Assessment of consumer demand for gambling industry transparency

16.09.22

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 better understand ***what information consumers value when choosing a gambling operator to bet with.***

1. The top two attributes that people who gamble favour are **price and value, and customer service information**. However, there were overall only **small differences** between the factors measured.

2. Gamblers are **not loyal to particular operators**, with the majority (57%) having used 5 or more operators in the last 6 months. Comparatively, in a study of online gamblers in 2020, the Gambling Commission found that the mean number of accounts held in the last 12 months was 2.1 accounts.

3. When asked where they would go to view a company's safer gambling policies, such as the ability to set a session time reminder, 1 in 6 participants said they **would not look for safer gambling policies.** This suggests there is a group of gamblers where greater transparency on safer gambling may be ineffective.

% of gamblers who said this factor **would make them moderately or very likely to choose an operator offering this**, compared to the operator(s) they already use

Allow funds to be withdrawn more easily	**68%**
Offer better odds	**67%**
Offer better bonus offers and promotions	**65%**
Have a higher customer service score	**60%**
Have higher average daily player gains	**59%**

Only the top 5 of 16 factors are shown here.

Background

This survey sought to understand what information people want when choosing an operator, to assess appetite for increasing market transparency.

Increasing market transparency aims to shift firms' behaviours by giving consumers greater information, thereby allowing them to make more informed choices. This can increase competition in the market and encourages firms to amend their behaviour to align with consumer preferences, thereby leading to improvements in the market (e.g. the EU's energy labelling scheme).

In the context of gambling, improving market transparency may make it easier for consumers to access, understand and compare this information across operators. This in turn enables consumers to make an informed decision and select an operator that aligns best with their preferences. Such initiatives can also increase firm incentives to prioritise consumer preferences, resulting in positive outcomes such as improved service quality.

Aim of the survey: to **establish what decisions people** make when choosing an operator, **what information do they think they want**, and then **present a few ideas of our own** to assess appetite and potential effectiveness.

NOTE ON INTERPRETING RESULTS

1. The sample doesn't capture the digitally excluded, or people not inclined to complete online surveys.
2. Just because people say they would do something in an online experiment, this doesn't mean they always will in real life. We therefore interpret stated intent as a likely upper bound of real behaviour.
3. When we examine differences by subgroups (e.g. gender, ethnicity), we only do so when the sample size remains large enough to draw robust inferences from.
4. PGSI scores are far higher on online surveys than reported in general statistics (this may be due to use of the short-form PGSI scale).

Experiment set-up

Methodology: Sample

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 operator transparency 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*	
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%

