



# DCMS Statistical Bulletin

## Betting Licensing

Great Britain, June 2002–May 2003

## Main Points

- The number of bookmakers’ permits in force on 31 May 2003 was 3,600, about 200 fewer than in 2000 when these statistics were last compiled. The number of betting office licences was 8,800, a rise of 100. (**Table 1, Figure 1**)
- Renewals of bookmakers’ permits stayed roughly level at 3,400. Renewals of betting office licences rose by 400 to 8,400. (**Table 2**)
- There were 770 new applications for betting office licences in the year to 31 May 2003, 120 more than in 2000. During the same period there were 330 new applications for bookmakers’ permits, 40 less than in 2000. (**Table 2**)
- High concentrations of betting office licences (betting shops) per head of population are to be found mainly in the old industrial areas, some metropolitan areas, certain other cities or large towns, and some resort areas. The highest concentrations were in Nottingham and Blackpool, both having over 300 per million population. (**Table 3**)

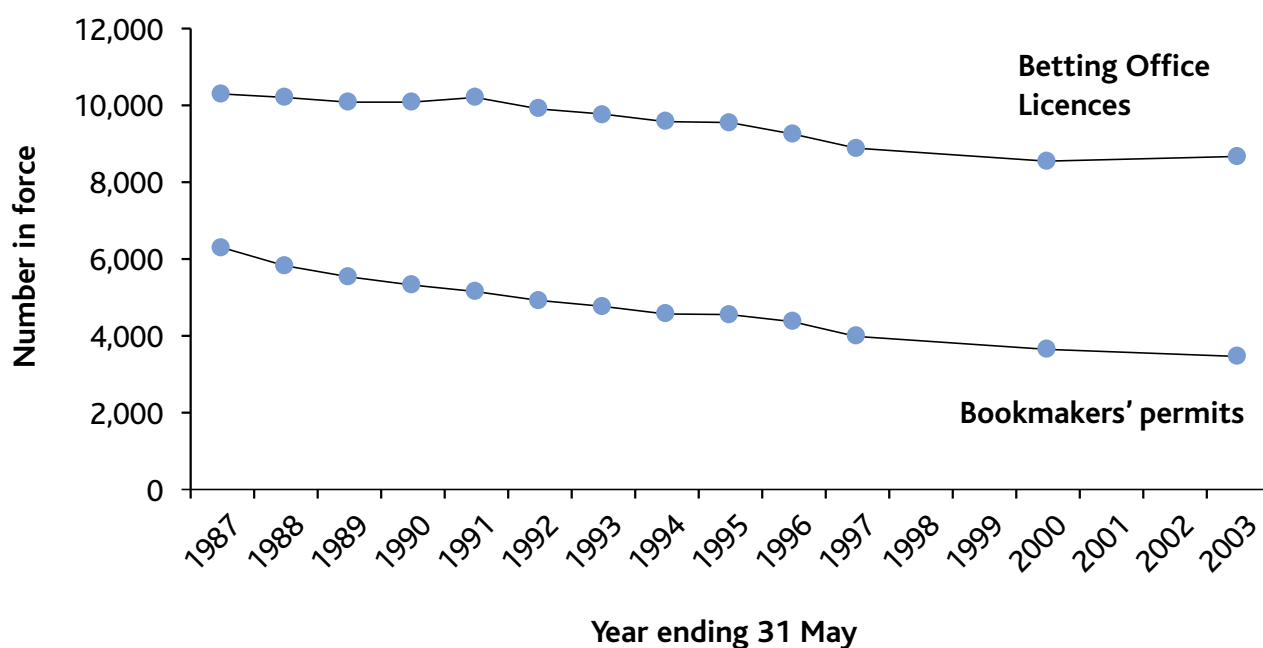


Figure 1: Bookmakers’ permits and betting office licences in force, Great Britain, 1987–2003

