

Executive summary

This report presents results from the British Gambling Prevalence Survey (BGPS) 2010. This is the third nationally representative survey of its kind; previous studies were conducted in 2007 and 1999. The aims of the BGPS 2010 were to provide data on participation in all forms of gambling in Great Britain, the prevalence of problem gambling, attitudes to gambling and to explore a range of associations with gambling behaviour.

The 2010 study is the first in this series to be conducted after the full implementation of the Gambling Act 2005. Therefore, a further objective was to, where possible, provide some comparisons pre and post implementation of the Gambling Act 2005. Overall, 7,756 people participated in this study.

Participation in gambling activities (Chapter 2)

- Overall, 73% of the adult population (aged 16 and over) participated in some form of gambling in the past year. This equates to around 35.5 million adults. This represents a return to rates observed in 1999 (72%) and an increase from the rate observed in 2007 (68%).
- As noted in previous years, the most popular gambling activity was the National Lottery. In 2010, 59% of adults had bought tickets for the National Lottery Draw, a slight increase from the rates observed in 2007 (57%) but lower than rates observed in 1999 (65%).
- Excluding those who had only gambled on the National Lottery Draw, 56% of adults participated in some other form of gambling in the past year. Comparable estimates for 1999 and 2007 were 46% and 48%. This highlights a significant increase in past year participation on other gambling activities, such as an increase in betting on other events i.e., events other than horse races or dog races with a bookmaker (3% in 1999, 9% in 2010), buying scratchcards (20% in 2007, 24% in 2010), buying other lotteries tickets (8% in 1999, 25% in 2010), gambling online on poker, bingo, casino and slot machine style games (3% in 2007, 5% in 2010) and gambling on fixed odds betting terminals (3% in 2007, 4% in 2010).
- Only one activity showed a large decrease in popularity between survey years. This was football pools (4% in 2010, 9% in 1999). There were some small but significant decreases in the popularity of slot machines (13% in 2010, 14% in 2007 and 1999) and online betting (4% in 2007, 3% in 2010). For all other gambling activities, there was either no significant change between survey years or estimates varied with no clear pattern.
- In 2010, after the National Lottery, the most popular gambling activities were other lotteries (25%), scratchcards (24%), betting on horse races (16%), playing slot machines (13%) and private betting (11%).
- Less than one in ten people took part in each other activity. Estimates ranged from 9% who took part in bingo and betting on sports events to 1% who reported spread betting.
- The prevalence of playing poker in a pub tournament or at a club was measured for the first time in 2010. Overall, 2% of adults reported playing poker this way in the past year.
- Overall, the average number of different activities people participated in within the past year was 1.9 (2.3 for men; 1.6 for women). Male past year gamblers took part in three different activities per year on average (3.0) whereas female past year gamblers took part in just over two different activities (2.3).

How people participated in gambling activities (Chapter 2)

- A core objective of the 2010 survey was to collect more detailed information about how people gamble.
- Overall, 14% of adults had used the internet to gamble in the past year. This included buying lottery tickets online, betting online, playing casino games, bingo or other slot machines style games and playing the football pools online.
- The 2007 survey used a more conservative definition of online gambling. This only included gambling online on casino, bingo or online slot machine style games, betting online or using a betting exchange. In 2010, 7% of adults participated in these activities, an increase from 6% in 2007. This increase was greater among women than men.
- Among past year gamblers, 81% reported that they gambled 'in-person' only, that is they gambled using any offline method, such as placing a bet in a betting shop, visiting a casino or bingo hall, buying lottery tickets or scratchcards in a shop and so on. 17% of past year gamblers had gambled both online and in-person. Only 2% of past year gamblers had gambled 'online only'.
- For most activities which can be participated in both online and offline, the vast majority of gamblers chose to take part in these 'offline'. However, two activities stood out as having a relatively high proportion of online activity; casino games and betting on other sports events. Among those who had played casino games in the past year, 39% had done so online. Likewise, 27% of past year sports bettors reported that they placed their bet online.

Who participates in gambling activities (Chapters 2 and 3)

- Men were more likely than women to gamble overall (75% for men and 71% for women).
- Men were more likely than women to take part in most gambling activities. The exceptions were bingo (12% for women and 6% for men) and scratchcards (25% for women and 23% for men).
- Among women, past year gambling increased from 65% in 2007 and 68% in 1999 to 71% in 2010. Among men, past year gambling estimates were higher in 2010 than 2007 (75% and 71% respectively). However, the 2010 prevalence rates were not higher than those observed in 1999 (76%).
- As in previous years, gambling was associated with age. Past year gambling participation was lowest among the youngest and oldest age groups and highest among those aged 44-64.
- Past year gambling prevalence rates were highest among those who were either married or had been married (75%), respondents who were White/White British (76%), those whose highest educational attainment was GCSEs or equivalent (76%) or had other qualifications (78%), those from lower supervisory/technical households (79%), those in paid work (78%), those with the highest personal income (79% for the 4th income quintile and 76% for the highest income quintile) and those living in the East Midlands (80%).

