

MAY 2023

SCOTTISH STUDENTS' VIEWS ON GAMBLING, GAMING, AND CRYPTOCURRENCY: SURVEY RESULTS



Tackling
Gambling
Stigma



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RECOMMENDATIONS

UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

- Provide students with more information about the risk of different types of gambling products.
- Increase student awareness of where and how they can access gambling-related support.
- Ensure gambling harm prevention and support are included in student wellbeing strategies.
- Use university and college communication channels to address gambling risks and harms.

REDUCING STIGMA

- Highlight that confidential and non-judgemental support is available.
- Use public health messaging tailored to young women.

POLICY & REGULATION

- Regulate the activities of gaming and gambling companies that can harm young people.
- Restrict gambling advertising and marketing.

RESEARCHERS

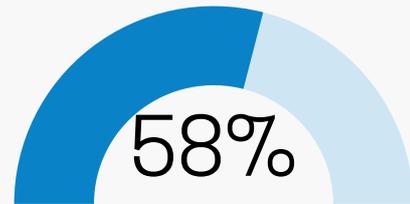
- Explore impact of gaming & gambling on affected others in the student population.
- Examine extent and nature of cryptocurrency-related harms within the student population.
- Explore impact of gambling-related stigma among the student population.

KEY FINDINGS

GAMING



MOST RESPONDENTS HAD **PLAYED A VIDEO GAME** IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS.



MANY GAMERS **PLAYED SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK** OR MORE.



MORE THAN **1 IN 5** RESPONDENTS WITH SOMEONE CLOSE TO THEM WHO GAMES REGULARLY HAVE WORRIED ABOUT THAT PERSON'S GAMING (21%).

- **Males were more likely to report having played a video game** (95% vs. 80% females), and playing every day (36% vs. 13% females).
- Respondents described both the positive and negative impacts of gaming:
 - **Positive impacts** included the social aspects of gaming, such as gaming for fun and relaxation, and using it as a way of coping with negative feelings such as stress and anxiety. They also described gaming for cognitive factors that included the challenge and problem-solving aspects of gaming.
 - **Negative impacts** included the harms that occurred such as time lost to gaming, being unable to stop, and feeling angry or tired due to gaming.

KEY FINDINGS

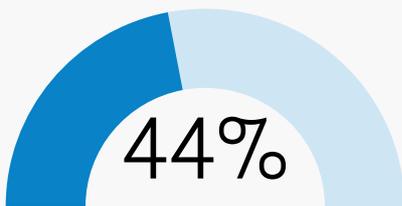
GAMBLING-LIKE FEATURES IN GAMES

RESPONDENTS RATED LOOT BOXES AS **RISKY, COMMON, EASILY AVAILABLE, HARMFUL, AND A FORM OF GAMBLING.**

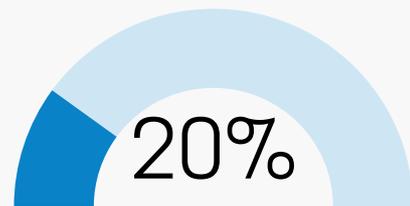


- **Over half of gamers had ever opened a loot box** (57%). Almost half had ever paid money to open a loot box (46%).
- **Males were more likely to report having opened a loot box** (77% vs. 40% females), and having paid to open a loot box (69% vs. 33% females).

GAMBLING



MORE THAN 2 IN 5 RESPONDENTS **GAMBLER** IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS.



MOST GAMBLE LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH, BUT 20% **GAMBLE ONCE A WEEK OR MORE.**



1 IN 10 RESPONDENTS WHO GAMBLE REPORTED THEIR GAMBLING IMPACTING THEM IN SOME WAY (10%).

KEY FINDINGS

GAMBLING (CONTINUED)

RESPONDENTS RATED GAMBLING AS **RISKY, COMMON, EASILY AVAILABLE, HARMFUL.**



OVER HALF OF RESPONDENTS WITH SOMEONE CLOSE TO THEM WHO GAMBLES REGULARLY HAVE **WORRIED ABOUT THAT PERSON'S GAMBLING** (57%).

- Respondents that said that gambling had impacted them described **financial harms and chasing.**
- For those who said that gambling had not impacted them, they described it as a **recreational activity**, where they set limits, or had little financial involvement.
- **Less than half of respondents would be confident in knowing where to refer a friend for support** around harmful gambling (45%).
 - Females were less likely to say they would be confident in knowing where to refer a friend for support than males (37% vs. 59%).
- More than 2 in 5 (43%) either would not feel comfortable reaching out for support (17%), or were not sure they would (26%).
 - Females were less likely to say they would be comfortable reaching out for support than males (43% vs 71%).
- Respondents would feel most comfortable reaching out to a **family member, friend, or support service for support** (58%, 58%, 50%).
 - Females were less likely to say they would be comfortable looking for support from health care professionals (24% vs 46% males).
- More than 3 in 5 said **judgement from friends might stop them** from accessing support (61%).

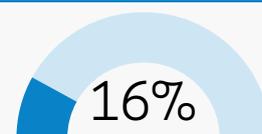
KEY FINDINGS

CRYPTOCURRENCY

RESPONDENTS RATED CRYPTO AS **RISKY, COMMON, EASILY AVAILABLE, HARMFUL, AND A FORM OF GAMBLING.**



MOST RESPONDENTS **HAD HEARD OF CRYPTOCURRENCY.**



OF THOSE WHO HAVE HEARD OF IT, ALMOST 1 IN 6 **HAVE USED CRYPTOCURRENCY.**



1 IN 10 RESPONDENTS WITH SOMEONE CLOSE TO THEM WHO USES CRYPTO HAD WORRIED ABOUT THAT PERSON'S CRYPTO USE (12%).

GAMBLING'S PLACE IN SCOTTISH SOCIETY

RESPONDENTS WANT **MORE GAMBLING SERVICES, MORE INFO, AND MORE AWARENESS** OF AVAILABLE SERVICES. ALSO, **MORE COMMUNICATION** FROM UNI/COLLEGE CHANNELS, AND **EDUCATION** ABOUT THE NATURE OF GAMBLING HARMS & RISKS.

- Almost half stated gambling is accepted as part of student life, but no more so than in wider society (46%).
- Most rated their exposure to gambling *About the same* since uni/college.
- Some described feeling gambling was **talked about less at uni/college**. Respondents who felt their exposure had been the same described still being faced with many types of gambling advertisements. Those who felt more exposed at uni/college described there being more gambling opportunities due to reaching the legal age to gamble, peers discussing gambling, and gambling had become normalised.

INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT OUTLINES FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY FAST FORWARD, TACKLING GAMBLING STIGMA, AND RCA TRUST TO EXPLORE SCOTTISH STUDENTS' VIEWS ON GAMBLING, GAMING, AND CRYPTOCURRENCY.

Gambling has become normalised in Scottish society. Half of young people¹ and over half of Scottish adults² participated in gambling in the last year, and most young people report having heard gambling advertising or sponsorship. In fact, despite age restrictions on gambling ads, research indicates that gambling ads on social media are more likely to appeal to children and young people than older adults.³

Gambling participation is increasingly shifting online, and the distinctions between gambling and related activities such as gaming and cryptocurrency use are no longer clear-cut. For example, game developers use gambling-style mechanics to drive players to purchase loot boxes – and loot box purchasing has been consistently linked to experience of harm from gambling.⁴

1. Gambling Commission (2022). [Young people and gambling 2022](#). This figure includes young people spending their own money on gambling activities, as well as wider participation such as picking lottery numbers for a family member.
2. The Scottish Government (2022). [Scottish Health Survey 2021](#).
3. Rossi, R., & Nairn, A. (2021). [What are the odds? The appeal of gambling adverts to children and young persons on Twitter](#). University of Bristol.
4. Close, J., & Lloyd, J. (2021). [Lifting the lid on loot boxes](#). University of Plymouth, University of Wolverhampton, & GambleAware.

Research indicates that students may be at higher risk of experiencing gambling harms.^{1,2} Beginning college or university can involve a number of transitions, both financially and in terms of a young person's support networks. Living on a fixed income yet having access to further funds such as student loans may increase financial vulnerability,³ and younger students may also be newly able to legally access gambling.

At present, Scottish young people do not have meaningful opportunities to make their voices heard on how policymakers and education providers can protect them from gambling harms. **Therefore, this survey aimed to explore Scottish students' views on gambling, gaming, and cryptocurrency, and the kinds of information and support they would like to receive.**

This research was funded by GambleAware.

FAST FORWARD, TACKLING GAMBLING STIGMA, AND THE RCA TRUST WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE STUDENTS WHO SHARED THEIR VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF GAMBLING, GAMING, AND CRYPTOCURRENCY.

WE ALSO THANK THE *GAMBLING LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK* FOR SHARING YOUR EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE, AND THE STUDENTS WHO PROVIDED INSIGHT AND PILOT TESTING – YOUR INPUT SHAPED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SURVEY.

1. Roberts, R., Wardle, H., Sharp, C., Dymond, S., Davies, T., Hughes, K., & Astbury, G. (2019). [Framing a public health approach to gambling harms in Wales: Challenges and opportunities](#). Bangor University.
2. Zolkwer, M., Dighton, G., Singer, B., & Dymond, S. (2022). [Gambling problems among students attending university in the United Kingdom](#). Journal of Gambling Issues.
3. [Annual gambling student survey](#) (2023). A Censuswide Survey commissioned by Ygam and GAMSTOP.

CONTEXT FOR THE SURVEY

THE SURVEY RAN BETWEEN 21 AUGUST AND 30 NOVEMBER 2021 AND RECEIVED **142 RESPONSES**.

Participants were recruited at in-person Freshers Week events and through social media advertising. The survey included a range of different question types, including open-ended questions, rating scales, and multiple choice options to make the survey as engaging as possible for students to complete.

Respondents were asked to provide their individual demographic information for further analysis. Statistically significant differences between female and male respondents are reported in the Survey Results section under Gender.

Although the survey was open to all students attending a university or college in Scotland, almost one third of respondents were aged 26+. Participants report attending universities or colleges based in 18 out of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities. Glasgow was the most common, followed by Highland and Dundee.



SURVEY RESULTS

The survey received **142 responses**.

GAMING

The first few questions were around students' experiences of gaming. This was defined as including computer games, games on your mobile, app games, and console games.

