# Lower-risk gambling guidelines

09.09.22

THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM

PREDICTIV

THE GAMBLING POLICY & RESEARCH UNIT

# Executive summary.

BIT ran an online experiment with a sample of 2,034 UK frequent gamblers to test the impact of different public messaging campaigns on self-reported behaviours. We compared the **Take Time to Think (TTTT) campaign** with **an adapted version of the Canadian lower-risk gambling guidelines (LRGGs) and a tobacco-style warnings.**

1. We found **no difference between the campaigns** in relation to reducing the **amount of money spent** gambling or the **number of gambling activities** they would play. The **TTTT arm** led to a greater number of participants saying that they would **reduce the amount of time** they spent gambling.

2. The **tobacco-style warning was more effective than the TTTT** when gamblers were asked **what others would do** if shown the campaigns.

3. The **gambling guidelines were perceived positively by gamblers and increased gamblers' confidence in knowing how** to reduce their gambling and access support.

| % who intend to reduce how much… | Pure control (no stimulus) | TTTT | Gambling guidelines | Tobacco-style warning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Money they spend | 51%* | 62% | 59% | 57% |
| Time they spend | 46%** | 58% | 52%+ | 51%* |
| Types of gambling activities they do | 38%** | 48% | 46% | 48% |

*, **, + identifies a statistically significant difference to the "TTTT" arm, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, + p < 0.10.

# Establishing whether the <u>Canadian lower-risk gambling guidelines</u> could help people in the UK to consider reducing the amount they gamble.

The Canadian lower-risk gambling guidelines were introduced in 2021, providing guidance to gamblers on the amount of money, time and number of different types of gambling activity they should conduct. They were compiled by comparing gambling involvement with gambling related harm for over 60,000 people who gamble from eight countries.

The guidelines could be used as a public messaging campaign to reduce gambling harm but have yet to be evaluated.

**To inform whether to proceed with a field trial evaluation, this experiment explored whether the guidelines impact people's intended gambling behaviours compared to other messaging campaigns.**



To reduce your risk of experiencing harms from gambling, follow all three of these guidelines:

**1 HOW MUCH**
Gamble no more than **1%** of household income before tax per month

and

**4 HOW OFTEN**
Gamble no more than **4 days** per month

and

**2 HOW MANY**
Avoid regularly gambling at more than **2 types** of games

| Yearly household income | Maximum monthly amount |
|---|---|
| $10,000 | $8 |
| $30,000 | $25 |
| $50,000 | $42 |
| $70,000 | $58 |
| $90,000 | $75 |
| $110,000 | $92 |
| $130,000 | $108 |
| $150,000 | $125 |

**WHAT YOU PLAY MATTERS**
▶ Fast-paced games that involve quick and repeated betting can more quickly and easily lead to problems.
▶ For example, with many forms of online gambling, slot machines, electronic gaming machines and poker, people can spend large amounts of money in a short time.

**GAMBLING TYPES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

**HOWEVER,** these limits may not be suitable for you. You should consider gambling less than these guidelines recommend or not at all if you ...

▶ Experience problems from **alcohol**, **cannabis** or **other drug use**

▶ Experience problems with **anxiety** or **depression**

▶ Have a **personal** or **family history** of problems with gambling

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# Experiment set-up

# We recruited a sample of 2,034 UK frequent gamblers.[1]

The Behavioural Insight Team's Gambling Policy & Research Unit (GPRU) worked with Predictiv, our policy-testing lab, to test whether lower-risk gambling guidelines may be beneficial to gamblers, with an online representative sample of 2,034 UK frequent gamblers between 20 and 27 May 2022.

**Median time spent completing survey:** 8m 45s.
Also collected data on gambling participation, whether they live in a city, employment, and income.

| Gambling risk[2] | |
|---|---|
| Non-risk | 35% |
| Low risk | 12% |
| Moderate risk | 27% |
| Problem gambler | 26% |

| Region | |
|---|---|
| South & East | 27% |
| North | 26% |
| Midlands | 17% |
| Scot/NI/Wales | 16% |
| London | 14% |

