

Early gambling - safe or dicey?

Loot boxes are a regular feature within video games, but are they gambling?

In their 2019 report on gaming and gambling in young people (aged 16–24), the UK charity Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM) LGHQWLÉHG WKDW RI LQGLYLGXDOV HQJDJHG

What's a 'loot box'?

In their game a player pays money in advance for a virtual loot box, which can be either in the form of a direct payment or in-game currency. After purchase a random outcome is then revealed.

Loot boxes are often necessary to progress in a game ('pay-to-win') or are a way to obtain desirable items. The game design means players may feel under pressure to purchase a loot box to achieve and outcome or feel satisfaction within the game.

Experience of gamers

URP LQWHUYLHZV DQG VXUYH\V RI we found that gamers perceived chance elements of loot boxes within online gaming are akin to gambling.

However, we found the emotional investment associated with placing a gambling bet is greater than the young people reported experiencing when they paid for a loot box.

There are parallels between gambling and loot boxes and as many children game it is important to understand the relationship between gaming and future problematic gambling.