

The Legal Landscape of Online Gambling in the UK: What Players Should Know

The UK is known for the quality of its online casinos, and its liberal stance on online gambling. Compared to other countries, it has a wide range of legal gambling activities and great coverage for online services of the kind.

But what exactly can UK residents do, how old must they be to play it, and who is responsible for gambling licenses and control of the quality of UK online gambling sites? These things and more are discussed in the article below.



Photo by Michał Parzuchowski on Unsplash

The UK Gambling Commission is responsible for licenses

While things like [NI rises](#), taxes, and other legislation are controlled by the UK government and devolved parliaments,

online gambling regulations and licenses are controlled by the UK Gambling Commission.

The UK Gambling Commission does the following:

- Oversees and creates gambling regulations.
- Assess and regulate gambling sites.
- Provides gambling licenses.
- Offers guidance to individuals and businesses.

The regulatory scope includes all licensed online gambling sites in the UK, but also the National Lottery.

Issuing of gambling licenses

Essentially, if a company wants to operate a legal online gambling site in the UK that can accept UK customers, they must have a valid gambling license. To get a license, the company must be compliant with the rules and regulations outlined by the UKGC.

The UKGC is a world-renowned licensing authority and it has a fantastic reputation for the strictness of its compliance terms, and the thoroughness of its licensing process. This, ultimately, is why UK online casinos, lottery and sportsbooks are also high-quality.

A voice within the UK gambling industry

This licensing authority also acts as a major voice within the UK gambling industry – they advocate for change, prompt responsible gambling, and publish statistics relating to the industry such as their roundup of [young people and gambling](#)

which was published late 2023.

Customer complaints

Lastly, the UKGC serves as a point of contact for customer complaints. If a person has a complaint about something related to the gambling industry, they can do so directly with the Gambling Commission. Complaint categories include:

- Gambling businesses.
- National Lottery.
- Gambling adverts.
- Alternative Dispute Resolutions.
- Gambling Commission.

For example, If a customer had a dispute about a withdrawal with an online casino, they could use the UKGC as an arbiter who would help resolve the dispute and ensure the online casino acted fairly and within regulations.

Online gambling legality by activity

Unlike countries such as the United States, where online gambling activity is different per state, there are general laws and regulations in place for England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. There is also a general age for gambling activities whether in-person or online.

The following summary table shows online gambling legality in the UK:

Activity	Legal Status	Minimum Age
Online Casinos	Legal	18
Online Sportsbooks	Legal	18
Online Bingo	Legal	18
Online Poker	Legal	18
Lotteries	Legal	18
Horse racing	Legal	18

Essentially, all types of online gambling are legal in the UK and there is a minimum age requirement of 18. This applies to things like the National Lottery, bingo clubs, racetracks, and all online activities.

The only difference was that until 2021, the minimum age to play lotteries was 16 – which was [increased to 18](#) in April 2021 during a review of existing UK gambling laws.

How online gambling in the UK is perceived

The UK is generally known to have a superb range of online casinos and sportsbooks, and it's possible to [learn more on betting.co.uk](#). The popularity of the industry as a whole continues to grow, and this is in large due to gambling sponsorships and partnerships with UK sports clubs, plus gambling adverts on national TV and radio.

For example, the following EPL teams have betting sponsors:

- Leeds United: Bet365.
- Newcastle United: Bet365.
- West Ham: Betway.
- Watford FC: Stake

- Everton: Parimatch.
- Burnley FC: Spread Ex.
- Chelsea FC: Parimatch.

As mentioned, the UKGC is one of the most respected gambling authorities in the world, together with the Malta Gaming Authority. Customers see the license from the UKGC and automatically assume that the online casino or sportsbook is high quality.

The UK remains a popular destination for online gambling

UK residents can benefit from one of the best legal scenery for online gambling in the world. The government and UK Gambling Commission ensure that online casinos, sportsbooks, and other sites operate ethically, fairly, and treat their customers with respect.

Additionally, virtually all types of online gambling in the UK are legal including casinos, sportsbooks, poker, bingo, and lotteries and there is a general minimum age range of 18. The strict regulations and licensing process has created a thriving online gambling scene and a host of competitive sites that give customers sites with a quality gaming experience.