

# GambleAware

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

**GambleAware publishes a follow-up study of loyalty card holders that adds new information to our knowledge of problems associated with machine gambling**

**London 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017:** New research, funded by GambleAware, suggests that the gambling industry should carefully consider what actions they should take to further prevent particular vulnerable groups from experiencing harm.

The study, conducted by NatCen and Dr Heather Wardle, is a follow-up to a 2014 study of holders of bookmakers' loyalty cards, commissioned by GambleAware as part of a programme of research looking at users of machines in bookmakers.

Researchers found that people generally thought to be more vulnerable to gambling-related harm were those more likely to become problem gamblers or to increase their Problem Gambling Status Index (PGSI) scores (those with low-incomes or from non-White backgrounds). This both exacerbates existing inequalities and highlights the importance of focusing preventative action and policies in these groups.

To date, policy makers have tended to focus on comparing prevalence rates over time to assess how gambling behaviour is changing. When looking at prevalence rates alone, trends in gambling behaviour and gambling problems can appear stable. However, this study found that change in patterns of behaviour over time is the norm, with gamblers increasing or decreasing their engagement over time, as measured by the number of activities undertaken or the frequency of play. A small proportion of participants (6%) became problem gamblers between the two studies, but a slightly larger proportion (9%) were problem gamblers in the earlier study but no longer so at follow-up. Overall, just over half (54%) maintained the same status over time, but a substantial minority changed how they were categorised according to the PGSI.

**Elizabeth Fuller, lead researcher at NatCen** said:

"This research demonstrates how gamblers can change their patterns of play over time, and that individuals' problem gambling scores can decrease as well as increase. It should be a matter of concern that the risks of problem gambling are concentrated in particular vulnerable groups in society."

**Marc Etches, Chief Executive of GambleAware** said:

"Despite the innovation in the industry over the last twenty years, prevalence rates for problem gambling have appeared to be relatively stable. However, this may well disguise significant behaviour change among some individuals and so this study of

behaviour over time is important. We are planning to commission more longitudinal studies in the future.”

**-ENDS-**

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**NOTES**

- The report is available on the GambleAware website:  
<http://about.gambleaware.org/research/research-publications/>
- The study sample included 3738 participants in the 2014 survey who had given permission for further contact. 1552 individuals took part in the survey, a response rate of 42%.
- Problem gambling was measured using the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). Based on responses to nine questions, participants are given a PGSI score between 0 and 27. A score of 0 is classified as non-problem gambling, a score of 1-2 is low risk gambling, 3-7 is moderate risk gambling and 8 or more is classified as problem gambling.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust operating as GambleAware is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry, GambleAware funds education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. The aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling, and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support. Click here to find out more: <http://about.gambleaware.org/>
- GambleAware aims to raise a minimum of £10 million each year in voluntary contributions from the gambling industry operating in Great Britain. This donation based system was proposed under the Gambling Act 2005 and is prescribed by the Gambling Commission in its Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice.
- GambleAware's programme of treatment, education, harm prevention and research are guided by the National Responsible Gambling Strategy, which is defined by the independent Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The RGSB, the Gambling Commission and GambleAware work together under the terms of an agreement in place since 2012: <http://about.gambleaware.org/media/1216/statementofintent.pdf>.
- Research is conducted under the terms of a 'Research Commissioning and Governance Procedure' agreed in 2016 by the RGSB, the Gambling Commission and GambleAware: <http://about.gambleaware.org/media/1270/research-commissioning-and-governance-procedure-may-2016-final.pdf>.