| Gender | |
|---|---|
| Women | 45% |

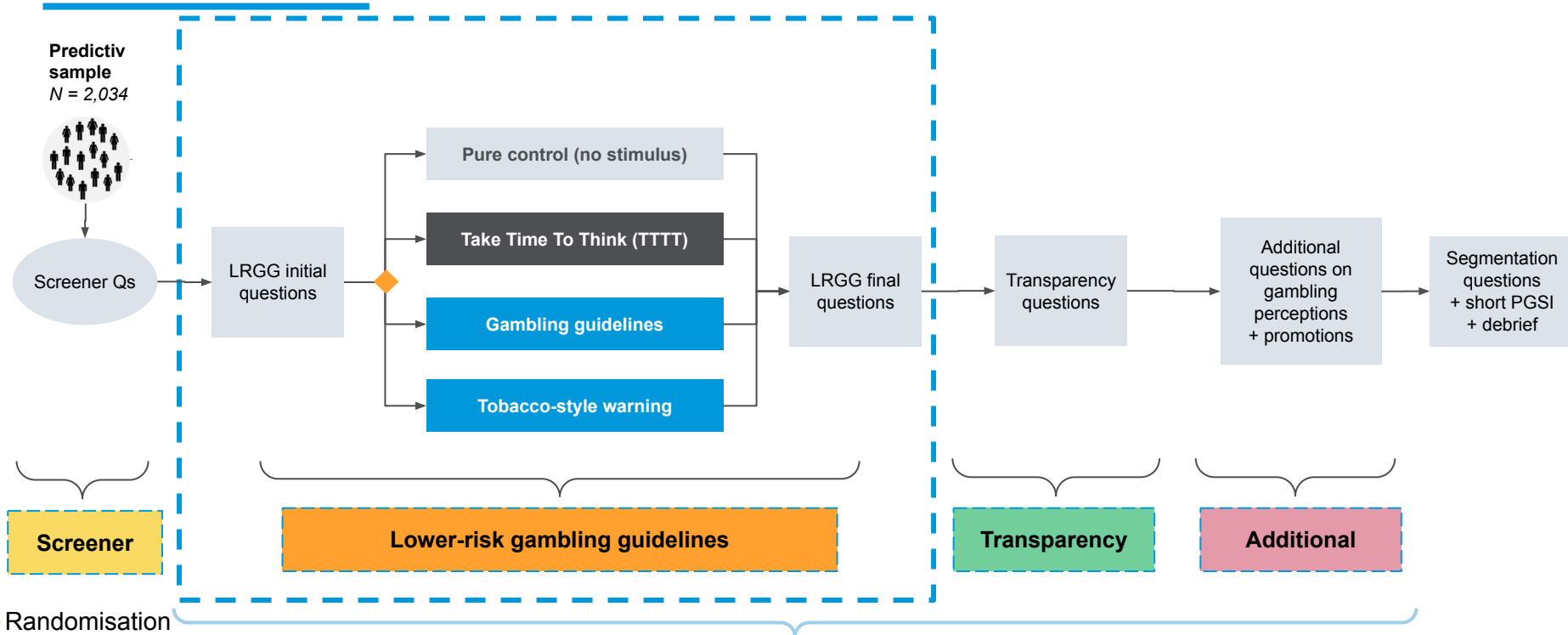| Ethnicity | |
|---|---|
| White | 87% |
| Asian | 6% |
| Black | 3% |
| Mixed / other | 4% |

| Age | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18-24 | 25-54 | 55+ |
| 21% | 64% | 15% |

[1] Adults gambling on any type of gambling activity, excluding the National Lottery, at least once per month
[2] Based on short-form PGSI.

# Participants were randomly assigned to see one of four arms, three of which were public messaging campaigns. They subsequently answered questions on these campaigns, operator transparency and some additional questions.

**Predictiv sample**
*N = 2,034*

Screener Qs

LRGG initial questions

Pure control (no stimulus)

Take Time To Think (TTTT)

Gambling guidelines

Tobacco-style warning

LRGG final questions

Transparency questions

Additional questions on gambling perceptions + promotions

Segmentation questions + short PGSI + debrief

**Screener**

**Lower-risk gambling guidelines**

**Transparency**

**Additional**

◆ Randomisation

*This deck focuses on the lower-risk gambling guidelines. These questions were asked in conjunction with questions for another project focussed on operator transparency as well as some additional questions. Findings for these are found in their own, separate decks.*

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# Each participant was randomly assigned to one of four groups – one of three different gambling messaging campaigns or no additional content.

| Arm | Description | N & median viewing time (MVT) |
|---|---|---|
| **Pure control (no stimulus)** | *[Nothing shown here]* | N = 533 |
| **Take Time to Think (TTTT)**<br><br>*TTTT is an existing public messaging campaign managed by the Betting and Gaming Council* | **TAKE TIME TO THINK: SAFER GAMBLING**<br><br>All across the country, people are pausing, taking time to think and using some of the many safer gambling tools to make their experience better.<br><br>Take time to join them. | N = 500<br>MVT = 6s |
| **Lower-risk gambling guidelines**<br><br>*This is an adapted version of the current Canadian lower-risk gambling guidelines.* | To reduce your risk of experiencing harms from gambling, follow all three of these guidelines:<br><br>1. Gamble no more than 1% of your household income before tax per month<br>2. Gamble no more than 4 days per month<br>3. Avoid regularly gambling at more than 2 types of gambling activity (for example, slot machines and betting on horse racing are two different types of games) | N = 490<br>MVT = 9s |
| **Tobacco-style warning**<br><br>*Warning messages in the same style as those printed on cigarette packets.* | Excessive gambling may result in intense distress<br><br>Gambling can become an addiction<br><br>Gambling may result in bankruptcy | N = 511<br>MVT = 8s |

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# Self-reported outcome measures.

*Throughout this section, the **gambling guidelines** and **Tobacco-style** treatment arms are compared against the **TTTT control**. The **TTTT control** is then compared against the pure control (no stimulus).*

## Intent – primary outcome measure
*Intention to change gambling behaviours*

We measured…

1. Whether people wanted to **change** the amount of **money** or **time** they spent or the number of different **types** of gambling activities they conducted.

