

## Betting

### What do we mean by 'betting'?

The Gambling Act 2005 brings the betting industry\* under the regulatory control of the Gambling Commission.

**General betting** licensees are able to offer facilities for betting as premises-based bookmakers (off-course) and on tracks (on-course), as well as by remote means (for example by telephone or over the internet). They must have rules that cover issues such as voiding late bets, maximum payouts, treatment of errors, and the treatment of withdrawals and non-runners. On-course licensees must also display specified information, as well as, in the case of Levy Board approved horse racetracks, information on betting slips.



**Pool betting** incorporates racecourse, football and other sports pool operators as well as 'fantasy football' type competitions. It can be conducted in person, for example the Tote accepts pool bets on tracks and in high street betting shops, or remotely, such as through an internet betting site run by one of the football pools operators.

**Betting intermediaries** facilitate the making or acceptance of bets between others. Remote betting intermediaries, often called betting exchanges, generally operate through the internet. An example of a non-remote betting intermediary is a tic-tac, who normally works within a betting ring on a horse or greyhound racing track.

### How is betting regulated?

Most organisations and individuals that provide facilities for betting require a licence to operate, whether the facilities are provided remotely (for example through the internet or telephone), or in premises, including on tracks. The Commission has developed licence conditions and codes of practice that govern licence holders and it has powers to prosecute or impose fines on operators who breach their licence conditions.

There are three types of licence:

- Operating licences are required by those that provide facilities for betting in Britain.
- Personal licences are required by individuals in certain management positions except for those organisations categorised as small-scale operators.
- Premises licences are required where gambling services are provided to the public from fixed premises (including at tracks). The premises licence is required by the track owner, rather than the on-course bookmaker. These are issued by the local licensing authority.

### Betting facts and figures

- There are approximately 8,000 betting shops across Britain.
- Over £10,000 million was bet off-course on horseracing in 2004/05, most of it in licensed betting offices in Britain, with a further £120 million bet with the Tote on-course.
- More than 12% of the population have bet on a horse race in the last year.
- Around 3% of people have bet on a dog race or an 'event' such as a football match.
- There are 59 horse racecourses and 29 greyhound tracks in Britain.

\* except for spread betting which is regulated by the Financial Services Authority

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The Gambling Commission regulates gambling in the public interest. It does so by keeping crime out of gambling, by ensuring that gambling is conducted fairly and openly, and by protecting children and vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling. The Commission also provides independent advice to government on gambling in Britain. For further information or to register your interest in the Commission please visit our website at: [www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk](http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk)