

GC Feedback on first draft of prevalence report

The following are points for clarification or suggestions where the drafting could be improved to prevent ambiguity.

General

Use of commas in 1000s.

Naming of the study – are we definitely going with 2006/07

Footnotes – seem to be in two sections. Numbering starts again.

Exec summary

Problem gambling

4th bullet – needs to be clear that this is a proportion of last year gamblers. Would not be clear if sentence taken out of context. **Done**

6th bullet – is associated with the best term here. I just wonder whether what the alternatives are and whether they would prevent a reader assuming a strong positive correlation. **I can't think of an alternative I'm afraid. These things are associated, but we can't infer a causal direction.**

Chapter 1

Section 1.1

Para 2 can this be broken up as currently too long. **Done.**

Section 1.2

Para 1 – there's a 'first' but no second etc. **Done**

Last para page 8 – 'by and large' sounds a bit colloquial. Can we say something stronger? **Changed to 'overall'**

Section 2.1

Para 1 – shorten to Gambling Act 2005 **done**

Para 3 – shorten to Secondly, rather than second major difference. **done**

Section 2.2

Those betting online on line 4% those using a betting exchange 3% do we know how many of these are the same person and those doing online gaming (3%) I.e. how many people gambled online. We'll need to compare this with our ICM data on remote gambling. Sorry this features later – 6%. I think this needs to be included in the exec summary to prevent people adding them together to get 10%. **Added new bullet point to exec summary**

Page 13 paras 1 & 2 – comparisons are ordered as men vs women, but then it switches. Worried that this might confuse. **Comparisons all now consistently ordered**

Para 4 – can we be clear we mean the world cup's immense popularity not betting on it. We could say given the competition's immense popularity? **done**

Section 2.2.3

I wonder whether the second para in this section should make it clear that percentages are of those participating in the particular activities.. A lay reader might read that as all gambling participants if read out of context? **Wording changed to make this clear**

Section 2.2.5

Para 1 - Some of the language in this para is casual. Do we want to say etc? **No changes made, as unclear why this is thought 'casual'. The parag gives examples to illustrate how the table is to be interpreted, and the use of 'etc' seems appropriate in this particular context.**

Fourth para – not sure about the word mention – again sounds casual. We need to be clear that respondents reported doing this activity. **Wording changed**

Table 2.5

The headings from this table will need to repeat if the table is to split across two pages. **OK, this applies also to several tables (eg, table 2.3) in the chapter – will be done before printing, but not changed for this draft.**

Section 2.3.1

Refers to this chapter – should this say this section? **changed**

Page 14 – para 1 – its and who should be removed **done**

Section 2.4.1

Para 4 – last para, last sentence – missing a 'be' **done**

Para 5 – make more clear this is 99 – say 1999 study rather than 'previous' **done**.

Para 8 – make it clear that this is referring to 2006/07 rather than 'this' **done**

Para 8 – questions subjected to not subjecting **changed**

Section 2.4.4

Page 38 para 3 – will stating that something within the report is 'pure speculation' lead to unnecessary criticism? **That sentence dropped**

Section 3.2

First para – use of informant – this seems to be the first use of this term. Should we be consistent and talk about respondents? **Changed throughout to be respondent.**

Page 41 – second para – no full stop at end. **Amended**

Section 3.3

First para – again informant and respondent are used interchangeably. **Changed throughout to be respondent.**

Page 48 - is this the only place that percentage points is used and abbreviated to pp? **It is standard NatCen house style to spell out percentage point (pp) the first time it is used than abbreviate to pp thereafter.**

I think it is worthwhile spelling out if this is the only section this term is used. Can the classifications be given here or in an annex for reference. A lay reader will not be very familiar with them. **The classifications are those that are given in the table. We could provide more detail about how the measure is categorised, but I think this would just confuse a lay reader even more: see the following description given in the glossary of HSE:**

