced the number of traditional sports betting opportunities that would ordinarily be available to British betting customers.
8. This led to an increase in markets offered on sporting events taking place predominantly outside of Britain, many of which fell outside of the jurisdiction of recognised SGBs. Media reports indicated that some of these events had been set up purely for betting purposes, with others identified as 'ghost matches' with doubt cast over whether the fixtures were even played at all.

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<sup>1</sup> [UK Anti-Corruption Plan](#) (Oct 2014) – Action 31: Gambling Commission and DCMS to implement the Sports Betting Integrity Action Plan

<sup>2</sup> [Progress Update on the UK Anti-Corruption Plan \(May 2016\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [United Kingdom Anti-Corruption Strategy \(2017-2022\)](#)



9. It was recognised that these unregulated events presented a greater risk for corruption and match fixing. In [a note to operators issued in August](#), the Gambling Commission (the Commission) reminded licensees to ensure they have robust systems in place to manage associated risks.
10. Whilst 2020 brought new risks and associated challenges, collaborative working remained at the heart of Britain's approach to managing integrity. One example of the success of this approach was realised in [a case investigated by the Darts Regulation Authority](#). Working with SBIF members from the International Betting Integrity Association (IBIA), the Commission's Sports Betting Intelligence Unit (SBIU) and licensed betting operators, along with the Malta Gaming Authority, the DRA's investigation led to the suspension of a player for match-fixing.
11. The Commission represented the UK's National Platform on the Council of Europe's Group of Copenhagen,<sup>4</sup> making significant contributions to the group's activity. This included leading a working group to develop a [Typology Framework](#), which was published in June 2020. The Framework classifies the different types of competition manipulation that could fall within the definition as set out in article 3 of the Macolin Convention.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [Network of National Platforms \(Group of Copenhagen\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions \(Macolin Convention\)](#)



## Key Priority Progress Updates

### 1a - Sharing Knowledge and Good Practice:

**Host workshop(s) and refresh the SBIF website to promote good practice and promote sharing of knowledge and Information across stakeholder groups.**

**Lead: Lorraine Pearman (Gambling Commission)**

#### Progress Update

Lockdown restrictions resulted in a different approach being taken to hosting the annual SBIF event, which would ordinarily involve over 100 delegates meeting to attend a day of workshops and discussion groups. Instead, the SBIF hosted three webinars, each focussing on a priority subject area:

- **Workshop 1** covered changes introduced in the [Commission's Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice](#) as well outlining a [new process for sending information to the SBIU](#)
- **Workshop 2** looked at the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspectives of the betting industry, sport and the Commission
- **Workshop 3** considered the innovation and change that has been at the forefront of education programmes delivered by sport governing bodies and professional player associations.

The [SBIF website](#) was re-launched in December 2020 and provides a range of information and good practice to those stakeholders working to protect the integrity of sports and sports betting in Britain and beyond. The website will be updated with new information on a regular basis.

### 1b - Sharing Knowledge and Good Practice:

**Promote good practice and sharing of knowledge across the betting industry with a focus on small and medium sized operators**

**Lead: Elizabeth Robson (Sky Betting and Gaming)**

#### Progress Update

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a digital approach to meeting this action as lockdown restrictions meant that training/knowledge sharing sessions could not be held in person. A key concern was that previous training collated by the Remote Gambling Association (RGA) for smaller or newly licensed operators was no longer accessible now the RGA website had been disbanded. A new digital training pack, with up-to-date examples and content, was built and went live on the Betting & Gaming Council website in November 2020.



## **2 - Strengthen link with all Britain's law enforcement agencies and enhance cooperation between the National Platform and prosecutors**

**Leads: Lorraine Pearman (Gambling Commission) and Paul Risby (National Crime Agency)**

### Progress Update

A dedicated point of contact has been confirmed within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) who will provide advice on criminal cases relating to betting integrity. This will include providing support both during the initial [triage process](#) and throughout any subsequent criminal investigations. This approach will support all stakeholders involved in the process in identifying and agreeing the most appropriate course of action.

