

GambleAware Stigma Polling

**Key findings
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Stigma 2 Polling: Key Findings

Overview

Introduction

GambleAware commissioned Ipsos to undertake survey research to inform the launch of the second burst of their stigma reduction campaign. The questions explore the extent to which stigma is a barrier to those experiencing gambling harm from opening up, and also uncovers the motivations and experience of those who do open up about their problems to someone. This is an important area as stigma is a significant barrier to accessing support among those experiencing gambling harms¹.

Technical note

Ipsos surveyed 4,207 adults aged 18-75 across Great Britain through the Ipsos iSay online panel. The fieldwork dates were 13th - 18th October 2023. The data was weighted to the known adult population of Great Britain, by age, gender and work status.

The Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI)² was used as a measure of gambling problems, with a follow up question asked of those who no longer gamble, or haven't experienced problems in the last 12 months, to identify those who had EVER experienced any level of problems. This method was used to capture a broad understanding of the experiences and attitudes towards opening up about gambling among both i) people who are currently or have recently experienced problems associated with gambling, and ii) those who have experienced problems longer than 12 months ago. The standard PGSI questions were also included for consistency with other GambleAware studies, and to ensure the ability to evaluate opinions across different key PSGI groups.

Audience	% of total sample	Sample size (n, unweighted)
General public	100%	4,207
Those who have gambled in last 12 months	65%	2,694
Those who have EVER experienced problems from gambling (includes those who have not gambled in the last 12 months)	27%	1,083
PGSI 8+ (experiencing 'problem gambling')	10%	410
PGSI 3-7 (experiencing a 'moderate level' of problems from gambling)	6%	252
PGSI 1-2 (experiencing a 'low level' of problems from gambling)	8%	333
PGSI 1+ (experiencing at least a 'low level' of problems from gambling)	24%	995

¹ GambleAware, 2023. Campaigns to reduce the stigma associated with gambling harm. Available from:

[https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2023-](https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Summary%20of%20background%20research%20and%20data%20insights%20for%20stigma%20reduction%20campaign_0.pdf)

[04/Summary%20of%20background%20research%20and%20data%20insights%20for%20stigma%20reduction%20campaign_0.pdf](https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Summary%20of%20background%20research%20and%20data%20insights%20for%20stigma%20reduction%20campaign_0.pdf)

² Gambling Commission, 2021. Problem gambling screens. Available from: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/publication/problem-gambling-screens>

PGSI 0 (experiencing no problems from gambling)	41%	1,699
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Key Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that more action should be taken to reduce the stigma around gambling harms and encourage those who have experienced problems from gambling to open up. Opening up includes speaking to someone in any capacity, both informal conversations with friend/family as well as seeking formal support. Few have spoken to someone about the problems they have experienced; those who have opened up felt better for doing so and often wished they had spoken to someone sooner. There is often a delay in opening up, with concerns around stigma and discrimination key barriers to having a conversation.

The survey also shows broad support among the public for greater regulation of gambling advertising and sponsorship, and suggests that greater scrutiny is needed over the role sporting events and gambling advertising plays in prompting people to gamble. The data also shows that those who are experiencing 'problem gambling' are more susceptible to be prompted to gamble by external factors, particularly adverts, and are more likely to feel that gambling adverts are inescapable. Support for changes to the way advertising is regulated is consistent across social media and TV, and is particularly strong for regulating the promotion of gambling logos on sports kit and games played by children.

The survey also finds that public perceptions on the addictiveness of different types of gambling products are consistent with those who have gambled in the last 12 months. Most adults consider various forms of gambling activity to be at least fairly addictive.

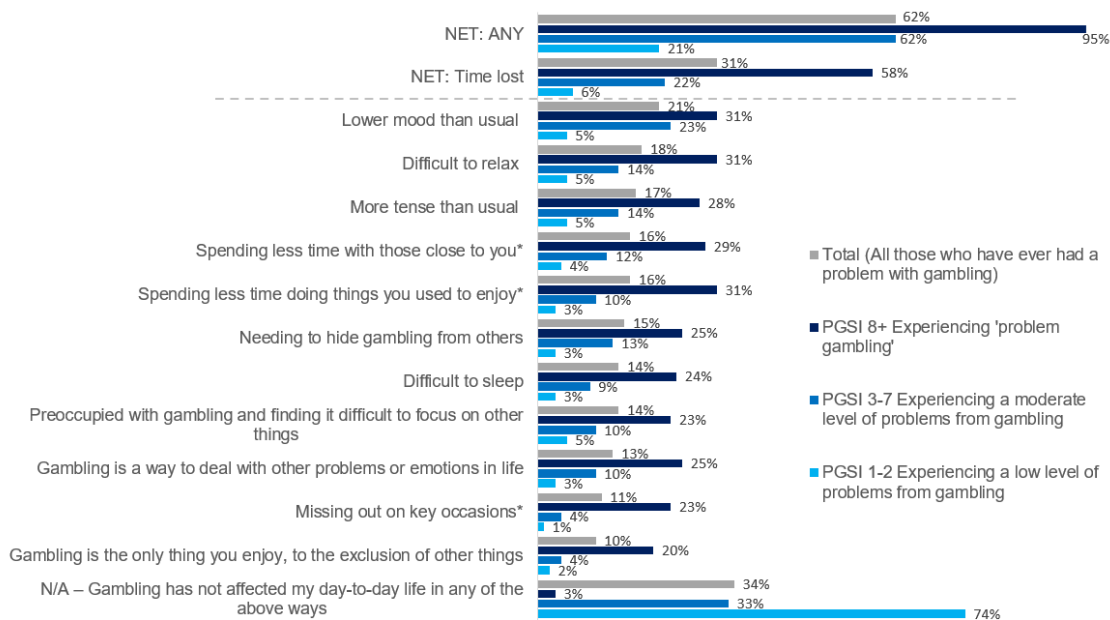
Experience of gambling problems

1.1 Those experiencing problems from gambling experience more than just finance related issues

Three in five (62%) of those who have ever experienced a problem related to gambling have been negatively affected on a day-to-day basis as a result of gambling. The most common ways were being in a lower mood than usual (21%), having difficulties relaxing (18%), and feeling more tense than usual (17%).

Around a third (31%) of those who have ever experienced problems from gambling reported feeling that they have lost time to gambling, a figure which increased to almost three in five (58%) for those experiencing 'problem gambling' (i.e., score 8+ on the PSGI). Experiencing loss of time includes spending less time doing the things they used to enjoy (31%), spending less time with those close to them (29%), and missing out on key occasions (23%).

