

Survey data on public perceptions of gambling

January 2010

1 Key findings

- 1.1** The following findings are based on questions commissioned by the Gambling Commission in omnibus surveys conducted by ICM Research. These questions measure how far people in this country think; firstly that gambling is fair and can be trusted and secondly that gambling is associated with criminal activity:
- For the year 2009 (that is, an average of figures from the four quarterly surveys conducted in 2009), 49.6% of the 4,000 adults surveyed agreed that gambling in this country is conducted fairly and can be trusted. This compares with 48.8% in the previous year.
 - Over the same period, 41.3% of the 4,000 adults surveyed agreed with the statement that gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity. This compares with 42.0% in the previous year.
 - Participation in gambling is associated with a more positive perception of gambling, with past-year gamblers more likely than past-year non-gamblers to agree that gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted (60.3% compared with 30.2% respectively) and less likely to associate gambling with criminal activity (38.2% and 46.7% respectively).
 - The category of crime that respondents most associate with gambling is 'Thefts committed by gambling addicts to support their addiction' (14.0% of respondents), followed by 'Money laundering' (7.9%), 'Violent crime' (7.4%) and 'Other serious/organised crime' (7.0%).

2 Introduction

- 2.1** This paper provides information on public perceptions of gambling. It sets out the findings from questions asked through omnibus surveys conducted by ICM Research. This is the first time this information has been published.
- 2.2** Questions monitoring public perceptions of gambling were initially piloted in the surveys from June 2006. These questions were subsequently revised to provide more detail (by distinguishing between gamblers and non-gamblers, and identifying which crimes respondents associated with gambling), to improve respondent understanding and to increase the accuracy of responses. The questions have remained substantially the same since March 2008.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 Each survey is conducted once a quarter with a nationally representative sample (in terms of age, gender, social classification and region) of 1,000 adults (over 18-year-olds). The survey takes place at weekends, and respondents are interviewed by telephone.
- 3.2 In order to minimise sample volatility, all the data contained within this report is shown as annual figures by averaging the results for four quarterly surveys. Thus the four quarter average figures are based on a sample size of 4,000 respondents. The overall sample size is relatively robust, especially when measured on a regular basis over time. Where figures do not add up to 100% it is because respondents refused to answer, answered ‘don’t know’ or were permitted to give multiple responses.

4 The findings

- 4.1 Respondents are asked introductory questions to establish whether they have gambled in the last 12 months. They are then asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statements:
 - In this country, gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted.
 - Gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity.

The full questions are set out in the Annex.

- 4.2 The tables below show the percentage of respondents who agreed (either strongly or slightly) with the above statements. Participation in gambling was associated with a more positive perception of gambling, with past-year gamblers more likely to agree that gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted, and less likely to associate gambling with criminal activity.

Table 1: In this country, gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted

Agree with statement	2008	2009
All respondents	48.8%	49.6%
<i>Gambled in past 12 months</i>	60.7%	60.3%
<i>Have not gambled in past 12 months</i>	35.9%	30.2%

See Annex for base sizes.

Table 2: Gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity

Agree with statement	2008	2009
All respondents	42.0%	41.3%
<i>Gambled in past 12 months</i>	40.3%	38.2%
<i>Have not gambled in past 12 months</i>	44.6%	46.7%

See Annex for base sizes.

- 4.3 Responses to the question ‘what crimes do you yourself associate with gambling?’ have been analysed for those respondents who agreed with the statement ‘Gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity’. Respondents were free to provide any answers they liked for this question, with responses then collated into broad categories. The following table shows the categories of crime that these respondents considered were associated with gambling. The figures, however, are expressed as percentages of all respondents, including those who did not agree there is any association between gambling and criminal activity.

Table 3: What crimes do you yourself, associate with gambling?

Category of Crime	2008	2009
Thefts committed by gambling addicts to support their addiction	12.6%	14.0%
Money laundering	8.8%	7.9%
Violent crime	7.8%	7.4%
Other serious/organised crime	5.9%	7.0%
Other financial crime (excluding money laundering)	4.3%	5.0%
People who run gambling businesses acting illegally	2.5%	2.8%
Criminal organisations illegally influencing sporting events	3.3%	2.4%
Criminal organisations buying and/or operating gambling businesses	2.2%	1.9%
Other	2.4%	3.5%
Crime not specified	10.2%	8.9%

See Annex for base sizes. Figures do not add up to 100% as multiple responses are permitted.

5 Future publications

- 5.1** This data will be published annually, based on an updated sample of 4,000 interviews. The next publication will thus include average figures for the four quarters up to the end of 2010.

Gambling Commission January 2010

Keeping gambling fair and safe for all

For further information or to register your interest in the Commission please visit our website at: www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

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Annex

Survey questions

C1A The next few questions are about gambling: By ‘gambling’ we mean things like: buying lottery tickets or scratchcards, playing the football pools, bingo, online gaming, fruit machines or casino games, or making bets.

Have you spent money on any of these types of activities in the last 12 months?

1. Yes – GO TO C2
2. No – GO TO C1B

C1B¹ Just to check, does that mean that you haven’t gambled at all in the last 12 months, or do you gamble very occasionally, perhaps to buy a lottery ticket, play on a fruit machine, or play games or make bets for money with friends?

READ OUT – SINGLE CODE

1. Very occasionally in the last 12 months
2. No, not at all in the last 12 months

C2 How far do you agree or disagree that....

READ OUT

- A. In this country, gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted.
- B. Gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity.

SINGLE CODE FOR EACH STATEMENT

1. Strongly agree
2. Slightly agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Slightly disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don’t know (Do not read out)

ASK ONLY THOSE WHO CODE 1-2 AT C2(B)

C3 What crimes do you yourself, associate with Gambling? Any others?

Respondents are free to provide any answer they like for this question, with responses then collated into broad categories.

Confidence levels and sample sizes

At a 95% confidence level the margin of error for figures within a 4,000 sample is a maximum of (+/-) 1.55%.

ICM Research interviewed a random sample of 4,027 adults (in 2008) and 4,047 adults (in 2009) aged 18+ by telephone. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults. ICM is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Further information is available at www.icmresearch.co.uk.

¹ This question was introduced in the third quarterly survey of 2008.