

Casino FAQs

Q: Are British casinos allowed to advertise?

General advertising

Section 42 of the 1968 Gaming Act prevents any advertisement that gives the address of a casino premises or invites the public to spend money taking part in gaming at those premises. Casino operators are advised to follow Guideline 6 agreed with the industry.

On the granting of a new licence

The usual restrictions may be partially relaxed upon the granting of a new casino licence.

Under Section 42(3)(c) of the Gaming Act 1968 casinos can, with the approval of the licensing authority, publish in any newspaper a notice stating that a licence under the Act has been granted. This can be done no later than 14 days from the date on which the licence was granted or such later date as may be appointed by the licensing authority.

The Commission is often asked for advice on the form such notices should take. Such notices should contain factual information (that is, for example, details of the licence holder, the club name, address and telephone number, the date of opening and hours of gaming, the games to be played, that membership is required and an invitation to seek information about membership but not to include an application for membership form). Language that relies on opinion or is intended to promote the facilities offered is not considered to be within what was intended by the Act. There are no objections to limited graphics being used (for example, as part of the club logo or as an unobtrusive background to the text). It is suggested that the advertisement should be no more than half-page size. The final decision on what is acceptable is one for the licensing authority.

Q: Can I hold a casino night?

Casino nights are lawful if held as part of an “exempt entertainment”, as laid down in section 15 of the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976. A copy of the Act can be obtained from the Office of Public Sector Information (formerly HMSO), a link to which is provided in the Useful links section of this site.

Under Section 15, the promoters of an “exempt entertainment” (i.e.: a fete, dinner, dance, sporting event or bazaar) may lawfully provide as part of the entertainment any “amusement with prizes”, whether it is a lottery or gaming or both, provided the following conditions are met:

- That the whole proceeds of the entertainment, after deducting the expenses of the entertainment, shall be devoted to purposes other than private gain;
- That the facilities for winning prizes at such amusements are not the only or substantial inducement to persons to attend the entertainment

Q: Can I organise a commercial casino night?

For many years, commercial organisations have offered to provide equipment and gaming staff to persons organising casino nights. These events are becoming more numerous and may not always fall within the law.

In many instances it is clear that, far from being incidental to the overall entertainment, it is

intended to be the main if not the only attraction of the event and is, therefore, unlawful.

The legality of such gaming depends very much on individual circumstances and only the courts can interpret definitively whether an entertainment is lawful or not. If any doubt exists, a promoter should seek legal advice.

Q: Can I establish a casino gaming internet site in Great Britain?

No. Internet casinos are currently illegal in Great Britain. The 1968 Gaming Act requires casinos to be premises-based, and those who wish to gamble must attend the premises, which in turn must have a licence to game. Companies that offer Internet casino gaming to UK residents must have their server and other gambling facilities based offshore to avoid contravening UK law.

Q: Will the law be changed?

The 2005 Gambling Act allows for Internet casinos to be based in Great Britain and regulated by the Gambling Commission, but this provision has not yet been brought into effect.

Q: Can I establish a casino gaming Internet site based outside Great Britain?

British law would not apply to an Internet casino based in another jurisdiction. However, you would need to comply with the legislative requirements of that jurisdiction.

Q: Am I breaking UK law if I gamble on the Internet?

There is nothing in current legislation which makes it illegal, or seeks to prevent, British residents gambling on the Internet in their own homes.

Q: Is it against the law to advertise, within the UK, a casino gaming Internet site based outside Great Britain?

Section 42 (1) (c) of the Gaming Act 1968 states that a casino located outside of Britain cannot invite the public to “subscribe money” or to apply for “information about facilities for subscribing any money”. The Commission's view is that you would be able to do little more than publish the name of the site without getting into potential legal difficulties.

Q: I've lost a substantial sum of money gambling with an Internet casino. I now feel that my bank allowed me too much credit, and the Internet casino allowed me to bet an excessive amount of money. Can the UK Gambling Commission intervene to help me?

No. Internet casinos are all currently based offshore and are therefore outside the jurisdiction of the Gambling Commission.

Complaints against casinos

Q: I played roulette in a casino. I thought I had won but the dealer said my bet had not been properly placed. I disagreed but the casino management supported the dealer's decision. Can I complain to the Gambling Commission?

The Commission can investigate complaints about the conduct of casino games.

Q: Where can I find a helpline and counselling service for problem gambling?

GAMCARE

2-3 Baden Place

Crosby Row

London SE1 1YW

Helpline: 0845 6000 133 (24 hour, 7 days a week)

Website: www.gamcare.org.uk

Email: info@gamcare.org.uk

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS

Helpline: 08700 50 88 80 (see also local numbers on web-site)

Website: www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

GORDON HOUSE

Residential treatment for problem gamblers

Gordon House Central Office

114 Wellington Road

Dudley

West Midlands DY1 1UB

Tel: 01384 241292

Website: www.gordonhouse.org.uk

Email: help@gordonhouse.org.uk

Q: What trade associations exist for the casino industry?

There are two trade associations:

The British Casino Association (BCA)

38 Grosvenor Gardens

London SW1W 0EB

Tel: 020 7730 1055

Website: www.britishcasinoassociation.org.uk