



Gambling-related Harm QSD on 5 November 2019

On 5 November 2019, Lord Chadlington (Conservative) is due to ask Her Majesty's Government "what assessment they have made of the impact of the convergence of gaming and gambling on the level of gambling-related harm in the United Kingdom".

Summary

- Although there is no explicit definition for gambling-related harm, the Gambling Commission, which is responsible for regulating gambling and supervising gaming law in Great Britain, define the term as covering "adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society". Gambling-related harms can include: financial instability; disruption or erosion of partnerships and familial relationships; and physical ill-health.
- Gambling in gaming is varied and can comprise many forms. This includes gaming machines and in-game purchases. For example, loot boxes provide players with the opportunity to acquire an unknown quantity and quality of items for use within the game.
- In Great Britain in 2018, the Gambling Commission found that 46 percent of respondents aged 16 or over had participated in at least one form of gambling in the month prior to the survey. This figure had remained stable since the previous year. The National Lottery was the most popular form of gambling, followed by scratchcards and other lotteries. Football and horse racing were the most popular betting activities. 21 percent of respondents had participated in "online gambling-style games" (a 3 percentage point decrease from 2017).
- The latest annual survey by the Gambling Commission found that 11 percent of 11 to 16-year-olds (350,000) spent their own money on a gambling activity in the week prior to the survey. In comparison to other harmful activities, the rate of gambling in the past week among young people is lower than the rates of drinking alcohol (16%), but higher than using e-cigarettes (7%) smoking tobacco cigarettes (6%) and taking illegal drugs (5%). The survey also found that 2 percent of young people personally visited a betting shop to play a gaming machine in the week prior to the survey.
- In 2016, the Government launched a review into gaming machines and social responsibility measures. As part of this, it published a consultation in October 2017 focusing on the maximum stakes at gaming machines and measures for the industry to reduce gambling-related harm. In response, the Government made several proposals, including reducing the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals from £100 to £2, which took effect in April 2019.

Eren Waitzman | 30 October 2019

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- In February 2019, the Labour Party proposed controls on online gambling, including caps on the amount that consumers can gamble. Tom Watson, the deputy leader of Labour, has also called for the Gambling Commission to have oversight of gambling in gaming. The Gambling Commission has previously stated that loot boxes in games did not meet the Gambling Act 2005's definition of gambling.
- In September 2019, the Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust opened the NHS Northern Gambling Service, which is the first of its kind outside London, as part of a new network of services for addicts being rolled out as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.
- In the same month, the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee published a report into its inquiry on immersive and addictive technologies, which included examining the links between gaming and gambling. The committee called on the Government to bring forward regulations under section 6 of the Gambling Act 2005 to specify that loot games are a "game of chance" and should be considered gambling under UK law. It is awaiting a response by the Government.
- In October 2019, the Children's Commissioner published a report examining children's participation with gaming. It found that the monetisation of gaming, through in-game purchases, "brings children closer to gambling". As part of her policy recommendations, the commissioner called for gambling laws to be "updated" to "reflect the reality" of children's experiences of spending money within games.

Further Information

- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Consultation on Proposals for Changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures](#), October 2017, p 5; and [Government Response to the Consultation on Proposals for Changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures](#), May 2018, pp 5–9

Executive summary from a consultation examining changes to the maximum stake of B2 gaming machines and the introduction of social responsibility measures towards gambling; and the government response to the consultation, which confirmed that it would be reducing the maximum stake on B2 gaming machines.

- Gambling Commission, [National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms](#), 17 April 2019, pp 4–5 and p 26

Foreword and conclusions from a report detailing the Gambling Commission's three-year plan to reduce gambling harms. In its conclusion, the commission calls on businesses in the financial services sector to work together to develop and offer tools and controls to help customers manage the amount they spend on gambling and work to "understand and support" vulnerable customers who are at an "increased risk of harm".

- Gambling Commission, [Gambling Participation in 2018: Behaviour, Awareness and Attitudes](#), February 2019, pp 4–5; and [Young People and Gambling Survey 2019](#), October 2019, pp 1–4

Executive summaries from reports into gambling participation in 2018 and 2019, including the involvement of young people.

- Children's Commissioner, [Gaming the System](#), 22 October 2019, pp 1–5 and 25–29

Summary, conclusions, and policy recommendations from a report into children and gaming.

- House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [Immersive and Addictive Technologies](#), 12 September 2019, HC 1846 of session 2017–19, pp 3–4 and 61–4

Executive summary, conclusions and recommendations from a report on immersive and addictive technologies.

- Public Health England, '[Gambling-related Harms Evidence Review: Scope](#)', 18 October 2019

Webpage announcing the launch of an evidence review into gambling-related harms, which Public Health England states will inform what action is needed as part of a public health approach to the issue.

- NHS Leeds and York Partnership, '[New NHS Gambling Addiction Service for North of England](#)', 18 September 2019

Press release announcing the establishment of the NHS Northern Gambling Service in Leeds, as part of the National Health Service's Long Term Plan.

Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- [Oral Question on 'Gambling-Related Harm'](#), HC Hansard, 23 May 2019, col 795
- [Debate on 'Gambling-Related Harm'](#), HC Hansard, 19 March 2019, cols 296–320WH
- [Debate on 'Online Gambling Protection'](#), HC Hansard, 12 March 2019, cols 90–97WH
- A selection of written questions from both Houses: [291536](#) (2 October 2019); [277807](#) (22 July 2019); [HL16732](#) (10 July 2019); [241420](#) (12 April 2019); [228669](#) (13 March 2019); [HL12059](#) (18 December 2018); and [908188](#) (13 December 2018)

Press Articles and Comment

- Sally Weale, '[Clamp Down on Fifa 'Loot Boxes', Urges Children's Commissioner](#)', *Guardian*, 22 October 2019
- Simon Jack, '[Bookmakers Pledge £100m to Avoid Gambling Crackdown](#)', BBC News, 19 June 2019
- Lulu Freemont, '[The Rise of Skin Gambling: How Outdated Legislation Allows Thousands of UK Children to Gamble Online](#)', London School of Economics and Political Science's Parenting for a Digital Future Blog, 17 April 2019
- Rob Davies, '[Problem Gamblers at 15 Times Higher Risk of Suicide, Study Finds](#)', *Guardian*, 13 March 2019
- Department of Health and Social Care, '[Gambling Related Harm is No Longer in the Shadows](#)', 1 March 2019
- Rob Davies, '[Tom Watson Calls for Crackdown on In-game Gambling](#)', *Guardian*, 28 February 2019
- Lord Chadlington, '[Evidence is Mounting That We Are in the Grip of a Gambling Epidemic](#)', *The House Magazine*, 7 February 2019