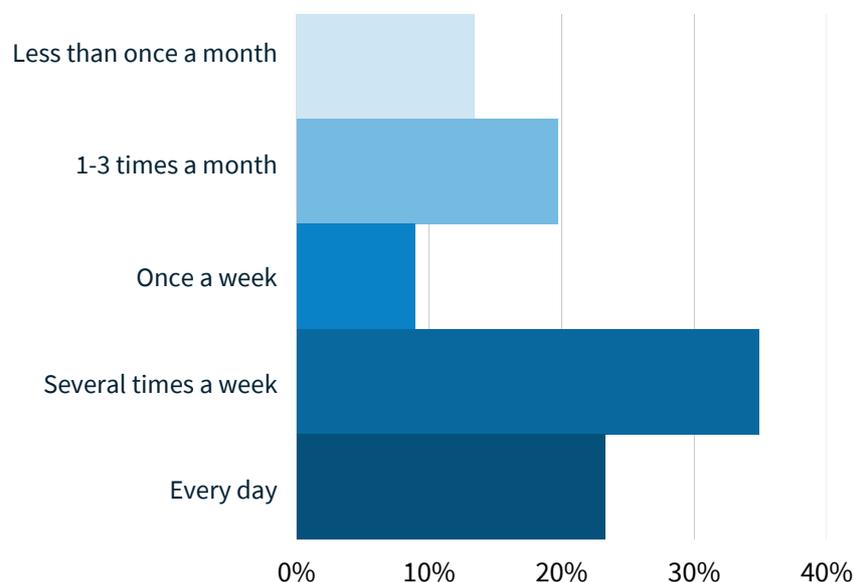
HAVE YOU PLAYED A VIDEO GAME IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

The majority of respondents (**89%**) stated that they had played a video game in the last 12 months. These **123 respondents** were then asked additional questions about their gaming.

Males were significantly more likely to report having gamed in the last 12 months (95%) than females (80%).

HOW OFTEN DO YOU PLAY?

Of those who had played a video game, almost a quarter played every day (23%) and **many played several times a week or more** (58%).



Males were significantly more likely to report gaming every day (36%) than females (13%).

HAS YOUR GAMING EVER IMPACTED YOU IN ANY WAY?

Of those who had played a video game, 35% (39) stated Yes their gaming had impacted them in some way.¹ 65% stated No.

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

This question received **45 written responses**. 40 of the answers were categorised into themes.²

Of those who selected *No* to the previous question, 7 people provided a written response. Of those who answered *Yes* to the previous question, 32 people provided answers.

1. Respondents were signposted to visit BBC's Don't Panic for support if needed.

2. 5 answers were removed as they consisted of "no" (3), "I'm not sure what this means," "no money."

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

No gaming has not impacted

Respondents who answered that gaming had not impacted them in any way provided written responses that described how gaming had little impact on them as they played irregularly or viewed it as a hobby. Some of the answers suggested they were consciously making choices to limit or control their gaming, so it did not affect their health and wellbeing.



“IT'S JUST AN ACTIVITY THAT I DO SOMETIMES. SOMETIMES I'VE DONE IT MORE FREQUENTLY THAN OTHER TIMES, BUT IT'S HARDLY A BIG DEAL.”

“I PLAY VIDEO GAMES BUT IRREGULARLY AS TO NOT AFFECT ME IN AN UNHEALTHY MANNER.”

“THERE IS NO IMPACT WITH GAMING FOR ME.”

“MY OBSESSION FOR GAMING CAN BE DEFINED AS MAKING MATURE DECISIONS ON TIME, THIS MEANS I WILL PLAY GAMING FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME WITHOUT BEING ADDICTED MUCH. AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, GAMING HAS NOT IMPACTED MY WELLBEING AND PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES IN ANY SHAPE OR FORM.”

“IT'S A HOBBY.”

Yes gaming has impacted in some way

Of those respondents who selected Yes to the previous question, the 32 answers could broadly be split into positive and negative impacts of gaming.

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

Yes gaming has impacted (continued)

In terms of positive impacts, these respondents generally answered that they felt in control of the time they spent gaming and often played for entertainment, with little or no financial involvement. It was a hobby that they enjoyed.

Respondents described using gaming for social reasons, such as making new friends and playing team games. Many respondents described using gaming for positive emotional factors (e.g., fun, excitement, enjoyment, relaxation). For others, gaming was used as a way of coping, such as relieving stress, feelings of depression and anxiety, and loneliness. Some described gaming for cognitive factors that included the challenge, problem-solving, and having an interest in the design and development of games.



“[GAMING] IMPACTS IN A POSITIVE WAY AS I TEND TO MEET MORE FRIENDS ONLINE THAN I WOULD OUTSIDE.”

“IT HELPS WITH MY ANXIETY AND IS A VERY IMPORTANT HOBBY.”

“SHAPED A GOOD CHUNK OF MY CHILDHOOD AND HELPS ME RELAX AND INTERACT WITH WONDERFUL STORIES AND SIGHTS”.

“GAMING WAS THE REASON WHY I GOT INTO GAME DEVELOPMENT.”

“I CAN BE OBSESSIVE AND NOT CONCENTRATE ON OTHER THINGS.”

“SOMETIMES GET ANGRY AND HAVE PUNCHED A WALL. GOT SORE EYES AND REALLY TIRED.”

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

Yes gaming has impacted (continued)

Some answered describing a negative impact of gaming, such as being unable to stop, time lost to gaming, and distraction from other activities such as studying and missing out on social activities. Gaming caused some people to become more angry or tired, or caused arguments within their families. The financial implication of gaming included getting into debt.

Main Theme	Secondary Theme	Main Theme	Secondary Theme	
Social factors	Bonding and connection	Cognitive factors	Challenge	
	Meeting new people		Problem-solving	
	Teamwork		Interest in game design and development	
Emotional factors	Fun, excitement, enjoyment		Improved focus	
	Relaxation		Harm	Excessive play
	Occupy time/boredom			Time loss
Coping	General stress reduction	Debt		
	Reduced loneliness	Missing social activities		
	Help with anxiety/depression	Anger		
	Distraction from life stressors	Tiredness		

DOES ANYONE CLOSE TO YOU¹ GAME REGULARLY?

All participants were asked this question. Almost 4 out of 5 (79%) respondents stated that someone close to them games regularly. 15% responded *No*, and 6% responded *Not Sure*.

Those who answered *Yes* were then asked the following questions about that person's gaming.

HAS THEIR GAMING EVER WORRIED YOU?

More than 1 in 5 (21%) of those who stated that someone close to them games regularly selected *Yes* to this question. 79% responded *No*.²



1. Examples provided included: family member, friend, or boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.
2. Respondents were signposted to visit [BBC's Don't Panic](#) for support if needed.

GAMBLING-LIKE FEATURES IN GAMES

The following questions were around students' thoughts on the connections between gaming and gambling.

HAVE YOU EVER OPENED A LOOT BOX?¹

Among respondents who had played video games, over half (57%) stated *Yes* they had ever opened a loot box. 6% responded *No*, and 6% responded *Not Sure*.

Males were significantly more likely to report having opened a loot box (77%) than females (40%).

HAVE YOU EVER PAID MONEY (OR USED VIRTUAL CURRENCY YOU HAVE BOUGHT) TO OPEN LOOT BOXES/PACKS/CHESTS TO GET OTHER IN-GAME ITEMS (E.G. SKINS, CLOTHES, WEAPONS, PLAYERS)?

Among respondents who had played video games, almost half (46%) stated *Yes* they had ever paid money to open a loot box. 51% responded *No*, and 3% *Not Sure*.

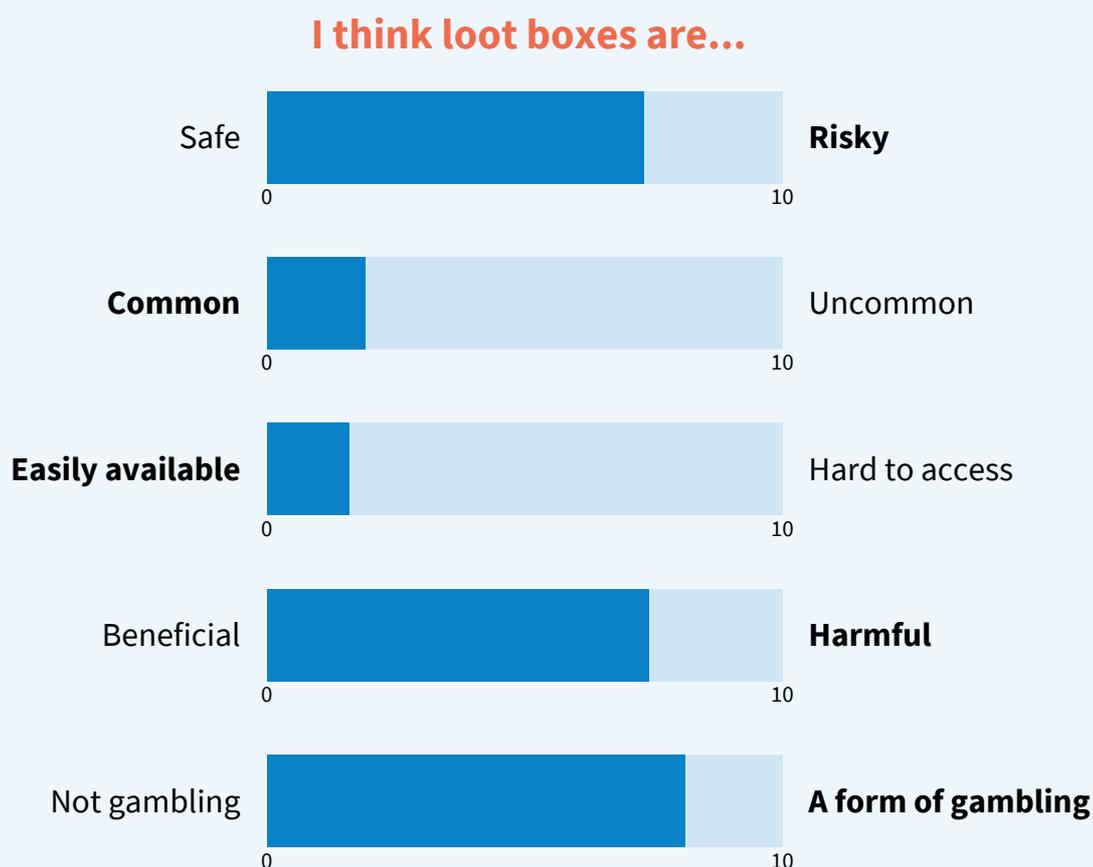
Males were significantly more likely to report having paid to open a loot box or receive an in-game item (69%) than females (33%).

1. The definition provided: A loot box is something you can purchase or receive in a game that contains a randomised reward. For example, 'player packs' or resource crates.

PEOPLE WHO GAME HAVE MANY DIFFERENT OPINIONS ABOUT LOOT BOXES. WE'RE INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU THINK. FOR EACH OF THE WORD PAIRS, PLEASE SELECT THE POINT BETWEEN THEM THAT YOU THINK BEST DESCRIBES LOOT BOXES.

I THINK LOOT BOXES ARE...

