



SCOTTISH FOOTBALL Supporters Association

Gambling Survey Report

An analysis of the results from our recent survey looking into the relationship between gambling and Scottish football, in association with Gamble Aware and their Tap Out for Time Out Campaign.

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With thanks to Gamble Aware.

Overview

In association with Gamble Aware, the SFSA launched a survey to investigate the relationship between gambling and Scottish football. The survey consisted of questions designed to understand the participant's attitude towards gambling in Scottish football, their level of participation and whether they used any measures to avoid impulsive gambling and if so, what these measures were.

The survey was conducted between 14/11/20 and 05/12/20 and there were 1,070 participants. The survey reached over 100,000 people via twitter, the SFSA newsletter, and other platforms. There were a number of clubs and social media accounts who helped us gather responses. All of their information can be found in the "Supporters" section of the report. We would like to thank Gamble Aware for their support.

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Introduction

Following Gamble Aware's "Tap out for Time Out" campaign which aimed to inform users of gambling websites and mobile apps of preventative measures to avoid making impulsive bets, we launched our "Gambling in Scottish Football Survey". This had been a long time in the planning as part of the SFSA's desire to understand the behaviours of football fans in Scotland.

Through this survey, we could analyse the effectiveness of Gamble Aware's campaign messaging and understand the measures which Scottish football fans are using to avoid making impulsive bets and their betting patterns. Additionally, we could discover the thoughts on the level of gambling representation currently in the Scottish game. The survey consisted of a variety of questions which this report will analyse in detail. All graphs/charts for associated questions are listed in the appendix.

Questions

Question 1

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Betting apps and online gambling make it easy to get drawn into making impulsive bets that you regret.
- With all the involvement of gambling in football, football clubs and players have a responsibility to do more to support campaigns to highlight the risks of gambling and encourage people to think more about their betting.

Analysis

The majority of fans (58%) strongly agree that betting apps and online gambling make it easy to get drawn into making impulsive bets that people then regret. This suggests that despite the promotion of responsible gambling practises such as setting deposit limits or cool down periods, football fans feel that advertisement and promotions from gambling companies still permit for irresponsible gambling. Fans believe that messaging and promotional techniques used by betting companies may be a risk to consumers, such as football fans. Most betting companies have information on responsible gambling such as Sky Sports¹ but despite this, Scottish football fans believe this is ineffective.

Almost half (47%) of fans believe that football clubs and players have a responsibility to do more to support campaigns which highlight the risks of gambling and help people think more about their betting.

Whether they realise it or not, fans and particularly younger supporters replicate the actions of sports stars. This is evident in football, where footballers, especially those at the highest level set an example for fans. Many fans agree that clubs should lead by example and bring awareness to the dangers of irresponsible gambling and possible consequences.

An issue that is well documented among Scottish football is the financial reliance on gambling companies. Many leagues, tournaments, and clubs themselves are primely sponsored by betting companies². With sponsorship money being received by clubs, it is important for the advertisement of gambling to be a responsible one. Fans want to see better support from their clubs and improved messaging to prevent irresponsible gambling.

¹ [Safer Gambling | Sky Bet | Tools to help you stay in control](#)

² [Ban gambling advertising in Scottish football, SPFL told | HeraldScotland](#)

Question 2

How much do you think that your club, and its players, are doing to encourage safer betting and make sure that their fans are aware of the risks of gambling? Select one that fits best with your views:

- They are already doing a lot
- They are doing some things, but could do more
- They are doing very little
- They are not doing anything that I am aware of

Analysis

The majority of fans (70%) felt clubs and their players were doing very little or nothing to help encourage safer betting for supporters. Given the level of promotion of gambling within the Scottish game, clubs should be doing better to help promote a safer gambling experience for fans.

Question 3

How have your opinions on the amount of gambling advertising and sponsorship around football changed over the past season?

- I am becoming more concerned about it
- I am less concerned now than I was
- My opinion has not changed

Analysis

The majority of respondents (52%) said that they were more concerned about the level of gambling advertisement and sponsorship than the previous season. This highlights an ever-growing concern by fans that gambling companies have too great a presence within the Scottish game. Clubs and football authorities should be encouraged to look elsewhere and inspire partnerships from other industries that have less risk to the consumer associated with them.