## Contents

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	page
Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences in force	4
Grants, renewals and cessations	4
Appeals	5
Geographical distribution	5
Betting agency permits	5
 Tables	
1. Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences in force, 1987 – 2003	6
2. Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences: applications for grants and renewals and cessations, 1987 – 2003	7
3. Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences in force in June 2003 by licensing area	8
4. Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences in force, Great Britain, 1961 – 2003	11
Notes and Conventions	12

## Bookmakers' permits and Betting Office Licences in force (Table 1)

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1. The number of bookmakers' permits in force in Great Britain fell by over 200 (6 per cent) during the triennial period ending 31 May 2003 to stand at 3,600. However, the decline varied across Great Britain, with a fall of 5 per cent in the number of permits in force in England (down 150), 10 per cent in Scotland (down 40) and 13 per cent in Wales (down 30).
2. The number of betting office licences in force in Great Britain on 31 May 2003 rose by 70 (1 per cent) to around 8,800 but again with slight variations across Great Britain. In Scotland the number of licences in force rose by 4 per cent (up 40), in England by 1 per cent (up 50) and in Wales fell by 3 per cent (down 20). These figures are slightly up following a long-term trend of decline. Betting office licences in force are not the same as the number of betting shops open; a licence may become effective or remain in force while a betting shop is closed for any reason.
3. The number of betting office licences in force reached a peak of 15,800 in 1968 (see Table 4). Since then there has been a steady decline and the number of licences in force has fallen by 44% to 8,800. Over the same period bookmakers' permits in force have fallen by 7,500, from 11,100 in 1968 to 3,600 in 2003, one third of the earlier level. Over the past 10 years, the fall in the number of betting office licences in force was 1,100 (11 per cent), and for bookmakers' permits was 1,300 (26 per cent).

## Grants, renewals and cessations (Table 2)

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4. In 2002-03 the number of new applications for grants of bookmakers' permits fell by 40 to 330, while new applications for betting office licences rose by 120 to 770, the highest number recorded since 1995. The proportion of new applications granted has tended to fluctuate between 90 and 95 per cent for bookmakers' permit applications and between 80 and 90 per cent for betting office licences applications during the last 10 years. In 2002-03 95 per cent of bookmakers' permits and 91 per cent of betting office licences were granted.
5. Over the 12 month period to 31 May 2003, there were 3,400 applications for the renewal of existing bookmakers' permits. This was slightly less than the last time these figures were collected, in 1999-2000, and continues the downward trend. It is a fall of 27 per cent from 4,700 which was the figure 10 years ago in 1992-93. Applications for the renewal of betting office licences rose by 400 to 8,400, an increase of 5 per cent since 1999-2000, but this still represents a fall of 13 per cent since 1992-93. Almost all applications for renewal of bookmakers' permits and betting office licences are granted.
6. Cessations in 2002-03 stood at 27 per cent of bookmakers' permits and 13 per cent of betting office licences currently in force. There were 950 cessations of bookmakers' permits and 1,130 cessations of betting office licences, compared with 870 and 1,000 respectively in 1999-2000.

## Appeals

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7. There were 12 appeals made against a grant or renewal of a betting office licence in 2002-03. Of these 4 were granted, 5 were dismissed and 3 were pending at the end of May 2003. There were no appeals against the grant or renewal of bookmakers' permits.

## Geographical distribution (Table 3)

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8. There is considerable variation across Great Britain in the number of betting offices per head of population. The average number, over the whole of Great Britain, is 150 betting office licences per million population. The highest concentrations are to be found mainly in the old industrial areas, some metropolitan areas, certain other cities or large towns, and some resort areas. Nottingham and Blackpool both had over 300 per million. Merseyside, London, Leicester and Cleveland all had over 200 per million. The lowest concentrations (fewer than 100 per million) were found in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Dyfed Powys in Wales and Cornwall and many of the shire counties in England.

## Betting agency permits

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9. The number of betting agency permits is very small; less than 40 such permits were in force on 31 May 2003: one in Powys, Wales and the rest in England.