- Safe vs **Risky**
(Average score 7.3 out of 10, 0 being Safe and 10 being Risky; SD 2.7)
- **Common** vs Uncommon
(Average score 1.9 out of 10, 0 being Common and 10 being Uncommon; SD 2.5)
- **Easily available** vs Hard to access
(Average score 1.6 out of 10, 0 being Easily available and 10 being Hard to access; SD 2.3)
- Beneficial vs **Harmful**
(Average score 7.4 out of 10, 0 being Beneficial and 10 being Harmful; SD 2.6)
- Not gambling vs **A form of gambling**
(Average score 8.1 out of 10, 0 being Not gambling and 10 being Harmful; SD 2.7)



GAMBLING

The following questions were around students' thoughts on gambling. This was defined as risking money (or anything of value) on something with an uncertain outcome, in the hope of winning additional money or a prize.¹

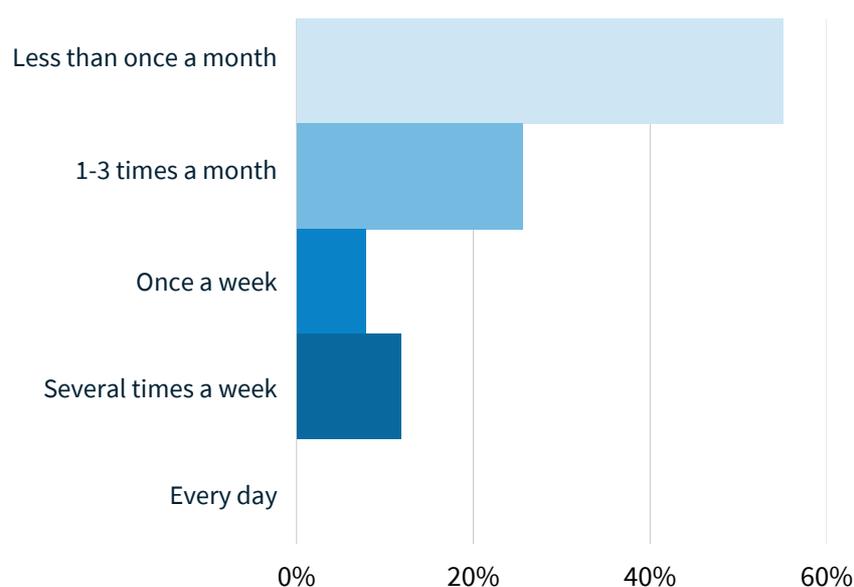
HAVE YOU TAKEN PART IN A GAMBLING ACTIVITY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

Over 2 in 5 (44%) respondents stated *Yes* they had gambled in the last 12 months. 52% responded *No*, and 3% responded *Not Sure*. There was no significant difference in gambling participation between male and female participants.

Respondents who indicated *Yes* or *Not Sure* were asked the following questions about their gambling participation.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU TAKE PART?

Of those who had gambled, most (55%) gamble less than once a month. However, 20% report gambling once a week or more.



1. Examples provided included: scratchcards, lottery, private bets with friends, bingo, betting (sports or eSports), casino games, poker, etc.

HAS YOUR GAMBLING EVER IMPACTED YOU IN ANY WAY?

Of those who had gambled, 1 in 10 (10%) stated Yes their gambling had impacted them in some way.¹ 90% stated No.

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

This question received **13 written responses**.

Yes gambling has impacted in some way

Of those who selected Yes to the previous question, 3 provided a written answer. These answers were centred on the financial harms (and chasing) from gambling.

Main theme	Secondary Theme
Harm	Financial
	Chasing

“CHASING LOSSES AND BEING SHORT FOR STUFF.”

“DEBT.”

“IN THE PAST I HAVE VISITED CASINOS AND SPENT MY ENTIRE MONTHS' SALARY IN A NIGHT.”



1. Respondents were signposted to visit to www.BigDeal.org.uk for support if needed.

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

No gambling has not impacted

Of those who selected *No* to the previous question, 10 provided a written response. The most common theme was gambling as a recreational activity, where respondents set financial or time limits, occasionally bet on the lottery, only bet on rare events (i.e., the Grand National races), or used virtual currency rather than their own money. In addition, the accessibility of gambling was discussed. For example, how easy it was in a video game to buy chips for an in-game casino, purchase loot boxes, or buying a scratchcard when visiting a petrol station. The financial implications of gambling were also discussed, including continuing to gamble to try and win (chasing) and the possible losses.

Main theme	Secondary Theme
General entertainment	Source of fun
	Little/no financial involvement
	Limit setting
Availability	Cross-selling of products in-game
	Accessibility
Financial implication	Chasing
	Losses

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

No gambling has not impacted (continued)

“I WOULD ONLY PLACE BETS DURING BIG EVENTS. ONCE A YEAR IF THAT AND ONLY OF A SMALL AMOUNT.”



“THE SMALL GAINS NEVER MAKE UP FOR THE BIG LOSSES. IT IS TOO EASY TO BUY LOOT BOXES AND LOSE MONEY THAT GOES DIRECTLY TO PUBLISHERS WHO FUND MORE AND MORE PREDATORY PRACTICES IN GAMES.”

“I BUY A LOTTERY TICKET OR A SCRATCHCARD IF IT’S A BIG ROLLOVER OR IF I’M AT THE PETROL STATION AND PAYING INSIDE.”

“THERE IS NO IMPACT IN GAMBLING YOU EITHER LOSING MORE AND WINNING LESS, BUT YOU JUST WANT TO KEEP TRYING HOPING YOU WIN BIG.”

“IT WAS IN A VIDEO GAME. IN GTA YOU CAN BUY MONEY, WHICH YOU CAN USE TO BUY CHIPS FOR AN IN-GAME CASINO. IT WASN'T A LOT BUT I IMMEDIATELY WANTED TO DO IT AGAIN AND I REALISED HOW IT COULD BE UNHEALTHY FOR SOMEONE VULNERABLE TO GAMBLING.”

DOES ANYONE CLOSE TO YOU¹ GAMBLE REGULARLY?

All participants were asked this question. Almost one third (30%) of respondents stated that someone close to them gambles regularly. 60% responded *No*, and 9% responded *Not Sure*.

Those who answered were then asked the following questions about that person’s gambling.

HAS THEIR GAMBLING EVER WORRIED YOU?

Over half (57%) of those who stated that someone close to them gambles regularly selected *Yes* to this question. 43% responded *No*.²

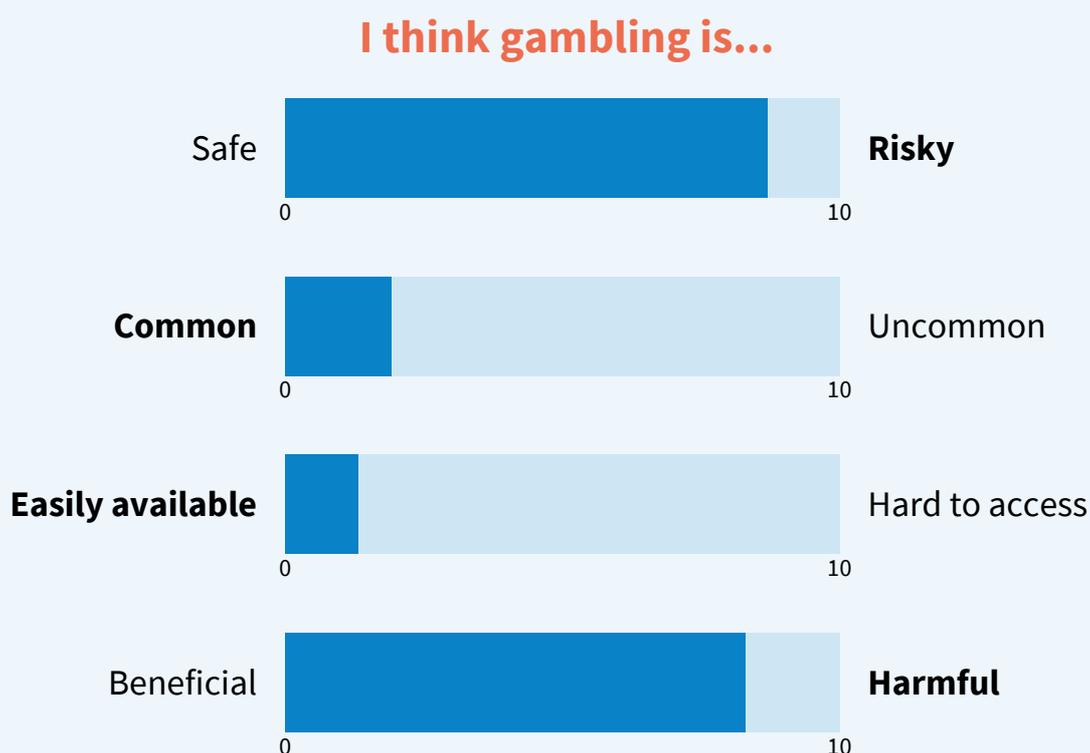
1. Examples provided included: family member, friend, or boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.

2. Respondents were signposted to visit to www.BigDeal.org.uk for support if needed.

STUDENTS HAVE MANY DIFFERENT OPINIONS ABOUT GAMBLING. WE'RE INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU THINK. FOR EACH OF THE WORD PAIRS, PLEASE SELECT THE POINT BETWEEN THEM THAT YOU THINK BEST DESCRIBES GAMBLING.

I THINK GAMBLING IS...

- Safe vs **Risky**
(Average score 8.7 out of 10, 0 being Safe and 10 being Risky; SD 1.5)
- **Common** vs Uncommon
(Average score 1.9 out of 10, 0 being Common and 10 being Uncommon; SD 2.3)
- **Easily available** vs Hard to access
(Average score 1.3 out of 10, 0 being Easily available and 10 being Hard to access; SD 2.1)
- Beneficial vs **Harmful**
(Average score 8.3 out of 10, 0 being Beneficial and 10 being Harmful; SD 1.7)



WOULD YOU BE CONFIDENT IN KNOWING WHERE TO REFER A FRIEND FOR SUPPORT AROUND HARMFUL GAMBLING?

All participants were asked this question. Responses were split, with 45% stating *Yes*, 43% stating *No*, and 13% *Not Sure*.

Females were significantly less likely to respond that they would be confident knowing where to refer a friend for support (37%) than males (59%).

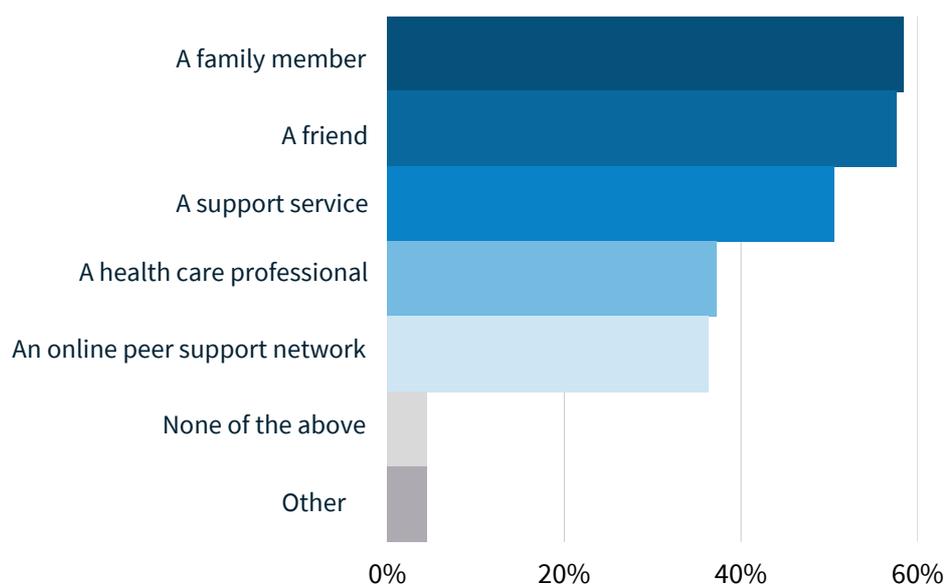
WOULD YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE REACHING OUT FOR SUPPORT IF YOU WERE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN GAMBLING?

