
PRESS STATEMENT

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Available for interview	Marc Etches, Chief Executive
Images available	Responsible Gambling Trust logo

Responsible Gambling Trust publishes research into gaming machines locations

The Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT) has today published geographic analysis of the location of licensed betting offices (LBOs) with gaming machines. The research places machine play in a geographic context and details the populations LBOs typically serve.

The independent analysis was conducted by Geofutures and commissioned by RGT. It forms part of the programme of research requested by the government, the gambling regulator and the industry to help inform policy decisions into gaming machines located in bookmakers. The research utilised studies conducted by NatCen Social Research and Featurespace, and published by the RGT in December 2014.

The research establishes a new authoritative source for understanding the number and location of LBOs with machines operating in Great Britain, and examines the nature of the communities in which these businesses operate. There were approximately 9,350 betting shops with gaming machines in November 2014, down from a peak of around 9,700 in December 2013. Although there are significant local variations, and not all places where LBOs are located exhibit the same characteristics, areas close to betting shops tend towards higher levels of crime events, resident deprivation, unemployment, and ethnic diversity.

Mark Thurstain-Goodwin, Managing Director of Geofutures, said:

“This research provides much-needed baseline information about the location of LBOs and the communities in which regular players live. Our aim was to document the relationship between area characteristics and LBOs, though not to look for specific evidence why these patterns occur – they are likely to be driven by a range of factors. We believe our analysis provides a factual and helpful basis for future, more in-depth research to understand specific local factors.”

Marc Etches, Chief Executive of the Responsible Gambling Trust, said:

“This study confirms that betting shops with gaming machines tend to be located in higher density urban areas and reveals a correlation between close proximity to those shops and rates of crime and deprivation, numbers of ethnic minorities and numbers of economically inactive people. However the researchers uncovered no evidence of a causal link and it is clear that there is a need to understand local and historical factors. I am confident that this research usefully adds to the knowledge base of the gambling industry and policymakers at local and national levels and we will continue to work with Geofutures to encourage further exploration to improve understanding of the local and historical factors when assessing machine location.”

-ENDS-

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The research is published online at <http://www.responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk/Research-Publications>.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry, the Responsible Gambling Trust funds education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. The aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling, and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust raises a minimum of £5million each year from the gambling industry operating in Britain within a voluntary (donation based) system and funds research, education, prevention and treatment services. Funding priorities are guided by the national strategy advised by the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The latest strategy was published in December 2012.
- Geofutures Ltd is an independent spatial data consultancy specialising in statistical analysis and online visualisation of large and complex datasets. Founded in 2002 as a spin-out from UCL's Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, Geofutures works with government, corporate and non-profit organisations to provide robust and non-partisan analysis of social, economic and environmental data to support decision-making, and has recently established a dedicated gambling research hub with Heather Wardle. www.geofutures.com