



Casinos

Great Britain currently has more than 140 casinos, employing about 15,000 staff. Participation in gambling in casinos is relatively low: in 2004, 3% of men and 1% of women had played table games in a casino in the last 12 months.

Current legislation

Casinos in Britain are currently relatively small. They can only be located in permitted areas (which have not changed for over 30 years), and advertising and promotion are strictly limited.

The Gambling Act 2005 is designed to update some of the current rules (see below). In the meantime, until the Act comes into force in the third quarter of 2007, casinos will continue to be regulated under the 1968 Gaming Act.

The 1968 Act requires all casino operators to have a certificate of consent (see left-hand menu), and some staff working in casinos require certificates of approval (see left). In addition, under the current legislation, casinos may only be established in permitted area. Further information on each of these regulations is available from the left-hand menu.

From 1 October 2005, the number of jackpot gaming (Section 31) machines allowed in a casino will increase from 10 to 20, and new casino members will no longer have to wait 24 hours before they can start gambling.

From 31 October the Gaming Machines (Maximum Prizes) Regulations 2005 and the Gaming Act 1968 (Variation of Monetary Limits) Order come into force.

The effect will be to vary the stake and prize limits for jackpot gaming machines in casinos - specifically, to:

- Increase the maximum stake from £1 to £2
- Increase the maximum prize from £2000 to £4000
- Permit a new style of jackpot gaming machine with a £100/£500 stake and prize limit

Gambling Act 2005

Once the new Gambling Act is fully implemented by the end of 2007, up to 17 extra new casinos will be permitted in three categories: one regional casino, eight large and eight small casinos.

The Government has decided to appoint an independent Advisory Panel to recommend the areas for the new casinos. Following the Panel's advice the Government will decide the areas where each of the casinos may be licensed.

The Advisory Panel will be asked to offer Ministers a list of up to 8 recommended areas for each of the three categories of casino. The Secretary of State will consider the Panel's recommendations. After consulting the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government, the Secretary of State will then decide which areas to designate.

Local Licensing Authorities will be responsible for awarding casino premises licences. A local licensing authority will only be able to award a casino premises licence if one has been identified for its area by the Casino Advisory Panel.

The process for awarding a premises licence will be open to all operators. It will have two stages. The first stage will be a regulatory test to ensure that all proposals satisfy the regulatory premises licensing requirements. The second stage will be triggered where there are more applications for casino premises licences than the local licensing authority is permitted to grant.

In the second stage local authorities in these areas will invite applications for premises licences. Where there are more applicants meeting the regulatory tests than available licences, the local authority will run a competition. Any operators chosen by local authorities will also require an operating licence from the Gambling Commission.

When the new Act comes into force in the third quarter of 2007 licence holders with a casino operating licence issued by the Gambling Commission.

The Gambling Commission will be consulting on the licence conditions and codes of practice related to casinos early in 2006.