QLIFE. Which, of the following ways, if any, has gambling ever affected you in your day-to-day life?



QLIFE: All adults who have ever had a problem with gambling, Base: Total = 1,083, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 410, PGSI 3-7 Experiencing a moderate level of problems from gambling = 252, PGSI 1-2 Experiencing a low level of problems from gambling = 333.

*Options that are included in NET: Time lost

**Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

Barriers to discussing gambling problems

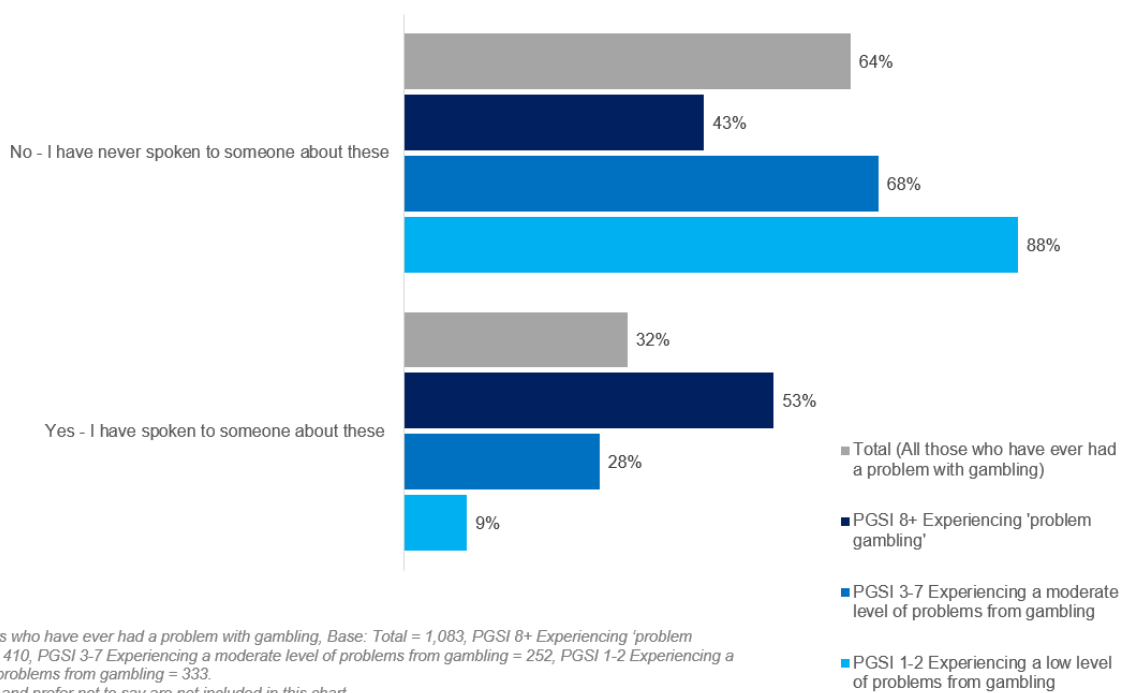
1.2 Most experiencing problems with gambling have not spoken to anyone about it

Over three in five (64%) of those who have ever experienced a problem with gambling say they have not spoken to anyone about it, while just under a third (32%) claim to have opened up about their experiences by speaking to someone.

Those with higher levels of problems (denoted by higher PGSI scores) were more likely to have spoken to someone about it. Around one in ten (9%) of those experiencing a lower level of problems (PGSI 1-2) had spoken to someone about it, rising to just over half (53%) among those experiencing 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+).

As this was the core question for the survey, an exploration of core demographic groups showed that certain communities were more likely than the average to not have spoken to someone. These included women (73%), those aged 45 or over (78%), those with a lower socioeconomic grade of DE³ (73%), those who live in rural areas (77%). However, it is challenging to say whether this is due to other factors (e.g., levels of PGSI vary across all groups which has a large impact on whether they had talked about it).

Q1. Have you ever spoken to someone about problems such as these as a result of your gambling ?



Q1. All adults who have ever had a problem with gambling. Base: Total = 1,083, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 410, PGSI 3-7 Experiencing a moderate level of problems from gambling = 252, PGSI 1-2 Experiencing a low level of problems from gambling = 333.
 *Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

1.3 Stigma is a key barrier to opening up about problems with gambling

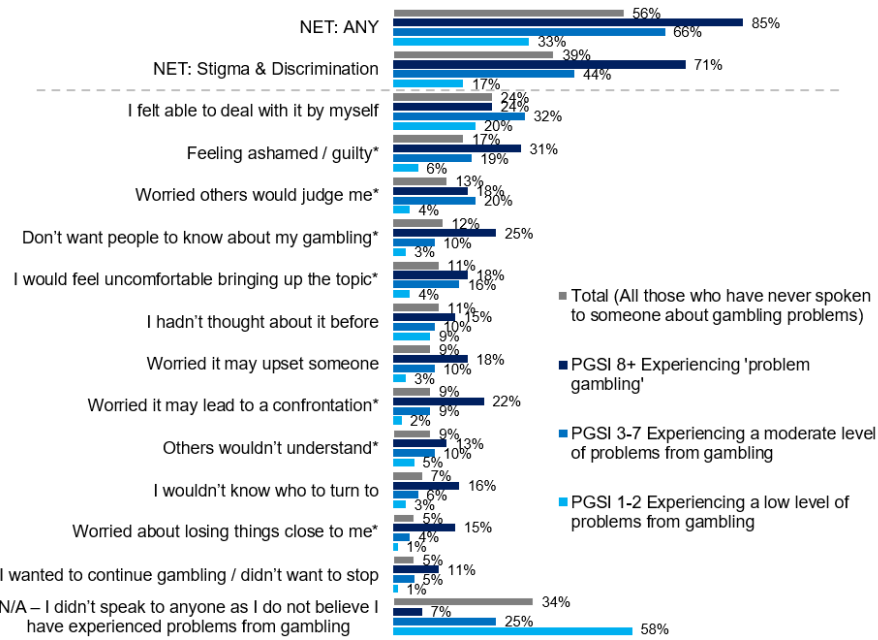
Among those who have experienced any problem with gambling and did not to speak to someone about it, nearly two in five (39%) said this was due to concerns about stigma and discrimination. This includes those who reported feeling ashamed or guilty (17%), or were worried that others would judge them (13%). Reasons relating to stigma and discrimination were an even higher barrier for those experiencing

³ Social grade classification 'DE' refers to those employed in semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations; unemployed and lowest grade occupations. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/aboutcensus/censusproducts/approximatedsocialgradedata>

'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+, 71%), with the top two reasons feeling guilty and ashamed (31%), and not wanting people to know about their gambling (25%).

Aside from stigma, the most common reasons for not speaking to someone among those who had ever had a problem was feeling able to deal with the problem themselves (24%). A third hadn't spoken to anyone as they didn't see their experience as a 'problem' (34%). Previous research suggests this could also potentially be linked to stigma, which can prevent people who experience gambling harms from identifying and acknowledging that they may have a problem as they may distance themselves from more 'extreme' stereotypes around gambling harms to avoid stigma⁴.

Q9. Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you have not spoken to anyone about any problems you were or are experiencing from gambling?



Q9. All adults who have never spoken to someone about gambling problems, Base: Total = 690, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 168, PGSI 3-7 Experiencing a moderate level of problems gambling = 179, PGSI 1-2 Experiencing a low level of problems gambling = 291.
 *Options that are included in NET: Stigma & Discrimination
 **Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

⁴ GambleAware, 2023. Campaign to reduce the stigma associated with gambling harm. Available from: https://www.begambleaware.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Summary%20of%20background%20research%20and%20data%20insights%20for%20stigma%20reduction%20campaign_0.pdf

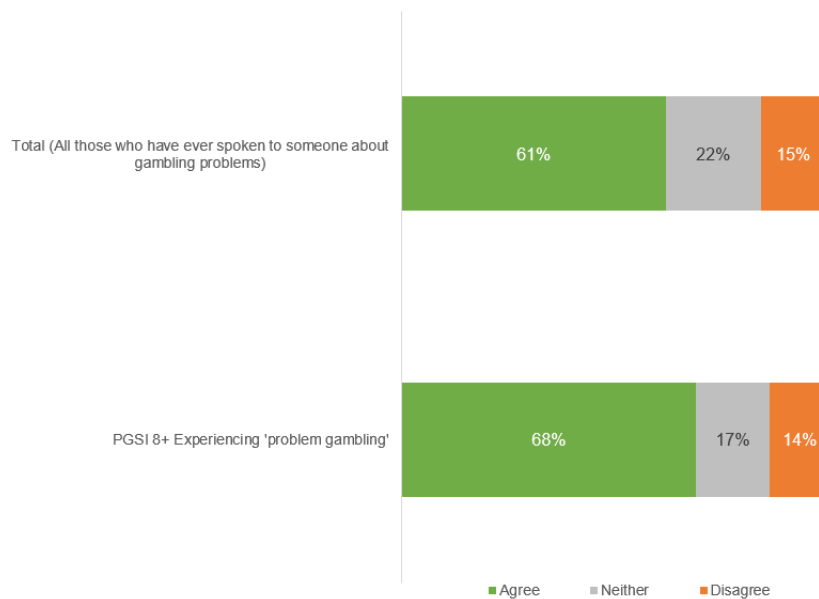
Experience of those opening up around problems

This section includes questions that were only asked of those who said they have opened up to someone about the problems they were experiencing from gambling. Due to smaller base sizes, data is only presented among those who have opened up about their problem(s), alongside those who are experiencing ‘problem gambling’ (PGSI 8+) and have opened up.

1.4 Most who reached out felt that gambling was significantly impacting them

Three in five (61%) felt that the problems they were experiencing with gambling were significantly impacting them. This was particularly the case for those who were experiencing ‘problem gambling’ (PGSI 8+, 68%).

Q8. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that before you first spoke to someone any problems you were experiencing with gambling were significantly impacting you? (Among those who had spoken to someone about their problems with gambling)

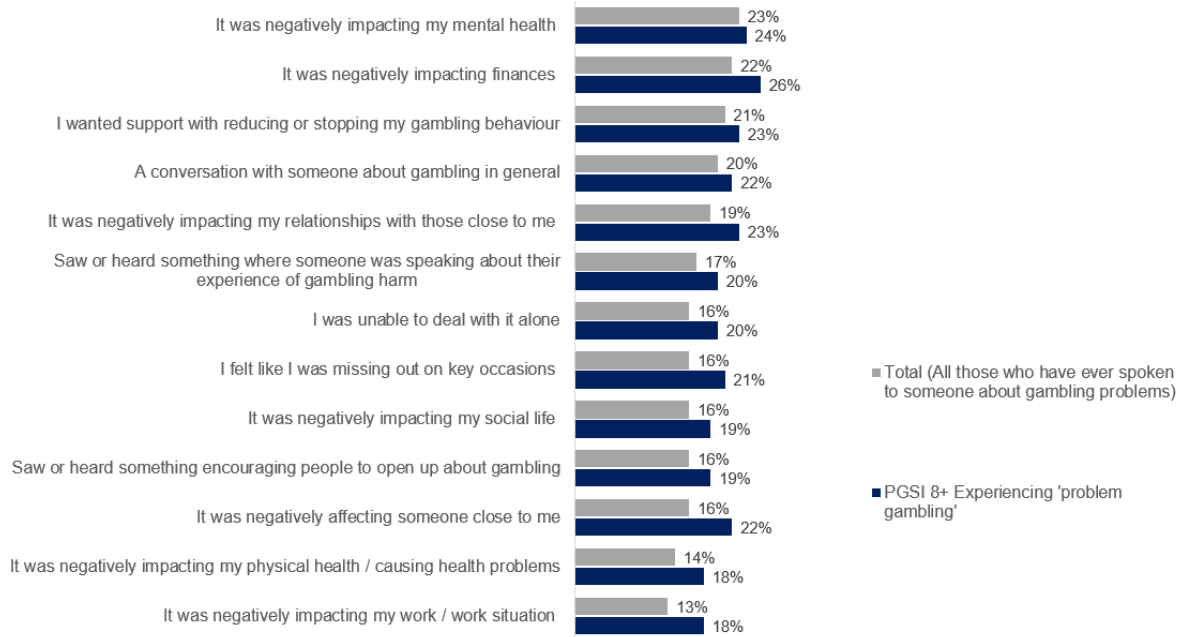


Q8. All adults who have ever spoken to someone about gambling problems, Base: Total = 351, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 224, Experiencing a moderate level of problems gambling = 65.
 *Don't know is not included in this chart

1.5 Motivations for opening up were varied, with negative impacts on mental health and finances the most common

The main motivations for reaching out were due to negative impacts to mental health (23%), finances (22%) and wanting support with reducing or stopping gambling behaviour (21%). Those who were experiencing ‘problem gambling’ (PGSI 8+) were more likely to be motivated by multiple reasons, the most common of which was the negative impact on finances (26%).

Q7. Which of these, if any, made you want to speak to someone about any problems you were experiencing with gambling?

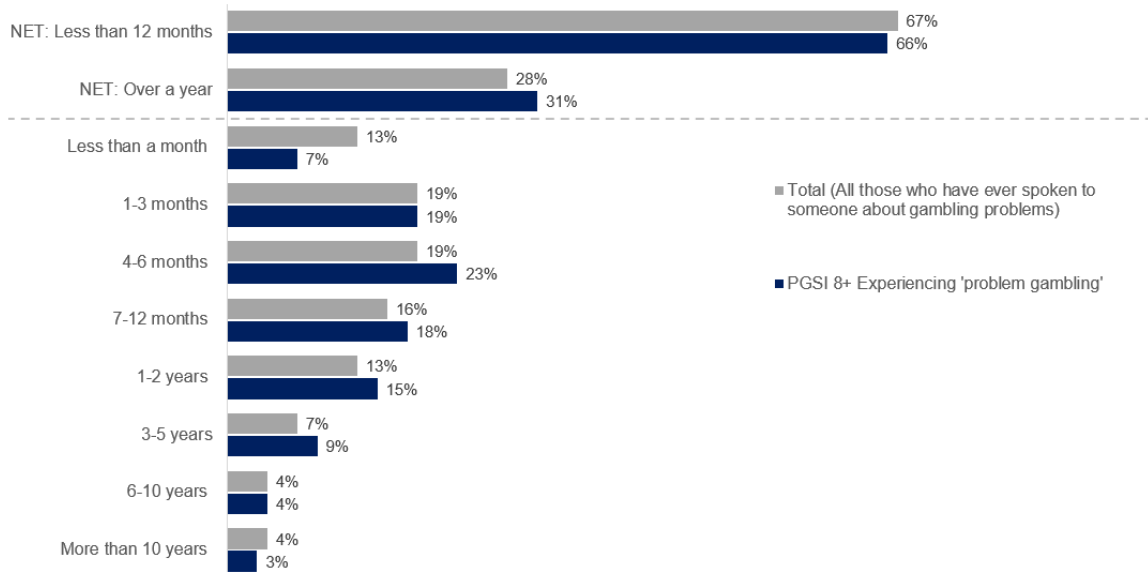


Q7. All adults who have ever spoken to someone about gambling problems, Base: Total = 351, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 224.
 *Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

1.6 There is often a delay before opening up about problems

Of those who spoke to someone about the problems they were experiencing from gambling, 13% first spoke to someone less than a month after experiencing the problem, 19% 1-3 months after, 19% 4-6 months after and 16% after 7-12 months. Just under three in ten (28%) did not speak to someone until over a year after first experiencing the problem, resulting in an average of 20 months overall.

Q2. How long had you been experiencing problems from gambling before you first spoke to someone?

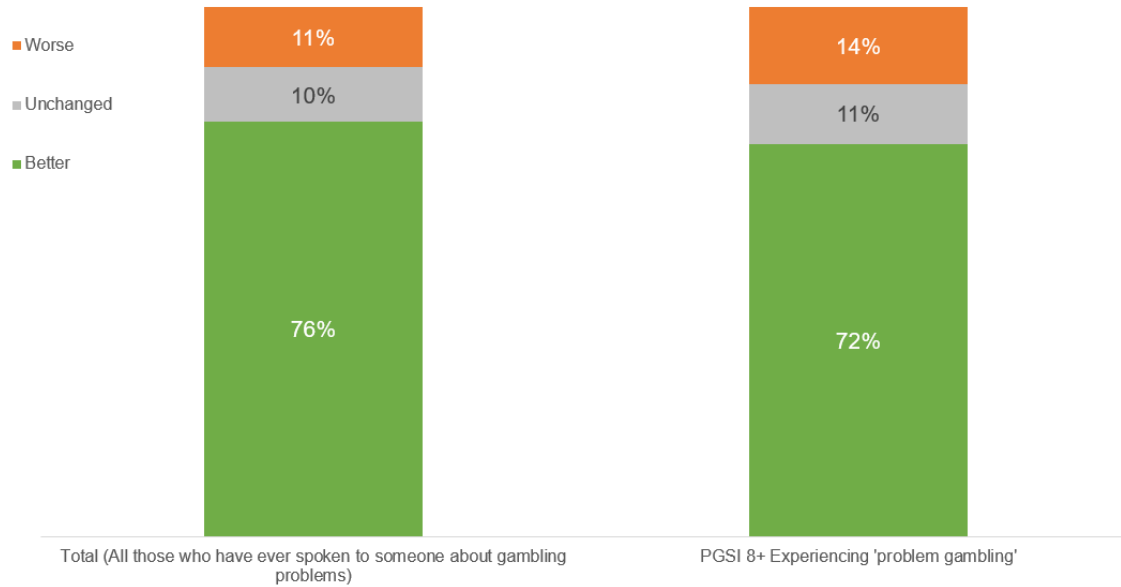


Q2. All adults who have ever spoken to someone about gambling problems, Base: Total = 351, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 224.
 *Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

1.7 People feel better after opening up, and many wish they had spoken to someone sooner

Three quarters (76%) of those who had spoken to someone about their problems with gambling said they felt better as a result of this.

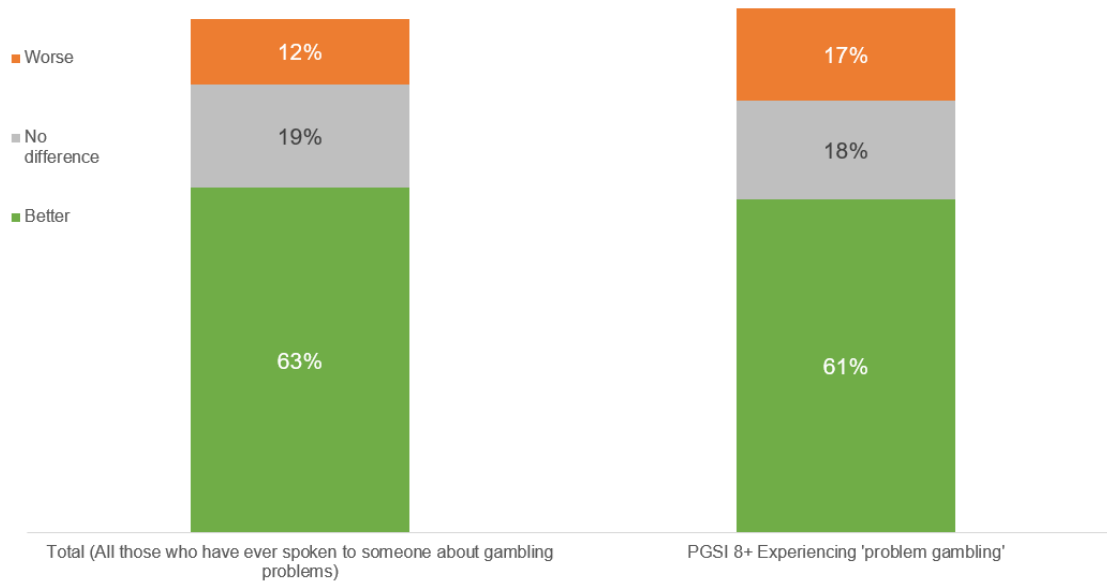
Q6. How did you feel after you first spoke to someone about any problems you were experiencing from gambling?



Q6. All adults who have ever spoken to someone about gambling problems, Base: Total = 351, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 224. *Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

Of all those who had spoken to someone about the problems they had experienced with gambling, over three in five (63%) thought it would have been better if they had done it sooner.

Q3. Do you think it would have been better, or worse, for you to speak to someone sooner about the problems you were experiencing from gambling?



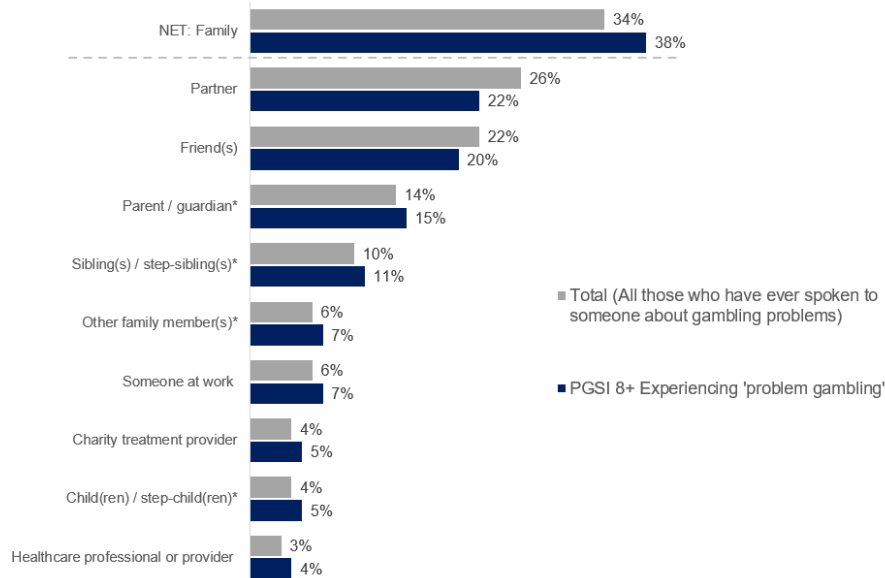
Q3. All adults who have ever spoken to someone about gambling problems, Base: Total = 351, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 224. *Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

1.8 Family and friends are important sources of support for those who open up

A third of those who had spoken to someone about problems related to gambling reached out to a family member first (any family member, 34%). A quarter spoke to their partner first (26%), and one in five (22%) spoke to a friend first.

Those experiencing ‘problem gambling’ (PGSI 8+) were more likely to open up to family members (38%).

Q5. Who did you first speak to about any problems you were experiencing from gambling?



Q5. All adults who have ever spoken to someone about gambling problems, Base: Total = 351, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 224.
 *Options that are included in NET: Family
 **Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

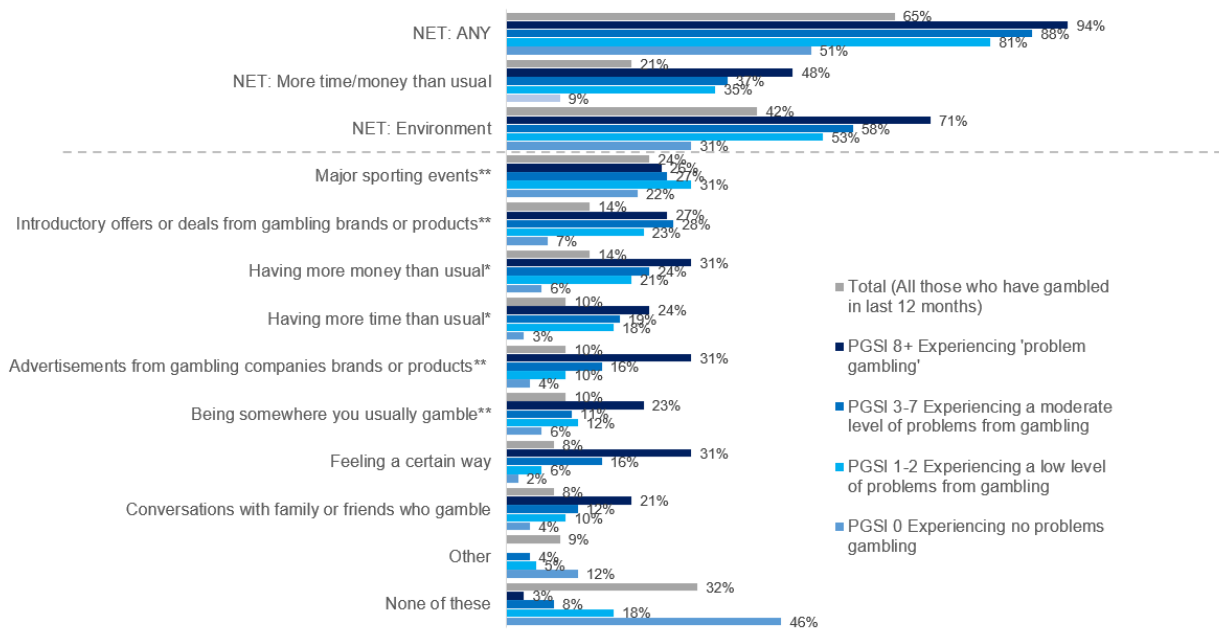
The impact of gambling marketing

1.9 A combination of external factors (e.g., sporting events, advertising) and internal factors (e.g., having more time and money) prompt individuals to gamble

Just under a quarter (24%) of people who have gambled in the last 12 months were prompted to gamble by a major sporting event, the most commonly selected prompt overall. Those who were experiencing 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+) were more likely to be prompted to gamble by a variety of external factors (71%), such as major sporting events (26%) or advertisements from gambling companies (31%).

Those who were experiencing 'problem gambling' were also much more likely to be prompted to gamble when they felt a certain way such as feeling stressed, anxious, depressed or lonely (31% PSGI 8+ vs 8% total) and when they had more money than usual (31% PSGI 8+ vs 14% total).

Q10. Which of these, if any, prompt you to gamble?



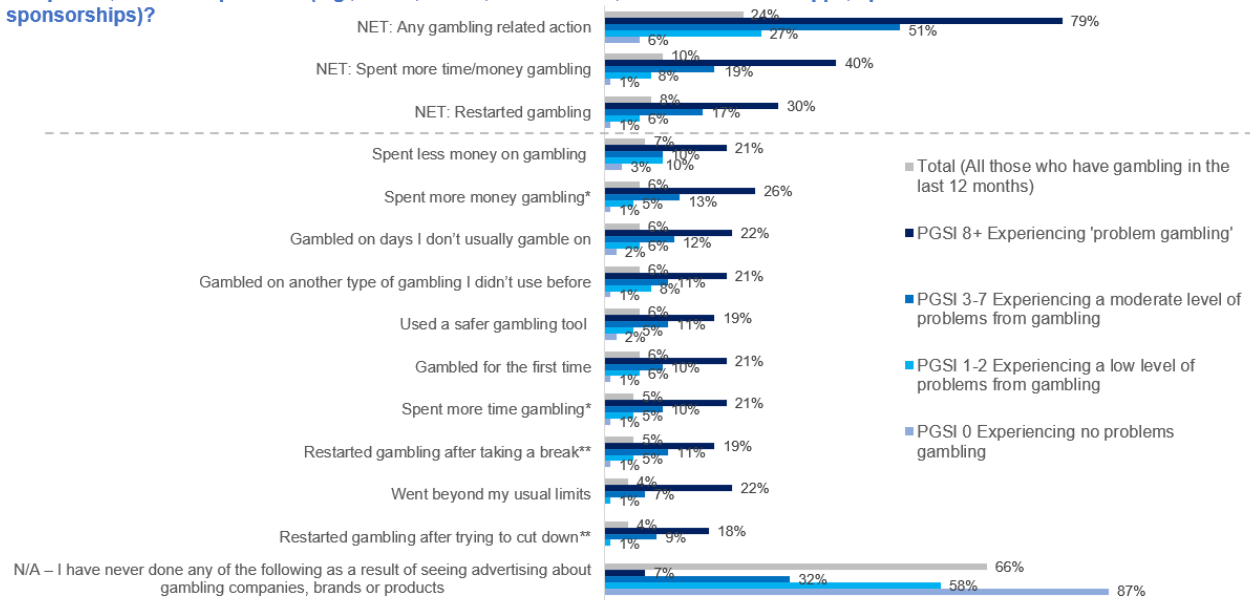
Q10. All adults who have gambled in the last 12 months, Base: Total = 2,694, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 410, PGSI 3-7 Experiencing a moderate level of problems gambling = 252, PGSI 1-2 Experiencing a low level of problems gambling = 333, PGSI 0 Experiencing no problems gambling = 1,699.
 *Options that are included in NET: More time/money than usual
 **Options that are included in NET: Environment
 ***Don't know/ prefer not to say are not included in this chart

1.10 Adverts are more of a prompt to gamble for those experiencing a higher level of problems

Two thirds (66%) of those who have gambled in the last 12 months said they had not taken any action after seeing a gambling advert; just under a quarter (24%) claimed to have carried out a gambling related action as a result of advertising.

Those who were experiencing a higher level of problems with their gambling were much more likely to have taken any action after seeing advertisements about gambling (79% for PGSI 8+ vs 6% for PGSI 0). Two in five (40%) of those experiencing 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+) and one in five (19%) of those experiencing moderate problems (PGSI 3-7), claimed they spent more money or time on gambling as a result of gambling advertisements.

Q11. Which of the following, if any, have you ever done after seeing advertisements about gambling companies, brands or products (e.g., on TV, online, social media, notifications from apps, sports sponsorships)?

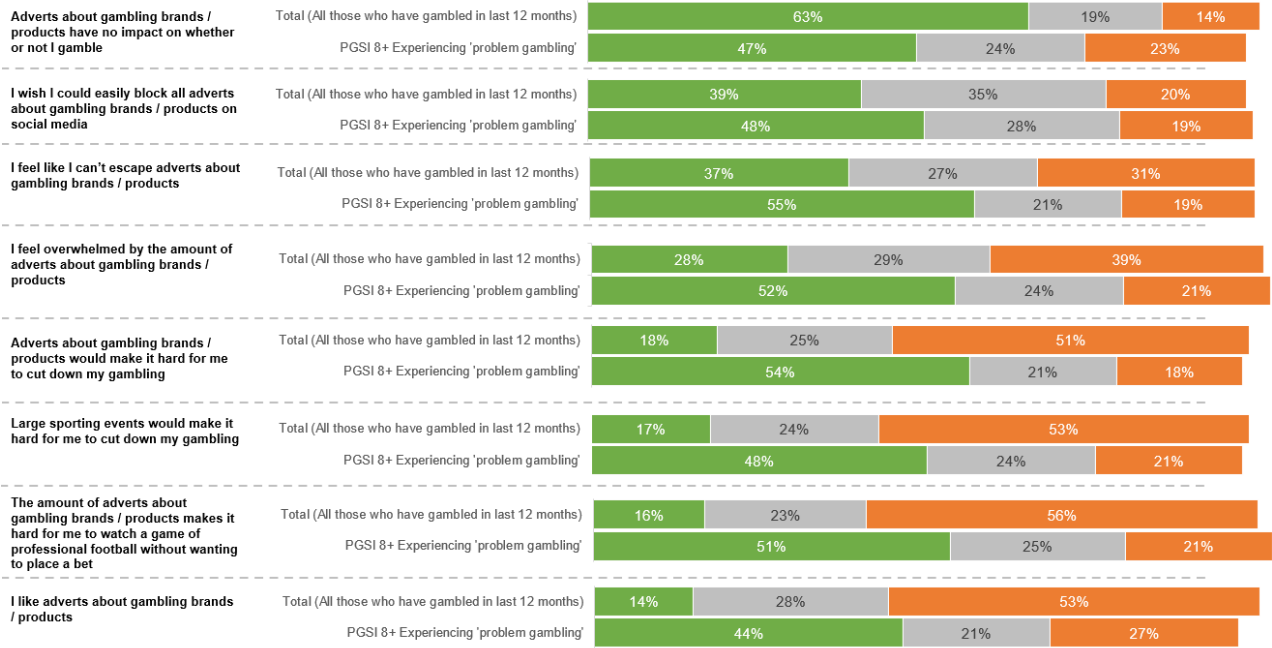


Q11. All adults how have gambled in the last 12 months, Base: Total = 2,694, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 410, PGS 3-7 Experiencing a moderate level of problems gambling = 252, PGSI 1-2 Experiencing a low level of problems gambling = 333, PGSI 0 Experiencing no problems gambling = 1,699.
 *Options that are included in NET: Spent more time/money gambling
 **Options that are included in NET: Restarted gambling
 ***Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

