What this report is about

Self-exclusion lets people voluntarily ban themselves from gambling for a set period of time. Since 2016, the Gambling Commission has required all gambling operators offering in-venue betting, bingo, and casino games in Great Britain to participate in multi-operator exclusion schemes. These schemes allow people to request self-exclusion from many operators within a sector at the same time. The schemes include:

- The Self-Enrolment National Self-Exclusion (SENSE) for land-based casinos.
- The Bingo Industry Self-Exclusion Scheme for licensed bingo places under the Bingo Association.
- The Multi Operator Self Exclusion Scheme (MOSES) for betting shops.
- Bacta and Smart Exclusion (IHL) as two separate schemes for the arcades sector.
- GAMSTOP for online gambling.

This report describes Phase 1 evaluation of the schemes. The goals are to explore whether people who gamble are aware of the schemes, their thoughts about the schemes, and barriers to use. Other goals include to assess staff training and promotion of the schemes. The report outlines what works well and what can be improved, as well as some initial evidence about impacts. The findings will inform Phase 2 evaluation on the impacts of the schemes.

What was done?

Ipsos MORI, a market research company, carried out the evaluation. The data were collected from multiple sources in 2019, including:

- Interviews with each of the six scheme providers.

Why is this report important?

The multi-operator exclusion schemes allow people to request self-exclusion from multiple gambling operators within a sector in Great Britain. The schemes cover five sectors: casinos, bingo, betting shops, arcades, and online gambling. This report describes Phase 1 evaluation of the schemes. The findings suggest that users find the promotional materials and sign up process easy to understand. Identifying people who try to breach their self-exclusion works well for venues that require people to show their membership. But, there are many areas that need improvement. These include stronger promotion, improved communication with users, more staff training, and identifying people in non-membership venues. The report makes several recommendations.

- Interviews with two treatment providers and two academic researchers.
- A focus group with 14 frontline staff.
- A workshop with 19 compliance officers.
- A telephone survey with 1,500 public members to explore awareness and attitudes.
- Five online focus groups with people who gamble, and 42 interviews with users of the schemes.
- Documents and datasets suggested by the Gambling Commission, GambleAware, and an academic research partner (Adrian Parke).

What you need to know

What works well:

- The promotional materials were seen as clear and easy to understand by users. But, many users...
thought that the materials could be displayed in more visible places.

- The sign up process was seen as straightforward by users. Barriers to use included: (1) requiring the presence of a manager on site to register a customer; (2) not being able to register on site with MOSES as it must be done via a contact centre; (3) not being able to register with other schemes in one location; (4) MOSES requires customers to list all the addresses and postcodes of the venues from which to self-exclude.

- Identifying people who try to breach their self-exclusion works well for venues that require people to show their membership before they can gamble (bingo and casino sectors).

- Initial evidence suggests that the schemes help users modify their gambling behaviour or stop gambling completely (at least in the short term). However, some users continued to gamble by going to venues out of their self-exclusion zone.

Areas to improve:

- There is low awareness of the schemes. Many users became aware about the schemes through Internet searches or their friends and relatives, rather than through the gambling operators.

- Some users were confused about the details of their self-exclusion, especially if they registered in more than one of the schemes.

- Staff training appears to be inconsistent. Staff turnover and a high number of part-time staff make it difficult to reach all staff. Also, staff may not be confident about how to approach people who show harmful gambling behaviour or who try to breach their self-exclusion.

- There are limits to current systems on how to identify people who try to breach their self-exclusion in non-membership venues. These venues rely on staff to identify customers through photographs, which can be challenging.

About the researchers

Ipsos MORI was commissioned to evaluate the multi-operator exclusion schemes. For more information about this report, please contact Ipsos MORI at www.ipsos-mori.com.

Citation


Study disclosures

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Gambling Research Exchange (GREO)

Gambling Research Exchange (GREO) has partnered with the Knowledge Mobilization Unit at York University to produce Research Snapshots. GREO is an independent knowledge translation and exchange organization that aims to eliminate harm from gambling. Our goal is to support evidence-informed decision making in responsible gambling and policies to reduce harm from gambling. Learn more about GREO by visiting greo.ca or emailing info@greo.ca.