2. How **easy** people would find it to **reduce** their gambling behaviour.

3. Whether participants thought that the campaigns would reduce the amount of money, time or types that **others** spend gambling.

## Sentiment – secondary outcome measure
*Perception of the campaigns*

We measured…

1. How people **felt** about the campaigns, how **helpful** they would be and whether they were something participants **wanted to see**.

2. Whether the lower-risk gambling guidelines are **set at the right level** or if participants found them to be too lenient or too restrictive.

3. How **confident** people felt about changing the **amount** they gamble and in **accessing support**.

## Additional analysis

We also captured additional information on where participants would want to see campaigns displayed, as well as demographic information to allow segmentation analysis of responses (by PGSI, gender, ethnicity and location).
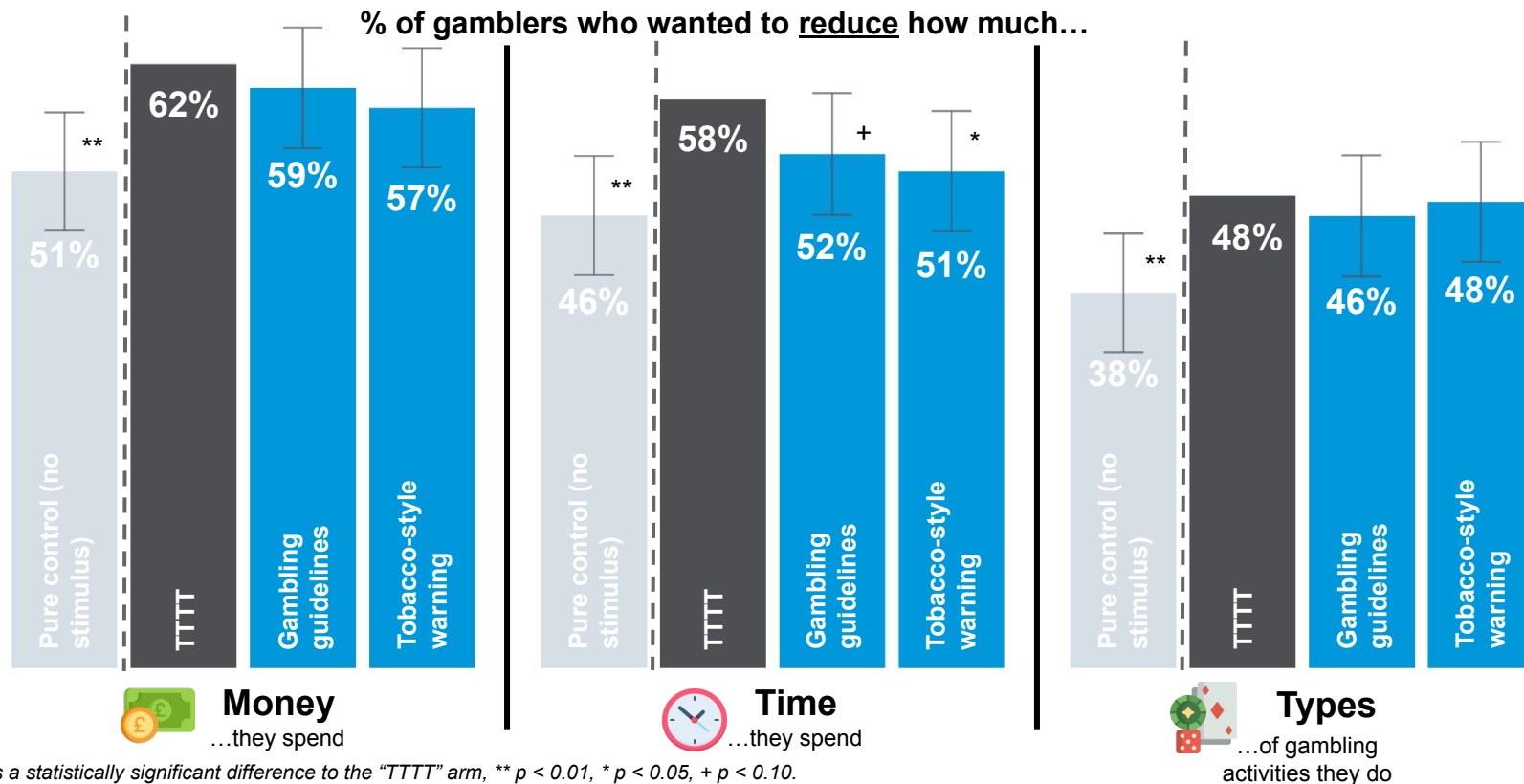
# Intent

**Lower-risk
gambling guidelines**

# Neither of the tested campaigns were more effective at influencing gamblers' intentions to gamble than the TTTT campaign. The TTTT campaign was more effective at reducing the intention to spend time gambling.

**% of gamblers who wanted to <u>reduce</u> how much…**



**Money**
…they spend

**Time**
…they spend

**Types**
…of gambling activities they do

Money: Pure control (no stimulus) 51% **; TTTT 62%; Gambling guidelines 59%; Tobacco-style warning 57%

Time: Pure control (no stimulus) 46% **; TTTT 58%; Gambling guidelines 52% +; Tobacco-style warning 51% *

Types: Pure control (no stimulus) 38% **; TTTT 48%; Gambling guidelines 46%; Tobacco-style warning 48%

*, **, + identifies a statistically significant difference to the "TTTT" arm, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, + p < 0.10.
Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.

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**Showing campaigns may have helped people calibrate how easy it is in reality to change their gambing habits. Those not shown any campaign were more likely to state it is easy to reduce the money and time they spend gambling.**

## % who think it would be easy to change the…

| | |
|---|---|
| TTTT | 64% |
| Gambling guidelines | 65% |
| Tobacco-style warning | 62% |
| Pure control (no stimulus) | 71%* |

**Money**
…they spend

| | |
|---|---|
| TTTT | 68% |
| Gambling guidelines | 69% |
| Tobacco-style warning | 66% |
| Pure control (no stimulus) | 73%* |

**Time**
…they spend

| | |
|---|---|
| TTTT | 75% |
| Gambling guidelines | 75% |
| Tobacco-style warning | 71% |
| Pure control (no stimulus) | 77% |

**Types**
…of gambling activities they do

## Overall ease to change the money and time spent, and types of games played*

| TTTT | Gambling guidelines | Tobacco-style warning | Pure control (no stimulus) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 69% | 70% | 66% | 74% |
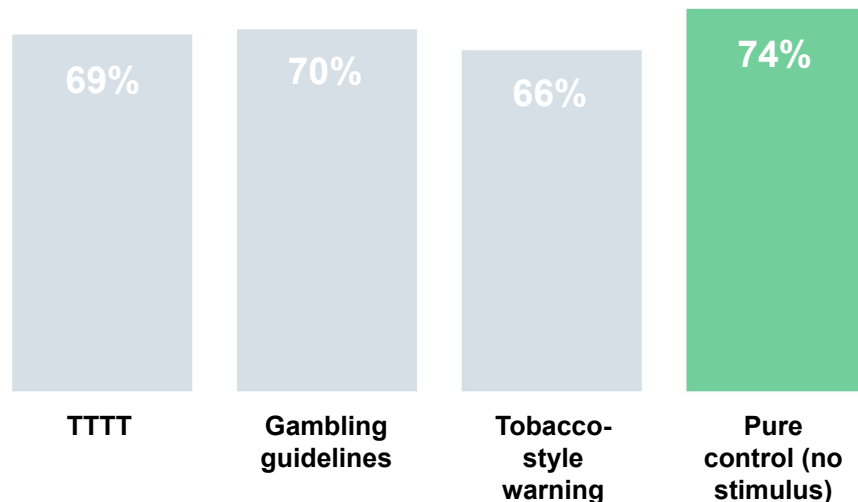
*\* Average percentage of gamblers who said it was easy or very easy to change money, time and type.*
*Green shading identifies statistically significant (p<0.1) difference to the 'TTTT' arm.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

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# The Tobacco-style warning performs better for whether people think that 'others' would reduce the amount of money they spend and types of gambling activity they conduct.

| % of gamblers who think, after seeing the campaign, <u>others would reduce</u> the… | TTTT (n = 500) | Gambling guidelines (n = 490) | Tobacco-style warning (n = 511) | Overall for others | | Overall for self |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| …amount of money they spend gambling | 51% | 52% | 57% | 53% | ↑ | 59% |
| …amount of time they spend gambling | 56% | 56% | 59% | 57% | ↓ | 54% |
| …number of different types of gambling activities | 48% | 51% | 55% | 51% | ↓ | 47% |

