

- Could you please tell me how many betting shoppings are there in Northern Ireland?
- How many people are employed in these betting shops?
- How many self service betting terminal (not to be confused with FOBTs) there are currently in these betting shops?
- When will DFC introduce the Bookmakers Code of Practice?
- Does the Permanent Secretary have the authority under the Executive Order to introduce this code of practice and further regulation without a Commencement Order in the Northern Ireland Assembly?
- Why did DFC write the legislation in a way that Consultation and a Commencement Order was needed prior to implement a Code of practice?
- Given Northern Ireland has fallen further behind the rest of the UK and ROI how will DFC regulate against further gambling harm?
- Does DFC accept responsibility for future gambling harm as a result of their failure to introduce legislation to tackle this issue?

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Ref: DFC/2024-0007
Date: 16 January 2024

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I wish to confirm that the Department has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 7 January 2024.

The Department does not hold information on the number of betting shops currently operating in NI, the number of people currently employed in these particular shops or how many self-service betting terminals are currently inside them.

The Department does, however, hold information on the number of bookmakers' office licences that were operational in the calendar years of 2021 and 2022, the number of VAT and PAYE gambling businesses more generally registered here from 2014-2022 inclusive as well as the number of people employed in the gambling industry as a whole from 2011-2021 inclusive. This information has been published on the Department's website and can be found via the following link:

[Gambling Licences and Industry Data Northern Ireland 2022 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/gambling-licences-and-industry-data-northern-ireland-2022)

The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Amendment) (2022 Act) (Commencement No.1) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023 appointed 1 October 2023 as the date on which section 16 ("Code of practice") of the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries

and Amusements (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 ('the 2022 Act') came into operation. Although the power to issue codes of practice has thereby come into effect, there is no intention to issue any codes until a Minister is appointed. Any such code(s) must also be consulted upon prior to issue in accordance with the requirements set out in section 16 of the 2022 Act. These arrangements were designed to reflect the wishes of both the then Minister and Northern Ireland Assembly at the time the legislation was introduced.

Decisions with respect to any further regulation of the gambling industry here would be a matter in the first instance for a future Minister for Communities, a future Executive and a future Assembly. The question of introducing legislation in the future to tackle gambling harm (as distinct from regulating the industry) would be a matter in the first instance for a future Executive and Assembly rather than the Department.

The Department's responsibility for gambling is to set the regulatory framework under which the industry operates and to describe, through one or more published codes of practice, arrangements that should be made by persons providing gambling facilities to meet their expected duty of care to those using their facilities.

If you are dissatisfied with this response and wish to request a review of our decision or make a complaint about how your request has been handled, you may ask for an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. You should write to the Information Access Manager, Department for Communities, Level 5, 9 Lanyon Place, BELFAST, BT1 3LP, or send an email to foi@communities-ni.gov.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a review of our original decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire

SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Social Policy Unit