Gambling involvement (Chapter 4)

- An objective of the 2010 survey was to collect better information about how engaged people were with gambling (termed gambling involvement in this report). This includes measurement of gambling frequency, the number of activities undertaken and broad estimates of money and time spent gambling.
- 59% of people who participated in the National Lottery did so once a week or more often. Only football pools was undertaken with a similar level of frequency; 54% of people who play football pools reported doing this once a week or more often.
- There were five other activities which were undertaken at least once a month by half or more of all participants. These were bingo played in person (54%), casino games played on line (53%), spreadbetting (53%), fixed odd betting terminals (52%), and poker at a pub/club (50%).

- Taking participation in all gambling activities together, past year gamblers took part in gambling, on average, on 93.6 days per year. That is, they tended to gamble more than once a week, but not quite as often as twice a week.
- Past year male gamblers had a higher mean number of gambling days per year than female past year gamblers (115.2 days compared with 71.5 days respectively).
- Those who gambled both online and in-person did so more than twice as often (163.3 days) as those who gambled 'online only' (61.5 days) or 'in-person' only (79.5 days).
- Regular gamblers, those who gamble once a month or more often, were categorised into the following groups:
 - High-time only gamblers (i.e., those who spend a lot of time but not a lot of money gambling),
 - High-spend only gamblers (i.e., those who spend a lot money, but not a great deal of time gambling),
 - High-time/high-spend gamblers, and
 - Non high-time/non high-spend gamblers.
- Overall, 85% of regular gamblers were classified non high-time/non high-spend gamblers, 6% were high-time/high-spend gamblers and 4% each were high-time and high-spend gamblers.
- High-time only, high-spend only and high-time/high-spend gamblers tended to be younger than non high-time/non high-spend gamblers.
- The profile of high-time only gamblers consisted disproportionately of those with the poorest socio-economic indicators. For example, 7% were unemployed. (4 percentage points higher than unemployment rates observed for all regular gamblers (3%)). After the National Lottery, bingo was the most popular activity among this group. This group also displayed a relative preference for playing poker at a pub/club.
- High-spend only gamblers had a varied socio-demographic profile. This group had the highest proportions of graduates (35%) and those in paid employment (70%). Comparative to the high-time only and non high-time/non high-spend groups, this group showed a relative preference for betting on sports events and betting on horse races.
- High-time/high-spend gamblers, like high-time only gamblers, displayed the most adverse socio-economic profile. They were more likely to live in areas of greatest deprivation, live in low income households and be unemployed. This group showed a relative preference for betting on horse races, fixed odds betting terminals and playing casino games.
- All respondents were asked to report whether their gambling involvement had changed in the past year. Overall, 4% of adults reported that their gambling involvement increased, 13% reported that it decreased and 82% that it had stayed the same.
- The main reasons given for changing gambling involvement related to different opportunities to gamble, such as having more or less money, time or gambling opportunities than previously.

Problem gambling (Chapters 5 and 6)

- Two measures of problem gambling were used: the DSM-IV and the PGSI.
- When examining changes in problem gambling prevalence, a number of considerations should be borne in mind. Tests to evaluate statistically significant differences (expressed as being significant at the 5% level or $p < 0.05$) take into account the possibility that observed differences are the result of random sampling error. However, other underlying differences in the responding profile between survey years can also affect estimates.
- DSM-IV problem gambling prevalence was higher in 2010 (0.9%) than in 2007 and 1999 (0.6% for both years). This equates to around 451,000 adults aged 16 and over in Britain. The increase was significant at the 5% level. However, the p-value was 0.049, showing that this increase is at the margins of statistical significance. Some caution should be taken interpreting this result as there may be some other underlying factor affecting estimates between survey years. Where possible, differences between the responding samples were taken into account and the result remained significant at the 5% level

($p=0.046$). Further surveys are needed to examine if this is evidence of an upward trend in problem gambling prevalence or simply random fluctuation in the data.

- Problem gambling prevalence rates as measured by the PGSI did not increase significantly between survey years. Estimates were 0.5% in 2007 and 0.7% in 2010 ($p=0.23$). This equates to around 360,000 adults aged 16 and over in Britain. There is increasing evidence from the BGPS series that the DSM-IV and the PGSI screens are capturing slightly different people and different types of gambling-related problems.
- Problem gambling prevalence rates should be considered alongside the confidence intervals for these estimates. The confidence interval for the DSM-IV estimate was 0.7% and 1.2%. The confidence interval for the PGSI estimate was 0.5% - 1.0%. This equates to somewhere between 342,000 and 593,000 adults according to the DSM-IV and between 254,000 and 507,000 adults according to the PGSI.
- Problem gambling prevalence rates observed in Great Britain, measured by either the DSM-IV or the PGSI, were similar to rates observed in other European countries, notably Germany, Norway and Switzerland, and lower than countries like the USA, Australia and South Africa.
- Problem gamblers were more likely to be male, younger, have parents who gambled regularly and had experienced problems with their gambling behaviour and be a current cigarette smoker.
- DSM-IV problem gambling was also associated with being Asian/Asian British whereas PGSI problem gambling was associated with being unemployed and being in bad/very bad health.

At-risk gambling (Chapter 7)

- Gambling behaviour is increasingly viewed as existing along a continuum, ranging from those who experience no problems with gambling, to those who experience some problems, to those who experience more problems and are classified as 'problem gamblers'.
- The PGSI includes classification of low risk and moderate risk gamblers; a PGSI score of 1-2 and 3-7 respectively.
- Overall, the prevalence of low risk gambling was 5.5% and moderate risk gambling was 1.8%. Men were more likely than women to be both low risk and moderate risk gamblers. This also means that the vast majority of people experience no problems from gambling (92%).
- At-risk (both low and moderate risk) gambling was associated with age, with rates being higher among younger adults and lower among older adults.
- Low risk gambling was associated with having parents who regularly gambled, being a current cigarette smoker, having fair health, drinking over 10 units of alcohol on the heaviest drinking day in the last week, having lower educational qualifications and living in low income households.
- Moderate risk gambling was associated with parental gambling behaviour, being a current cigarette smoker and being Black/Black British.
- There are some parallels with the range of factors associated with problem gambling. Men, younger adults, those whose parents regularly gambled and had experienced problems with their gambling behaviour and current cigarette smokers were all more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers.

Reasons for gambling (Chapter 8)

- A new 15-item scale for measuring reasons for gambling was developed for the 2010 survey.
- The majority of past year gamblers reported that they gambled for the chance of winning big money (83%), because it's fun (78%), to make money (59%) and because it's exciting (51%).

- Reasons for gambling were grouped into five broad areas: enhancement, recreation, social, coping and monetary reasons. Results are presented for regular (at least monthly) gamblers and show that reasons for gambling vary among different sub-groups. Men were more likely than women to report gambling for enhancement (i.e., for excitement or achievement) or coping (i.e., tension relief).
- Older gamblers were more likely than younger gamblers to report gambling for recreation or monetary reasons.
- Those who were Asian/Asian British or Black/Black British were more likely to gamble for enhancement or coping reasons than those who were White/White British.
- Reasons for gambling also varied by gambling behaviour. Those who had gambled on seven or more activities were more likely to report gambling for enhancement, recreation, social and coping reasons than those who gambled on fewer activities. However, they were less likely to report gambling for money than their counterparts who took part in one or two activities.
- Problem gamblers were also more likely than non-problem gamblers to report that they gambled for enhancement, recreation and social reasons. However, gambling for money was not a distinguishing factor between the two groups.

Attitudes to gambling (Chapter 9)

- A shortened version of the Attitudes Towards Gambling Scale (ATGS-8) was developed for the 2010 survey. This contained eight attitude questions.
- The overall sample average for the total scale and for six of the eight questions indicated that attitudes to gambling that were more negative than positive. As in 2007, the average view was that gambling was more harmful than beneficial and should not be encouraged.
- Two exceptions to this showed that, as in 2007, the average person tended to support the view that people have a right to gamble and reject the idea of prohibition.
- Attitudes to gambling were more positive among men and among regular gamblers and were least positive among women, those who were Asian/Asian British or Black/Black British and among non-gamblers.
- Comparisons with 2007 show that overall attitudes to gambling in 2010 have become more positive. Although the overall viewpoint is still somewhat negative, it is less negative than previously; indicating that attitudes are changing.
- Attitudes to gambling have changed the most among those aged 55 and over, whose mean attitudes scores have become somewhat more positive and more in line with the attitudes of younger age groups. This corresponds with an increase in gambling participation among this age group.

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