

# GAPP Summary 5. Speed and Continuity

## 1 Speed and Continuity of Play and Problem Gambling



- A game does not necessarily need to be fast to facilitate fast, continuous gambling, provided that there are frequent opportunities to bet and frequent opportunities for feedback on the bet outcomes. Research has found that fast, continuous play can increase enjoyment among problem gamblers, BUT that it is also associated with more problematic patterns of gambling behaviour, such as gambling for longer periods of time, losing control, persistent play, spending more money and making larger bets.

## 2 Speed and Continuity of Play as Risk Factors

### Modifies Mood



- Games facilitating fast and continuous play are attractive to individuals who are motivated to 'escape' or modify mood. Being motivated to gamble as a way of coping with negative mood has been consistently linked to gambling-related harm in the research literature.

### Increases cost of play



- 'Cost of Play' in a session is determined by accounting for the size of the stake, the return-to-player (or payback percentage), the game volatility and the speed of play. Assuming the other variables remain the same, playing the same game, continuously at a faster rate, will increase how much the player will spend.



### Facilitates loss-chasing



- Games and features facilitating fast and continuous play can better enable chasing behaviour. For extended periods of chasing losses to be facilitated, the gambling activity must provide frequent opportunities for gamblers to bet.

### Impairs decision-making



- Games and features facilitating fast and continuous play make it more difficult to make rational decisions regarding persistence and affordability. Emerging evidence suggests that imposing breaks in play can reduce risky behaviour by facilitating more rational decision-making regarding affordability and persistence.

## 3 Thinking about Player Protection



1. Facilities such as 'In-play betting', 'cash-out' and 'auto-play' can all increase the speed and continuity of gambling. Provisions and restrictions around such features may be required.
2. Research indicates that breaks-in-play may reduce persistent or uncontrolled gambling. Breaks-in-play may be less disruptive to the playing experience than slowing down the speed of the game or artificially increasing game duration.
3. While rapid, continuous games may provide an effective means of avoidant coping, they may pose greater risks since significant money and time can be lost and other more adaptive and less harmful strategies for rest, recovery and coping are available.

## 4 Further Reading

- Harris, A., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The impact of speed of play in gambling on psychological and behavioural factors: a critical review. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 1-20.
- Chapter 5. Parke, J., Parke, A., & Blaszczynski, A. (2017). Key Issues in Product-Based Harm Minimisation: Examining Theory, Evidence and Policy Issues Relevant in Great Britain. London: GambleAware.