

Statistics and insights on Problem Gambling (PG)



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In the research undertaken by Irish Banking Culture Board to support the Common Commitment of Care for Problem Gambling, we were able to reference information from the Gambling Regulatory Authority of Ireland, ESRI (specifically the Research Series paper 169 October 2023), Institute of Public Health, HSE, Gambling Care.ie, Member Banks AIB, Bank of Ireland and PTSB and other reputable stakeholders working in the industry.

What is Problem Gambling?

The term problem gambling (PG) is used to describe gambling behaviour that is disruptive or damaging to individuals but that may fall short of a clinical diagnosis of 'gambling disorder'. PG involves behaviours that may include betting more than one can afford to lose and experiences that may involve feeling guilt and anxiety about gambling.

Is there a criteria to determine Problem Gambling?

To meet the threshold for PG, individuals must report multiple negative behaviours or experiences associated with their gambling such as borrowing in order to fund their gambling.

What size is the cohort?

ESRI estimates that 3.3% of the adult population in Ireland are struggling with problem gambling. The figure of 3.3% equates to 1 in 30 adults, or 130,000 people with PG in Ireland.

Additionally, a further 7.1% report multiple problematic behaviours and experiences who fall short of the threshold for PG but show moderate evidence of PG. This equates to a further 279,000 adults with moderate evidence of PG.

Another 15% of adults (590,000) have reported at least one negative experience or behaviour.

This assessment, by ESRI, advises that 75% of the adult population engage in betting / gambling activities with no evidence of PG.

When gambling becomes harmful it can affect not just the person involved, but their families and friends. It can damage relationships, finances, employment, and mental health.

How much is spent on Gambling?

ESRI estimates the total annual spend on gambling by the adult population of €5.5 billion. They further estimate that 28.3% of this expenditure (€1.6bn) is funded by the 3.1% Problem Gambling cohort. Additionally 47% of the expenditure (€2.6bn) is accounted by the 10.4% of adults who have either PG or show moderate evidence of PG.

People with problem gambling spend on average more than €1k per month on gambling. To put this monthly spending into context, the Central Statistics Office confirms the average net income is €2,996 per month.

How serious can the challenge of gambling addiction become?

The Institute of Public Health in January 25 confirmed gambling was identified in the coroner files of 23 deaths by suicide in Ireland.

Other trends - Minors

In September 2023, the Institute of Public Health and the Tobacco Free Research Institute Ireland published a joint report titled 'Children and gambling – evidence to inform regulation and responses in Ireland'. The report presents an analysis of the 2019 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) - a cross-sectional, nationally representative survey conducted in students aged 15-16 years every four years.

The report found that among 16-year-olds in Ireland:

- Between 1 in 4 and 1 in 5 said they had gambled for money in the last 12 months
- Gambling for money was more common among boys than girls
- Betting on sports or animals was the most common form of gambling
- Ireland has the 4th highest rate of sports or animal betting, of all 33 ESPAD countries with data on gambling.



Gambling Regulation Authority of Ireland

www.grai.ie



The GRAI role :

- Regulate the gambling industry.
- Protect the public from gambling harm.
- Raise awareness of the potential dangers of gambling.

The Regulator will:

- Operate a National Gambling Exclusion Register which helps people stop their gambling for a period of time or indefinitely.
- Ensure safer advertising and marketing to protect vulnerable people and children.
- Ban gambling with credit cards.
- Improve how gambling businesses interact with their customers, making online spaces safer for those at risk.
- Control what gambling content you can see on-line and on social media.
- Be tough on enforcement and compliance.
- Prevent a gambling business from encouraging people to gamble.