57% of respondents indicated that they would feel comfortable reaching out for support. 17% stated *No*, and 26% *Not Sure*.

Females were significantly less likely to respond that they would be comfortable reaching out for support (43%) than males (71%).

WHERE MIGHT YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE LOOKING FOR SUPPORT?

Respondents indicated that they would be most comfortable reaching out to a family member, a friend, or a support service (58%, 58%, 50%) for support.^{1,2}



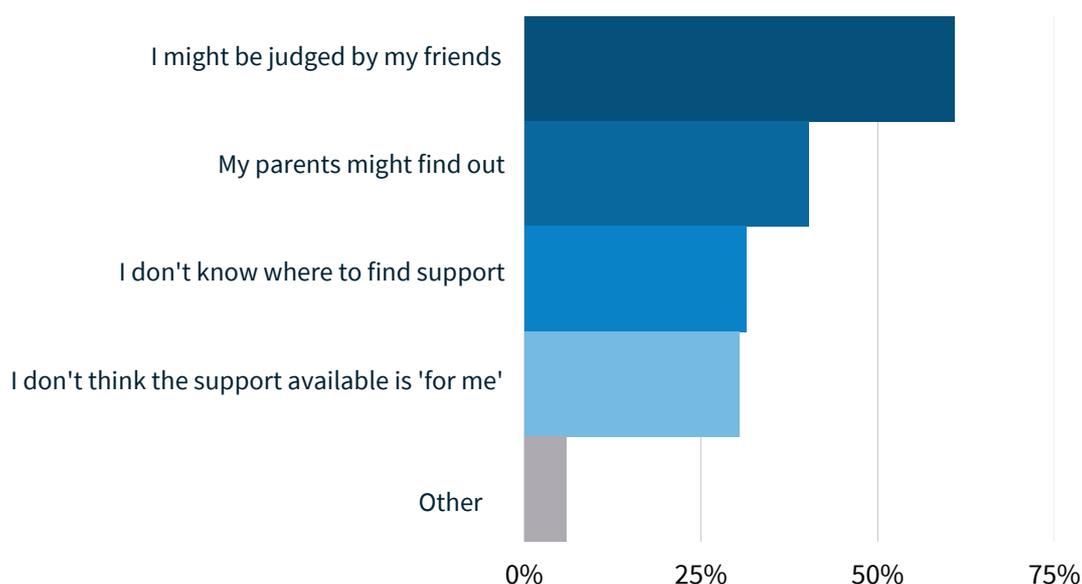
Females were significantly less likely to indicate that they would be comfortable looking for support from health care professionals (24%) than males (46%).

1. Family member examples included: a parent or carer. Health care professional examples included: your GP. Support service examples included: BigDeal.org.uk. Online peer support network examples included: a forum or social media community.
2. 5 respondents wrote under *Other* indicating GambleAware, NHS literature, and anonymous helplines.

WHAT MIGHT STOP YOU FROM REACHING OUT FOR SUPPORT?

More than 3 in 5 (61%) respondents indicated that *'I might be judged by my friends'* might stop them from accessing support, with 2 in 5 (40%) indicating *'My parents might find out.'*

Almost a third indicated that they *'don't know where to find support'* (31%) or *'don't think the support available is 'for me''* (30%).



Six respondents wrote in responses under Other (please specify) indicating concerns the support services could not help, they might be judged by people at the services, they would be too embarrassed, or they would not gamble.

CRYPTOCURRENCY

The following questions were around students' thoughts on cryptocurrency. There were no significant differences between responses from female and male participants around cryptocurrency.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF CRYPTOCURRENCY BEFORE?

All participants were asked this question. The majority of respondents (90%) stated that they had heard of cryptocurrency. These respondents were then asked the remaining questions about cryptocurrency.

HAVE YOU EVER USED CRYPTOCURRENCY?¹

Of the participants who had heard of cryptocurrency, almost 1 in 6 (16%) stated that they had used of cryptocurrency. 81% indicated *No* they had not, and 2% stated they were *Not Sure*.

HAS ANYONE CLOSE TO YOU² EVER USED CRYPTOCURRENCY?

Of the participants who had heard of cryptocurrency, almost 2 in 5 (39%) stated that someone close to them had used cryptocurrency. These respondents were then asked the remaining question about this person's use of cryptocurrency.

50% indicated *No* they had not, and 11% stated they were *Not Sure*.

HAS THEIR USE OF CRYPTOCURRENCY EVER WORRIED YOU?

Of the participants who stated that someone close to them had used cryptocurrency, over 1 in 10 (12%) stated that *Yes* it had worried them.³

88% indicated *No* it had not.

1. At this stage a definition was provided: Cryptocurrency is a digital or virtual form of money that uses encryption to keep transactions secure, such as Bitcoin. It's also sometimes called 'crypto' or 'cryptocoins'. Examples provided included: Bitcoin, Ethereum, or Ripple.

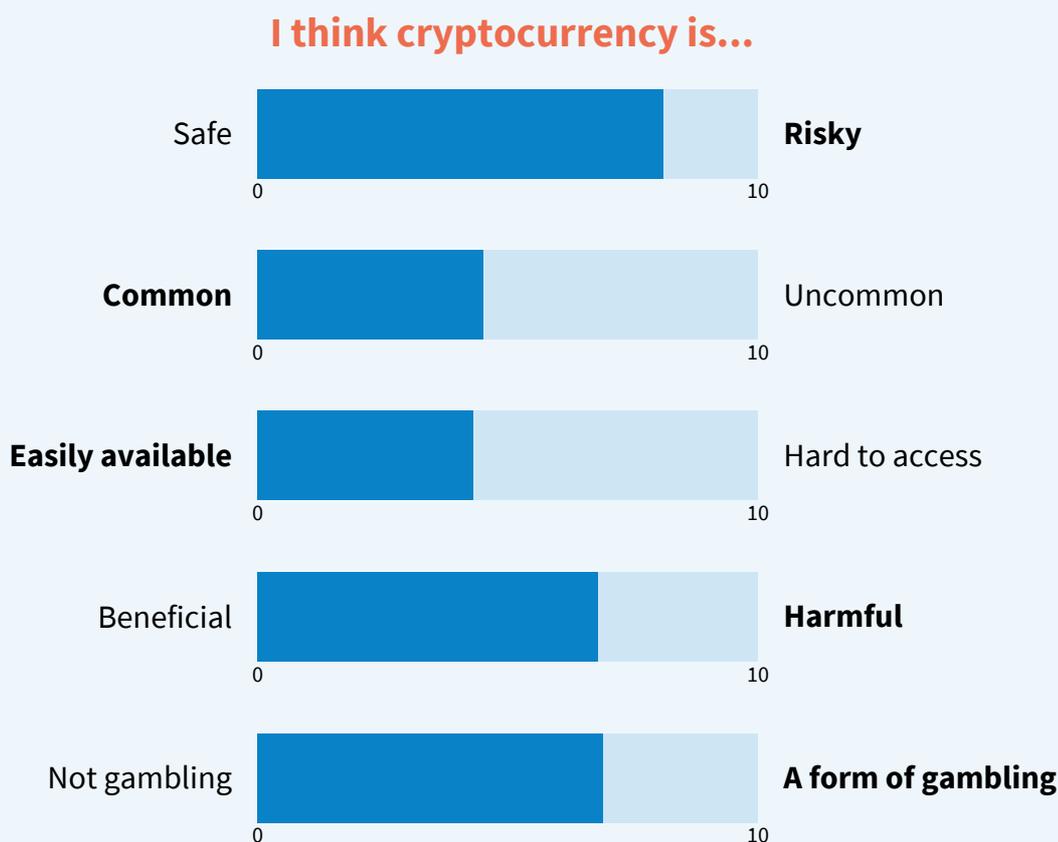
2. Examples provided included: family member, friend, or boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.

3. Respondents were signposted to the National Gambling Treatment Service for support if needed, which has a 24-hour helpline and live chat, and their advisers are trained to provide support around cryptocurrency.

STUDENTS HAVE MANY DIFFERENT OPINIONS ABOUT CRYPTOCURRENCY. WE’RE INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU THINK. FOR EACH OF THE WORD PAIRS, PLEASE SELECT THE POINT BETWEEN THEM THAT YOU THINK BEST DESCRIBES CRYPTOCURRENCY.

I THINK CRYPTOCURRENCY IS...

- Safe vs **Risky**
(Average score 8.1 out of 10, 0 being Safe and 10 being Risky; SD 2.3)
- **Common** vs Uncommon
(Average score 4.5 out of 10, 0 being Common and 10 being Uncommon; SD 2.7)
- **Easily available** vs Hard to access
(Average score 4.3 out of 10, 0 being Easily available and 10 being Hard to access; SD 2.9)
- Beneficial vs **Harmful**
(Average score 6.8 out of 10, 0 being Beneficial and 10 being Harmful; SD 2.7)
- Not gambling vs **A form of gambling**
(Average score 6.8 out of 10, 0 being Beneficial and 10 being Harmful; SD 2.7)



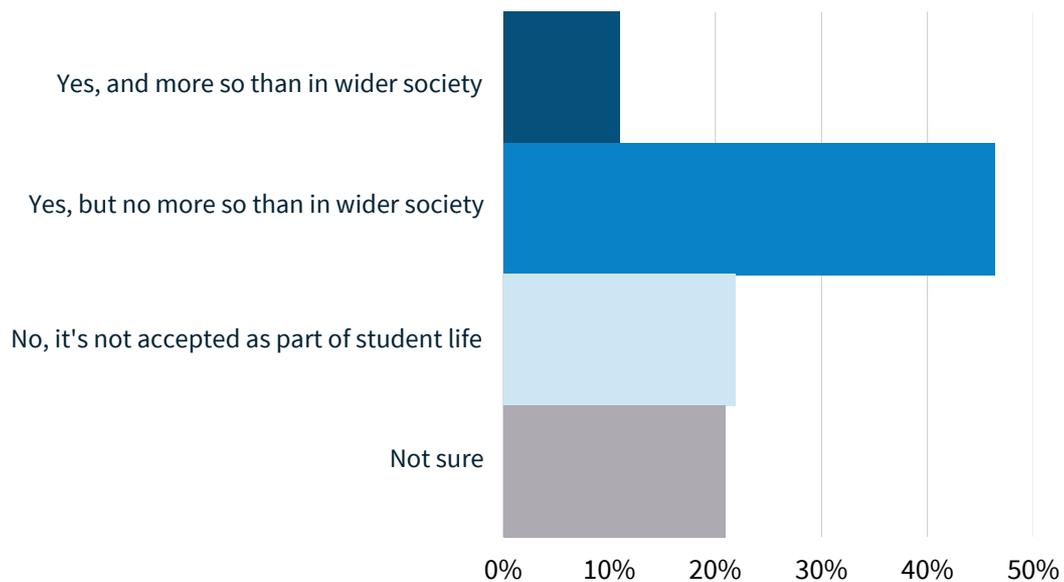
GAMBLING'S PLACE IN SCOTTISH SOCIETY

The following questions were around students' thoughts on gambling and related technologies like gaming and cryptocurrency, and their place in Scottish society. All participants were asked these questions.

