Facts and Figures for land-based gambling in Great Britain

Executive Summary

Gambling in Great Britain is one of the most rigorously regulated sectors of the economy and, for land-based gambling operators on the high street that regulation is doubled with both the Gambling Commission and local licensing authorities having a range of regulatory responsibilities and powers.

The land-based sector pays taxes, provides employment and contributes to local communities by providing gambling facilities which millions enjoy every year, and the vast majority suffer no ill effects.

Industry and local (and national) regulators want well run businesses on their high streets that protect their customers and have social responsibility at the heart of what they do.

The regulated land-based sector is committed to protecting those at risk of harm from gambling.

However misinformation and misrepresentations regarding land-based licensed gambling in Great Britain are being used all too often to undermine the legitimacy of what is for many an entertaining and social way to choose to spend their leisure time.

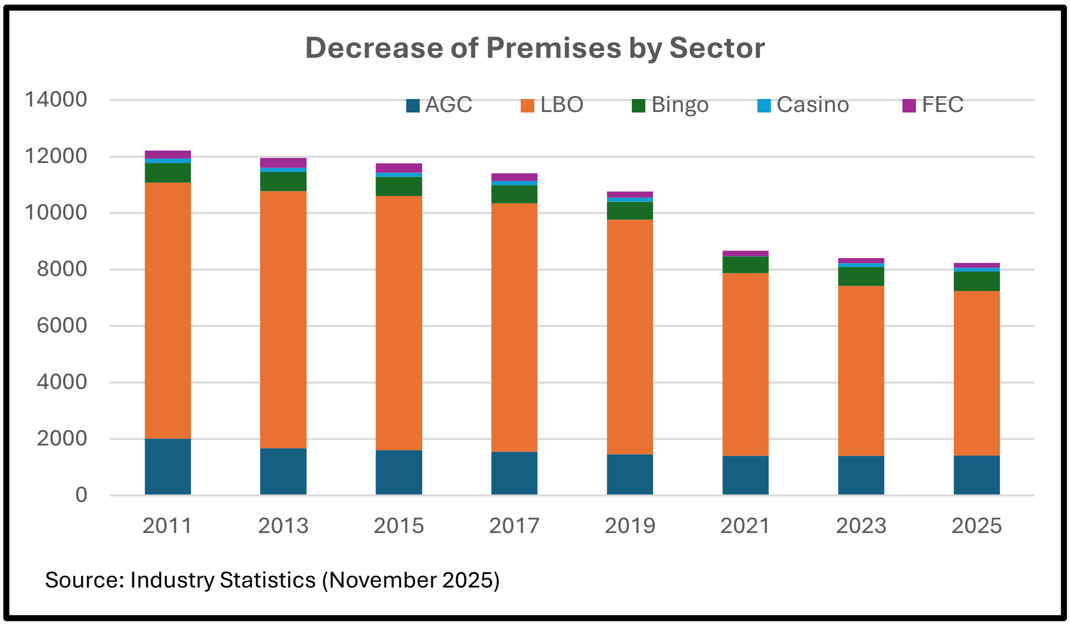
- In March 2025 there were **8,234** premises down from **12,307** in 2011.
- Land based gambling Gross Gambling Yield in 2024/25 **was less than in 2008/09**.
- The most recent Gambling Commission research found the most popular in-person gambling activities are buying tickets for a National Lottery draw (15%) buying a scratchcard (12%).and buying tickets for other charity lotteries (6%).
- The in-person gambling participation rate is **28%** falling to **18%** when lottery draw only players are removed.
- Problem gambling rates **remain statistically stable** (between 0.3 - 0.7%) according to the APMS and Health Surveys for England.

This document expands on these unadulterated facts about licensed land-based gambling in our towns and on our high street.

