

March 2014

## Voluntary Self-Exclusion Program Review

In late 2010, BCLC and the Province's Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) asked the Responsible Gambling Council Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices to conduct a review of the Voluntary Self-Exclusion (VSE) Program. The review was released in summer 2011.

The review focused on the casino-based VSE program at five casinos in the province of British Columbia, representing a range of location, size and operator. The sites were located in Victoria, Kelowna, New Westminster, Vancouver and Richmond.

The review was completed by Responsible Gambling Council's Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices staff, and then peer-reviewed by a group consisting of a gambling researcher, problem gambling treatment provider and an individual who has previously self-excluded.

To view the VSE Program Review in its entirety, visit:

<http://corporate.bclc.com/resources/documents/corporate/who-we-are/RG-Report-VSE-Program-Review.pdf> or [pssg.gov.bc.ca](http://pssg.gov.bc.ca).

BCLC, in collaboration with GPEB, has initiated action or completed activities on all of recommendations that came from this review.

RGC Recommendation	Action Taken
Develop policies/procedures for those areas of the VSE program that do not currently have documentation including the role of security in responding to breaches and requests from others for a patron's exclusion.	Complete.
Consolidate the policies and procedures on VSE to facilitate access and understanding of the entire VSE Program.	VSE policy and procedures are continually reviewed for accuracy and are available in a variety of areas to ensure that BCLC and Service Partner staff have access to them as required.
Implement a more formal training process that addresses how security and GameSense Advisors (GSA) can work together.	Complete. Although BCLC has already developed and executed a training program for Security staff, BCLC is currently looking to improve delivery with the addition of an online training component. Development is expected by the end of Fiscal 2013/14.

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Simplify the language in the registration form to make it more user-friendly.	Complete.
Ensure that the frequently asked questions section of the information package covers all key points in the registration form.	Complete.
Offer the take away package in multiple languages.	Complete. VSE brochures and enrolment forms are available in multiple languages. FAQs and take home packages are available in English, French, Tagalog, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Punjabi.
Ask patrons if they would like to be contacted in a week or so as a follow-up at which time the person making contact can re-introduce counseling as an option.	On enrolment, patrons are given the option to request follow up by a counselor, but if declined, privacy restrictions limit follow up opportunities (once the individual has signed up).  BCLC has also joined other Canadian jurisdictions (Interprovincial Lottery Corporation) in funding a major research initiative to develop appropriate intervention tools intended to encourage counseling take-up by VSE participants, which is currently underway. Results are expected in late 2014.
Minimize the embarrassment associated with having security escort VSE patrons off the premises.	Complete. BCLC gaming security policy specifies that dealings with VSE participants are to be handled with discretion and respect for the individual. Recent feedback (see BC Centre for Social Responsibility Report) from participants suggest this is generally well-handled by staff involved.  The VSE training program reiterates this policy and encourages staff to consider possible embarrassment by the individual signing-up.
Increase treatment providers' awareness of the option to register for VSE outside the venue.	Complete. BCLC is committed to continued communication with all treatment providers

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	<p>advising that this is an option available by prior arrangement with BCLC security.</p> <p>Additionally, as part of a test program, in fall 2013, BCLC will enable VSE re-enrolment at select counselor offices.</p>
Increase the GameSense Advisors' (GSA) hours of availability.	There are currently 23 full-time GameSense Advisors servicing casino GameSense Info Centres. Funding for the GSA program is provided through GPEB.
Develop a policy to clarify whether or not significant others can request to have a patron excluded.	Although current policy states explicitly that only self-enrolment is permitted, problem gambling counselling is available for significant others who may be affected by another person's gambling behaviour.
Identify patrons at higher risk of breaching by creating shortlists of the most frequent and/or recent violators.	<p>Complete.</p> <p>BCLC has initiated monthly reporting, by region, of the most frequent breachers (4 incidents minimum) for transmission to all facilities in that region, effective August 2011. Security staff includes these individuals as priority surveillance subjects.</p>
Create greater awareness of the "be on the lookout" option among treatment providers to notify casinos.	<p>Complete.</p> <p>BCLC is committed to continued communication with treatment providers advising that this is an option.</p>
Clarify role of the GameSense Advisors in responding to breaches.	<p>Complete.</p> <p>BCLC issued guidelines in July 2013, which clarifies the GSA role in supporting VSE. GSA's assist Security with sign-up and breaches while working at a gaming facility. Their role is to answer questions about the VSE program and share problem gambling resources to encourage counselling through BC's Responsible and Problem Gambling Program.</p>
Explore options for establishing consistent and escalating consequences for breaches.	BCLC and GPEB are not considering fines or escalating consequences. We continue to encourage counselling for individuals who self-exclude. BCLC has also implemented a

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	jackpot withholding policy to remove incentives for VSEs to gamble further.
Create an active reinstatement policy and procedures that include: the option to renew the exclusion; support and information regarding community resources, including tips and information about responsible gambling; discussion of any breaches that may have taken place; documentation that the patron wishes to return to gambling and is making an informed decision to reinstate.	New options for a re-entry program are under consideration and will likely begin with online VSEs through PlayNow.com. a. Currently, other elements, such as communication about the option to renew the exclusion, information about community resources and responsible gambling information are already key components of the current program.
Expand the filtering capabilities [of the incident tracking, or iTrak, system] (i.e., being able to filter by exclusion type) and access to secondary information.	Complete. iTrak can filter by type of ban, which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BCLC Prohibition</li> <li>2. Bingo Self Exclusion</li> <li>3. E Lottery Self Exclusion</li> <li>4. Casino Self-Exclusion</li> <li>5. Site Barring</li> </ol>
Investigate opportunities to be more proactive among adjacent properties with sharing information on high risk breaches.	Complete. BCLC initiated monthly reporting, by region, of most frequent breachers (4 minimum) for transmission to all facilities in that region, effective August 2011. Security staff includes these individuals as priority surveillance subjects (“be on the lookout”).
Share VSE Review report with other gaming providers and corporations across Canada who face similar challenges as they work to improve the effectiveness of their self-exclusion programs.	Complete.