Clubs should take notice of this. If the level of gambling remains the same or continues to increase fans may be inclined to speak out against the existing partnership between Scottish football and gambling companies. A recent example of this was Celtic supporters who spoke out against a partnership with betting company Mr Green in 2019³. This resulted in a fan revolt, where claims were made that the partnership went against the club's core values.

³ [Celtic accused of betraying club values as fans rage at 'official slot game' - Daily Record](#)

Question 4

Have you seen advertising recently (whether on TV, online or elsewhere) encouraging safe betting with the tagline 'Tap Out for Time Out and avoid Bet Regret'?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know/not sure

Analysis

The majority of fans (54%) who answered our survey had recently seen the campaign encouraging users to 'Tap Out for Time Out and avoid Bet Regret'. This campaign was promoted across a number of platforms, including the SFSA website and social media accounts. 'Bet Regret' is the sinking feeling you get the minute you make a bet without thinking it through. It is reported this occurs most often when drunk, bored or chasing losses. Beating 'Bet Regret' and 'Tapping Out' is about avoiding those impulsive bets you kick yourself for as soon as you've made them. Extensive research validates that the action of tapping out helps you to avoid Bet Regret. The campaign featured a wrestler encouraging two users to tap out of the app, demonstrating the ease of using the feature⁴.

With the campaign being seen by most, this will hopefully have a positive impact and encourage users to think before placing a bet or to consider "Tapping Out". This campaign also helps break the stigma of impulsive gambling by offering a solution in a light-hearted way. It should maybe be no surprise at the high awareness of the campaign as it was heavily promoted by the SFSA over a 12-week period through our newsletters and on our social media channels. The newsletter is sent to around 30,000 individuals and 30 fans groups and it has a huge average open rate of 76%, reaching many of our members.

Question 5

If you wanted to cut down your gambling, which of the following would you consider doing to help?

TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

- Set a limit in advance (a cash cap on how much you are willing to bet)
- Set limits on when you bet (only bet a certain times)
- Cut out impulsive, heat of the moment bets or gambling
- Close or "tap out" of your betting app and pause before deciding whether to place a bet
- None of these

Analysis

The majority (55%) said they would consider setting a limit in advance to minimise impulsive bets. This may be due to this measure being the most common among betting apps as a way to monitor spending, etc. Although a positive step, it is unclear whether betting companies are offering this

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUdfygE43Rk>

service for the benefit of the consumer, or if it is simply a way to stay competitive in a very diluted market.

Question 6

And which of these things have you actually done in the past month or 2?

TICK AS MANY AS APPLY

- Set a limit in advance (a cash cap on how much you are willing to bet)
- Set limits on when you bet (only bet a certain times)
- Cut out impulsive, heat of the moment bets or gambling
- Close or “tap out” of your betting app and pause before deciding whether to place a bet
- None of these

Analysis

Despite the results from the previous question, the vast majority of users do not use any measures to avoid impulsive betting with only 22% actually setting a limit. This suggest that despite the preventative measures that are available, most users aren’t using them. Whether this is a choice by the user or lack of promotion of safe betting measures, this is unclear. However, it does indicate that gambling companies and potentially the government should bring more awareness to these measures to ensure irresponsible gambling is avoided.

Question 7

Do you agree that there is too much gambling sponsorship in Scottish football? Yes or No

Analysis

Almost all of fans (80%) agree that there is too much gambling sponsorship in Scottish football. A clear indication that the level of reliance on gambling companies within Scottish football needs to change. SFSA board member and former First Minister Henry McLeish has also highlighted the need for change, hoping that the financial support brought by James Anderson in the summer of 2020 would encourage new money to find its way to Scottish clubs⁵, and potentially dilute the amount of gambling sponsorship in the sport.

Question 8

How often do you bet on Scottish football?