DO YOU THINK GAMBLING IS ACCEPTED AS PART OF STUDENT LIFE?

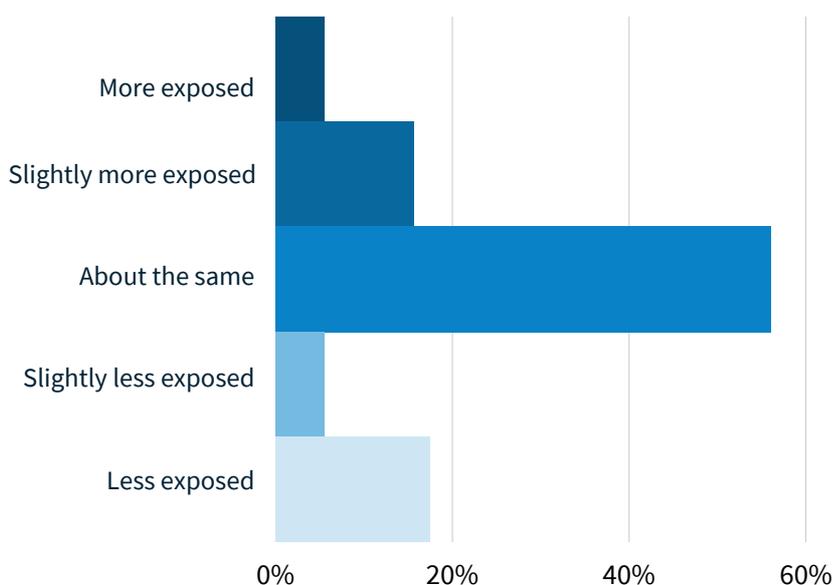
Almost half (46%) stated that Yes [gambling is accepted], *but no more so than in wider society*.

22% responded No, it's not accepted as part of student life, 21% were Not Sure, and 11% responded Yes [gambling is accepted], *and more so than in wider society*.



HAVE YOU BEEN EXPOSED TO GAMBLING MORE OR LESS SINCE GOING TO UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE?

More than half (56%) responded that their exposure has been *About the same* since going to university or college. Remaining responses were relatively evenly split between being more or less exposed (21% *Slightly more* or *More exposed*; 23% *Slightly less* or *Less exposed*).



COULD YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE?

This question received **37 written responses**.¹

Somewhat less exposed

Ten people indicated that they were slightly less exposed or less exposed to gambling since going to university or college. These respondents answered that they had not heard gambling talked about at university/college. One respondent said their peers talked less about gambling at university/college, but they did discuss gaming more frequently.

1.3 answers were excluded: 2 said they had only just started university/college, and 1 wrote "nothing."

COULD YOU TELL MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE? (CONTINUED)

”

“I HAVEN'T SEEN OR HEARD ANYTHING TO DO WITH GAMBLING FROM ANY PEERS OR ORGANISATIONS THROUGH COLLEGE. NO MENTION OF IT.”

“IN THE PAST 4 YEARS I'VE FOUND PEOPLE TALK FAR LESS ABOUT GAMBLING ON SPORTS ETC AND MORE ABOUT GAMING, ITS MORE ABOUT PLAYING AND BUYING COMPUTER/CONSOLE GAMES WHICH CONTAIN DLCs, SKINS ETC”.

“IN MY TIME AT COLLEGE, GAMBLING HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED NOR APPARENT IN ANY WAY.”

“NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT GAMBLING AT COLLEGE.”

About the same

Eleven people said their exposure had been about the same. They felt just as exposed to gambling and other activities as they had before they enrolled. Others described that they felt no more exposed to gambling at university/college but were still faced with seeing many gambling advertisements across multiple channels (social media, television, radio etc.).

”

“I HAVE NEVER BEEN VERY EXPOSED TO GAMBLING AND STILL AREN'T, I FEEL YOU HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT IF YOU WANT TO SEE IT IN MY COMMUNITY.”

“I WASN'T EXPOSED BEFORE AND HAVEN'T BEEN BECAUSE OF STUDENT LIFE.”

“I'M NOT AWARE OF GAMBLING BECOMING MORE OR LESS ON MY RADAR. THE EXPOSURE HAS REMAINED THE SAME - MAINLY RADIO ADVERTISING.”

“GAMBLING IS ADVERTISED EVERYWHERE NOT JUST UNIVERSITIES.”

“THE SAME AMOUNT, PEOPLE THAT ONLINE GAMBLE DON'T REALLY TALK ABOUT IT AND IT'S NOT LIKE GOING TO A CASINO WHERE IT'S OBVIOUS.”

COULD YOU TELL MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE? (CONTINUED)

Somewhat more exposed

Twelve people answered that they were slightly more exposed or more exposed to gambling since going to university or college. Some described how more people were gambling since they attended university/college, and they often heard their peers discussing gambling – particularly betting on football games. Another reason for the increased exposure was that they had reached the legal age to gamble. This also meant that they were able to go to casinos, or pubs where betting machines were available. One mentioned moving to a college/university where there were betting shops that they had not previously been exposed to. Another person described how gambling had become “normalised.”

“MORE PEOPLE DO IT, QUITE NORMALISED.”

“SEEN MORE PEOPLE GAMBLING THROUGH ONLINE BETS TO SOCIETIES. ALTHOUGH, AS PEOPLE GET INTO UNI/ COLLEGE THEY BECOME OF AGE TO GAMBLE SO AN INCREASE OF EXPOSURE TO GAMBLING ISN'T SURPRISING.”

“YOU HEAR MORE PEOPLE DISCUSSING BETS AND HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET MORE PEOPLE, GO TO EVENTS AND SO COMING FROM A MORE SHELTERED BACKGROUND I HEARD IT MUCH MORE.”

“DUE TO PLACES SUCH AS CASINOS OR BETTING SHOPS NOW BEING AN AVAILABLE PLACE I CAN VISIT WHEREAS BEFORE (DUE TO MY AGE) THEY WERE OFF LIMIT.”

“WHEN GOING OUT WITH FRIENDS THAT ARE THE AGE OF 18 OR OVER, YOU'RE EXPOSED TO SO MANY FORMS OF GAMBLING IN PUBS OR BARS.”



COULD YOU TELL MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ABOVE? (CONTINUED)

Main theme	Secondary Theme
No change	No difference
	Not discussed
Life stage	Accessibility and availability
	More high street betting shops in college/university city
	Legally gamble online
	Access to gambling environments (casinos, pubs with gaming machines)
Advertising	Social media
	Radio advertising
	TV/streaming service
More exposure	Online betting societies
	Peers discussing betting
	Peer influence - embedded with university activities

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION OR SUPPORT WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE TO FEEL MORE INFORMED ABOUT THE RISKS AROUND GAMBLING AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES?¹

This question received **33 written responses**. Respondents provided practical suggestions for additional support and information both in general and specifically for their university/college.

Main theme	Secondary Theme
General support	Increased and accessible support
	Awareness of available support
	Non-judgemental
	Financial support information
University/College specific support	Email communication about support organisations
	Information about limit-setting tools
	Posters and leaflets around campus
	Gambling specific talks
Public education campaigns	Information on harms and risks
	Gambling, cryptocurrency and day trading
	Normalising conversations around gambling and gambling harm

1. Examples provided included: from your university or college, parents or carers, or service providers like health and social care.

WHAT INFORMATION/SUPPORT WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE (CONTINUED)

People generally wanted to see more support services and awareness of the available services. This included help and support for gambling difficulties but also information about financial support services. Specifically for universities and colleges, people wanted more communication about available support, including via email, posters and leaflets around the campus, and talks on gambling risk and harms.

Others stated there needed to be more general education and emphasis on the extent and nature of gambling harm and counter-framing of gambling harms and risks in commercial advertisements about gambling. To encourage help-seeking and reduce the perceived stigma, some highlighted the importance of normalising conversations around addictive products and ensuring that non-judgemental support was available.



“FIRST OF ALL, THAT THERE IS ACCESSIBLE, NON-JUDGEMENTAL AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE SUPPORT.”

“I THINK TALKS AT THE UNIVERSITY’S WOULD HELP TO KEEP STUDENTS AWARE.”

“UNIVERSITIES CAN REACH OUT MORE VIA EMAIL WITH RESOURCES ON WHERE TO TURN IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT GAMBLING OR AT LEAST WHEN TO LIMIT YOUR GAMBLING OR STOP IT.”

“INFORMATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY IN THE FORM OF DIGITAL ADS ON THE SCREENS AROUND CAMPUS, POSTERS OUTSIDE LECTURE HALLS AND IN THE STUDENTS UNION.”

“DON'T THINK IT IS THE UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITY. PUBLIC HEALTH ADS AND EDUCATION AT YOUNGER AGE COULD BE BENEFICIAL SIMILAR TO THE APPROACHES USED FOR SMOKING.”

“MORE SOCIAL CARE ADVERTISED THROUGH MAINSTREAMS MEANS LIKE GAMBLING SUPPORT ADS ON PAGES REPLACING GAMBLING ADS.”

“INFORMED WARNINGS ABOUT THE MALICIOUS NATURE OF THE GAMBLING AND CRYPTOCURRENCY, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT, DAY-TRADING.”

“THE AWARENESS OF DAMAGES MOSTLY CAUSE BY GAMBLING WHICH RESULT TO AFFECTING HUMAN WELLBEING.”

GENDER

There were a number of statistically significant differences between female and male respondents:¹

- Males were **more likely** to report having gamed in the last 12 months (95% compared to 80% females), and playing every day (36% compared to 13% females).
- Males were **more likely** to report having opened a loot box (77% compared to 40% females), and having paid to open a loot box (69% compared to 33% females).
- Females were **less likely** to respond that they would be confident knowing where to refer a friend for support (37% compared to 59% males).
- Females were **less likely** to respond that they would be comfortable reaching out for support (43% compared to 71% males), and also **less likely** to report that they would be comfortable looking for support from health care professionals (24% compared to 46% males).

There were no other significant differences in the answers of female and male respondents.