NS-SEC The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) is a social classification system that attempts to classify groups on the basis of employment relations, based on characteristics such as career prospects, autonomy, mode of payment and period of notice. There are fourteen operational categories representing different groups of occupations (for example higher and lower managerial, higher and lower professional) and a further three 'residual' categories for full-time students, occupations that cannot be classified due to lack of information or other reasons. The operational categories may be collapsed to form a nine, eight, five or three category system. The Health Survey for England generally uses the five category system in which respondents are classified as managerial and professional, intermediate, small employers and own account workers, lower supervisory and technical, and semi-routine and routine occupations

Section 3.7

Can we give any more explanation regarding how equivalised household income is calculated, i.e. I assume it's from the info given on individual questionnaires rather than the household questionnaire?

A footnote has been added.

Page 55

Para 1 do you mean lower?

Amended.

Page 58

Is it possible to show past week gambling also? Think we will be asked how many people who consumed 20 units in last week also gambled? Contentious – but we'll be asked I'm sure.

The pattern is the same as last year gamblers. I've added a sentence, with key estimates to show this.

Section 4.1

Para 2 – 'we decided' might need to be explained. Was this part of the NatCen proposal or was it agreed at a later date by the steering group? **Both. Have changed to 'we decided (in discussion with the Steering Group)'**.

Page 64

Fifth bullet – spell out GB **Have changed to 'British'**.

Para 4.5

Where does the 5.0% come from. The table implies this should be 4.5% **Amended**

Table 5.1

If the threshold is 3 or more shouldn't the dotted line be between 2 and 3. It seems misleading at the moment.

There is no dotted line on table 5.1, but we have moved the dotted line the appropriate table in chapter 4.

Section 5.3

First para – bad/very – word missing in relation to health?

Amended

Section 5.6.1

Third para – spelling of perform and separate.

Amended

Section 6.1

The first sentence needs modifying. The direction of change is not controversial to everyone.

Done.

Do we need to say so much about which items were removed and why? I wonder whether this will lead to speculation about why such items were dropped.

There is whole research note provided by ***** detailing why items have been dropped, based on analysis of the pilot data and employing sound statistical techniques. I don't think we need to include this within the report, but maybe if there are queries, this could go on the GC web site (subject to some tidying up). Maybe we should discuss with ***** on Monday?

There seems to be a lot of detail in section 6 – more than I expected. Should some of it be moved to an appendix?

This is the section with which the peer reviewers had fewest comments. It is a new instrument and, as such, it is right that the details of development are presented thoroughly and I think this detail is most appropriately placed within the bulk of the chapter.

Publication issues

I have asked ***** to follow this up with you. However, these are the main areas we need to resolve asap.

Who will format the document?

Who will pdf the document?

Who will proof read the document?

Who will produce printed copies?

Will pdf on web be available as whole document and separate chapters given the length of the report?

****, we haven't done anything with this intro but we are happy for you to make the changes (if you are).

The first British Gambling Prevalence Survey, commissioned by GamCare and conducted by the *National Centre for Social Research*, was conducted in 1999/2000. The findings were reported in *Gambling Behaviour in Britain: Results from the British Gambling Prevalence Survey*¹. An accompanying qualitative study was reported in *Exploring Gambling Behaviour In-depth: a Qualitative Study*². Both the main and qualitative studies were subsequently summarised in the book *Gambling and Problem Gambling in Britain*³.