- A- Daily
- B- Several times a week
- C- Weekly
- D- Monthly
- E- Never

⁵ [James Anderson’s gambling is a good bet for SPFL clubs | The Scotsman](#)

Analysis

More than half of fans (67%) have responded to say that they have at some point placed a bet on Scottish football- be that daily, weekly or monthly. This is a large percentage of fans that participate in gambling, and so it is important that the right measures are in place to prevent irresponsible gambling and provide support to those who are struggling to stop.

Gamble Aware and others provide information and support in these areas. However, as stated by the fans, it also the responsibility of clubs to offer support and preventative measures to minimise the potential risk to its supporters. With the current relationship between Scottish football and the gambling industry, it may be difficult to prevent the problem entirely.

Social media interaction

Through support from other Scottish football-related accounts via twitter, the survey was able to be seen by over 100,000 people. And while not everyone who had seen the survey participated, we are very grateful to everyone who helped us reach over 1,000 responses. This was particularly impressive as gambling is an area where not everyone has strong views or opinions, and if they do it is often kept to themselves. The list of those who supported the survey can be found in the "Supporters" section of this report.

Conclusion

There is a consensus among fans that there is too much gambling advertisement and promotion within Scottish football. In addition to this, fans believe that clubs and players should do more to address the issues associated with gambling irresponsibly. Although gambling companies have developed supportive measures which fans can use, and messaging from Gamble Aware is being received, most fans still aren't using these helpful tools to minimise irresponsible gambling.

Most fans would agree that Scottish football needs to look outside the large pockets of gambling companies and promote other industries in partnership with clubs, leagues, and competitions. What became apparent during this campaign was a request for further research into this area of football and we believe that it would be pertinent for Gamble Aware to consider looking at on-going research with us in this area.

The SFSA have steadfastly refused various approaches from gambling companies over the years and indeed it was that approach that led us to work with Gamble Aware in the first place. We as an organisation believe that there is too much gambling sponsorship in the Scottish game and that there is little being done to highlight the potential issues that it can cause. We, as an organisation, have made a commitment to support the work of <https://www.gamtalkuk.org/> and to also support <https://www.backonside.co.uk/> as two organisations who have to pick up the pieces where excessive gambling has taken hold. Please take some time to look into these organisations and ally our support.

