I am writing to you as Minister of State for Digital and Culture in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, to ask that the Government takes decisive action on loot boxes in video games and classifies them as a form of gambling.

New research with gamers aged 13 to 24 conducted by the [Gambling Health Alliance](https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/alliances/the-gambling-health-alliance.html) (GHA) has revealed that three quarters feel that buying a loot box is bad for their health, citing feelings of addiction, regret and anger when purchasing loot boxes. Two in five said they thought spending money on a loot box when under 18 would make them more likely to gamble when older, and further research shows that normalising gambling amongst young people increases the likelihood of them experiencing gambling-related harm in the future.

It is therefore unsurprising that the GHA survey of 611 young people found that the vast majority (91%) of them view buying a loot box as a form of gambling, and three quarters think they should be illegal for under 18s to buy. Given the widespread recognition that the harms from gambling are increasing, including risks of addiction, the impact on mental health and links with suicide, it is vital that action is taken to reduce the harms from gambling and protect our most vulnerable from exposure to it, including in this case young people who play video games.

In my personal experience, loot boxes are….. **[please insert anything you want to add about your own experience of loot boxes in video games or delete this line].**

Therefore, in light of the consultation on loot boxes and the upcoming review of the 2005 Gambling Act, loot boxes should be brought into the scope of gambling legislation. They should be classed as a form of gambling, made illegal for under 18s to buy, and removed from video games played by minors. There is support from the gaming community for this to happen, and we should be encouraged by the steps taken in Belgium, The Netherlands and the Isle of Man towards greater regulation and protection for young people mental health, wellbeing and finances.

I look forward to hearing the Government’s response to the consultation.

Yours sincerely,