

It is clear to Councils and Councillors that their ability to deal with and curb the proliferation of betting shops in town centres and high streets, as well as controlling the quantity of FOBTs available is severely restricted under the 2005 Gambling Act. Despite the Minister for Local Government's view that licencing authorities are not making sufficient use of existing powers.

It is proposed to give Scotland the power to vary the number of FOBTs in new betting premises and, subject to amendments in the Scotland Bill, this could be extended as a retrospective power. No such power for Licensing Authorities in England and Wales is proposed just a continual reference to "existing powers".

The view of the Campaign for Fairer Gambling is that the power to vary the number of FOBTs should be devolved to all Local Authorities and their Licensing Committees as is proposed for Scotland. However, it is not the quantity of machines that essentially creates the problem as can be seen from the latest Gambling Commission statistics.

Sector/Machines	Terminals	Yield (millions)	Yield Share
Betting Shops/B2	34,874	£1,613.60	68%
Bingo B3/4/C/D	52,506	£292.24	12%
Casino B1/2/3	2,925	£166.26	7%
AGC B3/4/C/D	50,530	£306.09	13%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>140,835</b>	<b>£2,378.19</b>	

Figures from the Gambling Commission Industry Statistics to September 2014

All gaming machines other than B2/FOBTs are capped at £2 and under per spin. It is the capacity for large losses that is facilitated by such a high staking capacity (£1 to £100 rather than 25 pence up to £2 as on most other gaming machines) that is the core of the problem regarding the B2 casino content.

As part of your Council's gambling policy over the next three years, we recommend you contain a statement supporting further regulatory action against FOBTs, with greater powers of control devolved to councils.