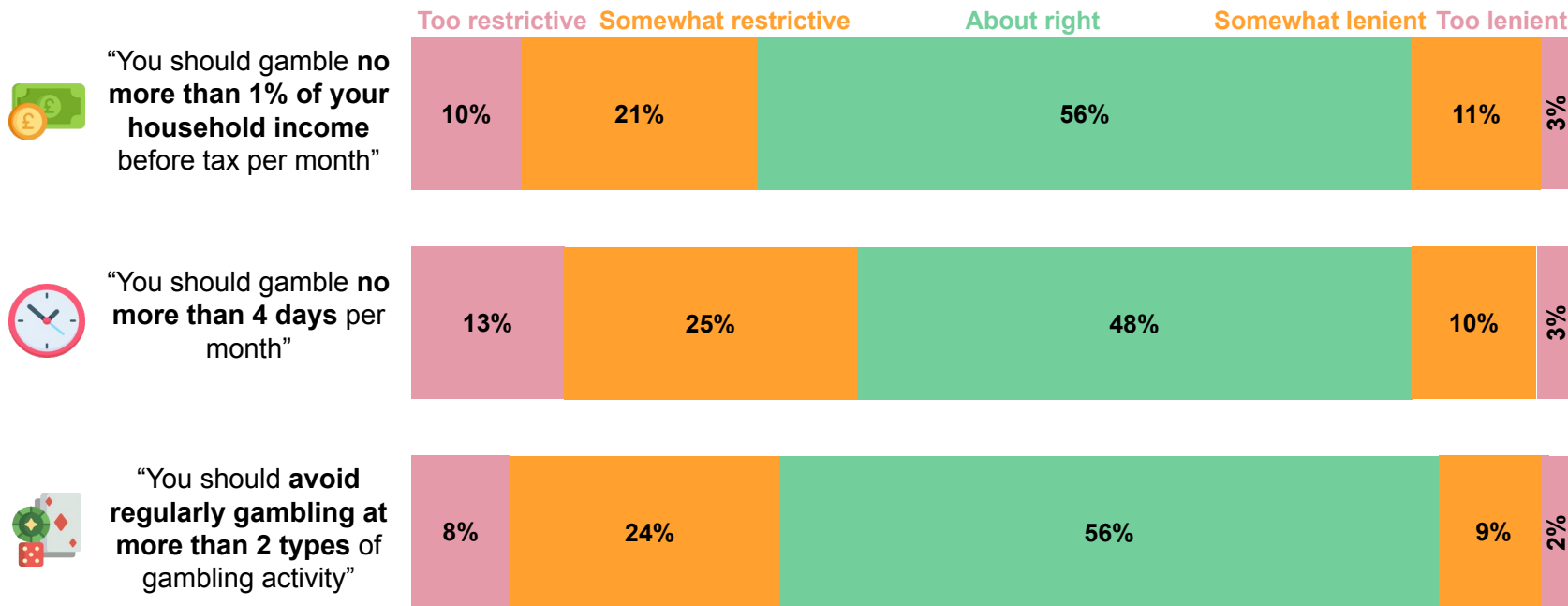*Green shading identifies statistically significant (p<0.1) difference to the 'TTTT' arm.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

# Sentiment

**Lower-risk gambling guidelines**

# Overall positive sentiment was highest for the gambling guidelines. Negative sentiment was similar across arms.

| | TTTT<br>(n = 500) | Gambling<br>guidelines<br>(n = 490) | Tobacco-style<br>warning<br>(n = 511) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall **positive** sentiment (average percentage of people who think the campaigns are supportive, helpful and something they would like to see in the future) | 51% | 56% | 49% |
| Overall **negative** sentiment (average percentage of people who think the campaigns are patronising, irritating, aggressive and worrying) | 18% | 18% | 19% |

*Full numbers are in the appendix.*
*Green shading identifies statistically significant (p<0.1) difference to the 'TTTT' arm.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

# Gamblers thought the gambling guidelines for money spent and number of gambling activities were mostly set at the right level. More gamblers felt the guidelines for time spent gambling were restrictive.

*"Thinking about your current gambling activities, for each of these guidelines, do you feel that they are…"*

| | Too restrictive | Somewhat restrictive | About right | Somewhat lenient | Too lenient |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "You should gamble **no more than 1% of your household income** before tax per month" | 10% | 21% | 56% | 11% | 3% |
| "You should gamble **no more than 4 days** per month" | 13% | 25% | 48% | 10% | 3% |
| "You should **avoid regularly gambling at more than 2 types** of gambling activity" | 8% | 24% | 56% | 9% | 2% |

*Statistically significant at p < 0.1.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

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# Gamblers shown the gambling guidelines were most confident in knowing how to manage their gambling behaviour and access support.

| % of gamblers who are confident they know how best to… | Pure control (no stimulus) (n = 533) | TTTT (n = 500) | Gambling guidelines (n = 490) | Tobacco-style warning (n = 511) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| …change the amount of money you spend gambling | 66% | 64% | 71% | 68% |
| …change the amount of time you spend gambling | 65% | 67% | 72% | 67% |
| …change the number of different types of gambling activities you play | 64% | 63% | 74% | 68% |
| …access gambling-related support | 59% | 58% | 66% | 63% |