**Table 1: Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences in force on 31 May, 1987–2003**

Bookmakers' permits				Numbers in force
Year	England	Wales	Scotland	Great Britain
1987	5,250	339	739	6,328
1988	4,947	322	664	5,933
1989	4,720	321	644	5,685
1990	4,499	317	621	5,437
1991	4,342	307	600	5,249
1992	4,161	304	584	5,049
1993	3,978	278	567	4,823
1994	3,832	287	539	4,658
1995	3,874	276	536	4,686
1996	3,675	268	488	4,431
1997	3,447	235	442	4,124
2000	3,213	208	370	3,791
2003	3,059	181	332	3,572

Betting Office Licences				Numbers in force
Year	England	Wales	Scotland	Great Britain
1987	8,646	689	1,049	10,384
1988	8,597	663	1,047	10,307
1989	8,500	643	1,070	10,213
1990	8,494	628	1,097	10,219
1991	8,523	627	1,096	10,246
1992	8,381	584	1,092	10,057
1993	8,233	566	1,059	9,858
1994	8,061	550	1,059	9,670
1995	8,067	538	1,060	9,665
1996	7,787	509	1,019	9,315
1997	7,513	481	989	8,983
2000	7,315	453	964	8,732
2003	7,363	438	1,003	8,804

**Table 2: Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences: applications for grants and renewals, and cessations, 1 June to 31 May, 1987-2003, in Great Britain**

## Great Britain

### Bookmakers' permits – year ending 31 May

Year	New Applications			Applications for renewals			Cessations
	Total Applications <sup>1</sup>	Total Granted	Total Refused	Total Applications <sup>1</sup>	Total Granted	Total Refused	
1987	521	464	6	6,175	6,127	11	1,001
1988	483	451	8	5,729	5,690	7	879
1989	474	428	6	5,536	5,452	13	691
1990	444	405	5	5,248	5,216	10	686
1991	381	339	6	5,139	5,108	9	565
1992	384	355	4	4,885	4,857	6	550
1993	360	323	6	4,674	4,642	13	557
1994	383	359	8	4,362	4,332	10	465
1995	383	343	6	4,463	4,441	7	477
1996	368	343	7	4,248	4,219	10	629
1997	243	226	4	4,045	3,963	5	643
2000	368	341	2	3,474	3,441	4	872
2003	332	316	2	3,433	3,397	15	954

### Betting Office Licences – year ending 31 May

1987	1,128	920	71	10,061	10,003	12	895
1988	1,411	1,213	55	9,902	9,817	8	1,219
1989	1,380	1,125	54	9,854	9,712	12	1,180
1990	1,236	1,032	53	9,818	9,739	9	954
1991	1,080	884	78	10,024	9,947	6	753
1992	800	665	42	9,934	9,865	6	742
1993	774	660	32	9,665	9,587	12	830
1994	1,193	1,044	29	9,148	9,008	11	893
1995	959	801	19	9,104	9,050	5	877
1996	692	621	21	9,108	9,050	7	916
1997	627	566	22	8,824	8,763	8	812
2000	645	561	18	7,972	7,911	6	995
2003	768	697	34	8,400	8,370	12	1,132

<sup>1</sup>Total applications also includes those applications withdrawn, adjourned and otherwise not dealt with as well as those granted and refused.