Since then there have been substantial changes in national gambling policy in Britain, a wide ranging new Gambling Act, rapid development of varied forms of gambling, and a great deal of media attention on the topic. In mid-2001 the much-anticipated report of the government's Gambling Review Body (GRB) was published. The GRB had wide terms of reference. It was asked to consider, "... the current state of the gambling industry and the ways in which it might change over the next ten years in the light of economic pressures, the growth of e-commerce, technological development and wider leisure industry and international trends... [and to consider] the social impact of gambling and the costs and benefits", and to make recommendations. Though set up by the Home Office, the GRB reported to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to which department government responsibility for gambling had been transferred in the meantime. The GRB made 176 separate recommendations. Whilst recognising the dangers of increased problem gambling and the need to protect children and others who might be vulnerable, the recommendations were largely in the direction of relaxing restrictions on gambling that were now considered to be out-of-date. They included, for example, lifting restrictions on the advertising of gambling, licensing and regulating internet gambling, and making it easier to open new casino facilities, including large 'regional' casinos where unlimited prize (category A) gambling machines would be permitted for the first time in the UK. DCMS published their response to the GRB report, *A Safe Bet for Success*, in March 2002 and in July of that year the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee produced their report, *The Government's Proposals for Gambling: Nothing to Lose?*, and the government responded in October. The draft Gambling Bill appeared in 2003 and, after a period of consultation and debate in parliament, the Gambling Act 2005 became law, and will fully come into operation in September 2007. Meanwhile, the Gambling Commission, which under the new Act replaces the former Gaming Board, was constituted and began its work in 2005. Amongst its first actions was the commissioning of the second British Gambling Prevalence Survey which is the subject of the present report.

Although the new Gambling Act is not yet fully operational, there have been considerable changes in the gambling landscape in Britain in the last seven years. For example there has been much publicity about the increased availability of internet gambling sites and it is thought that the numbers of people playing internet poker may have greatly increased. In general, gambling has been continually in the news, and the new Gambling Act has stimulated much controversy, and criticism in many quarters. The view that it will lead to a significant increase in problem gambling is one that is often heard stated. Particularly newsworthy in February 2007 was the choice of one location in Britain which was granted permission to apply for a licence for the one permitted regional casino – controversially granted to an inner-city area of Manchester.

The 2006-07 survey, carried out by the *National Centre for Social Research*, therefore took place in a situation which is fluid as far as gambling in Britain is concerned. It was unknown beforehand whether rates of gambling and problem gambling had increased since 1999. Since the full effects of the Gambling Act 2005 were not yet in operation, it might have been expected that there would have been little increase. On the other hand, because of changes that had taken place in the meantime (for example the increased availability of internet gambling) increases might have been expected. In any case, since seven years has elapsed since the first survey, a new survey was overdue. The government has stated that, in order to monitor the effects of the new Act, a national survey should be carried out every three years from now on.

A number of changes were made for the 2006-07 survey. When enquiring about engagement in different forms of gambling, it was necessary to add a number of new forms, such as playing virtual gaming machines in a bookmaker's, on-line betting with a bookmaker, and use of a betting exchange. Questions about gambling expenditure were modified in an attempt to collect net expenditure (see Chapter 2). An important change from the earlier survey was the choice of screening questions for estimating the prevalence of problem gambling. As explained in Chapter 5, one of the two sets of questions used in the earlier survey has been retained (questions based upon the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association) in order to allow direct comparison with the earlier results. The second set of questions used in the earlier survey (the South Oaks Gambling Screen⁴) had in the meantime gone out of favour internationally, and it has therefore been replaced for the present survey with a new set of questions (the Canadian Problem Gambling Severity Index⁵) which has been showing good evidence of validity⁶. Because of the controversial nature of gambling and gambling policy, public attitudes for or against gambling have been more systematically studied in the present survey.

Specifically, the aims of the 2006/2007 study were to:

- Measure the prevalence of participation in all forms of commercial and private gambling (including estimates of expenditure and information on venue).
- Estimate the prevalence of 'problem gambling' and look at which activities have the highest prevalence of 'problem gamblers'.
- Investigate the socio-demographic factors associated with gambling and with 'problem gambling'.
- Assess attitudes towards gambling.

This report provides the main results of the survey. Chapters 2 and 3 describe participation in gambling activities, Chapters 4 and 5 present results on problem gambling, and Chapter 6 the results of the assessment of attitudes towards gambling