*'Somewhat confident' or 'Very confident' responses.*
*Green shading identifies statistically significant (p<0.1) difference to the 'TTTT' arm.*
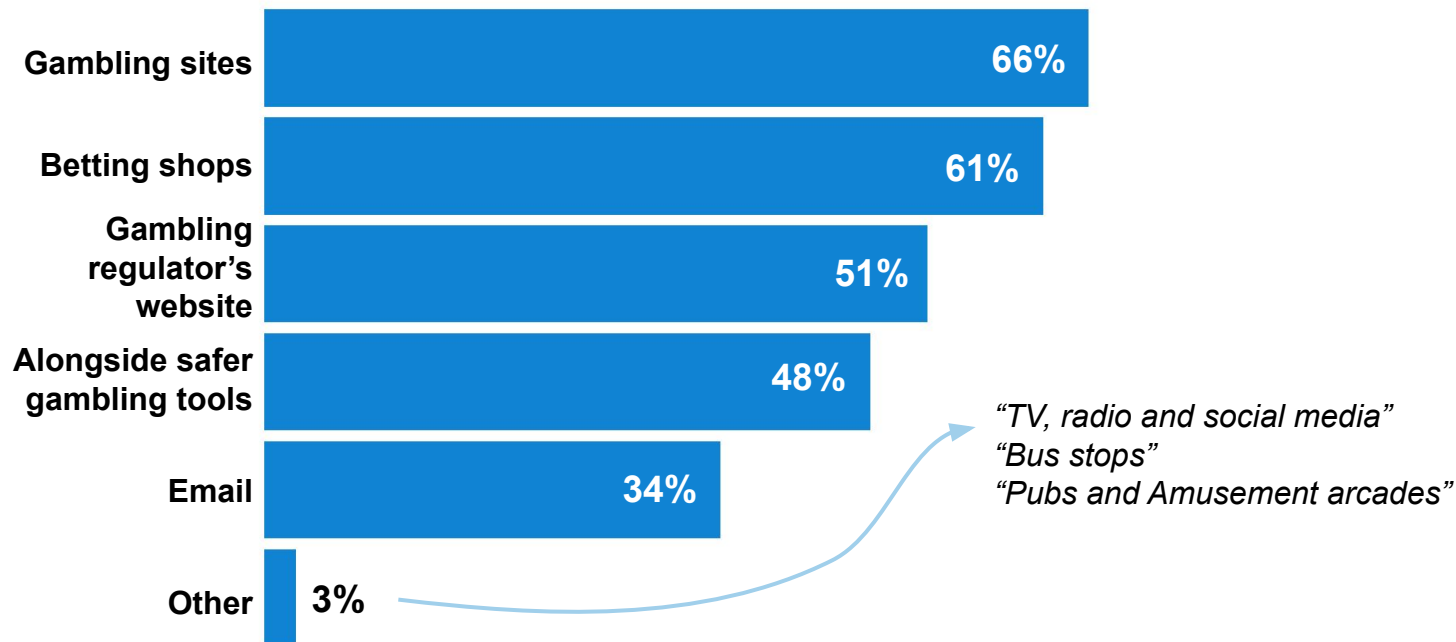*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

# Additional findings

**Lower-risk
gambling guidelines**

# People would most like to see the gambling guidelines on gambling sites, at betting shops, and on the gambling regulator's website.

*For those shown the gambling guidelines and answered they would want to see guidelines like this: "Where would you want to see a statement like this displayed?"* (n = 434)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Gambling sites** | 66% |
| **Betting shops** | 61% |
| **Gambling regulator's website** | 51% |
| **Alongside safer gambling tools** | 48% |
| **Email** | 34% |
| **Other** | 3% |

"TV, radio and social media"
"Bus stops"
"Pubs and Amusement arcades"

*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

# Moderate risk and problem gamblers were more likely to exceed the gambling guidelines. They were also more likely to want to reduce their gambling activity.

| % who self-reported, per month, that they gamble… | Non-risk (n = 714) | Low risk (n = 239) | Moderate risk (n = 547) | Problem (n = 534) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| …more than 1% of their monthly household income | 53% | 66% | 82% | 84% |
| …on more than 4 days | 45% | 56% | 65% | 69% |
| …on more than 2 types of gambling activity | 61% | 67% | 83% | 91% |
| **% who, before seeing any campaign, are currently trying to reduce…** | **Non-risk** (n = 527) | **Low risk** (n = 160) | **Moderate risk** (n = 414) | **Problem** (n = 400) |
| …the amount of money they spend gambling | 16% | 40% | 63% | 73% |
| …the amount of time they spend gambling | 14% | 33% | 57% | 67% |
| …the number of different types of gambling activities they play | 16% | 32% | 51% | 56% |
| …something else about how they gamble | 6% | 10% | 31% | 42% |

*These are the groups targeted by the lower-risk gambling guidelines*

*Green shading identifies statistically significantly (p<0.1) highest (or joint highest) value within row.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

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# Non-risk gamblers were less likely to want to reduce their gambling activity.

**NOTABLE DIFFERENCES**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 28% | Under 25 | 7% |
| 8% | 55 or over | 30% |
| 15% | Non-risk gambler | 79% |
| 17% | Ethnic minority | 6% |
| 58% | Below median income | 50% |
| 42% | Live in an urban area | 32% |
| 41% | Live in a suburban area | 49% |

The groups were similar in terms of gender, ages 25 to 54, and living in a rural area.

**Gamblers who said they want to gamble <u>much</u> less money or time or play fewer games**
(52% of gamblers, n = 1,062)

**Gamblers who <u>do not</u> want to change how much money or time they gamble or gamble on a different number of games**
(26% of gamblers, n = 538)

*Notable differences are statistically significant, p > 0.1.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

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# Gamblers suggested that guidance should be more personalised and more to the point, aligning with previous work between BIT and the University of Bristol.

