

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.

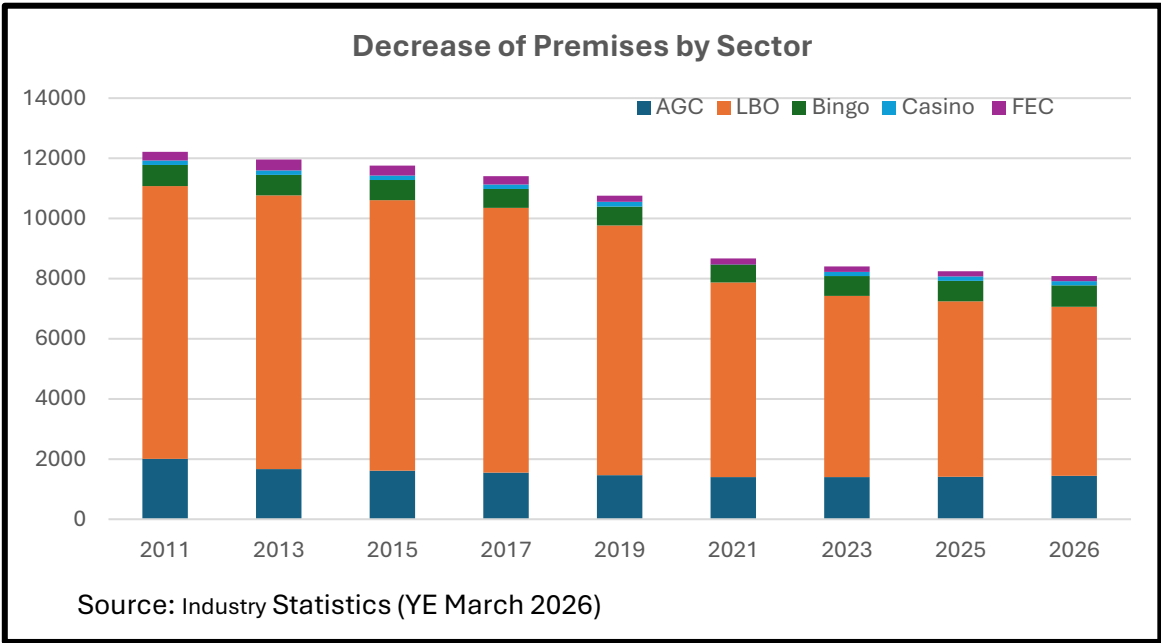
- In March 2026 there were **8,081** premises down from **12,307** in 2011.
- Land based gambling Gross Gambling Yield (GGY) in 2025/26 **was similar to GGY 17 years earlier in 2008/09**.
- The most recent Gambling Commission research found the most popular in-person gambling activities over the past 4 weeks are buying tickets for a National Lottery draw (15%) buying a scratchcard (13%) and buying tickets for other charity lotteries (6%).
- The in-person gambling participation rate is **29%** 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:

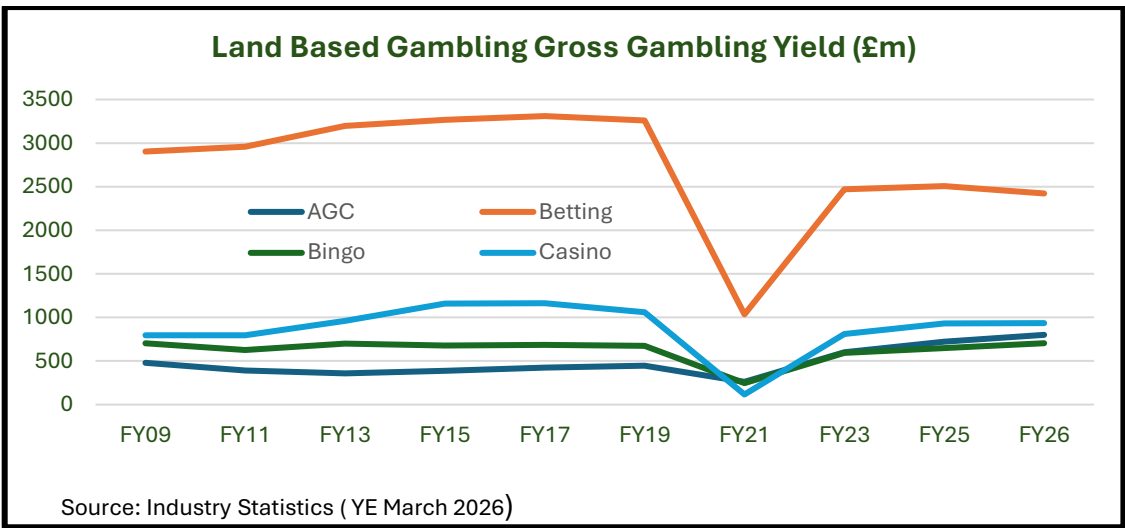
1. Numbers of licensed gambling premises are in decline
2. Consumer spending on land-based gambling has fallen
3. Reasons for changes in machine numbers
4. Gambling participation is down
5. Problem Gambling rates remain statistically stable
6. Under age gambling – the facts

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 2026 that number dropped** across all sectors to a total of **8081** with the largest declines seen in betting.
- In 2024 82,000 people were employed in the gambling sector (both online and land-based) according to the [latest DCMS publication](#).

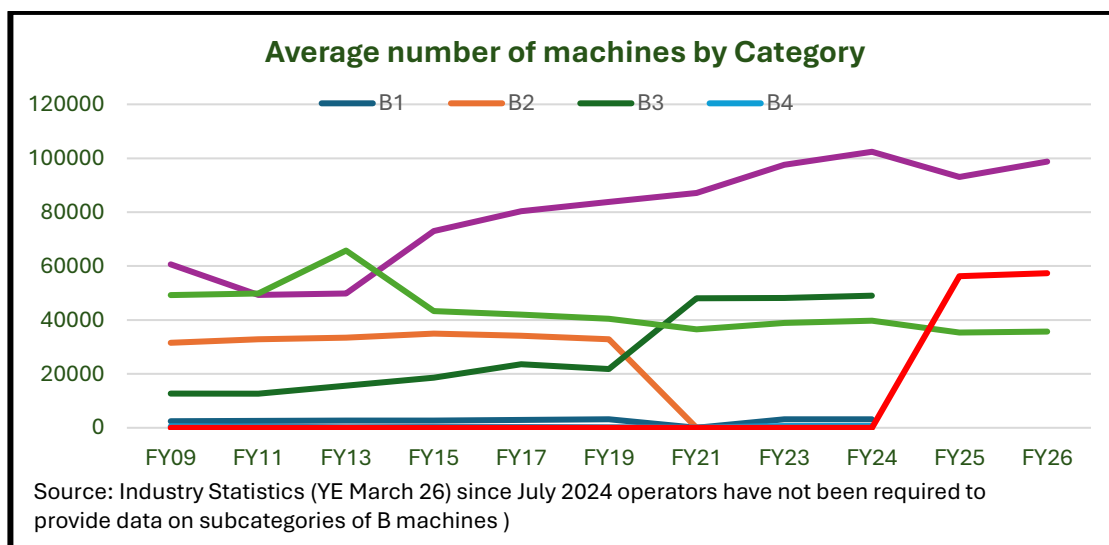
Section 2: Consumer expenditure on land-based gambling the same as 2008/09



The Commission's [latest annual industry data](#) shows that total **Gross Gambling Yield** (GGY) for these land-based gambling sectors in **2025/6** (£4.9bn), whilst increased 1.1% on the previous financial year, **is equivalent to what it was in 2008/9** (£4882.87m), yet over that same 17-year period the average annual rate of inflation was 2.9 (i.e. 49% inflation over 17 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 annual statistics](#) there are just @192,000 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