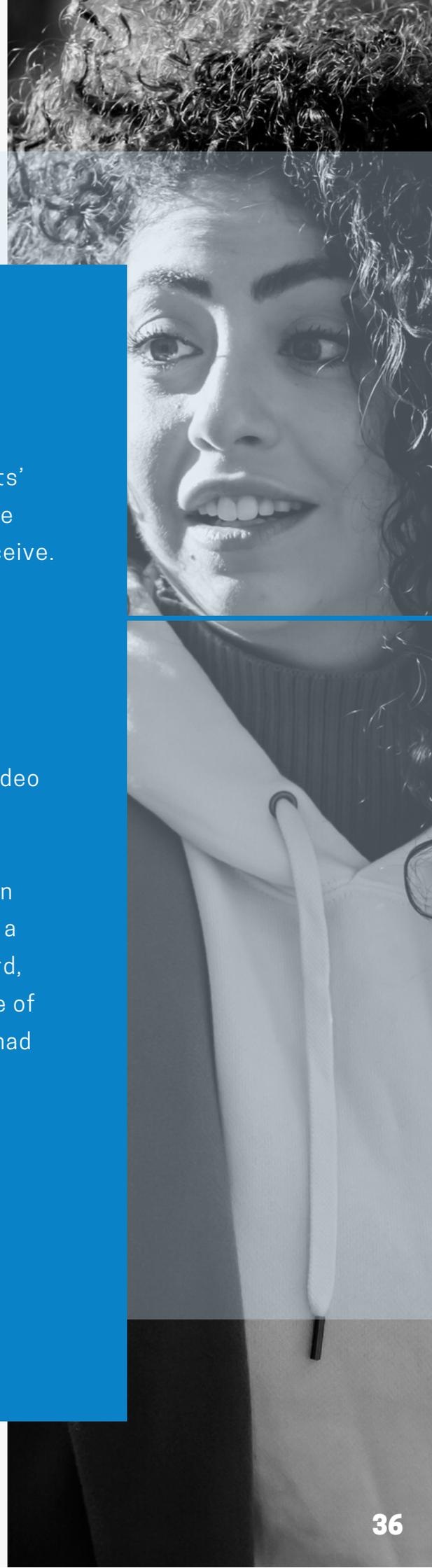
1. There were no statistically significant differences among respondents identifying as *Non-binary*, *In another way*, or *Prefer not to say*.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this survey was to explore Scottish students' views on gambling, gaming, and cryptocurrency, and the kinds of information and support they would like to receive.

GAMING AND LOOT BOXES

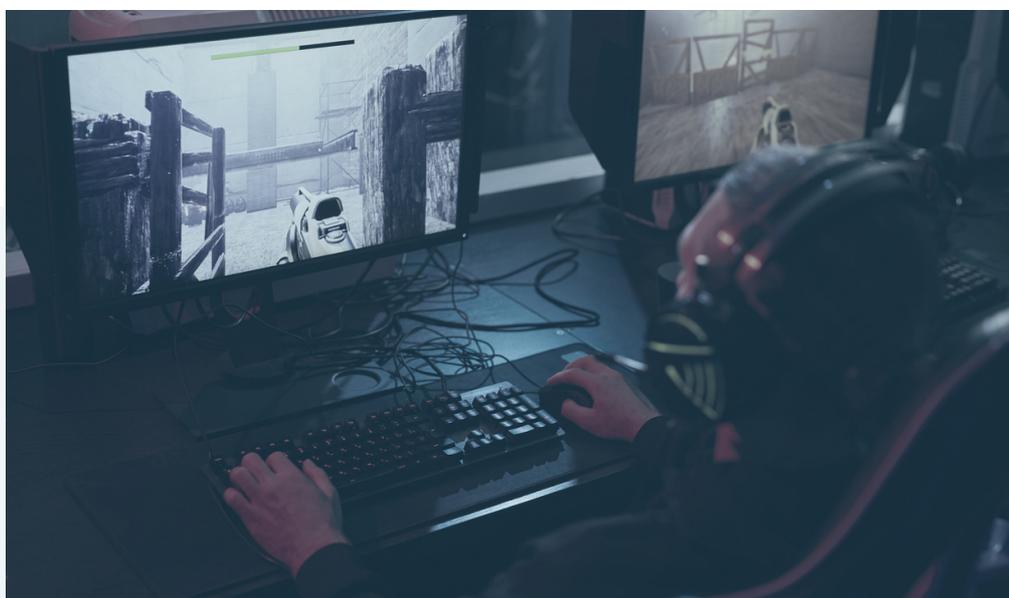
Just under 90% of survey respondents had played a video game in the last 12 months and male students were significantly more likely to report playing a video game than female students. The popularity of video gaming in the present survey echoes previous research, such as a report published in 2022 by the ALLIANCE, Fast Forward, and Young Scot,¹ which found that 92% of their sample of young people from Scotland aged between 11 and 26 had played a video game in the previous year.



1. Fast Forward and Young Scot commissioned by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) (2022). [Your views on gambling and gaming.](#)

Over one-third of respondents indicated that gaming had impacted them in some way. Student attitudes towards gaming were mainly positive, with some qualitative answers indicating that students were consciously making choices to limit or control their gaming, so it did not affect their wellbeing. Positive impacts of gaming included social benefits, stress reduction, and cognitive challenges. Many of the benefits of playing video games discussed in this survey have been previously documented.^{1,2,3}

Whilst gaming was predominantly described as a pastime, a small number of students found that gaming negatively impacted them. The qualitative responses indicated that they struggled to control the amount of time that they spent gaming, or it distracted them from other activities. Others commented on the impact that excessive gaming had on their wellbeing, such as feeling angry or tired. Again, these are gaming harms that have been previously documented.^{4,5,6}



1. Barr, M., & Copeland-Stewart, A. (2022). Playing video games during the COVID-19 pandemic and effects on players' well-being. *Games and Culture*, 17(1), 122-139.
2. Adachi, P. J., & Willoughby, T. (2017). The link between playing video games and positive youth outcomes. *Child Development Perspectives*, 11(3), 202-206.
3. Yee, N. (2006). Motivations for play in online games. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 9(6), 772-775.
4. Annual gambling student survey (2023). A Censuswide Survey commissioned by Ygam and GAMSTOP.
5. Shi, J., Renwick, R., Turner, N. E., & Kirsh, B. (2019). Understanding the lives of problem gamers: The meaning, purpose, and influences of video gaming. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 97, 291-303.
6. Rosendo-Rios, V., Trott, S., & Shukla, P. (2022). Systematic literature review online gaming addiction among children and young adults: A framework and research agenda. *Addictive Behaviors*, 107238.

One-fifth of the respondents who said that they had someone close to them who played games said that person's gaming had worried them at some point. This means that the gaming of friends or family members is likely a concern for many students. A growing area of research on gambling is the impact on friends, family and other people around them.^{1,2} However, the nature of harm from video gaming on others has received limited attention to date. There is a small amount of evidence that shows that the negative impacts of gaming are not limited to gamers but also to the people close to them.^{3,4} Therefore, our findings highlight the need to do more to understand students' worries.

A process of digital convergence means that gaming is incorporating gambling-like mechanisms in order to drive play and get players to spend more money in the game. Just over half of the respondents who had played video games stated that they had opened a loot box and just under half of video game users had paid money to open a loot box. Male participants were significantly more likely to have used loot boxes and paid to open a loot box than female participants. This aligns with findings that young males tend to be more prominent users of loot boxes.⁵

Previous research has indicated that loot box expenditure is positively associated with greater gaming-related financial harms.⁶ Loot boxes have been described as similar to gambling because the prizes are undetermined and what is won can be of much less value than the price paid to open them. Like gambling, they are structurally and psychologically designed to create an experience

1. Riley, B. J., Harvey, P., Crisp, B. R., Battersby, M., & Lawn, S. (2021). Gambling-related harm as reported by concerned significant others: A systematic review and meta-synthesis of empirical studies. *Journal of Family Studies*, 27(1), 112-130.
2. Dowling, N. A., Hawker, C. O., Merkouris, S. S., Rodda, S. N., & Hodgins, D. C. (2022). Addressing gambling harm to affected others: a scoping review.
3. Szász-Janocha, C., Magann, M., Gold, H., Lindenberg, K., Delfabbro, P., & King, D. L. (2023). Problem gaming-related harm experienced by partners and parents of individuals with gaming problems and their help-seeking experiences. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*.
4. Lianekhammy, J., & Van De Venne, J. (2015). World of Warcraft widows: Spousal perspectives of online gaming and relationship outcomes. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 43(5), 454-466.
5. Kristiansen, S., & Severin, M. C. (2020). Loot box engagement and problem gambling among adolescent gamers: Findings from a national survey. *Addictive Behaviors*, 103, 106254.
6. Carey, P. A. K., Delfabbro, P., & King, D. (2022). An evaluation of gaming-related harms in relation to gaming disorder and loot box involvement. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 20(5), 2906-2921.

that drives people to play them repeatedly¹ and it has been argued that due to the gambling-like nature of loot boxes and the potential for financial harm, purchasing loot boxes should be classified as a form of gambling and subject to the same age controls and regulations as other forms of gambling.^{2,3,4}

Respondents in the present survey generally indicated that they perceived loot boxes as a form of gambling. This suggests that they already have some awareness of the potential risks involved with loot boxes. It also gives support to the view that if these devices appear and function like gambling they should be subjected to greater regulatory controls, even if they evade technical definitions.

GAMBLING

Just under half of the respondents had gambled in the last 12 months, with 20% reporting that they gambled at least once a week or more. There was no significant difference in gambling participation between male and female students. One in ten respondents indicated that gambling had impacted them in some way. Qualitative responses indicated that a small number of students experienced financial harms from gambling. However, many respondents described gambling as a recreational activity, where they set financial or time limits. Some students expressed concern over the availability of gambling-like products in video games.

Almost a third of respondents stated that someone close to them gambles regularly, and over half of the people who said yes to this question stated that their gambling had worried them. Research has shown that around 7% of the population in Britain is negatively affected by someone else's gambling, and

1. Drummond, A., & Sauer, J. D. (2018). [Video game loot boxes are psychologically akin to gambling](#). *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2(8), 530-532.
2. Wardle, H. (2019). [The same or different? Convergence of skin gambling and other gambling among children](#). *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 35(4), 1109-1125.
3. Gibson, E., Griffiths, M., Calado, F., & Harris, A. (2022). [The relationship between videogame micro-transactions and problem gaming and gambling: a systematic review](#). *Computers in Human Behavior*, 107219.
4. Zendle, D., & Cairns, P. (2018). [Video game loot boxes are linked to problem gambling: Results of a large-scale survey](#). *PLoS One*, 13(11), e0206767.

the impact is most likely to be experienced by immediate family members, but friends and extended family and work contacts can also be affected by someone else's gambling.¹ The current research supports the need for greater attention to be paid to the range of impacts on affected others, including affected others who are students.

The survey also explored gambling's place in Scottish society and exposure to gambling at college or university. Almost half of the students said that gambling was accepted at their college or university, but no more so than in wider society. Quantitative responses indicated that just over half of respondents felt their exposure to gambling had been the same since going to college or university. The qualitative responses indicated that those who felt no more exposed to gambling since attending college or university were still faced with seeing many gambling advertisements across multiple channels. Students explained that gambling has become such a normal part of society that they saw gambling as much when they were younger. Research has shown that gambling advertising and marketing is prolific, with advertising and sponsorship widely and frequently reaching consumers of all ages, and online advertising is more likely to be seen by younger adults.²

Some described being more exposed to gambling since they attended university or college, and this was due to their being more conversations around gambling and increases in the number of legally accessible gambling opportunities for this age group.

CRYPTOCURRENCY

It is possible to buy and sell various cryptocurrency assets continuously and remotely due to the availability of mobile trading applications and the 24/7 nature of cryptocurrency markets. Through these trading applications,

1. Gunstone, B., & Gosschalk, K. (2020). [Gambling Treatment and Support](#). YouGov commission by GambleAware.

2. Gambling Commission. (2021). [Understanding how consumers engaged with gambling advertising in 2020](#).

individuals can engage in trading patterns that resemble gambling and potentially cause harm to the individual. A recent scoping review on cryptocurrency trading and its association with gambling and mental health suggested there may be a relationship between harmful gambling and cryptocurrency trading.¹

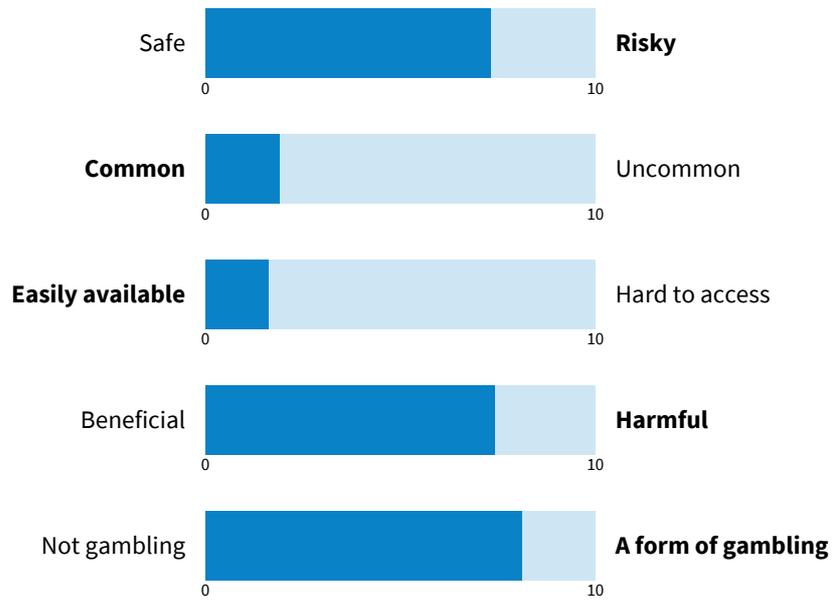
16% of participants had used cryptocurrency. This participation is slightly higher than the 10% crypto asset ownership found in the general population.² A recent survey on student gambling behaviour in the UK also found a higher than average cryptocurrency use among university students, and suggested reasons for this could be that students are exposed to more marketing of cryptocurrencies than the general population, or they have more of an awareness of the mechanisms to purchase cryptocurrency.³

12% of participants in the survey stated that someone else's cryptocurrency use had worried them. The results indicated that on average, students were more likely to view cryptocurrency as a form of gambling (than non-gambling).

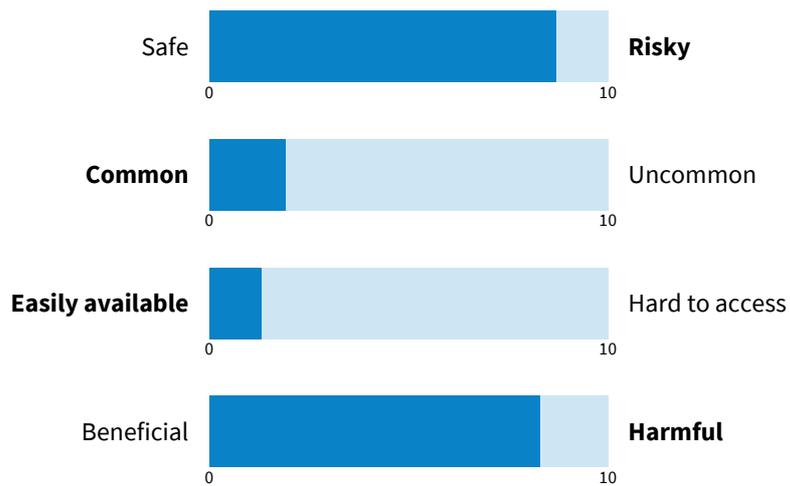
Respondents were asked to compare cryptocurrency, loot boxes and gambling across several factors. Students rated cryptocurrency as less common and less easily available than loot boxes and gambling, and slightly less harmful than gambling and loot boxes. In addition, students scored cryptocurrency use as risky (versus safe), and slightly riskier than loot box use but less risky than gambling. Therefore, the potential harms of cryptocurrency trading behaviours amongst university students and the people around them is an area that warrants further research. That students do experience or perceive cryptocurrency trading as a form of gambling suggest that there may be a need for more regulation, protection, or awareness. It may be important for university or college higher education teams to be aware of potential financial difficulties for students due to the value of cryptocurrency significantly declining in 2022.⁴

1. Johnson, B., Co, S., Sun, T., Lim, C. C., Stjepanović, D., Leung, J., Saunders, J. B., & Chan, G. C. (2022). [Cryptocurrency trading and its associations with gambling and mental health: A scoping review](#). *Addictive Behaviors*, 107504.
2. [Individuals holding cryptoassets: uptake and understanding](#). (2022). HM Revenue & Customs.
3. [Annual gambling student survey](#) (2023). A Censuswide Survey commissioned by Ygam and GAMSTOP.
4. Gunstone, B., & Gosschalk, K. (2020). [Gambling Treatment and Support](#). YouGov commission by GambleAware.

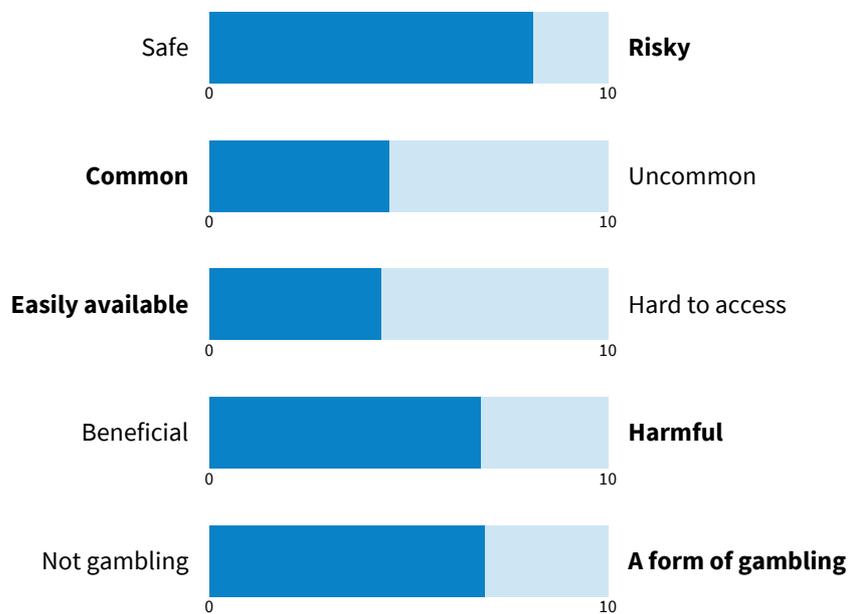
I think LOOT BOXES are...



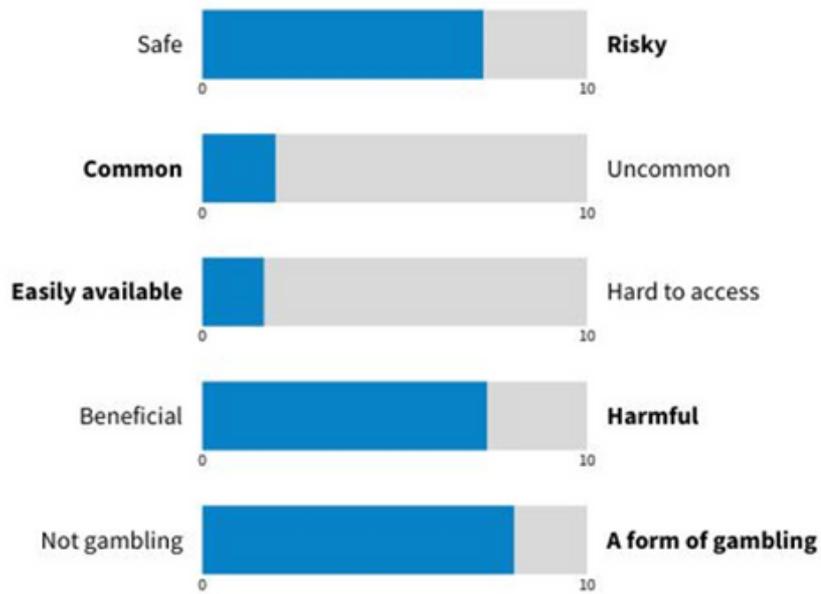
I think GAMBLING is...



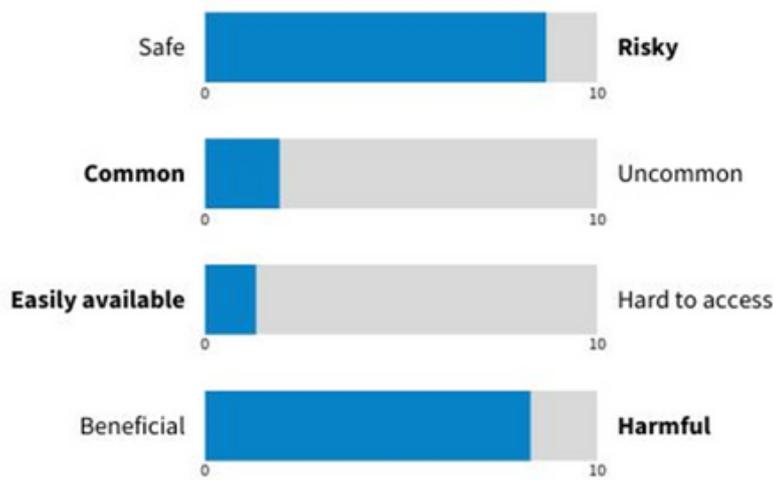
I think CRYPTOCURRENCY is...



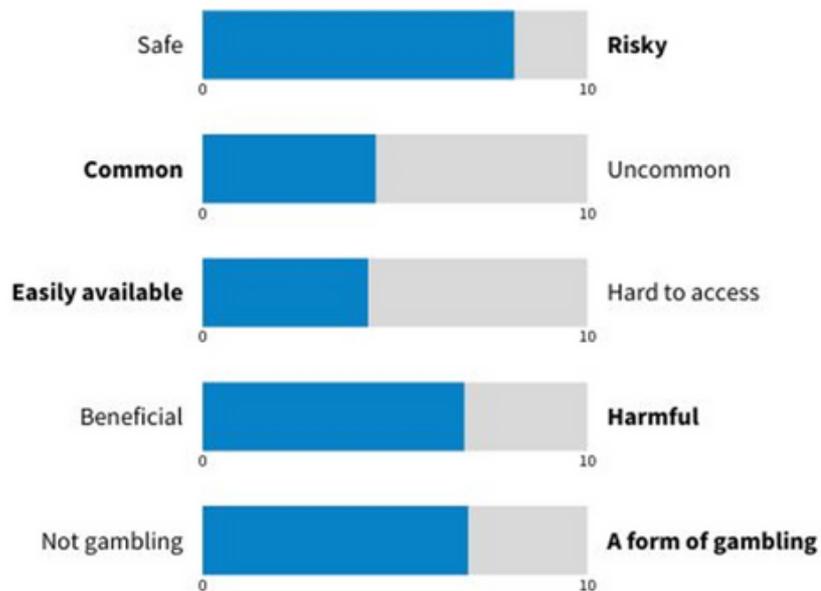
I think loot boxes are...



