



## **Local Government and Regeneration Committee**

### **Fixed odds betting terminals**

### **Online questionnaire results**

#### **Introduction**

In addition to its standard call for written evidence on FOBTs, the Committee also issued an online questionnaire, in order to gauge wider public opinion on the issue. As this is a self-selecting questionnaire, the results should not be treated as a representative survey of those who use FOBTs, nor of the population in general.

With those caveats in mind, the remainder of this paper presents all of the results of the questionnaire.

These results are presented “as is” – no further analysis or selection has been done at this point. The Committee is invited to consider what further work, if any, it wishes to be done with the results.

There were 31 responses. Not all respondents answered all questions.

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The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

## Experience of playing FOBTs

1. How often do you play FOBTs?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Every day		16.67%	4
2	More than once per week		29.17%	7
3	Once per week		8.33%	2
4	Less than once per week		4.17%	1
5	Very occasionally		41.67%	10
			answered	24
			skipped	7

2. How much do you typically spend per session on a Fixed-Odds Betting Terminals?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Less than £10		27.27%	6
2	£10 - £20		27.27%	6
3	£20 - £30		4.55%	1
4	£30 - £40		0.00%	0
5	£40 - £50		0.00%	0
6	£50 - £100		0.00%	0
7	More than £100		40.91%	9
			answered	22
			skipped	9

3. How much do you typically spend per "play", or "spin", on a Fixed-Odds Betting Terminals?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Less than £10		63.64%	14
2	£10 - £20		0.00%	0
3	£20 - £30		4.55%	1
4	£30 - £40		13.64%	3
5	£40 - £50		13.64%	3
6	£50 - £100		4.55%	1
7	More than £100		0.00%	0
			answered	22
			skipped	9

4. Have you ever "self-excluded" or limited your spend on fixed-odds betting terminals?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		36.36%	8
2	No		63.64%	14
			answered	22
			skipped	9

5. Please add any other comments that you wish to make on your experience of playing fixed-odds betting terminals.	
1	Gambling industry professional for over ten years. Not enough is being done, the gambling commission are an entity that tend to only deal with regional managers. I would like to see enforcement officers, in a similar style to LHO's but for gambling. I'd happily volunteer to do that job.
2	I know of people who are addicted to these and are transfixed by the sounds, flashing lights and such like. From some contacts in the gaming industry, they say these are where the profits are as people get 'hooked' . I really think the laws on gambling are too lax.
3	The worst harm I have suffered has come from using my debit card on FOBTs. When my daily cash withdrawal limit from ATM has been exceeded, I can go into any bookmakers and use my debit card on a FOBT without any limits. This has often resulted in me losing control and spending everything in my account.  In my 10 years of gambling on FOBTs, I have noticed that the game that causes the most problems for people in terms of addiction is Roulette.
4	These are a cancer on the high street. They make me feel sick but I can't stop playing them. My kids are not eating and we are going to lose our home.
5	Speaking from personal experience, they can be extremely addictive and destructive. I have lost thousands of pounds in a matter of hours. They absolutely should be seriously curbed - not only in betting shops, but online too.
6	A bit of fun only with either a £1 or £2 coin
7	I became addicted to these and I've lost thousands, I self excluded from all the shops in my area , this didn't work they still let me in. I am now with gam care and looking to see a hypnotherapist
8	A thoroughly enjoyable leisure activity. A view shared by many of my friends.
9	These machines are extremely addictive and I find it incredible they are allowed on our high street sadly I find it difficult to control my urges they have cone close to ruining my life on several occasions
10	Due to some expensive treatment (there's nothing available on the NHS unless you live in London) I'm fortunately free of this evil now but this is what I used to spend
11	Just get rid of the things Id rather be dead given the financial hole Im in now
12	I find them fun to play whilst in the betting shop and I also play on line slots and roulette as well as playing in Casinos
13	Really fun
14	They should reduce how much you can put in a machine at once. Rather than being max £100 it should be reduced to £50.

**5. Please add any other comments that you wish to make on your experience of playing fixed-odds betting terminals.**

	answered	14
	skipped	17

**Experience of working in a place that has fixed-odds betting terminals**

**6. If you have worked in an establishment that featured fixed-odds betting terminals, what was the type of business?**

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	High Street Bookmaker		66.67%	6
2	Casino		22.22%	2
3	Other (please specify):		11.11%	1
			answered	9
			skipped	22
Other (please specify): (1)				
1	Both of the above. Also worked in bingo halls offering awp machines.			

**7. What was your experience of working with fixed-odds betting terminals?**

1	The FOBTs are an extremely dangerous form of gambling. From my observation one of the most damaging aspects is that many of the games regularly give the bettor the impression that they have a much greater chance of winning than they actually do. For example, a slot game will give 2 out of 3 of the bonus symbols with regularity whilst all 3 rarely appear. I've seen for myself the frustration of these bettors who, blinded by their addiction, fail to see this for what it is and genuinely think they are close to winning the jackpot. One of the most damaging things is seeing the bookmakers target young men who come in on a Saturday afternoon to bet a football coupon. These people typically live with their parents and are working or at university/college. They therefore have a reasonable amount of disposable income which very often ends up in the machines.		
2	Good machines, good money makers, but very easy for vulnerable people to become addicted to them. The recent player protection measures are a good idea, but fall short in my opinion.		
3	I have not worked with them - just know people who have.		
4	They bring out aggression from people that are normally mild mannered. I have seen grown men cry because of them and then still keep putting notes in.		
5	Casino staff were encouraged to let high staking players lose as much as possible. I was told that the restrictions that applied to betting shops didn't apply to casinos so I should ignore large losses by customers.		
6	Working long hours, as never be such if you will be attacked any moment, as crime of violence, drug deals, dodgy goods sold & money laundering FOBTs? Many single staffed are informed not to report crime, as would effect revenue, as dark nights approach & late opening hours. Many single staffed cut corners 4 own safety & allow underage to gamble, as many get abusive if asked 4 ID?		
		answered	6

## 7. What was your experience of working with fixed-odds betting terminals?

skipped

25

## Changes to the regulation of fixed-odds betting terminals

### 8. Would you like to see changes to the way fixed-odds betting terminals are regulated in your community?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		86.67%	26
2	No		13.33%	4
			answered	30
			skipped	1

### 9. What are your views on these specific changes to the regulation of fixed-odds betting terminals?

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Response Total
There should be a restriction on where the machines can be played	93.3% (28)	6.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	30
There should be a restriction on the number of machines available in any one location	86.7% (26)	13.3% (4)	0.0% (0)	30
Any changes should apply to existing machines, as well as new ones	90.0% (27)	10.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	30
			answered	30
			skipped	1

Please add any other comments or suggested changes (20)

1	Whilst I am of the opinion that people should have the freedom of choice to use these machines I think that a lot has to be done. Firstly I would say that FOBTs are an example of what is called a Skinner Box. They exert a form of behavioural conditioning on their operants. From watching people play these, whilst at the same time watching people bet horses, greyhounds and football I can safely say that they are completely different forms of gambling. FOBTs seem to encourage addiction to a much greater extent. I would therefore argue that there is a need for separating the premises on which sports betting and casino betting occur.
2	Gambling enforcement officers, working for the local authority, rather than gambling commission officers who are rarely seen.
3	There are four bookmakers on my street. They all prominently feature FOBTs. This oversaturation of betting shops draws lowers the tone of the area considerably and results in the pavements being obstructed by smokers in their doorways. They also act as a conduit for antisocial behaviour with patrons shouting, swearing and dropping cigarette ends in the street. I would favour the complete removal of FOBTs from betting shops.
4	These terminals should be banned. They offer nothing positive to the community and are only a means of generating profit for bookmakers.
5	I am aware that on our local area 2-3 of the same betting shops are on the street -

**9. What are your views on these specific changes to the regulation of fixed-odds betting terminals?**

		Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Response Total
	I understand this is because they can only have a certain number per shop. I think the law should be tightened up generally on opening hours, limit per spin and payouts.				
6	The maximum stake needs reducing inline with other gaming machines to £2.00 Debit card use should be prohibited Roulette should be excluded from the game content				
7	There needs to be a much lower stake so that lives stop being ruined.				
8	The limits are dangerously high on FOBTs. They encourage high-risk gambling. The maximum spend per 'spin' should be around the £2-£3 mark, not £100.				
9	U should have to be a member to play these just like u do in a casino, money laundering is a big problem				
10	These should all be banned. On ground this activity is misleading and damaging to people on low incomes.  This should be banned but also horse and dog racing too on grounds of animal abuse and the contravention of animal rights.  Betting/gambling is an elitist activity and destroys lives of 'lower classes'.  End it all.				
11	The current controls in betting shops are adequate however the same controls must be implemented in casinos as well.				
12	These amount and frequency should be brought in line with other gaming machines ie 2 pound a spin				
13	The maximum stake needs to be reduced first and foremost, a membership card system would help too				
14	JUST GET RID OF THEM				
15	If people want to play the machines that is up to them and not parliament. I can play for lots more money online so ban them if you want and I'll just play elsewhere				
16	They are safe and great fun. Already heavily regulated. I dint see any need to apply new regulations to them. It's a personal choice if folk choose to play them. The tabloid headlines are ridiculous about the amount spent are clearly manipulated to serve a particular political agenda. The daily record campaign is just awful. They've lost all credibility since last summer.				
17	i would recommend a return to much stricter control of these and similar machines, far too many lives have been blighted by the near free for all of the betting industry, our high streets, tv's and on line lives are constantly invaded by these companies.				
18	Stakes are far too high. I have a friend who lost thousands of pounds on these machines. There seems to be no system in place to stop this happening. Putting the onus on shop staff to stop it is not fair. What will a wee chat from the staff in the bookies do to help? Stakes need to be lowered. I suggest £2.				
19	Put the age of gambling up to 25 years old. At the moment lots of young people are lousing thire income.				

**9. What are your views on these specific changes to the regulation of fixed-odds betting terminals?**

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Response Total
20	Maximum £2 stake fobts , minimum 2 staff , security staff on entrance , locking device on fobts to force them to show ID.			

**Information on respondents**

**10. Please confirm your age group**

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	18-24	6.67%	2
2	25-34	26.67%	8
3	35-44	36.67%	11
4	45-54	13.33%	4
5	55-64	13.33%	4
6	65-74	3.33%	1
7	75-84	0.00%	0
8	85 or older	0.00%	0
		answered	30
		skipped	1

**11. Please confirm your gender**

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male	82.76%	24
2	Female	17.24%	5
		answered	29
		skipped	2