**Table 3: Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences in force on 31 May 2003 by licensing area**

Licensing area	Bookmakers' permits	Betting office licences	Bookmakers' permits per million population	Betting office licences per million population
<b>England</b>				
Avon and Somerset	67	132	54	106
<b>Bedfordshire</b>				
Bedford and Mid Bedfordshire	13	27	48	100
Luton and South Bedfordshire	8	38	27	127
Berkshire	59	106	73	132
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>				
Milton Keynes UA	6	17	29	81
Rest of Buckinghamshire	23	47	48	98
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>				
Peterborough UA	22	26	139	165
Rest of Cambridgeshire	35	45	63	81
<b>Cheshire</b>				
Halton UA	4	22	34	186
Warrington UA	12	32	62	167
Rest of Cheshire	27	86	40	127
Cleveland	25	111	46	205
Cornwall	15	31	30	61
Cumbria	78	68	160	139
Derbyshire	59	107	61	111
<b>Devon</b>				
Plymouth UA	12	34	50	142
Rest of Devon	47	68	56	81
Dorset	41	73	59	105
Durham	53	101	90	171
Essex	79	196	49	121
Gloucestershire	61	42	75	52
Greater Manchester	137	448	55	180
<b>Hampshire (inc Isle of Wight)</b>				
Southampton	8	39	36	176
Rest of Hampshire	88	245	56	156
Herefordshire	6	16	34	91
Hertfordshire	52	141	50	136
Humberside	62	143	71	164
<b>Kent</b>				
Medway UA	5	25	20	100
Rest of Kent	46	121	34	90

Licensing area	Bookmakers' permits	Betting office licences	Bookmakers' permits per million population	Betting office licences per million population
<b>England (continued)</b>				
Lancashire				
Blackburn with Darwen UA	2	22	14	158
Blackpool UA	9	43	63	303
Rest of Lancashire	36	123	32	108
Leicestershire				
Leicester UA	34	69	120	243
Rest of Leicestershire + Rutland	28	39	43	60
Lincolnshire	19	72	29	109
London				
Inner London	197	793	69	277
Outer London	365	928	81	207
Merseyside	112	384	82	282
Norfolk	45	88	56	110
Northamptonshire	32	69	50	108
Northumberland	8	39	26	126
North Yorkshire				
York UA	23	30	126	164
Rest of North Yorkshire	45	49	79	86
Nottinghamshire				
Nottingham UA	28	97	104	359
Rest of Nottinghamshire	20	43	27	57
Oxfordshire	22	57	36	94
Shropshire	20	44	45	99
South Yorkshire	108	189	85	149
Staffordshire				
Stoke-on-Trent UA	12	39	50	163
Rest of Staffordshire	44	78	54	96
Suffolk	22	78	33	116
Surrey	50	117	47	110
Sussex	103	188	69	125
Tyne and Wear	68	214	63	199
Warwickshire	30	60	59	117
West Midlands	169	425	66	165
West Yorkshire	197	286	94	137
Wiltshire				
Swindon UA	6	25	33	138
Rest of Wiltshire	11	33	25	76
Worcestershire	44	55	81	101
<b>Total England</b>	<b>3,059</b>	<b>7,363</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>149</b>

Licensing area	Bookmakers' permits	Betting office licences	Bookmakers' permits per million population	Betting office licences per million population
<b>Wales</b> (note: The Magistrates' Courts Committee areas have been used)				
Dyfed Powys	21	36	42	73
Gwent	25	93	45	168
North Wales	32	88	48	132
South Wales	86	167	102	198
West Glamorgan	17	54	47	151
<b>Total Wales</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Total England and Wales</b>	<b>3,240</b>	<b>7,801</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Scotland</b> (note: Government Office Regions have been used)				
North Eastern Scotland	15	88	34	202
Eastern Scotland	140	324	74	170
South Western Scotland	157	557	69	246
Highlands and Islands	20	34	44	75
<b>Total Scotland</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1,003</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>Total Great Britain</b>	<b>3,572</b>	<b>8,804</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>153</b>