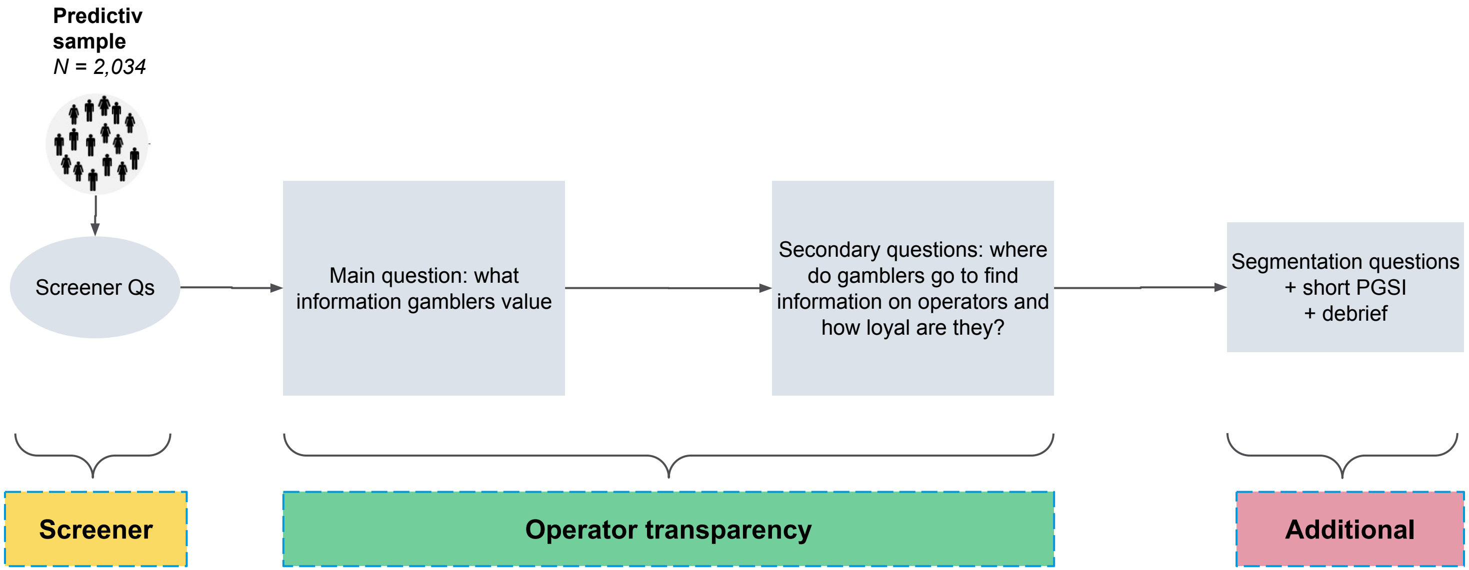
Gender	
Women	45%

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
* Based on short-form PGSI.

Participants were asked questions on gambling guidelines, operator transparency and additional questions on gambling perceptions and promotions



Results

THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM

PREDICTIV

THE GAMBLING POLICY & RESEARCH UNIT

Outcome measures

1. **The main outcome captured was which pieces of information gamblers considered most important when choosing an operator site to use.** This was calculated as the percentage of participants answering whether each piece of information, if available, would make them either moderately or very likely to choose an operator performing better on this piece of information compared to an operator they already use.

2. The pieces of information were categorised into:

    a. **Price & value:** e.g. information about the odds offered

    b. **Customer service:** e.g. customer service scores

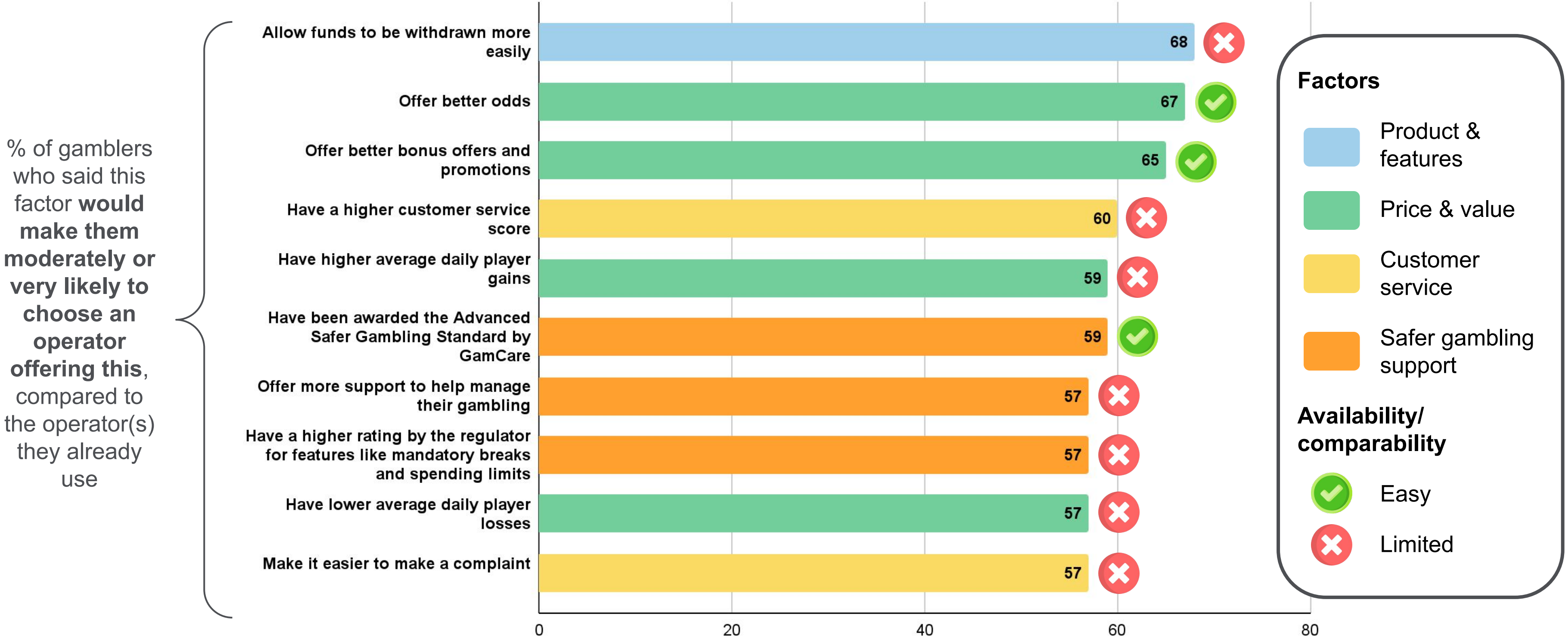
    c. **Product and feature:** e.g. ease of withdrawing funds from an account with the operator