Sections:

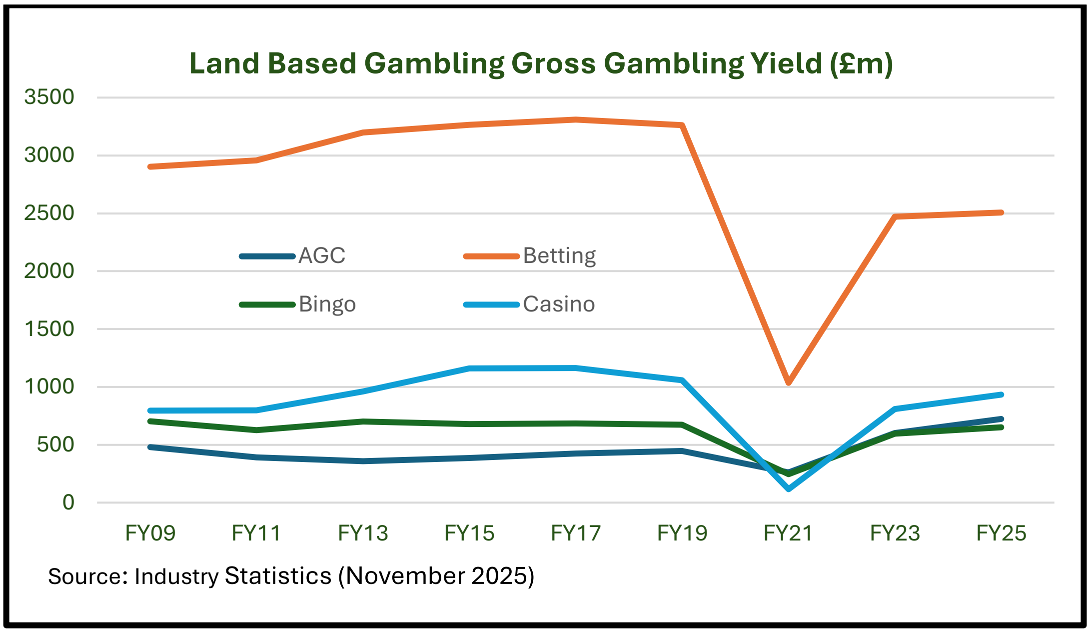
1. Numbers of licensed gambling premises are in decline
2. Consumer spending on land-based gambling has fallen
3. Reasons for changes in machine numbers
4. Gambling participation is down
5. Problem Gambling rates remain statistically stable
6. Under age gambling – the facts

Section 1: Numbers of licensed gambling premises are in decline



- The Gambling Commission's latest Industry Statistics annual report shows there was a combined total of 12,307 AGC, Betting, Bingo Casino and FECs in 2011.
- **By March 2025 that number dropped** across all sectors to a total of **8234** with the largest declines seen in Betting and AGCs.
- In 2024 82,000 people were employed in the gambling sector (both online and land-based) according to the latest DCMS publication.

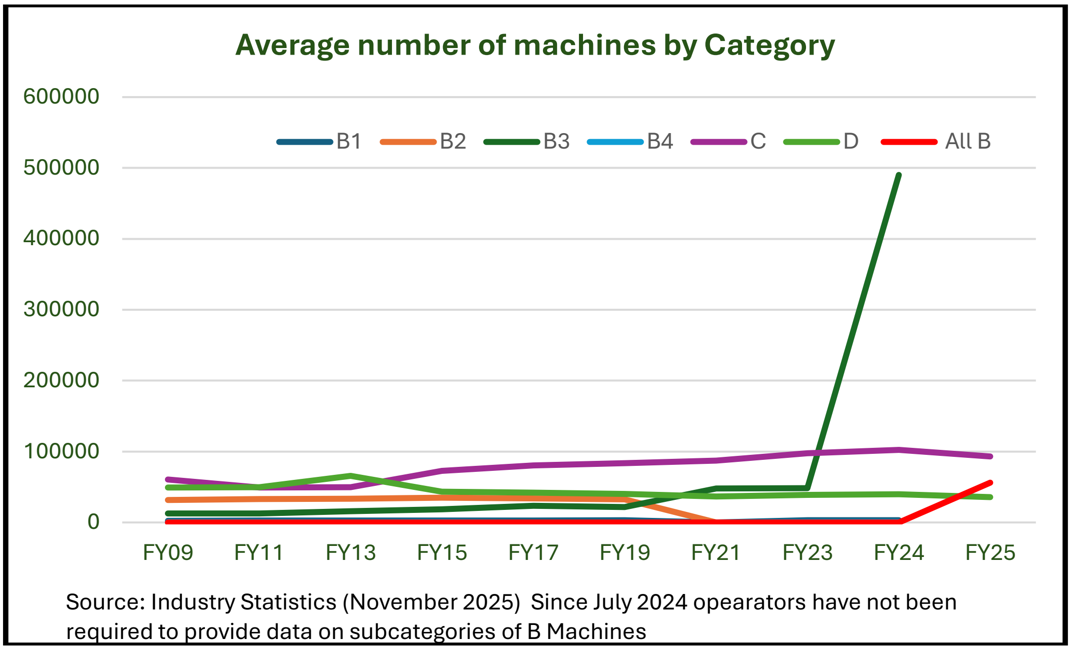
Section 2: Consumer expenditure on land-based gambling has fallen