**Table 4: Bookmakers' permits and betting office licences in force, 1961 – 2003**

Great Britain	Numbers in force	
	Bookmakers' permits	Betting office licences
Year		
1961	9,944	8,802
1962	*	*
1963	11,061	14,388
1964	11,114	15,025
1965	11,235	15,638
1966	11,253	15,741
1967	11,138	15,535
1968	11,069	15,782
1969	10,723	15,490
1970	9,917	15,644
1971	9,414	14,462
1972	9,134	14,812
1973	8,731	14,873
1974	8,602	14,837
1975	8,369	14,371
1976	8,221	13,865
1977	8,082	13,254
1978	7,960	12,812
1979	7,881	12,475
1980	7,781	12,248
1981	7,576	11,993
1982	7,555	11,774
1983	7,291	11,237
1984	7,226	10,856
1985	7,065	10,633
1986	6,853	10,407
1987	6,328	10,384
1988	5,933	10,307
1989	5,685	10,213
1990	5,437	10,219
1991	5,249	10,246
1992	5,049	10,057
1993	4,823	9,858
1994	4,658	9,670
1995	4,686	9,665
1996	4,431	9,315
1997	4,124	8,983
2000	3,791	8,732
2003	3,572	8,804

\*not available

## Notes

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<b>Bookmakers' permit</b>	A bookmakers' permit authorises a person to act as a bookmaker on his or her own account.
<b>Betting agency permit</b>	A person who receives bets as the agent of another bookmaker or of the Totaliser Board, and who wishes to obtain a betting office licence, requires a betting agency permit.
<b>Betting office licence</b>	A separate betting office licence is required for each betting office.

1. The Deregulation (Betting Licensing) Order 1997, SI 1997 No. 947, which came into force on 1 September 1997, extended the duration of these licences and permits from one year to three years. It altered section 29, Schedule 1 of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 so that permits and licences, unless renewed, "cease to be in force at the end of the licensing period in which the date falls, or if that date falls in the last five months of the period, at the end of the next licensing period, and shall not be transferable". The licensing period means "the period of three years beginning with 1 June 1997, and each successive period of three years".
2. Mid-2002 population estimates were used to calculate the per million population figures in Table 3. Estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics were used for England and Wales and estimates produced by the General Register Office for Scotland were used for Scotland.
3. While everything possible has been done to reconcile discrepancies between the returns for one year and the next, a few minor differences remain. For example, in a few cases the figures for applications and cessations in Table 2 do not exactly account for the changes in the number of licences/permits in force, as shown in Table 1. Other reasons are that action taken in one twelve-month period may continue into the next (e.g. because of an appeal) and in some cases, a cessation, for example in England, may correspond to a renewal elsewhere, for example in Scotland. For this reason, figures may not be accurate to the final digit. In the text numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100 (or 10 for numbers less than a thousand).
4. There was a response rate of 98% to the questionnaire sent to each petty sessional area in England and Wales and to each district in Scotland. Figures were estimated for the small number of outstanding areas.
5. Betting licensing statistics are classed as National Statistics. As such they conform to standards of high quality, as well as relevance and integrity. This is assured by adherence to the National Statistics Code of Practice and its protocols. A brief summary of the principles of National Statistics and its application in DCMS can be found at [www.culture.gov.uk/global/research/statistics/National\\_Statistics.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/research/statistics/National_Statistics.htm)

## Further Information

6. Betting licensing statistics, which were published annually until 1997 and triennially thereafter, were until 1980 published as a House of Commons paper, the last of which was *Betting Licensing Statistics, Great Britain, June 1979–May 1980* (1980–81 HC5). Subsequently, they were published as Home Office Statistical Bulletins. This is the first time these statistics have been produced by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The Department inherited responsibility for these statistics, as part of the transition of responsibility for gambling and racing legislation, in 2001.
7. In addition, details of permits and licences in force and results of proceedings before licensing authorities for each petty sessional division of England and Wales and for each district in Scotland can be obtained from the address below.
8. This bulletin can be downloaded in electronic format free of charge from [www.culture.gov.uk/global/research/statistics\\_outputs/betting\\_licences\\_statistics.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/research/statistics_outputs/betting_licences_statistics.htm). A link to the previous edition (December 2000) is also available.
9. This bulletin was prepared by Simon Brown in the Analytical Services Division of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Tim Bartlett (Analytical Services Division), Richard Allen (Home Office) and Bruce Denman (Lord Chancellor's Department) towards completing this publication. If you have any enquiries about figures in this bulletin or wish to request further analysis of the data then please contact Simon Brown. The address is:

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