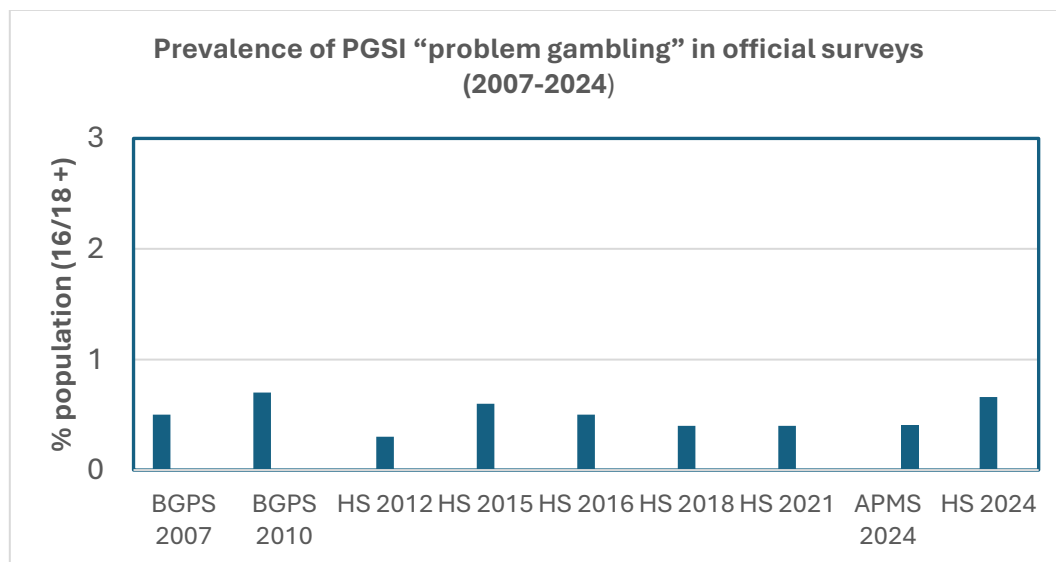
In September 2026 the Gambling Commission published its participation data for the latest [Wave of the Gambling Survey for Great Britain](#) where a nationally representative sample of 5277 adults aged 18 and over responded to the survey during the January 2026 - May 2026.

- Overall participation in any gambling activity (in the past 4 weeks) was **49%**.

- 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%**. Approximately one fifth of adults in Great Britain only took part in lottery draws (either National Lottery or other charity lottery draws) in the past 4 weeks.
- The **in-person gambling** participation rate (in the past 4 weeks) was **29%**. This falls to **18%** when lottery draw only players are removed.
- The online gambling participation rate (in the past 4 weeks) was 39%. This falls to 16% 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 (13%) buying tickets for other charity lotteries (6%).

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)

- 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 have consistently been in the range of 0.3%-0.7% over that period.
- Two of the most recent reports using the PGSI are:
 - The [Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey](#) (APMS): Survey of Mental Health & Wellbeing, England (2023/24) was published in June 2025 **indicating a problem gambling rate of 0.4 %**. Problem gambling remains a relatively rare mental health condition, one of the least report conditions in the APMS.

- The [NHS Health Survey for England report](#), published in January 2026, identified **0.66% of adults experienced problem gambling** (as indicated by a PGSI score of 8+).
- In contrast the Gambling Commission's Gambling Survey for Great Britain (GSGB) has reported rates of 2.5% (GSGB 2023) and 2.7% (GSGB 2024) and 2.4% (GSGB 2025) - significantly higher than the 2024 NHS "Health Survey" for England, BUT evidence has shown conclusively that the GSGB over-reports gambling participation and cannot be considered reliable.
- The GSGB has been criticised by a number of leading experts, including economists, Bill Robinson and Professor David Forrest; as well as Professor Patrick Sturgis from the London School of Economics. Professor Heather Wardle, a leading advisor to the Gambling Commission, has also advised that topic salience bias is likely to lead to over-reporting.
- 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 a recommendation that:

"The Gambling Commission should apply more prominent disclaimers to the GSGB to highlight uncertainty of estimates."

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.