

The Welsh Problem Gambling Survey 2018 – Summary

Background

The Commission has a responsibility under the Gambling Act to report on levels of problem gambling in Great Britain. As a result, since 2012 survey questions have been included in the Health Survey for England and the Scottish Health Survey in various years. Unfortunately, the Commission has been unable to secure survey space in the National Survey for Wales (the Welsh comparator for the health surveys). As such the Commission procured a standalone survey of gambling behaviour in Wales to commence in 2015. This was repeated in 2016 and again in 2018, with the same questions that were included in the Health Survey for England 2018.

This summary contains the key findings of the Wales Problem Gambling Survey 2018 and where appropriate makes comparisons to the data from previous Wales surveys and the Health Survey for England 2018. Previous Wales reports can be accessed [here](#) and supplementary tables on gambling from the Health Survey for England 2018 can be found [here](#).

Methodology

The following findings are based on a set of questions commissioned by the Gambling Commission and conducted by Beaufort Research as part of their Wales Omnibus. The Omnibus sample is designed to be representative of the adult population resident in Wales aged 16 and over.

Data collection took place in March, June, September and November 2018 with approximately 1,000 interviews completed per quarter. These interviews provide an overall sample of 4,034. To maximise consistency the same gambling survey questions were asked as in the Health Surveys, with respondents providing data via a self-completion section of the questionnaire utilising CAPI (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) technology. A methodology review was conducted examining the comparability of the Wales Omnibus Survey to the Health Surveys which found that there is a slight potential for bias in Wales due to the fact that survey interviewers are able to select respondents from fairly broad areas and quota specifications. Details of the review can be found in Appendix A of the following [report](#).

Participation questions ask respondents whether they have spent money on gambling activities in the past 12 months. Problem gambling status has been assessed using both the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). Further details on the screens can be accessed [here](#).

Key findings

The table below shows headline participation, low and moderate risk, and problem gambling rates for Wales for 2015, 2016 and 2018 and for England 2018.

Measure	2015 - Wales	2016 - Wales	2018 - Wales	2018 - England
Past year gambling participation	61.3%	54.7%	51.5%	54.0%
Past year gambling participation excl. National Lottery draws only	44.2%	40.4%	37.9%	40.2%
Low-risk gambler	2.6%	2.2%	2.0%	2.7%
Moderate-risk gambler	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%
Problem gambler according to either DSM-IV or PGSI	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%	0.5%
Overall sample size	4,048	4,035	4,034	7,126

*Caution should be applied when making comparison across nations due to differences in methodologies.

Participation in gambling activities in the last 12 months

- In Wales in 2018, 52% of adults aged 16+ had spent money on gambling in the past 12 months. 53% of men had spent money on gambling in the past 12 months compared to 50% of women. This compares to an overall participation rate of 55% in 2016; 58% for men and 52% for women.
- When respondents who have only played National Lottery draws are excluded, the overall gambling participation rate in 2018 was 38%. Participation rates among this group were highest for those aged 25-34 (47%).
- National Lottery draws were by far the most popular form of gambling in Wales in 2018 with participation at 36%. The next most popular gambling products were scratch cards (23%) and other lotteries (15%). A similar pattern was also observed in previous years.
- National Lottery draws and other lotteries were most commonly played by those aged between 45-74. Scratchcards were most popular for those aged 25-34.
- 5% of respondents had participated in any online gambling (excluding National Lottery draws only) in the previous 12 months. Participation peaks in the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups, and then declines with age.
- Rates of online play were highest for males aged 16-24 (15%) and 25-34 (15%).

At-risk gambling and problem gambling

- In 2018, 0.9% of all respondents were classified as moderate-risk gamblers and a further 2.0% as low-risk gamblers. This compares to 1.1% and 2.2% respectively in 2016, which does not represent a notable change over time.
- In 2018, 0.7% of those surveyed were classified as problem gamblers according to either the PGSI or the DSM-IV screening instruments compared to 0.8% in 2016. In 2018, the highest problem gambling rates were seen in males aged 25-34 (2.7%) and males aged 35-44 (2.0%).
- Data for 2018 also shows that problem gambling is most prevalent amongst those who participated in multiple gambling activities. In 2018, 14.0% of those who spent money on seven or more gambling products were classified as problem gamblers, compared to a rate of 0.1% for those who spent money on just one activity.

Those unemployed were more likely to be a problem gambler (2.2%) than those in the other economic activity categories.

- Population estimates show that in Wales, approximately 18,000 people are problem gamblers, 24,000 are moderate-risk gamblers and 52,000 are low-risk gamblers.¹

¹ The upper and lower confidence intervals for these estimates can be found on Table 7 and Table 13 of the main spreadsheet output, accompanying these key findings.