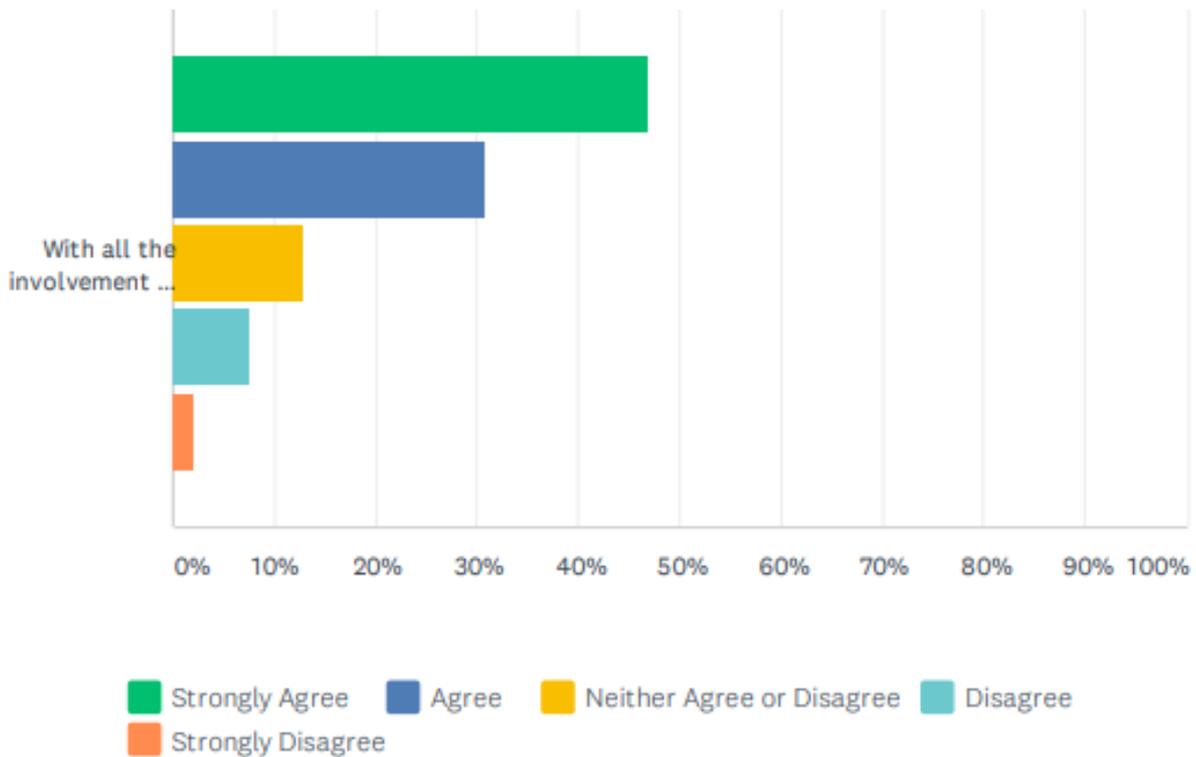
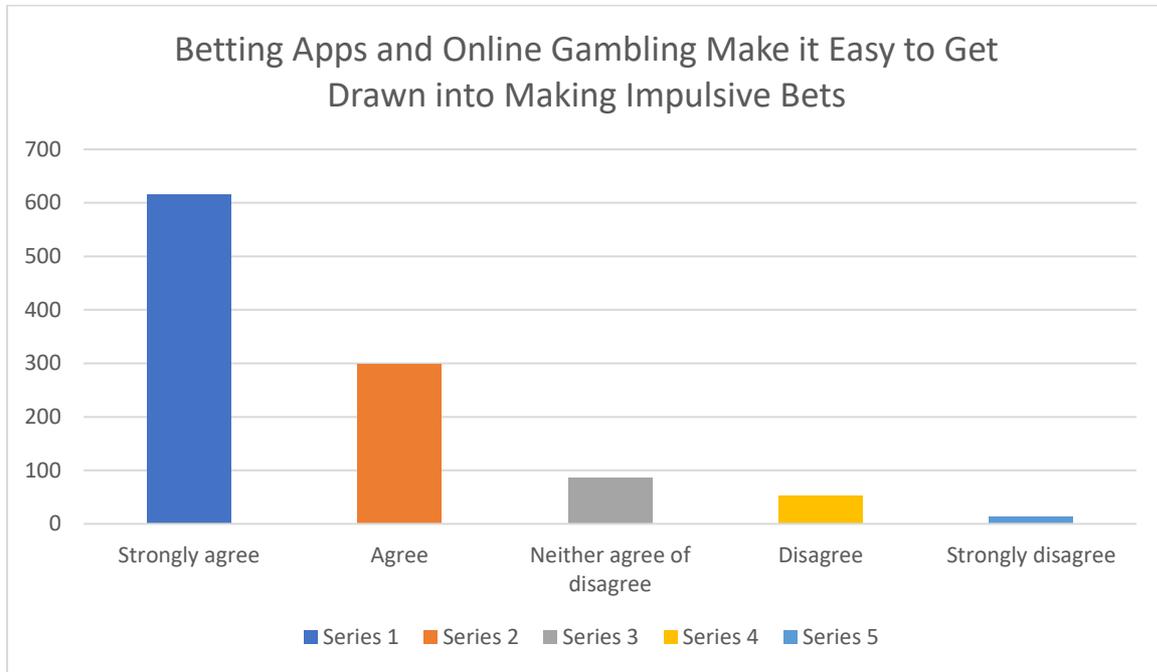
Supporters

A massive thank you to all the clubs, podcasts, football personalities and others who helped share the survey. A list of everyone who supported the survey can be found here:

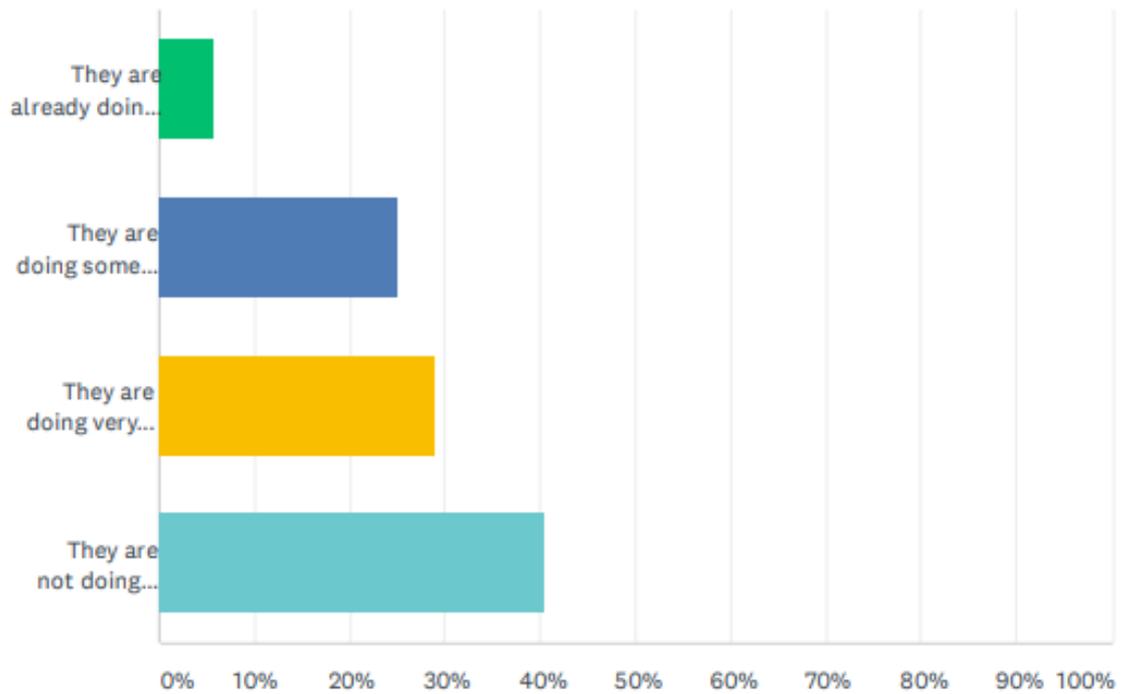
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Appendix