    d. **Safer gambling support:** e.g. an operator offering more support to help manage their gambling

Main findings

Results: Main findings

Overall, price & value factors were more likely to encourage people to choose an operator, with three factors rated within the top 5. However, overall differences were small.



Only the top 10 of 16 factors are shown here, full list in the appendix.

Data collected by BIT on 20-27 May 2022.

There was minimal difference in average willingness to choose an operator across different features. Low risk and problem gamblers had higher willingness to choose than non-risk and moderate risk gamblers across all factors.

Average willingness to choose ('Moderately' or 'Very' likely)	**Non-risk (n = 714)**	**Low risk** (n =239)	**Moderate risk** (n = 547)	**Problem gamblers** (n = 534)
58%* are willing to choose the company for **price & value factors**	57%	64%	55%	61%
58%* are willing to choose the company for **customer service factors**	57%	67%	54%	61%
56% are willing to choose the company for **product and feature factors**	53%	60%	54%	61%
56% are willing to choose the company for **safer gambling support factors**	55%	61%	52%	59%

Average willingness to choose ('Moderately' or 'Very' likely) for each type of factor.
** Statistically significantly higher than the column, p < 0.1.*
Data collected by BIT on 20-27 May 2022.

Summary of main findings and next steps

Using these findings as the basis for a choice experiment

1. The top two attributes that people who gamble favour are **price and value, and customer service** information.
2. There is **minimal difference** between factors.
3. **Low-risk and problem gamblers** are more likely to favour more information than non-risk and medium-risk gamblers.

Following these results, we will be conducting a **choice experiment** to better understand the relative importance of different pieces of information.

For example, the choice experiment will provide us with information on how important odds are to gamblers compared to a customer service score, including how much the customer service score would have to improve by to overcome better odds.

This will form the basis of an eventual consideration on whether a **comparison site** will improve transparency in the industry, thereby improving operator performance.

THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM

PREDICTIV

Get in touch:

Esther Hadman
Senior Advisor
esther.hadman@bi.team

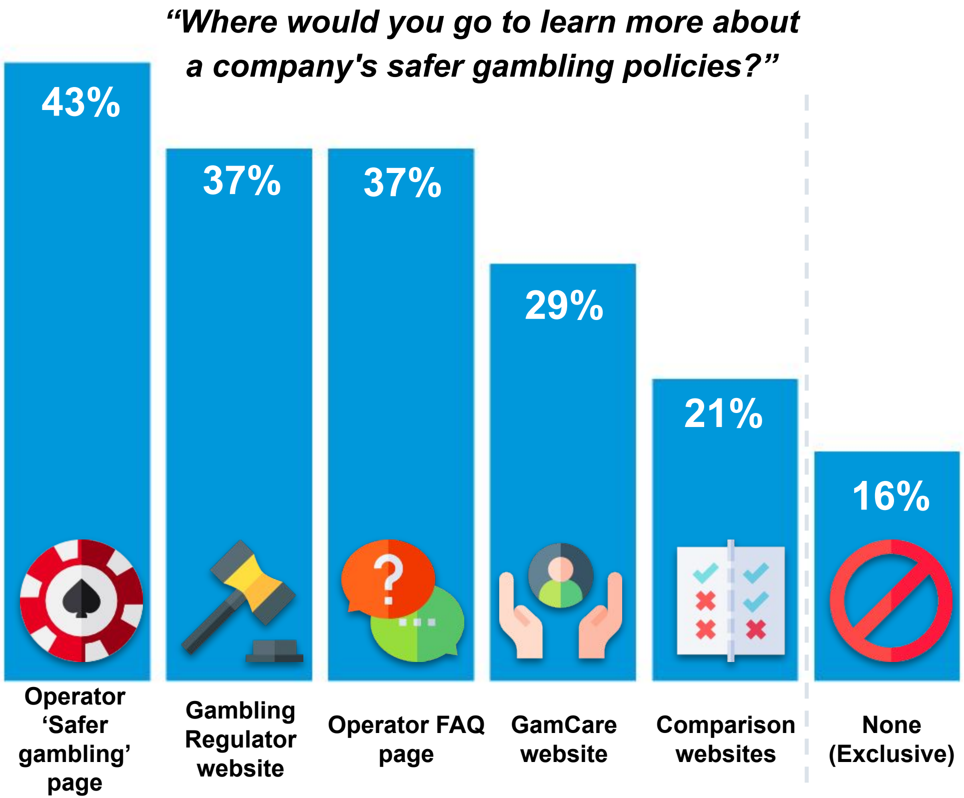
Deelan Maru
Associate Advisor
deelan.maru@bi.team

Aisling Ní Chonaire, Principal Advisor
Filip Murar, Senior Research Advisor
Elena Meyer zu Brickwedde, Associate Research Advisor
Louis Shaw, Associate Research Advisor

Secondary findings

Results: Secondary findings

When asked about finding more information on safer gambling, most participants say they would use the operator's 'safer gambling' page. 1 in 6 said they would not look for safer gambling policies at all.

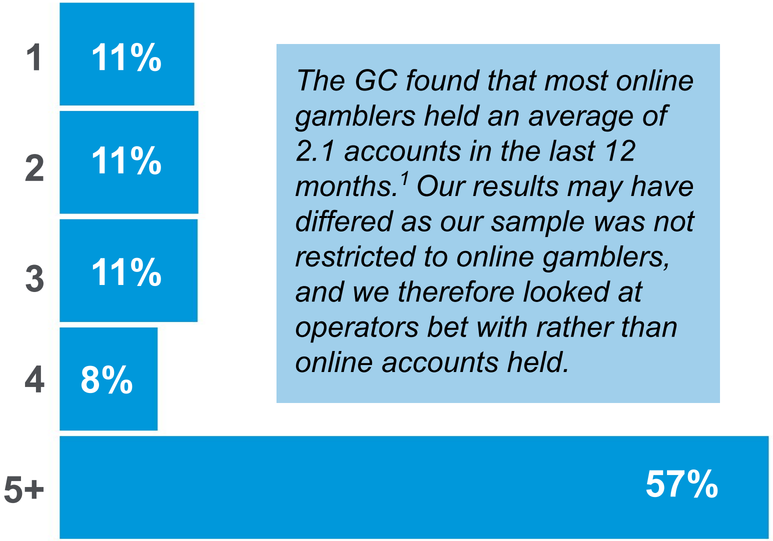


NB. This question identified hypothetical rather than actual behaviour. As such, attention should be given to the rank order of responses rather than the overall percentage.

