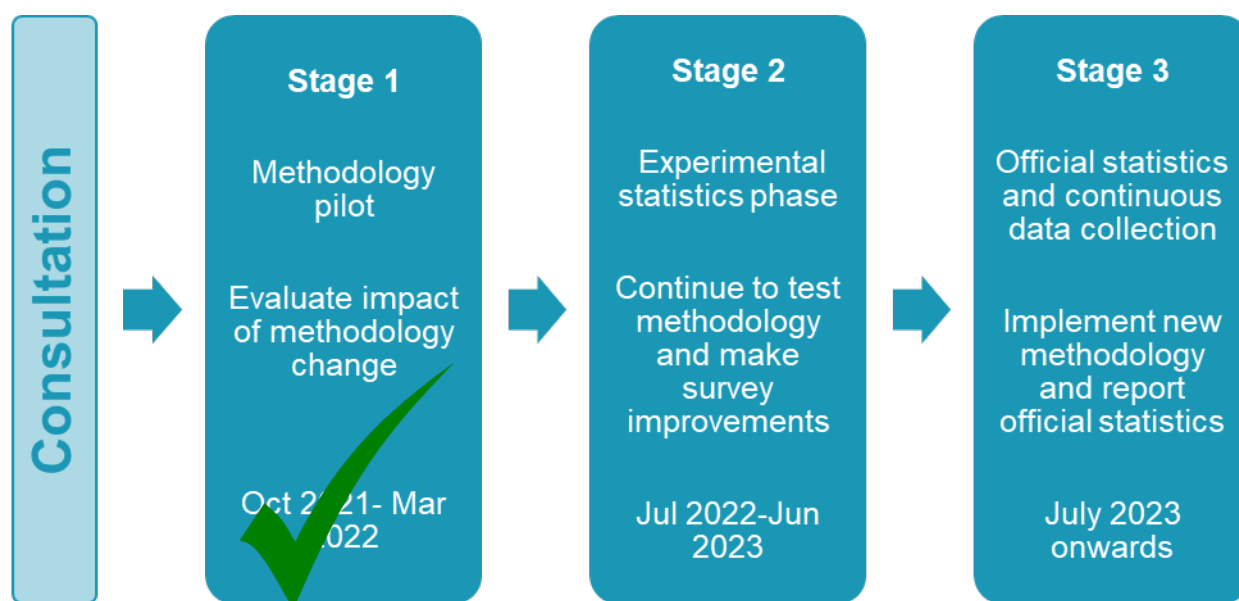


Improving our statistics – gambling participation and prevalence.

Here at the Gambling Commission, we have reached a significant milestone in our [project to improve the way we collect data on adult gambling participation and prevalence](#) of those who experience difficulties or harms through their gambling.

The recently concluded pilot stage of the project, which tested a new way of collecting the relevant data, has been completed with the refreshed methodology being approved as suitable for the next stage. The improved survey will allow us to build a better understanding of consumer gambling behaviours and in turn make effective policy decisions to make gambling even safer.



The new way of collecting data

This pilot involved testing a new push-to-web methodology, using random probability sampling, to measure gambling participation, gambling harms, experience of problem gambling and a range of other related topics among adults aged 16 and over living in Great Britain.

This method contacts participants at random from across the sample area and requests them to contribute online, with an option to complete a paper version of the survey, for those who didn't want to or could not complete online.

This new approach will give us more timely data from a larger sample of people and will improve the quality of the statistics which we rely on for promoting understanding, decision making and evaluating change

We're not alone in making the shift to a push-to-web methodology. Many national surveys, especially in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, are moving to a push-to-web approach - such as the Participation Survey or the Active Lives Survey.

The results of the pilot survey

The report on the survey, which looked at responses from around 1,000 participants, demonstrates the following:

- This new way of collecting the data was successful in attracting participants and generated a good response rate across the whole of Great Britain
- Offering a postal survey completion option is a must – it allows us to be inclusive in our data collection amongst all demographics, and we saw almost 40% of responses returned to us through the postal option
- Given that this is a survey primarily about gambling, it has generated a higher response amongst gamblers than non-gamblers, which is not unexpected.
- The percentage of respondents from the pilot survey who were classified as problem gamblers, according to the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), was higher than the Health Survey for England 2018 estimate. The percentage of 1.3% should not be used as an estimate of problem gambling due to potential bias within this small sample. The rate will be studied in detail through the next 'experimental statistics' phase with more robust sample sizes.

Next steps

The pilot survey has demonstrated that we have a sound base for a methodology and can now move forward into the experimental stage of our project.

In the experimental stage we'll be doing more work to refine the methodology and the survey, including:

- Looking at ways to encourage both gamblers and non-gamblers to complete the survey to ensure a representational spread across people who gamble and people who don't gamble
- Updating questions asked in the survey; stakeholders unanimously agreed that the gambling activities we ask about to effectively measure participation need updating so that's high up on our list of priorities.
- Reducing the survey length to around 20 minutes, we'll be experimenting with varying how often we ask some questions
- Exploring different ways to present the findings so data is easily accessible for all

We're also committing additional investment for the project and will be increasing the sample size for the survey up to 20,000 per annum. This means we will be able to analyse and make use of the data with a much higher confidence in its accuracy.

A survey of this size will also significantly enhance the level of granularity we can achieve in our analysis, especially when looking at problem gambling rates, and make this one of the largest gambling surveys in Great Britain.

In the summer we'll also be publishing an external review of the questions we have developed to measure gambling related harms both amongst gamblers and affected others, alongside analysis of the harms questions that were included in the pilot survey.

You can read more information on the Participation and Prevalence Methodology Pilot in the [full report](#). [LINK]