## *"What could be done to improve these campaigns?"*

| TTTT | Gambling guidelines | Tobacco-style warning |
|---|---|---|
| *"Make the message **stronger and more urgent**, as 'take the time to join them' is very low key."* | *"**Expand on the 1% to saying 1-2%**. Makes people feel **more in control of the power** of personal choice perhaps."* | *"You're just **stating the obvious, it needs to be abit more serious** to make a difference."* |
| *"Perhaps it would be good to **allow people who have been negatively affected by gambling to speak out** in the campaign and share how gambling has damaged their life and relationships."* | *"Include some **subjective/emotional/behavioral content**....not just numbers."* | *"Show **hard hitting stats** of how much UK spent on gambling, percent payout (chances of winning), betting company profits (reinforce chances of winning), number of bankruptcies due to gambling, number of suicides due to gambling."* |
| *"Give **links and numbers** for people to contact for help."* | *"Be **stricter**. [...] By doing that, **you're telling people with a gambling problem that it's still ok to gamble**, where stopping it altogether is the only solution."* | *"**Be positive**, give people ideas how they can stop gambling. **Don't just say it is bad**."* |
| *"A bit **more about gambling tools** as I have no idea what these are."* | *"Could you give a **stat at the start** ie x number of people experience x harm from gambling."* | *"Make it **more positive** - such as **save money by gambling less** and pointing out what you could spend it on."* |
| *"**More informative**. Include statistics. [...] State what help is available."* | *"**Where to find help and more useful tools** instead of just instructions. For example you would not say to an alcoholic 'just stop drinking'. This has the same feel."* | *"Be more **assertive**. Gamblers have a habit that needs breaking with help. **Offer guidance** how to 'do this instead of that'."* |

*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

# Gamblers suggested a range of guidelines and limits, ranging from self-imposed restrictions to outright bans from operators and banks.

*"Is there anything else that would be more effective at helping you to manage the amount you gamble?"*

**Limits that should be imposed**
*"If **banks froze your card** if they recognise trends."*
*"**Actual spending caps** set by the gaming sites."*
*"**Bans** after certain time periods."*
*"A **limit** on how much can be deposited in any month **depending on income**."*
*"Having **gambling controls built into my iPhone**. Maybe having a **specific 'gambling' card** on my phone which only had a certain amount on it every month."*
*"Set a fixed limit on **how much you can afford to lose and how many bets** per session you will make."*
*"Should be **compulsory to register on a national registry** so the amount you spend on gambling across websites and betting shops **can be monitored** more closely."*

**Support and advice**
*"Links to **charities and support groups**."*
*"By **reminding me through emails** on the need to manage the amount I gamble."*
*"Someone checking that I am stopping/a **support buddy**."*
*"Some **online forum where I could speak to other people struggling** to reduce their gambling habits."*
*"Make more **support as a oppose to restrictions**, and if it is restrictions **direct them towards the companies** and not the individuals taking part."*

**Distractions**
*"Coming up with **activities similar to gambling but without financial risks**"*
*"Having **other sources of enjoyment**. Something that distracts me from gambling."*

**Advertising**
*"Television adverts **promoting awareness of gambling safely**. I also think they should **ban gambling TV shows** at early hours in the morning as it can cause people to relapse."*
*"Cutting me off from the internet. It's **everywhere**, when you go online. **Even if you don't want to play, you will see advertising**."*
*"If there is to be a change then **gambling companies should not be allowed to advertise on TV or sponsor TV shows or sports team**. I would also make it illegal for them to make political donations."*

**Personal experiences of gambling harms**
*"**Personal experiences of people who have [reduced their gambling]** would be helpful."*
*"Show **real life case studies/examples** of what can happen when one bets all of their money."*
*"Putting out there that **you can have minor and regular problems** even if you aren't a serious gambler."*

**General**
*"An **incentive to stay off gambling**."*
*"Same as how investment companies do, they should **emphasis to people that their money/wealth is at stake** at every given opportunity."*
*"Some kind of **tracker so I know how much I've spent across all forms**."*
*"More **time out messages/think before you gamble** when actually playing."*
*"**Taxation** of gamblers as well as the companies they gamble with."*

*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

# THE
## BEHAVIOURAL
## INSIGHTS
## TEAM

# P R E D I C T I V

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# Those identified as Problem Gamblers were more actively looking to reduce their gambling before seeing the interventions.