The Commission's latest industry data shows that total **Gross Gambling Yield** (GGY) for these land-based gambling sectors **in 2024/25** (£4.8bn), whilst increased 3.6% on the previous financial year, **is still less than it was in 2008/9** (£4882.87m), yet over that same 16-year period the average annual rate of inflation was 2.9 (i.e. 46% inflation over 16 years against a drop in GGY) with the population growing by @10%.

GGY fell sharply during the pandemic and whilst it is recovering, the numbers are still below pre pandemic levels, with betting being the largest sector in terms of GGY.

Section 3: Reason for changes in machine numbers



According to the Commission's latest statistics there are just over 185,000 machines in the land based sector spread across different Categories of machines, with Category C machines making up over half that total.

In April 2019 the maximum stake on B2 machines reduced from £100 to £2. This triggered the demise of the B2 machines with betting shops then siting B3 machines instead, which lead to the overall increase in B3 machines at that time.

The growth in Category C machines is due to the 80:20 requirement in AGCs and Bingo premises. This stipulates that no more than 20% of the total machines 'available for use' can be Category B gaming machines. Category C (mainly) or D machines are used make up the other 80%.

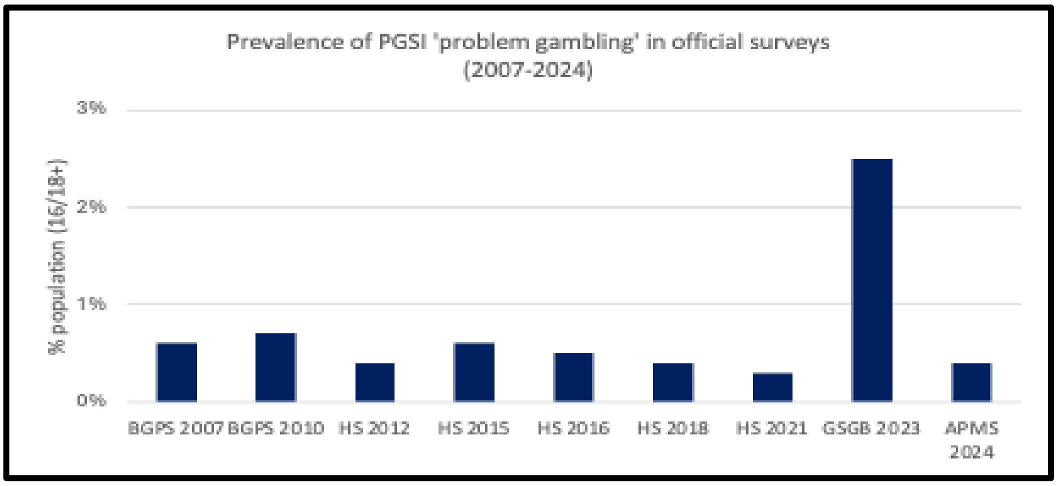
Section 4: Gambling participation is down

In December 2025 the Gambling Commission published its findings from the Gambling Survey for Great Britain Annual Wave 2 April – July 2025 where a nationally representative sample of 4750 adults aged 18 and responded to the survey during the period 7 April – 20 July 2025.

