

Government to crack down on gambling operator sport sponsorship

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- Ban would stop illegal firms using Premier League clubs as platform to appeal to British audience
- In addition, a new cross-industry taskforce will bring together social media platforms, banks and law enforcement to protect fans from harm

Unlicensed gambling operators face being blocked from sponsoring British sports teams, including Premier League clubs, as the Government sets out plans to consult on a ban as part of its crackdown on illegal gambling.

Ministers are deeply concerned about the dangers posed by the unlicensed gambling market, which has been linked to organised crime. Unlicensed operators do not adhere to laws and guidelines designed to protect customers, including mandatory financial vulnerability checks, responsible advertising, and fair terms. They often lack data protections, leaving customers vulnerable to fraud and identity theft.

The government's new consultation on sports sponsorship, to be launched this Spring, will mitigate the risks associated with the illegal market, and help eliminate unfair competition for properly regulated firms.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said:

When placing a bet on the big match, fans deserve to know the sites they're using are properly regulated, with the right protections in place.

It's not right that unlicensed gambling operators can sponsor some of our biggest football clubs, raising their profile and potentially drawing fans towards sites that don't meet our regulatory standards.

The new measures would mean gambling companies without a UK licence would be restricted from entering into any sponsorship arrangements with sports clubs, including in the Premier League, where a number of clubs currently carry sponsorship from operators not licensed in Great Britain.

Last year the Premier League voluntarily committed to removing all gambling sponsorship from the front of shirts by the end of the 2025-26 season.

However gambling operators, including those that are unlicensed, are currently able to strike deals, including logos on shirt sleeves, that give them a major presence in the country's most-watched sports league.

Clubs are currently not acting unlawfully in maintaining these sponsorship arrangements as long as the gambling operators are not accessible to UK consumers. However, ministers believe there is a strong case for stopping unlicensed sponsorship altogether given the brand visibility could drive consumers towards unlicensed sites operating outside the Gambling Commission's regulatory protections.

Gambling Minister Baroness Twycross said:

We know the real harm that unregulated gambling can cause, exploiting vulnerable people and leaving consumers without the protections they deserve.

This consultation, alongside the work of our Illegal Gambling Taskforce, shows how seriously this government is taking the issue. We will not hesitate to act where we see people being put at risk.

This consultation forms part of the government's separate, wider work to address concerns around gambling. Last month, the government launched an Illegal Gambling Taskforce, bringing together major companies including Google, Mastercard, TikTok and Visa alongside law enforcement and gambling bodies to tackle illegal gambling.

The taskforce, led by Baroness Twycross, will focus on three areas:

- Stopping illegal operators advertising on social media platforms
- Preventing payments to unlicensed sites
- Improving cross-agency collaboration

This work is distinct from the consultation announced today, though both reflect the government's broader commitment to protecting consumers and tackling illegal gambling.

Notes to Editors

- In November 2024 the Government confirmed plans to implement a statutory levy on gambling profits and online slot stake limits to help tackle the issue of gambling addiction, to deliver on its commitment to reducing gambling harm.
- The Gambling Commission published research in September 2025 that showed reported engagement with illegal gambling websites also tends to be higher amongst men, younger individuals (that is, aged 18 to 24 years)², those who gamble more frequently, and those who score 8 or more on the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI).
- Operators providing gambling facilities to consumers in Great Britain must be licensed by the Gambling Commission.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-crack-down-on-gambling-operator-sport-sponsorship>