

Betting shops: Gambling impacts and Local Authority responses

Scottish Government Ministerial Summit
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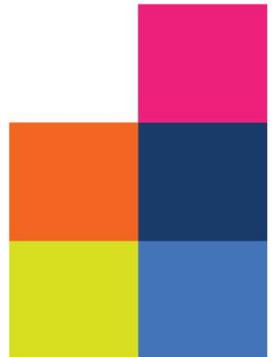
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Overview

- Gambling Act 2005
- Gambling Impacts
- Nature of the problem
- Local concerns
- Potential policy changes
- What can be done today



Gambling Act 2005

Objectives:

1. Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.
1. Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way, and;
1. Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.



Gambling impacts

Economic	Social	Health	Cultural
<p>Benefits Benefits to users (consumer surplus) Ancillary economic benefits from casino/gambling development National and local government benefits (e.g. taxation)</p> <p>Costs Problem gambling Increases in criminal activity Degradation of the environment Displacement (movements from one form of gambling to another)</p>	<p>Benefits Acceptance, social networking Crime reduction</p> <p>Costs Crime 'In-house' crime, crime committed to acquire funds to gamble or pay debts, crime as a by-product of gambling (e.g. family violence) Housing Loss of home, need re-housing Other debt related Family relationships Child maltreatment, domestic violence Work Loss of time and job</p>	<p>Benefits Recreation</p> <p>Costs Stress disorders Addictive Disorders Suicidality Some evidence of physical health problems</p>	<p>Benefits Increase in social networks Increasing leisure opportunities</p> <p>Costs Reducing social capital</p>



Size and scale of the “problem”

- Overall percentage of problem gamblers in Scottish adult population is 0.7% (30,500 – 32,000). On the face of it, this is fairly conservative.
- However:
 - 3% low risk and 1% moderate risk of becoming problem gamblers (175,300 considered vulnerable)
 - Greater the engagement with a product, more likely to be harmed. 13.3% of multiple interest gamblers (engaged in 8 or more activities) were problem gamblers
 - Losses: Gambling on FOBTs cost problem gamblers around quarter of a billion pounds per year. This is compared with other forms of gambling which cost around £50-70 million pounds (Dispatches, 2012).
 - International research demonstrates that approximately 30 – 50% of total gambling turnover comes from at-risk or problem gamblers.



Vulnerable groups

- Men – 11.6 times more likely to be a problem gambler compared to women;
- Deprived communities – those living in the most deprived quartile are 7 times more likely to be a problem gambler than those living the least deprived quartile;
- People experiencing poor mental health - 5.6 times more likely to be problem gamblers than those who indicate positive psychological wellbeing;
- People displaying signs of possible alcohol dependence – 7.1 times more likely to be a problem gambler compared with low risk or abstinent drinkers.



Licensing at a local level (premises licence)

Gambling Act 2005 (153) – Licensing Authority shall aim to permit gambling so far as the authority think it:

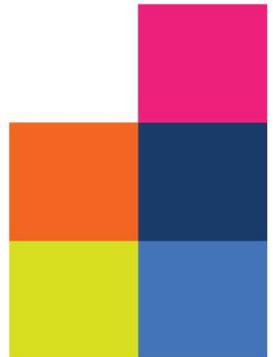
- In accordance with a relevant code of practice;
- In accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission;
- Reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives and;
- In accordance with the licensing authority policy issued under the Act.



Local concerns with gambling

Mainly betting shops and in particular:

- Proliferation of betting shops since the Gambling Act 2005 came into force;
- Clustering of betting shops in the most deprived areas, and the impact on the vulnerable;
- Anti-social behaviour in and around betting shops;
- Longer term sustainability of the high street;
- FOBTs – “crack cocaine of gambling”.



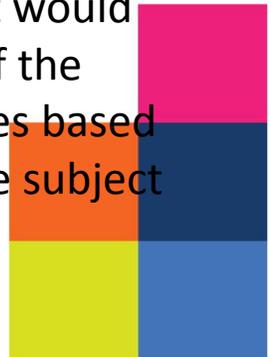
Interface with the planning system

- Betting shops are classified as ‘financial and professional services’ (use class 2). For example, a premises that houses a bank or estate agent can be converted into a bookmakers without having to seek consent.
- Current planning system doesn’t allow for Local Authorities to control the number or location of betting shops.
- Calls to have betting shops put into own use class. This would allow Local Authorities to develop and implement policies that assess the impact of betting shops on communities and the surrounding built environment.



Time for a policy review?

- **Health objective** – a new ‘public health’ objective to be added to the Gambling Act 2005 and Licensing Act 2003 to allow health to be taken into account when reaching licensing decisions in a bid to tackle issues that would include problem gambling and FBOTs.
- **Cumulative impact** – allowing councils to consider ‘cumulative impact’ when making licensing decisions about betting shops and other facilities – this would force betting firms to prove that new shops would not have a negative impact on local economic growth or existing businesses.
- **Primary Activity** – incorporating the ‘primary activity’ test into the Gambling Act would enable councils to refuse licences where they do not believe the primary focus of the shop will be betting rather than gaming. Councils that have tried to refuse licences based on the references to primary activity in the Gambling Act guidance have been the subject of successful legal challenges.



What can be done today?

- Greater public health engagement in the licensing process;
- Monitoring and better understanding local needs and commissioning interventions to prevent and minimise gambling-related harm e.g. needs assessment and integrated health and social impact assessments;
- Promoting the availability and uptake of basic problem gambling screening/identification, brief intervention and sign-posting training to local services;
- Using local authority owned property to support positive public health outcomes;
- Primary research to better understand overall socio-economic and health impacts of gambling within local authority areas.



For more information

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