

Gambling participation and problem gambling prevalence

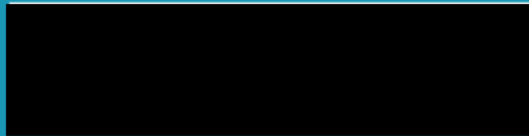
May 2022 update

Research and Statistics

Welcome

- [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Gambling Commission
- Recap of project – [REDACTED]
Gambling Commission
- Pilot survey findings - NatCen
- Questionnaire development and testing – NatCen
- Recommendations - NatCen
- Feedback and questions - Heather Wardle, University of Glasgow

Recap of project



Project stages

Consultation



Stage 1

Methodology pilot

Evaluate impact
of methodology
change

Oct 2021- Mar 2022



Stage 2

Experimental
statistics phase

Continue to test
new methodology
and make survey
improvements

Jul 2022-Jun 2023



Stage 3

Official statistics
and continuous
data collection

Implement new
methodology on a
permanent basis
and report official
statistics

July 2023 onwards

Stage 1 – The Pilot

Questionnaire Review Oct/Nov 2021

- Review existing questionnaires
- PG screens
- Additional questions/topic areas

Stakeholder Engagement Nov 2022

- Engagement Panels
 - Industry
 - Lived Experience
 - Policy and Academics
- Wider consultation survey

Cognitive Testing Jan/Feb 2022

- Testing the survey materials
- Reflect on stakeholder feedback
- 15 test interviews
- Results feed into questionnaire and materials sign off for stage 2

Survey Fieldwork Jan 2022

- 1,000 respondents from across GB
- Push-to-web approach
- Fieldwork of 4 weeks
- Test the survey methodology

Methods pilot report Mar 2022

- Data analysis to assess impact of methodology change on results
- Evaluate success of new methodology and make recommendations for future
- Disseminate findings

Update since Stakeholder Engagement in Nov 2021

- Committed business plan investment for larger annual sample of 20,000 individuals
- Commissioned separate development work on measurement of harms
- Re-commissioned telephone survey for a further 12 months to run alongside experimental stage
- Explored options for new participation question to understand activities and mode of gambling better

Pilot survey findings

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Pilot survey: Design and content

Survey Design

- High quality random probability sampling approach
- Push-to-web methodology
 - 2 adults per household can complete the survey
 - Paper questionnaire included with one of the reminders to ensure people who are not as technologically savvy can respond as well as those without internet access
- 1,000 respondents (pilot phase)
- Full GB coverage
- Questionnaire length of approx. 20 minutes
- Incentive offered for survey completion

Survey Content

- Participation, problem gambling screen
- Gambling harms – own gambling and impact of someone else's gambling
- Key non-gambling metrics e.g., smoking, alcohol use and wellbeing
- Socio-demographic questions, e.g., age, gender, ethnicity and qualifications.
- Selection of softer topics - attitudes to gambling, advertising etc.

Pilot survey: Does the methodology work?

- The pilot was successful in attracting participants and exceeded response rate expectations
 - Address-level response rate: 21% (target 22%)
 - 1,078 adults fully completed the questionnaire (619 online, 459 postal) (target 1,000)
- The postal element improved the representativeness of the overall sample in relation to age and internet usage
- The incentive was cited as a major factor in promoting response
- The mailing strategy to maximise response appeared to work well

Pilot survey: Impact on core estimates?

- The pilot survey produced higher prevalence estimates - both for gambling activities in the previous 12 months and for low or moderate risk or problem gambling - in comparison with both HSE 2018 and the trend-adjusted HSE figures:
 - 54% of HSE 2018 participants reported having gambled in the previous 12 months compared with 63% of those from the pilot survey.
 - Within the pilot survey 1.3% of participants had a PGSI score of 8+ (problem gambling) compared with 0.4% in HSE 2018. Corresponding figures for low-risk gambling (score 1-2) was 7.8% and 2.7% and moderate risk gambling (3-7) was 2.3% and 0.8%.