The National Police Chief's Council, the National Crime Agency and Police Scotland now represent British law enforcement agencies at SBIF. Work is also ongoing with the NPCC Gambling Lead to raise awareness of the betting integrity agenda across UK police forces.

## **3 - Whistleblowing and Reporting Mechanisms:**

**Review the national approach to whistleblowing and reporting mechanisms. To include what processes and guidelines are currently exist, assess effectiveness of the supporting processes including protection for those disclosing information and identify good practice.**

**Leads: Phil Suddick (Tennis Integrity Unit) and Duncan Gibson (Greyhound Board of Great Britain)**

### Progress Update

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the resulting work and travel restrictions there has been no progress in relation to this action. It is anticipated that further progress will be made in 2021 when circumstances allow.



#### **4 - Risk Assessment:**

**Support the Council of Europe's (CoE) Risk Assessment Working Group by undertaking an assessment of betting integrity across the UK's National Platform**

**Lead: Lorraine Pearman (Gambling Commission)**

##### Progress Update

As with many projects, the Risk Assessment was put on hold to allow member states to concentrate on addressing the challenges of COVID-19. However, the SBIF took the opportunity to use the CoE's [Typology Tool](#) to start to assess the capabilities of the UK's National Platform across the different types of manipulation as defined by the Macolin Convention.

Initial findings will be considered by the SBIF once lockdown restrictions have been fully lifted i.e. once the approach of the SBIF can be expanded outside of the operational needs brought about by the pandemic.

#### **5a - Sport Education Programmes:**

**Research methods to evaluate education programmes to identify the most effective techniques to help prevent and deter against involvement in betting integrity issues.**

**Lead: Hayley Green (England and Wales Cricket Board)**

##### Progress Update

Due to the challenges of COVID-19, this action was placed on hold during 2020.

It is noted that the way education has been delivered throughout the year has had to be adapted for some sports (and often at short notice) i.e. from face-to-face interactive sessions, to ones delivered virtually. Despite these challenges, education remains a clear priority for sports and betting operators alike; and the evaluation of education programmes is still key in ensuring the content is relevant to and impactful on participants.

Due to the inevitable financial impact COVID-19 has had on sports and betting operators, it is unlikely that an independent (and potentially costly) evaluation will take place in the near future. The plan for 2021 is to consider ways that all sports and betting operators can obtain feedback from within their business, and directly from key participants of their education programmes.



#### **5b - Sport Education Programmes:**

**Review the reach of education programmes to ensure focus across all tiers of sport**

**Lead: Leigh Thompson (Sport and Recreation Alliance)**

##### Progress Update

Due to the impact of COVID-19 there has been limited progress in relation to this action. It is anticipated that this action will be revisited in 2021, with a view to progressing further as circumstances allow.

#### **6 - Black and Grey Markets:**

**Commission research on black and grey markets to understand the impacts on British sport and sports betting, with a view to developing a strategy to manage the risks to betting integrity**

**Lead: Chris Watts (British Horseracing Authority)**

##### Progress Update

Due to the impact of COVID-19 there has been limited progress in relation to this action. It is anticipated that this action will be revisited in 2021, with a view to progressing further as circumstances allow.

#### **7 - Protecting Integrity after Brexit:**

**Following Brexit, work with Government and SBIF Members to assess new opportunities or identify emergent risks to Britain's ability to protect itself against betting integrity issues**

**Lead: Lorraine Pearman (Gambling Commission)**

##### Progress Update

As the Brexit deal has still to be finalised, this action could not be completed as the opportunities and risks are still unknown. This will be carried over as a priority action to be delivered in 2021 once the implications of the Brexit deal are realised.



#### **8 - Evidential Data Collection:**

**Collate and compare existing data collection/extraction policies from sport and other relevant sources to identify potential common standards and good practice**

**Lead: Simon Taylor (Professional Players Federation)**

#### Progress Update

Due to the impact of COVID-19 there has been limited progress in relation to this action. It is anticipated that this action will be revisited in 2021, with a view to progressing further as circumstances allow.