

Summary of Gambling White Paper

High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age

Statutory gambling operator levy

The first statutory gambling operator levy will replace the current voluntary levy. Its proceeds will be ring-fenced for funding for research, education and treatment, including through the NHS. The levy will be collected by the Gambling Commission and spending will be approved by the government

New online stake limit

A new stake limit for online slots will be introduced with the default maximum stake of between £2 and £15 per spin, subject to consultation. As it stands there is no limit on bets for online slots whereas in-person slot machines in pubs, arcades, bookmakers have a limit of £2 and casinos have limits of up to £5.

Player protection checks

In a move aimed at supporting those who may be suffering harm or in the grip of addiction, gambling operators will now be required to do more to protect customers. Betting companies will be required to conduct seamless player protection checks on the highest spending gamblers to check they're not incurring harmful losses.

New powers for the Gambling Commission

New powers will be given to the Gambling Commission to tackle and block unlicensed black market gambling firms from operating in the United Kingdom.

Restricting bonus offers

The call for evidence showed that while millions of people enjoy an occasional bet every year without issue, particular groups such as those suffering addiction and harm, are at greater risk from certain aggressive advertising practices. Bonus offers, such as free bets or spins, can drive harmful behaviour and trigger people to spend more than they intended. The Gambling Commission will take a closer look at how bonuses are constructed and targeted to prevent them being used in harmful ways and its work will inform new rules to stop dangerous practices.

Horseracing levy

The knock-on impact of the gambling White Paper on the horseracing industry will be minimal, but there will be a review into the current horserace betting levy to make certain racing continues to be appropriately funded for the future.

Other measures

The following additional measures were also encompassed:

- Remove loopholes to prevent under-18s from accessing any form of online gambling, cash prize fruit machines or widely accessible scratch-cards.

- Review of online game design rules to look at limiting speed of play and other characteristics which exacerbate risks.
- Consult on making 'Think 25' rather than 'Think 21' the ordinary code expectation for all land-based licence holders.
- Consult on extending the duty in the Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice (LCCP) to require test-purchasing by small operators in licence fee categories A and B, to ensure all land based venues are subject to the same age assurance processes.
- Explore through consultation the evidence around premises where there is not normally direct staff supervision (such as AGCs in service stations). It will explore the extent to which existing requirements and industry actions support delivery of our desired regulatory outcomes, including the prevention of underage gambling
- Bring the local authority licensing regime into line with that for alcohol by legislating to introduce a formal system of cumulative impact assessments (CIAs), when Parliamentary time allows.
- Consult on raising the cap for the fees licensing authorities can charge adult gaming centres, betting premises, bingo premises, casinos and family entertainment centres for premises licences.