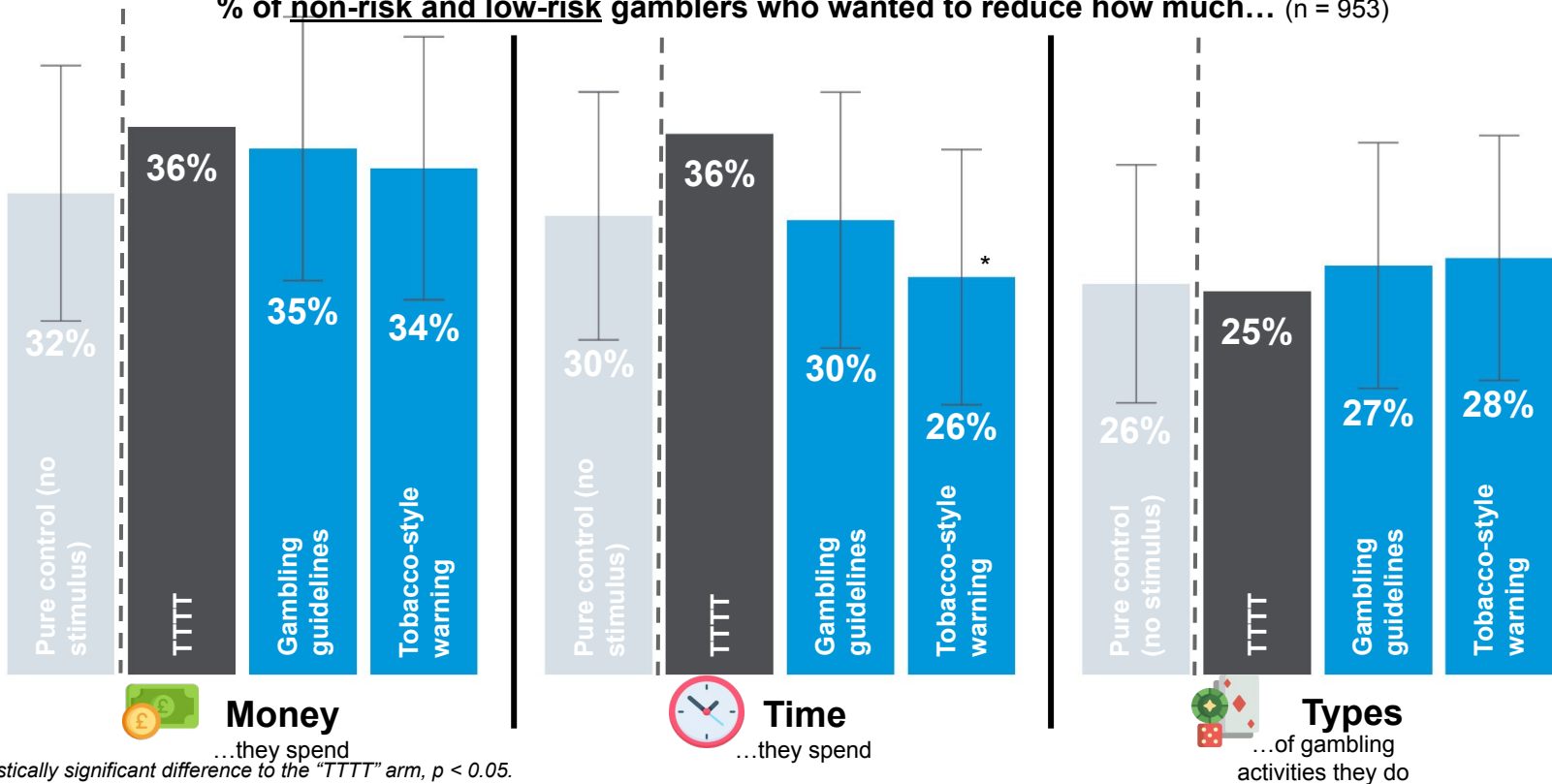| % of gamblers who, after seeing a campaign, wanted to reduce how much… | Non-risk (n = 714) | Low risk (n = 239) | Moderate risk (n = 547) | Problem (n = 534) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| …money they spend | 27% | 54% | 77% | 77% |
| …time they spend | 24% | 50% | 70% | 70% |
| …types of gambling they do | 19% | 49% | 62% | 61% |

*Green shading identifies statistically significantly (p<0.1) highest (or joint highest) value within row.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

# The TTTT campaign was the most effective in influencing whether gamblers want to reduce the money and time they spend and type of gambling activities they do.

**% of <u>non-risk and low-risk</u> gamblers who wanted to reduce how much…** (n = 953)



**Money**
…they spend

**Time**
…they spend

**Types**
…of gambling
activities they do

Money bars:
- Pure control (no stimulus): 32%
- TTTT: 36%
- Gambling guidelines: 35%
- Tobacco-style warning: 34%

Time bars:
- Pure control (no stimulus): 30%
- TTTT: 36%
- Gambling guidelines: 30%
- Tobacco-style warning: 26% *

Types bars:
- Pure control (no stimulus): 26%
- TTTT: 25%
- Gambling guidelines: 27%
- Tobacco-style warning: 28%

*italic* *denotes a statistically significant difference to the "TTTT" arm, p < 0.05.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*

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**Across all campaigns, lower risk gamblers were more keen to see campaigns in the real world. Email was the least preferred means of communicating safer gambling messages.**

| Of gamblers who saw any of the guidelines and say it's something they would like to see in the future, % who say they would want to see a campaign like this from… | Non-risk (n = 428) | Low risk (n = 139) | Moderate risk (n = 384) | Problem (n = 372) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gambling sites | 80% | 79% | 63% | 51% |
| Betting shops | 79% | 72% | 56% | 48% |
| Gambling regulator website | 61% | 65% | 51% | 44% |
| Alongside safer gambling tools | 54% | 56% | 47% | 42% |
| Email | 39% | 39% | 35% | 36% |

*Green shading identifies statistically significantly (p<0.1) highest (or joint highest) value within row.*
*Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.*