Pilot survey: Impact on core estimates? (cont.)

- Our analysis highlighted two potential causes of differences:
 1. It appears likely response rates were higher among gamblers than non-gamblers, which in turn may lead to somewhat higher estimates of problematic gambling
 2. It appears that there were differences between the two surveys in the way that survey participants completed the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), with the differences greatest for women

Questionnaire development and testing

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Questionnaire development and testing

- Cognitive testing:
 - 14 cognitive interviews with members of the general public and individuals from lived experience groups recruited through GamLearn and GamFam networks.
 - The aims were to get participants:
 - Reactions to the initial survey invitation and reminder letters
 - Understanding of descriptions of gambling activities used in survey questions, identifying and misunderstandings, ambiguities, missing activities
 - Reactions to the gambling harms' questions, understanding and appropriateness of answer options

Questionnaire development and testing (cont.)

- Summary of findings from cog testing:
 - No serious issues identified with invitation letters or survey questions
 - Invitation letters need some further work to encourage non-gamblers to take part & to refine messaging
 - Some survey questions need further consideration. For example, there is no one way in which people think about gambling activities.

Descriptions of gambling activities need to be clear and it was identified that it is important to make explicit whether activities take place online or offline.

Including explicit descriptions of activities that may not immediately come to mind should also be done, e.g. 'instant win games', 'machines, slots and reel-based games', 'casino games', 'other gambling activities'
 - No issues with reference periods – 12 months & 4 weeks

Recommendations

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Recommendations from Pilot Survey

- The postal follow-up to the online survey should be retained as it improved response and the representativeness of the sample.
- It is clear that there was non-response bias towards non-gamblers but the extent of this cannot be fully understood from the pilot data alone. We recommend that a part of the further work undertaken during the experimental statistics phase is to further understand this bias and make changes to reduce it. Two areas that should be considered for further work are:
 - Conducting split-sample experiments
 - Changing the invite and reminder letters

Recommendations from Pilot Survey (cont.)

- Other recommendations based on findings from the pilot are to:
 - Increase the age of eligibility from 16 to 18 years (only eight individuals aged 16 or 17 took part in the pilot)
 - Retain the mailing strategy as employed in the pilot (i.e. the same number of mailings and gaps between them)

Recommendations from Pilot Survey (cont.)

- In terms of the questionnaires:
 - Content should be carefully considered in order to reduce the average completion time to nearer the optimum 20 minutes
 - There should be more use of multi-code “select all that apply” answer options to reduce participant burden and item non-response
 - Routing in the postal questionnaires should be reviewed to ensure it is clear
 - Hidden ‘don’t know and refusal’ options should be utilised more widely in the online questionnaire. This should reduce the number of questions skipped and hence should help reduce item non-response

Next steps

- Based on these findings, we feel that the push-to-web methodology is suitable for roll out to the experimental statistics stage, subject to further refinement and testing of the methodology.
- During the Stage 2 – Experimental Statistics phase we plan to:
 - Consider optimum sample size for the different phases of experimentation
 - Refine the push-to-web approach
 - Increase understanding of non-response bias towards non-gamblers and make changes to reduce it
 - Develop and test new gambling activity list
 - Test core and modular questions
 - Test questionnaire format/style
 - Consider reporting appropriate trend series, frequency and format i.e. web tool
- Provisional publication date 18 May
- Re-engage with stakeholder groups part-way through experimental phase

Questions / Feedback

Heather Wardle

Feedback

- Any questions on pilot survey findings or cognitive interviews?
- Do you have any feedback about the plans for the experimental stage? Anything else you think should be included in this stage?
- How should we present data from this survey in the future so it isn't compared like for like with previous estimates?
- Any advice to better appeal to non-gamblers?
- How should we manage the competing considerations of ensuring core questionnaire topics are included and concerns about questionnaire length?
- What else can we do to keep you informed about the project?

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