

Gambling: wagering something of value on an uncertain outcome in the hope of gain...it always involves a degree of risk taking (ScotPHN, 2016)



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Defining the issue (Prof Griffiths, 2014)

Problem Gambling

Describes gambling that compromises, disrupts or damages personal, family or recreational pursuits

Gambling-related harm

Extends into communities or society more generally and is associated with a range of mental health and social problems

Crime; debt; employment

Public health services; justice & court services

Gambling addiction

Extreme end of spectrum; experiences indicators of addiction;

psychiatric diagnosis

Gambling: Betting, gaming or participating in a lottery
(Gambling Act, 2005)

Arcades (for adults and for families)

Betting (online, at an event or in a high street bookmakers)

Bingo (online or in a bingo hall)

Casino (online or in a casino)

Lotteries (raffles, tombolas, sweepstakes etc)

Gaming machines (fruit machines, fixed odds betting terminals etc)



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Who's who?

Dept. of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Gambling Commission (independent; sponsored by DCMS): regulation of commercial gambling in partnership with licensing authorities; licensing objectives

Responsible Gambling Strategy Board: independent advice to Commission on research education and treatment; sets responsible gambling strategy and research priorities

Gambleaware: responsible for commissioning research, education and treatment to minimize gambling related harm and raising funds from industry

Strategic direction

Gambling Commission: Making gambling Fairer & Safer 2018-21

(crime prevention; protect consumers and children & vulnerable)

Responsible Gambling Strategy Board: National Responsible Gambling Strategy 2016-19: harm minimization; treatment improvement; evaluation of initiatives; public & private sector responsibilities to tackle; improved understanding

Advertised as a ‘harmless, fun activity, associated with winning’

“In the Government’s view the law should no longer incorporate or reflect any assumption that gambling is an activity which is objectionable and which people should have no encouragement to pursue” (DCMS)

National data (Gambling Commission, 2018-21)

63% 16yrs+ have gambled in past year

33% 18-24 year olds

54% 45-54 year olds

29% National Lottery

18% online (29% of whom via mobile phone)

0.8% of population classed as problem gamblers

n= 195,000 → 1,560 problem gamblers

At risk groups (Gambling Commission, 2018-21)

- Ethnic
- Youth
- Low IQ
- Substance misuse
- Poor mental health

Public health approach

- Comorbidities: anxiety & depression; substance misuse;
- Medical consequences: insomnia; CVD; stomach problems
- Social consequences: relationships; neglect; bankruptcy
- Burden on public purse: health; welfare; housing; criminal justice
- Evidence base for intervention: Fast Forward; Welfare Rights
- Spot check/survey? → local data
- Awareness of risks vs marketing & advertising
- Prevention & treatment
- Infrastructure: knowledge of workforce; pathways



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• Environment : Geospatial clustering; cultural acceptance; 3As

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Proposed next steps

- Screening spot check: general or targeting a risk group?
- What works..?