

Prevention and Education Review: Gambling-Related Harm

R E S E A R C H R E P O R T

2021

2.0 Universal Measures

2.2 Regulatory Restrictions on How Gambling is Provided

Protocol

DESCRIPTION

The Prevention and Education Review contributes to guiding the development of a collective and clear prevention plan, as set out in the National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms in Great Britain. The review is organised into three levels of prevention and education measures: universal (for the benefit of the whole population), selected (for the benefit of at-risk groups), and indicated (for the benefit of at-risk individuals). Regulatory restrictions on how gambling is provided is a universal measure. In jurisdictions where gambling is a regulated, commercially provided activity, gambling regulators have a duty to ensure this activity is provided in a manner that reduces the chance of harm for consumers and the broad population. There is minimal rigorous empirical research to guide best practice gambling regulation and vast differences between jurisdictions in gambling policies. Gambling activities include a broad array of products and policies need to account for differences between these, and how the product is offered to consumers, including the use of technology and remote services.

PURPOSE

This review aims to examine recent international research (2016-2020) to identify what evaluations and research studies have been conducted internationally to inform the effectiveness of regulations to restrict the provision of gambling to consumers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the most effective restrictions on the provision of commercial gambling to minimise gambling-related harms? More specifically, the review seeks to:

- Identify empirical research on the effectiveness of policies to restrict gambling.
- Identify illustrative case studies and jurisdictional overviews to guide considerations of policies to restrict gambling and minimise gambling harms.
- Identify empirical research including from other public health domains and related to restrictions that impact gambling such as advertising and smoking in venues that is relevant to guide development of policies to restrict gambling and minimise gambling harms.

METHODOLOGY

Due to a lack of rigorous empirical research on the effectiveness of regulatory restrictions, this topic will be approached with a scoping review combined with illustrative case studies focusing on detailed information available. This section will include evidence from actual regulatory changes and may also include evidence from studies that claim to have regulatory policy implications. There are many studies that claim to have policy implications, but the evidence does not apply directly to regulatory decisions and thus represents the author's opinion only.

The focus of this review will be the most current relevant practices only, so the search strategy will include literature published from 2016 to the present (see appended search strategy). The five-year time period is the standard "recent" time period for "Current Reports" reviews such as in [Current Addiction Reports](#). It will be most valuable to focus on recent regulatory restriction changes—important conclusions from older literature will be captured in more recent work.

The review will be limited to English language jurisdictions and articles available through common academic databases supplemented by grey literature such as research reports.

Scope refinement

This topic is divided into three areas relevant to regulatory decision making: product, place, and provider. In consultation with the Gambling Commission, the following topics will be addressed (as outlined in the project brief):

Product:

Since gambling products take a variety of forms (e.g., online, FOBT, scratch cards, horse racing, etc.), feedback was requested as to the forms which are most likely to lead to regulatory public policy change by government, regulators, and other stakeholders.

Include: online gambling (with special attention to maximum bet and speed of play); scratch cards; lotteries; casino table games; betting/wagering (sport and non-sport); gaming machine placement. These areas have been prioritised as they have the highest participation and/or highest problem

gambling rates in Great Britain.

Exclude: structural characteristics of gaming machine games (e.g., maximum bet, payback percentages, etc.); Bingo

Secondary topics: applications of evidence from land-based EGM restrictions to online gambling environments, only if evidence is insufficient in the areas in the original scope.

Place:

Gambling can take place either online or in a land-based format. Clarification was requested regarding whether to focus on location (e.g., neighbourhood), licensing conditions (e.g., density, number of machines, etc.), or environment (e.g., pub, casino, at home, etc.).

Include: individual licence conditions (i.e., restricting how much gambling one licensee can operate); broader licence conditions (i.e., limiting total number of licensees, density and placement of licensees, etc.); restrictions on volume and placement of gambling advertising in both traditional and online environments. Restrictions on the content of gambling advertisements, including inducements.

Exclude: Restrictions on higher-level placement of gambling venues (i.e. "neighbourhood" restrictions).

Provider:

Gambling is provided through a variety of channels across jurisdictions. Feedback was requested as to whether this should include government, as well as industry owned and operated channels.

Include: any form of privately operated gambling; government operated lotteries and online gambling.

Exclude: Gambling owned or operated by Indigenous Peoples (due to limited relevance in the British context).

SEARCH STRATEGY

Academic and grey literature searches were undertaken for this topic. The search strategy will be included along with a PRISMA flow diagram for inclusion/exclusion of materials.