More broadly, a significant minority of those who gambled in the last 12 months felt they couldn't escape gambling adverts (37%) and wished they could more easily block them (39%). For those experiencing 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+) this increased significantly, with the majority feeling that gambling advertisements were overwhelming/inescapable, and finding it hard to cut down as a result. In fact, over half of those experiencing 'problem gambling' (PGSI 8+) said they:

- Felt they couldn't escape adverts about gambling (55%).
- Agreed that adverts about gambling would make it hard for them to cut down their gambling (54%).
- Felt overwhelmed by the amount of adverts about gambling (52%).
- Agreed that the amount of adverts about gambling makes it hard for them to watch a game of professional football without wanting to place a bet (51%).

Q14. How much would you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Q14. All adults who have gambled in the last 12 months. Base: Total = 2,694, PGSI 8+ Experiencing 'problem gambling' = 410. *Don't know and prefer not to say are not included in this chart

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

Public perceptions towards gambling advertising and products

1.11 Most agree that there should be more regulations around gambling advertising, with broad support to revise rules on social media and TV

Two thirds of the general public (67%) felt that there is currently too much advertising about gambling. Similarly, two thirds (66%) were also concerned about the impact gambling adverts will have on children, with over three in five (63%) worried that the amount of gambling advertisements found everywhere makes it seem “harmless” to children and young people.

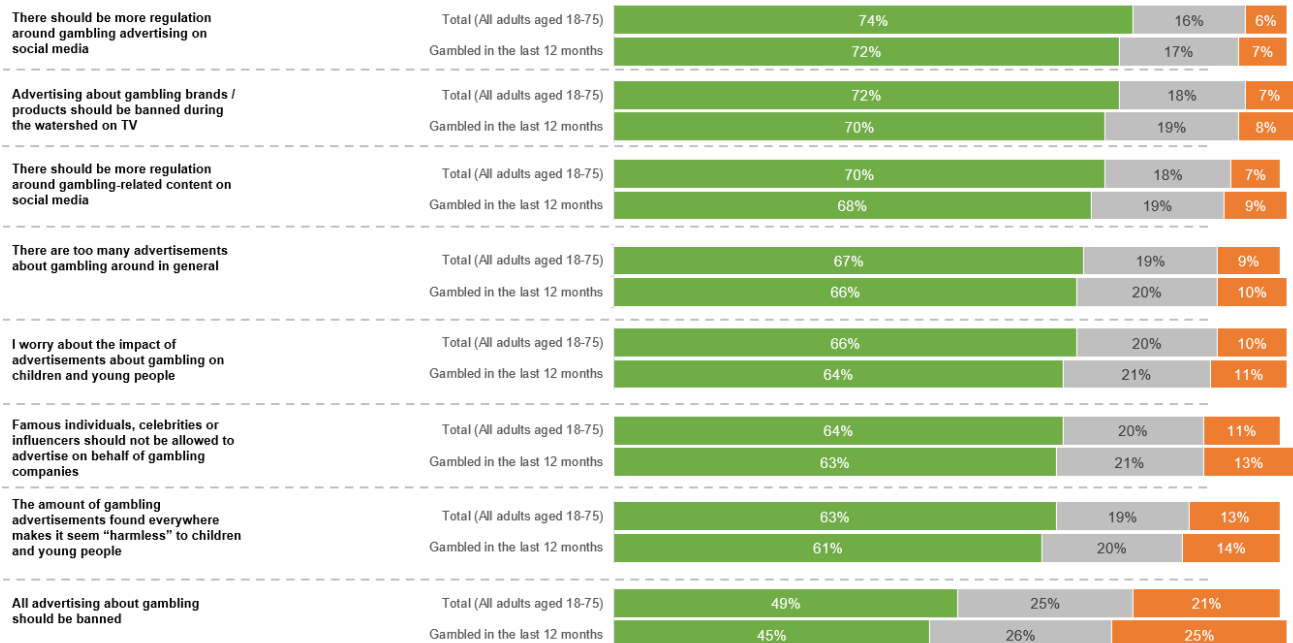
The majority of the general public support there being more regulations for advertisements related to gambling on both social media and TV:

- Just under three quarters (74%) of adults agreed that there should be more regulation around gambling advertising on social media.
- Just over seven in ten (72%) of adults agreed that advertising about gambling should be banned during the watershed on TV.
- Seven in ten (70%) agreed that there should be more regulation around gambling related content on social media.

Support of banning gambling advertisements was less strong compared to increased regulation with just under half (49%) of the general public agreeing that all advertising about gambling should be banned.

This is broadly consistent with the attitudes of those who have gambled in the last 12 months and those who are experiencing at least low levels of problems from gambling (PGSI 1+).

Q12. To what extent to you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about adverts promoting gambling brands / products?



Q12. All adults aged 18-75, Base: Total = 4,207, Gambled in the last 12 months = 2,694.