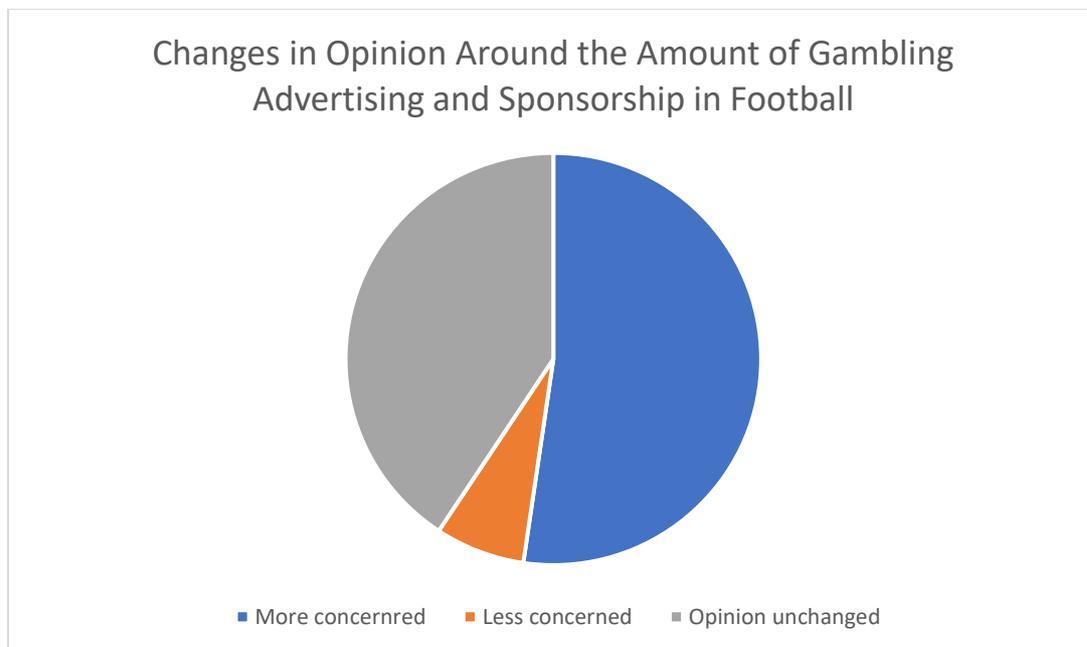
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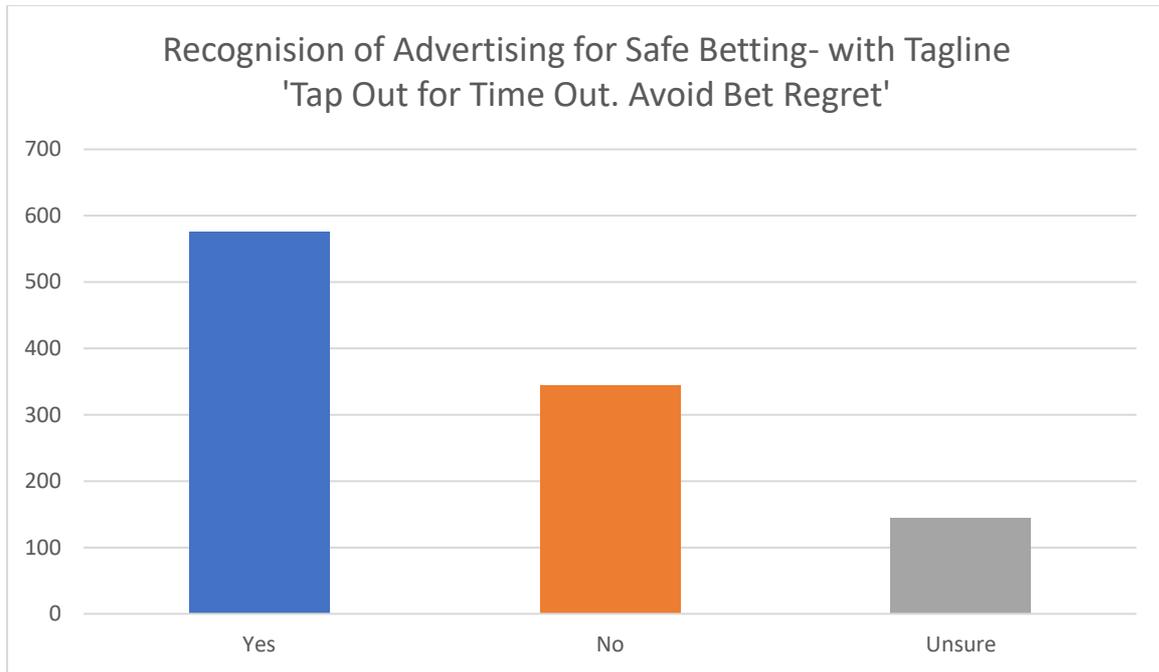
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