

Gambling Harms in Scotland

In the 2017 Scottish Health Survey, **63%** of Scottish adult respondents had spent money on gambling in the last year, excluding National Lottery only gamblers, **45%**.^[1,2]



National Lottery, other lotteries and scratchcards were the **most popular** gambling activities.



12% of respondents took part in **4 or more** activities.

Younger people, men and people living in the most deprived areas were **more likely** to experience a gambling problem. Gambling problems were associated with harmful drinking and mental health problems.

People move in and out of being at risk of or experiencing gambling problems. For up to half of all people in surveys that report experiencing severe gambling problems, these problems are new.^[3]



0.8% of respondents reported gambling to an extent that disrupted or damaged their life. A further **3.6%** were estimated to be **'at-risk'** of gambling to this extent.



For every person experiencing a gambling problem, on average **6** other people in their life will be negatively affected.^[4]

An estimated **7%** of the population are 'affected others'. Women are **more likely** to be an 'affected other' than men.^[5]



At population level, the burden of harm lies with people affected by someone else's gambling.



A higher proportion of 11–16 year olds reported spending their own money on gambling in the last week (**11%**) than on e-cigarettes, tobacco or illegal drugs. An **estimated 1.7%** of young people are thought to be experiencing problems from their own gambling at any given time, with a further **2.7%** 'at risk'.^[6]

Gambling harms are the adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society.^[7]

Health and wellbeing

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sleep problems
- Shame and stigma
- Suicide
- Physical ill-health
- Substance misuse
- Alcohol misuse
- Early death



Relationships

- Strained / exploited
- Loss of trust
- Separation / divorce
- Domestic violence
- Neglect
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Social isolation
- Cultural harm



Resources

- School drop out
- Work absenteeism
- Job loss and unemployment
- Financial insecurity
- Debt / bankruptcy
- Use of food banks
- Rent arrears
- Homelessness
- Criminality



Estimating the true cost of gambling harms is difficult. Recently the excess economic costs of harmful gambling in England were conservatively estimated to be



Gambling harms are **not** experienced equally. People experiencing gambling problems may face multiple disadvantages that can mask gambling as a problem; gambling can exacerbate disadvantage.

! Anyone can experience harm at **any time**, but some people and groups are more vulnerable to harm than others^[8,9]:

- Children, young people
- Students
- People who have had ACE
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- People who are immigrants
- Military veterans
- People who are homeless
- People who are unemployed
- People in financial hardship
- People living in deprived areas
- People with offending behaviours
- People with intellectual impairment
- People with mental health issues
- People with substance/alcohol misuse
- Gamblers seeking support

[1] Scottish Health Survey. Gambling Commission, Birmingham, UK. 2018; [2] Scottish Health Survey 2017; [3] Billi R, et al. The Victorian gambling study: a longitudinal study of gambling and health in Victoria 2008–2012. Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2014; [4] Goodwin BC et al. A typical problem gambler affects six others. International Gambling Studies 2017; [5] B Gunstone, K Gosschak. Gambling Treatment and Support. YouGov for GambleAware. 2020; [6] Young People and Gambling 2019: A research study among 11–16-year olds in Great Britain. Ipsos Mori for the Gambling Commission, 2019; [7] Wardle H et al. Measuring gambling-related harms: a framework for action. Gambling Commission. 2018; [8] Gambling Related Harms evidence review. PHE. 2021; [9] Rogers RD et al. Framing a public health approach to gambling harms in Wales: Challenges and opportunities Bangor University, Wales. 2019.