*Don't know is not included in this chart

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

1.12 The public broadly oppose gambling logos being used across the football experience, particularly on kits and within environments focused at children

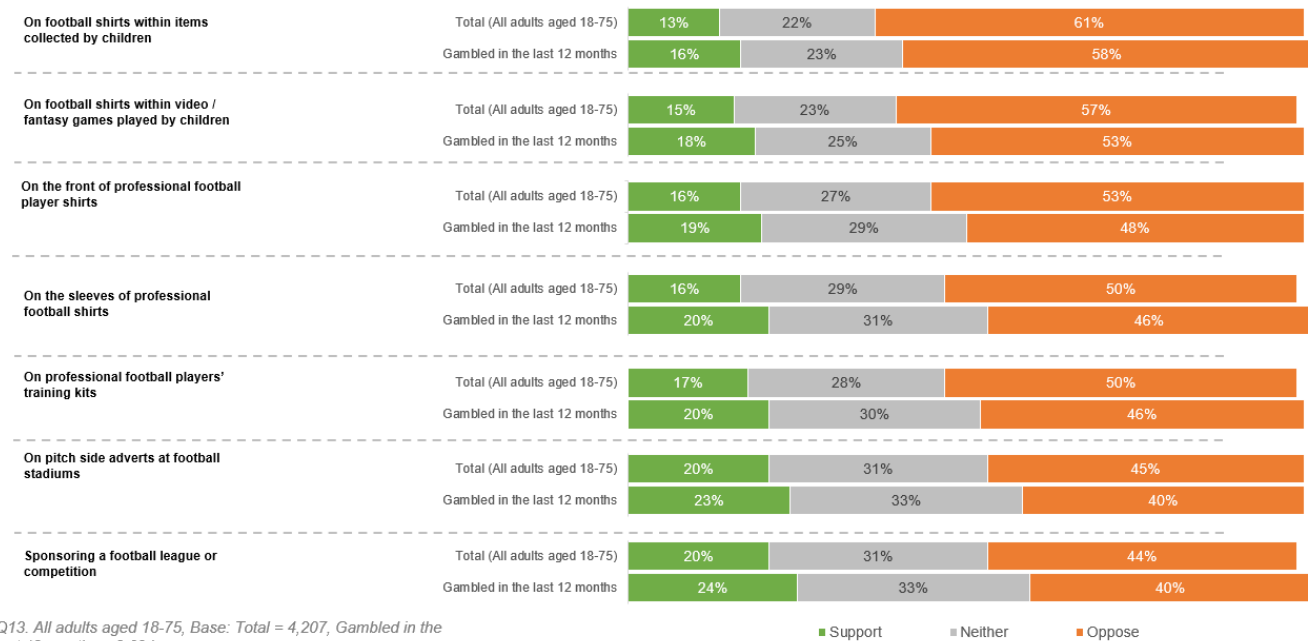
Opposition is highest for gambling logos being on football shirts within items collected by children (61%), and football shirts within video/fantasy games played by children (57%).

There is also a high level of opposition for gambling logos being included on:

- The front of professional football player shirts (53% oppose).
- The sleeves of professional football shirts (50% oppose).
- Professional football players’ training kits (50% oppose).
- Pitch side adverts at football stadiums (45% oppose).
- Sponsoring a football league or competition (44% oppose).

This is broadly consistent with those who have gambled in the last 12 months, though those who are experiencing at least a low level of problems from gambling (PGSI 1+) are less strongly opposed to logos being used in any of the above circumstances.

Q13. To what extent would you support, or oppose, gambling brands / products in each of the following circumstances when thinking about professional football in the UK?



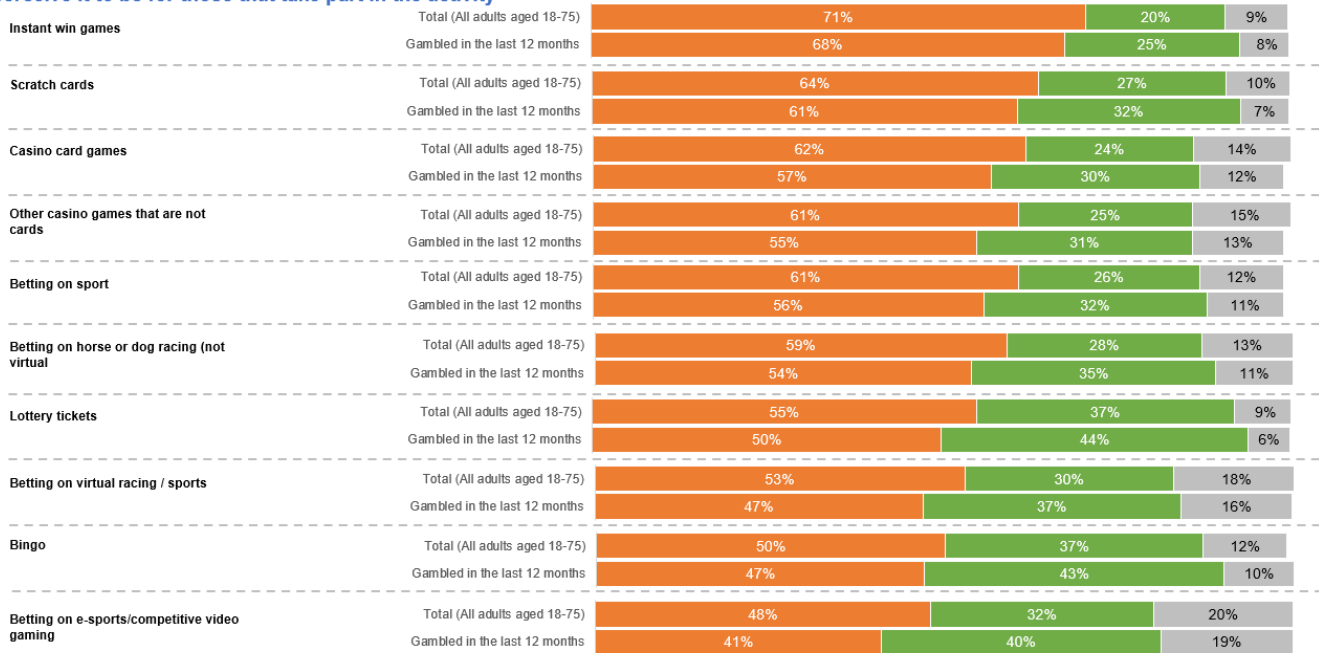
Q13. All adults aged 18-75, Base: Total = 4,207, Gambled in the last 12 months = 2,694. *Don't know is not included in this chart

1.13 The gambling product most likely to be perceived as addictive by the general public is instant win games

Of adults aged 18-75, the gambling product rated most addictive was instant win games (71% rated it “very” or “fairly” addictive), with scratch cards rated the second most addictive (64%). All gambling products shown were highly likely to be rated as “very” or “fairly” addictive; the product rated to be the least ‘addictive’ was betting on e-sports/competitive video games (48%). Perceptions on the

addictiveness of different gambling products by those who have gambled in the last 12 months is consistent with the general public.

Q15. For each of the following types of gambling and betting activities, please indicate how addictive, or not, you perceive it to be for those that take part in the activity



Q15. All adults aged 18-75, Base: Total = 4,207, Gambled in the last 12 months = 2,694.

Very or fairly addictive Not/not very addictive Don't know