A free text 'other' option was available but was selected by < 1%.
Data collected by BIT on 20-27 May 2022.

Gamblers do not appear loyal to a particular operator. 9 in 10 surveyed gamblers have used more than one operator in the last 6 months and 6 in 10 have used five or more operators. Problem gamblers, in particular, are not loyal, with 9 in 10 having used five or more operators .

Number of operators used in the past 6 months, either sometimes or often.



The GC found that most online gamblers held an average of 2.1 accounts in the last 12 months.[1] Our results may have differed as our sample was not restricted to online gamblers, and we therefore looked at operators bet with rather than online accounts held.

Number of operators by PGSI Status

	Non-risk (n = 714)	**Low risk** (n =239)	**Moderate risk** (n = 547)	**Problem gambler** (n = 534)
1	**22%**	11%	5%	2%
2	**20%**	9%	7%	4%
3	**18%**	11%	10%	3%
4	9%	**14%**	7%	5%
5+	28%	53%	69%	**86%**

Green shading identifies statistically significantly ($p < 0.1$) highest (or joint highest) value within row.

[1] Gambling Commission. (2021). Taking a more in-depth look at online gambling.

Data collected by BIT on 20-27 May 2022.

Customer service was less important for those under 25. Products & features scored highly with under 25's but not with those 55 and over. Women scored price & value the lowest, with men scoring this the highest.

		Preferred type of factors when choosing an operator			
		Products & features (n = 273)	**Price & value** (n = 229)	**Customer service** (n = 362)	**Safer gambling support** (n = 236)
Age	Under 25	30%	28%	23%	27%
	25 - 54	61%	61%	62%	61%
	55 and over	8%	12%	16%	12%
Gender	Female	46%	38%	45%	48%
	Male	54%	61%	55%	52%

A participant was classified as preferring a category of factors if they had a higher average preference for those factors than for the others factors.
Green shading identifies statistically significantly (p<0.1) highest (or joint highest) value within row.
Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.

Non-risk gamblers rate products & features information the lowest when choosing an operator. Gamblers that perceive themselves as skilled rate safer gambling support information the lowest.

		Preferred type of factors when choosing an operator			
		Products & features (n = 273)	**Price & value** (n = 229)	**Customer service** (n = 362)	**Safer gambling support** (n = 236)
PGSI	Non-risk	25%	34%	29%	31%
	Low risk	10%	11%	13%	11%
	Moderate risk	34%	27%	30%	26%
	Problem	31%	28%	28%	33%
Skilled	Yes	46%	42%	41%	39%
	No	49%	49%	52%	56%
	Don't play games that involve skill	5%	9%	7%	5%

A participant was classified as preferring a category of factors if they had a higher average preference for those factors than for the others factors.
Green shading identifies statistically significantly (p<0.1) highest (or joint highest) value within row.
Data collected by BIT on 20 - 27 May 2022.

Results: Secondary findings

We asked what information would help gamblers decide whether to open an account with an operator they had not used previously. Mostly, these aligned with our existing categories. Participants also highlighted specific safer gambling tools and the ease of setting accounts up.

Reviews and familiarity

*"**Good reviews** of their products from other punters"*

*"Loads of **good reviews**"*, and 17 other references to customer reviews.

*"**Ask others** if they use it"*

*"**Friends' opinions** who already have a account"*

*"**Familiarity** with games"*

*"The main thing for me is the **brand. If I do not know the brand name then I would not open an account**."*

Safer Gambling Tools

*"A **tracker** visible in the corner of the app that **tells you how much you're spending**"*

*"A **credit check**"*

*"They **don't send lots of emails encouraging spending money**"*

*"Has to have a **restriction on deposits**"*

*"Making me set **limit per week** I can gamble and **not be allowed to go over this**"*

Welcome offers welcomed

*"I really just **look for good promotions** like X amount of **free spins for new customers** etc, then I'll **sign up and see what I think**."*