I think gambling is...



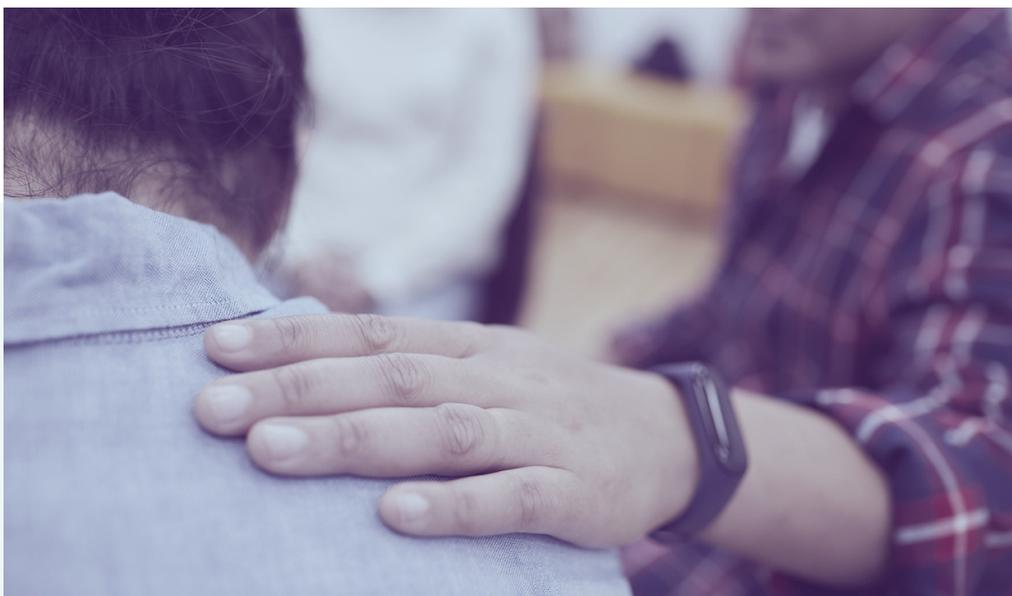
I think cryptocurrency is...



HELP AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The survey found that just under half of respondents felt confident in knowing where to refer a friend for gambling support, and just over half of the respondents indicated that they would feel confident reaching out for support for their own gambling. However, female participants were significantly less likely to respond that they would feel comfortable reaching out for support. This finding is similar to the recent Censuswide Survey commissioned by Ygam and GAMSTOP that reported that females who gamble were less likely than males to feel confident in accessing support from their university.¹ It is important that more is done to reduce the stigma felt by women who experience gambling difficulties, and there is an increase in awareness of gambling harms amongst this group.

Barriers that were commonly cited as reasons for students not accessing support in the current survey were being judged by friends (61%), friends or family finding out (40%), not knowing where to find support (30%), and not thinking the support available was suitable for them (30%). These are all barriers



1. [Annual gambling student survey](#) (2023). A Censuswide Survey commissioned by Ygam and GAMSTOP.

that have been previously identified. For example, the recent Censuswide Survey commissioned by Ygam and GAMSTOP found that just under 45% of those who gambled were unaware of the support available to them from their universities.¹ Individuals not thinking treatment or support was relevant for them has previously been identified as a barrier to accessing support. Stigma (such as feeling embarrassed, or not wanting other people to find out) has often been reported as a barrier to disclosure and accessing support and treatment.^{2,3}

Qualitative findings from this research show there were different types of information or support that Scottish students wanted to see. This included more general awareness of the available support for gambling. However, they also provided suggestions for specific strategies of communicating support and advice information through higher education providers, including via email, posters about gambling, and talks on gambling risks and harm. People also indicated that they wanted to see more general public education on the extent and nature of gambling harm. To encourage help-seeking and reduce stigma, some highlighted the importance of normalising conversations around addictive products and ensuring that non-judgemental support was available.

1. [Annual gambling student survey](#) (2023). A Censuswide Survey commissioned by Ygam and GAMSTOP.
2. Pliakas, T., Stangl, A., & Siapka, M. (2022). [Building Knowledge of Stigma Related to Gambling and Gambling Harms in Great Britain. A scoping review of the literature](#). GambleAware.
3. Dinos, S., Windle, K., Crowley, J., & Khambhaita, P. (2020). [Treatment Needs and Gap Analysis in Great Britain](#). GambleAware.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this survey show that there is more that can be done to prevent and provide support for students experiencing gambling-related harm in Scotland. We make the following recommendations for action:

UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE GAMBLING HARM PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The findings in this survey highlight the need for further action to be taken within a higher education setting. These include:

- Providing students with more information about the risk of different types of gambling products.
- Increase student awareness of where and how they can access gambling-related support.
- College and university settings should ensure that gambling harm prevention and support information are included in their strategies that promote student health and wellbeing.
- Organisations that provide education and support for young people need to engage with communication teams within universities and colleges to lead on gambling education campaigns.
- University and college communication channels must be utilised including email communication, campus posters, and talks specifically designed to address gambling risks and harms.





STIGMA REDUCTION STRATEGIES

The survey highlights that stigma remains a barrier to accessing support. Therefore, the following should be considered:

- It is important that efforts made to raise awareness of support services address student concerns and perceived stigma by highlighting that confidential and non-judgemental support is available.
- Female students experiencing gambling difficulties are less likely to feel comfortable accessing support, so more needs to be done to address stigma and increase awareness of harms amongst this group. This also reinforces the need for public health messaging which is tailored toward young women.¹

CHANGES TO POLICY & REGULATION

The findings align with existing public health recommendations that address the broader determinants of harm:

- Regulating the activities of gaming and gambling companies that can harm young people. More specifically, the findings of this survey support increasing the regulatory controls around loot boxes.
- The restriction of gambling advertising and marketing.

1. McCarthy, S., Thomas, S., Marko, S., Pitt, H., Randle, M., & Cowlshaw, S. (2022). Women's perceptions of strategies to address the normalisation of gambling and gambling-related harm. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Some areas identified in this study warrant further exploration through additional research. This includes:

- The impact of gaming and gambling on affected others in the student population.
- The extent and nature of cryptocurrency-related harms within the student population – both from own use and that of somebody else's.
- The impact of gambling-related stigma among the student population.

Gambling difficulties can be complex, often coinciding with worry, stress, and perceived stigma. Feelings of stigmatisation can be worsened by the gambling industry narrative that places the onus on the individual to gamble 'responsibly,'¹ rather than addressing the wider social, environmental, and commercial drivers of gambling behaviour. It is important that universities and colleges collaborate with organisations working within that sector to not only promote the help that is available but to work on stigma reduction strategies and normalise conversations around gambling harm.

1. Livingstone, C., & Rintoul, A. (2020). Moving on from responsible gambling: a new discourse is needed to prevent and minimise harm from gambling. *Public Health*, 184, 107-112.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents were asked to voluntarily provide their details in the following questions. 39 respondents skipped these questions, and have not been included in the demographic tables.

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

Almost one third of respondents were 26+ (30.1%).

Age	% Response	Age	% Response
16 or under	1.9%	22	3.9%
17	13.6%	23	3.9%
18	5.8%	24	5.8%
19	10.7%	25	3.9%
20	8.7%	26+	30.1%
21	11.7%		



WHAT LOCAL AUTHORITY IS YOUR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY IN?

Respondents report attending universities or colleges based in **18 out of the 32** Scottish Local Authorities. Glasgow was the most common (35.0%), followed by Highland (14.6%) and Dundee (11.7%).

Local Authority	% Response	Local Authority	% Response
Aberdeen	7.8%	North Ayrshire	1.9%
Dumfries and Galloway	1.9%	North Lanarkshire	1.0%
Dundee	11.7%	Orkney Islands	1.0%
East Ayrshire	2.9%	Perth & Kinross	1.0%
East Renfrewshire	1.0%	South Ayrshire	1.0%
Edinburgh	9.7%	South Lanarkshire	1.0%
Fife	1.9%	Stirling	2.9%
Glasgow	35.0%	West Lothian	1.0%
Highland	14.6%	Not sure	1.0%
Moray	1.9%		

WHAT COURSE(S) ARE YOU STUDYING?

JACS subject codes were used to categorise responses.¹

Subject Area	% Response	Subject Area	% Response
Biological sciences	15.1%	Combined	5.4%
Computer science	15.1%	Social studies	5.4%
Agriculture & related studies	9.7%	Business & administrative studies	4.3%
Education	9.7%	Architecture, building, & planning	2.2%
Creative arts & design	8.6%	Languages	2.2%
Subjects allied to medicine	7.5%	Historical & philosophical studies	1.1%
Engineering & technology	6.5%	Mass communications & documentation	1.1%
Other	6.5%		

1. [JACS 3.0 Principle subject codes](#)

DO YOU IDENTIFY AS...?

Gender	% Response
Female	50.5%
Male	37.9%
Non-binary	3.9%
In another way	4.9%
Prefer not to say	2.9%

HAVE YOU EVER QUALIFIED FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

Answer	% Response
Yes	24.3%
No	67.0%
I went to school outside the UK	6.8%
Prefer not to say	1.9%

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNICITY?

Ethnicity	% Response
White/White Scottish/White British	81.4%
Prefer not to say	4.9%
White Other	4.9%
Irish	2.9%
Polish	2.0%
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	1.0%
African/African Scottish/African British	1.0%
Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British	1.0%
Other	1.0%

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

TACKLING GAMBLING STIGMA

Tackling Gambling Stigma (TGS) is a not-for-profit organisation set up to tackle the stigma and discrimination around gambling harm. TGS do this by sharing the real-life stories of those affected – because evidence shows that social contact is core to tackling any stigma or discrimination. TGS use best practices in research to gather and analyse lived experiences. This material is used to create a multi-media website where those affected, the public and professionals can learn about gambling harm by reading, listening, or watching people share their experiences.

FAST FORWARD

Fast Forward is a force for change, supporting young people to take informed decisions about risk taking behaviours. We are Scotland's national youthwork organisation specialising in risk-taking behaviours, prevention and early-intervention. Our projects support organisations and practitioners who work with young people by providing training, upskilling, and resources. We also support young people through engaging with them in learning activities in groups, in community and school settings.

Fast Forward's Scottish Gambling Education Hub provides free training, consultancy and resources to organisations working with children, young people and families across Scotland.

RCA TRUST

RCA Trust is an organisation that provide free and confidential specialist support to anyone at risk of or experiencing gambling related across Scotland as part of the National Gambling Treatment Service as well as offering support to their loved ones that are also affected by a range of different methods and services.

CONTACT

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