- Overall participation in any gambling activity (in the past 4 weeks) was 47% consistent with the same period in 2024.
- When those who only took part in a lottery draw in the past 4 weeks are excluded from the overall gambling participation rate, **gambling participation falls to 28 percent**.
- The **in-person gambling** participation rate (in the past 4 weeks) was 28%. This falls to **18%** when lottery draw only players are removed, which is also consistent with the previous year.
- The online gambling participation rate (in the past 4 weeks) was 38%. This falls to 17% when lottery draw only players are removed.
- The **most popular in-person gambling** activities in the past 4 weeks were buying tickets for a National Lottery draw (15%); buying a scratchcard (12%) or buying tickets for other charity lottery draws (6%).
- The statistics highlight the large proportion of players that only gamble on lottery draws (whether on line or in person).

The Commission states that the GSGB "*should not be used to provide direct comparisons with results from other gambling or health surveys, because differences in survey design, methodology, and sampling can lead to misleading comparisons. Nor should it be used to as a measure of addiction to gambling.*"

Section 5: Problem Gambling rates remain statistically stable



BGPS – British Gambling Prevalence Survey (National Centre for Social Research), APMS - Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Study (NHS),Health Surveys (NHS) Telephone Surveys (GC)

- Since 2007 the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) has been used to estimate the population prevalence of problem gambling in GB. Data collected via the NHS Health Surveys showed rates were consistently in the range of 03.%-0.7% over that period.
- The Gambling Survey for Great Britain (GSGB) Year 2 report, which first started collecting data in July 2023, reports a rate of 2.7% - ten times higher than the figure reported in the NHS "Health Survey" for England in 2021, BUT there are serious

questions over the reliability of the GSGB number, and the methodologies used are very different.

- Professor Patrick Sturgis of the London School of Economics and Political Science, in his evaluation of the GSGB in 2024, highlighted the risk that the **GSGB substantially overstates rates of harmful gambling**.
- The Commission published guidance states that the GSGB **should not be used** to provide direct comparisons with results from other gambling or health surveys due to the different methodologies used.

In May 2025 the Office for Statistics Regulation's (OSR**)** undertook a compliance review to assesses the GSGB statistics against the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The OSR's 9 recommendations included that the Gambling Commission should:

- *clearly communicate to users within the statistical releases the potential biases that may affect the GSGB estimates, the possible impact of these, and Professor Sturgis' conclusion regarding the risk that the statistics potentially overestimate some gambling behaviour; and*
- *do more to investigate the coherence and comparability of GSGB statistics with other relevant data, such as from the Health Survey for England and the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey that will be published later in 2025 and communicate these findings to users.*

In June 2025 the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) Survey of Mental Health & Wellbeing, England (2023/24) was published**.** Chapter 7 of this report, focuses on gambling behaviour, with some of the key findings being:

- Overall, 1.6% of adults experienced at least moderate risk gambling (PGSI score of 3+). **0.4% of adults experienced problem gambling** (as indicated by a PGSI score of 8+). ***This is significantly lower the GSGB's 2.7% and not dissimilar to the NHS Health Survey evidence.***
- Most experiencing moderate risk gambling had never used services or support specifically related to gambling. Whereas 25% of adults with a PGSI score of 3+ had used some form of gambling-specific treatment or service.

Section 6: Under age gambling – the facts

The Commission's most recent official statistics about young people's exposure to and involvement in gambling, Young People and Gambling November 2025 collected data from pupils aged 11 – 17 years old and found:

- 30% of those surveyed had spent their own money on any gambling activity in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.
- The most common types of gambling activity were legal or did not feature age restricted products, namely:
    - Penny pusher/claw grab arcade machines (21%)
    - Placing bet for money between friends or family (14%)
    - Playing cards for money with family or friends (5%)
- 6% of those who had gambled had spent their own money on regulated forms of age restricted products (the same as 2024).
- The proportion of young people participating in unregulated gambling increased from 15% in 2024 to 18% in 2025.