*"Good **welcome offer**"*

*"**Free bets**"*

*"More **free stuff to do**"*

*"**Promotional opening offers**"*

How to withdraw

*"Clear **instructions on cashing out**"*

*"**Speeds of withdrawal**"*

*"**How to get payoffs**"*

*"**How withdrawals work**"*

*"If they do **payout promptly**"*

*"**Restrictions on withdrawals**"*

Ease of set-up

*"If they wanted so **many ID images sent it would put me off** and I'd just stick with one I use"*

*"How **easy** is an account set up"*

*"If you are going to **ask for docs ask before deposit not after win**"*

Additional findings

Lower risk gamblers are more sensitive to almost all operator features. Problem gamblers reveal they care more about whether skilled gamblers are excluded from an operator than other gamblers.

% who say this price & value factor would make them likely* to choose an operator offering this, compared to one they already use	Overall (n = 2,034)	Non-risk (n = 714)	Low risk (n = 239)	Moderate risk (n = 547)	Problem (n = 534)
Offer better odds	67%	68%	77%	64%	65%
Offer better bonus offers and promotions	65%	64%	74%	60%	65%
Have higher average daily player gains	59%	58%	64%	55%	63%
Have lower average daily player losses	57%	55%	64%	55%	58%
Have a lower percentage of players losing more than £500 per month	54%	50%	60%	54%	58%
Earn less per customer after payment of winnings	47%	43%	45%	43%	57%
% who say this products and features factor would make them likely* to choose an operator offering this, compared to one they already use	**Overall** (n = 2,034)	**Non-risk** (n = 714)	**Low risk** (n = 239)	**Moderate risk** (n = 547)	**Problem** (n = 534)
Allow funds to be withdrawn more easily	68%	69%	79%	64%	66%
Have more games and betting options	53%	47%	55%	54%	60%
Less likely to exclude skilled gamblers	47%	42%	47%	44%	58%

Gamblers who say they are moderately or very skilled at the games they play were significantly more likely to say they'd choose an operator for being less likely to exclude skilled gamblers (57%) than those who are not (42%) or don't play games that involve skill (31%).

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

Results: Additional Findings

Lower risk gamblers are more sensitive to almost all operator features.

% who say this customer service factor would make them likely* to choose an operator offering this, compared to one they already use	**Overall** (n = 2,034)	**Non-risk** (n = 714)	**Low risk** (n = 239)	**Moderate risk** (n = 547)	**Problem** (n = 534)
Have a higher customer service score	60%	60%	68%	55%	60%
Make it easier to make a complaint	57%	55%	65%	52%	62%
% who say this safer gambling support factor would make them likely* to choose an operator offering this, compared to one they already use	**Overall** (n = 2,034)	**Non-risk** (n = 714)	**Low risk** (n = 239)	**Moderate risk** (n = 547)	**Problem** (n = 534)
Have been awarded the Advanced Safer Gambling Standard by GamCare	58%	59%	69%	55%	58%
Offer more support to help manage their gambling	57%	54%	58%	54%	63%
Have a higher rating by the regulator for features like mandatory breaks and spending limits	57%	56%	64%	55%	57%
Send fewer adverts and promotions to people that are making losses	56%	55%	62%	52%	60%
Exclude a higher percentage of problem gamblers	52%	53%	52%	45%	57%

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

Problem gamblers are more likely to say they would use the GamCare website or comparison websites compared to other gamblers.

% who say they would learn more about a company's safer gambling policies from…	**Non-risk** (n = 714)	**Low risk** (n = 239)	**Moderate risk** (n = 547)	**Problem** (n = 534)
The operator's 'Safer gambling' page	41%	52%	40%	44%
Gambling Regulator website	34%	44%	39%	34%
The operator's FAQ page	36%	38%	37%	37%
GamCare website	23%	28%	31%	34%
Comparison website	14%	20%	21%	30%
None (Exclusive)	25%	13%	12%	7%

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