

New interim research findings detail gambling habits from 140,000 online gambling accounts in Great Britain

Under embargo until 9:00am GMT on Friday 12 March 2021

New interim findings from research conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), in collaboration with Professor David Forrest and Professor Ian McHale (University of Liverpool), details for the first time the gambling habits of close to 140,000 active online gambling accounts in Britain.

The research, which looked at the use of active 'gaming' and betting accounts¹ between July 2018 and June 2019, was commissioned by GambleAware to improve understanding of the online gambling market. It is the first time a dataset containing this level of detail on online gambling transactions has been collated for research purposes.

The results show that a large majority of active online gambling accounts in the UK spent relatively low amounts and were used infrequently throughout the year, while a small proportion of accounts were used extensively and generated substantial losses.

As a result, a small proportion of accounts made up a large proportion of gross gambling yield (GGY) – the amount retained by operators from customer stakes after the payment of winnings but before the deduction of the costs of the operation.

Key findings from the interim research:

- 85% of accounts used for betting spent less than £200 on betting over the year between July 2018 and June 2019, while 90% of 'gaming' accounts had either an overall win or loss of less than £500 for the same period.
- 0.7% of accounts used for betting (representing approximately 60,000 accounts among participating operators) and 1.2% of accounts used for gaming (representing approximately 47,000 accounts among participating operators) lost £5,000 or more over the course of the year.
- The 5% of online accounts with the highest losses generated a minimum of 70% of Gross Gambling Yield (GGY) in each of betting, virtual casinos, live casinos, and slots.
- Pre-match football, in-play football and horseracing accounted for most spending from betting, while slots and casino games accounted for most spending from 'gaming'.
- Among women, gaming was more popular than betting, with 26% of GGY for 'gaming' coming from women compared to 6% for betting.
- 4% of accounts used for 'gaming' (representing an estimated 164,000 accounts among participating operators) lost more than £500 in a single session during the year.
- Late night 'gaming' was associated with greater spending intensity, particularly for live and virtual casino games.
- The online betting sector derives an estimated 94% of its GGY from men, who held 78% of betting accounts.

¹ Gaming covers a range of gambling activities: bingo, live and virtual casino games, poker, slots and instant wins. Betting generally relates to events external to the gambling environment, for example results of a cricket match.

- Among accounts which spent £5,000 or more over the year, over 95% were held by men, typically in their 40s.
- Participation in online gambling was higher in more deprived areas than less deprived areas, but people living in more and less deprived areas spent on average similar amounts throughout the year.

Researchers also looked at the use of safer gambling tools. Around 4% received contact from an operator for the purpose of 'social responsibility', with the vast majority (84%) of those contacts being made by email.

Of the accounts which lost in excess of £2,000 during the year, around a third (36%) had received a 'social responsibility' contact during the year, while 0.84% received a phone call from an operator.

Among safer gambling tools, deposit limits were most widely used by account holders. Around a fifth (21.5%) set deposit limits, whereas, self-exclusion was applied to 2.3% of accounts.

Commenting on the research, **Dr Sokratis Dinos from NatCen** said: *"This research was able to analyse and assess an unprecedented source of information on how people in Great Britain gamble and opens up numerous opportunities to further understand people's gambling habits. These interim findings are just the first stage and future research will provide a greater opportunity to understand the risk factors associated with gambling behaviour."*

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The interim findings from this research will be available on Friday 12 March at 9:00am at this address: http://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/PoP_Interim%20Report_Short_Final.pdf

Notes to editors

About the research

- This research was commissioned by GambleAware to improve understanding of the online gambling market. Research questions were:
 - What are the basic patterns of play within online gambling?
 - How do these patterns of play vary for different types of people?
 - How do patterns of play vary among different products and characteristics?
 - What types of behaviours are associated with problem or at-risk gambling, for example use of credit cards, reverse withdrawals etc?
- Seven major online operators agreed to supply data to be used in the analysis. It was decided to sample cases from each operator and cases were selected at random, which means the results can be generalised to all participating operators.
- Each operator was requested to provide an anonymised list of all its accounts where the account's registered address was in Great Britain and there had been at least one

transaction, in which money had been gambled, between 1st July 2018 and 30th June 2019. From the full list of accounts, 20,000 accounts per operator were sampled, and full transactional data for the time period was requested and supplied to the researchers for analysis. The final aggregated dataset comprised one year's gambling activity data for 139,152 accounts.

- Differences between gaming and betting:
 - Gaming covers a range of gambling activities: bingo, live and virtual casino games, poker, slots and instant wins.
 - Betting generally relates to events external to the gambling environment, for example results of a cricket match.
- Five of the seven operators were focused on betting. It is estimated that operators included in the study capture more than 85% of the online betting market in Great Britain and more than 37% of the gaming market.
- The research only captures the gambling activity of one individual online account and cannot determine where an individual may have more than one account with different operators.
- A second stage of research is planned for the Summer 2021, in which a sample of account holders will be contacted and invited to take part in a survey to better understand the wider context of their gambling behaviour.

About the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)

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