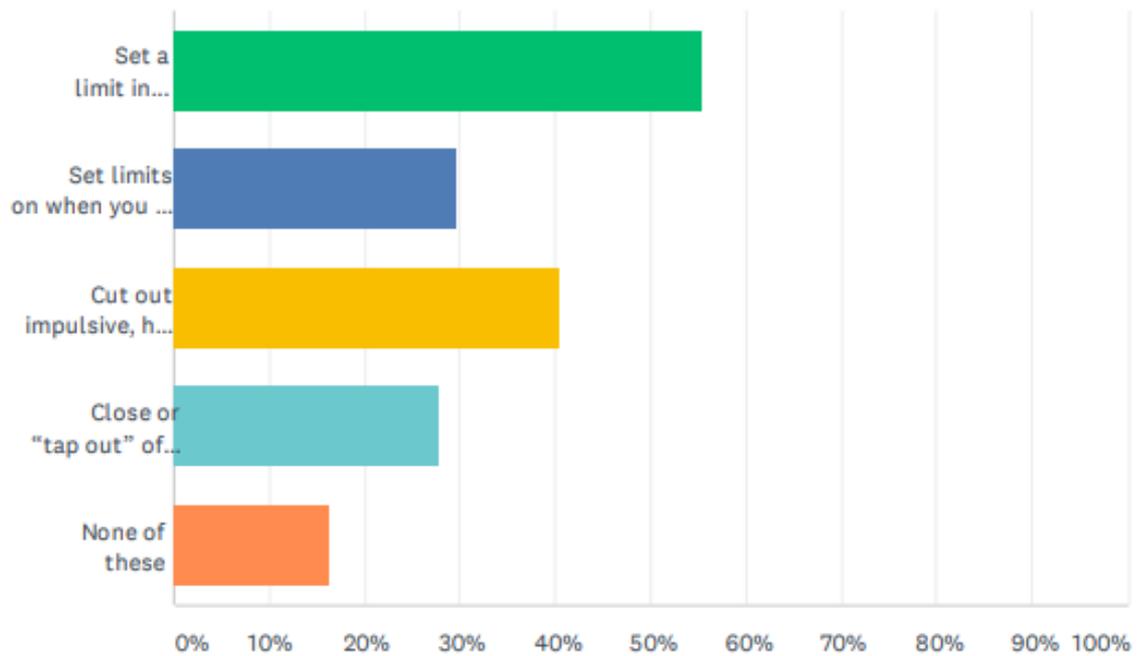
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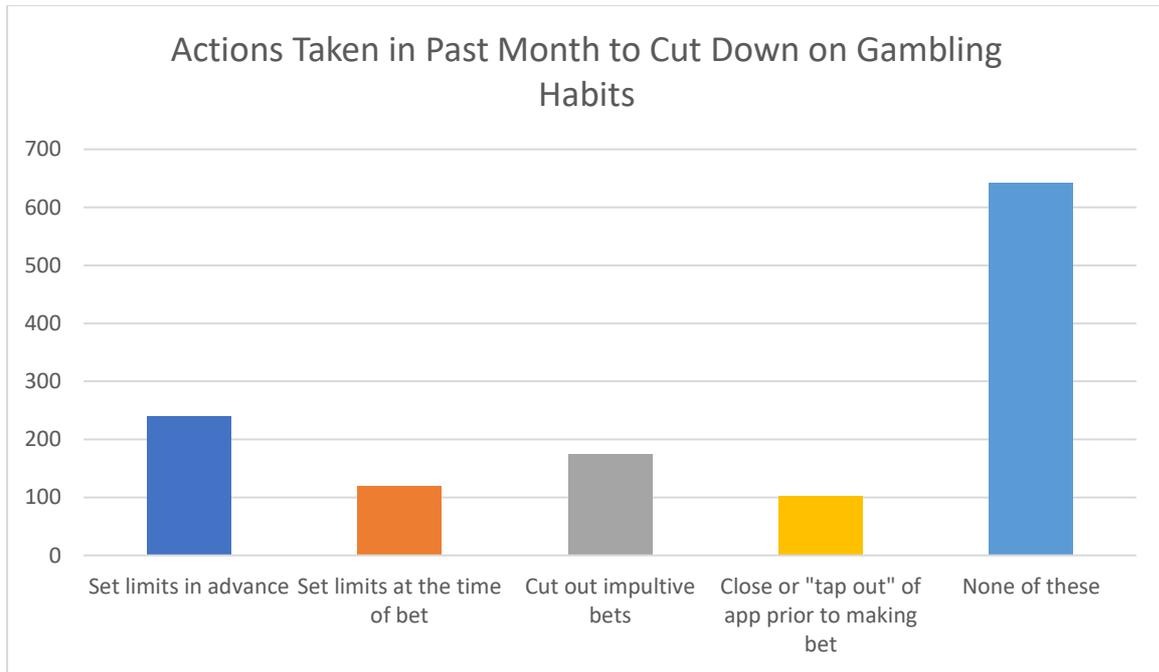
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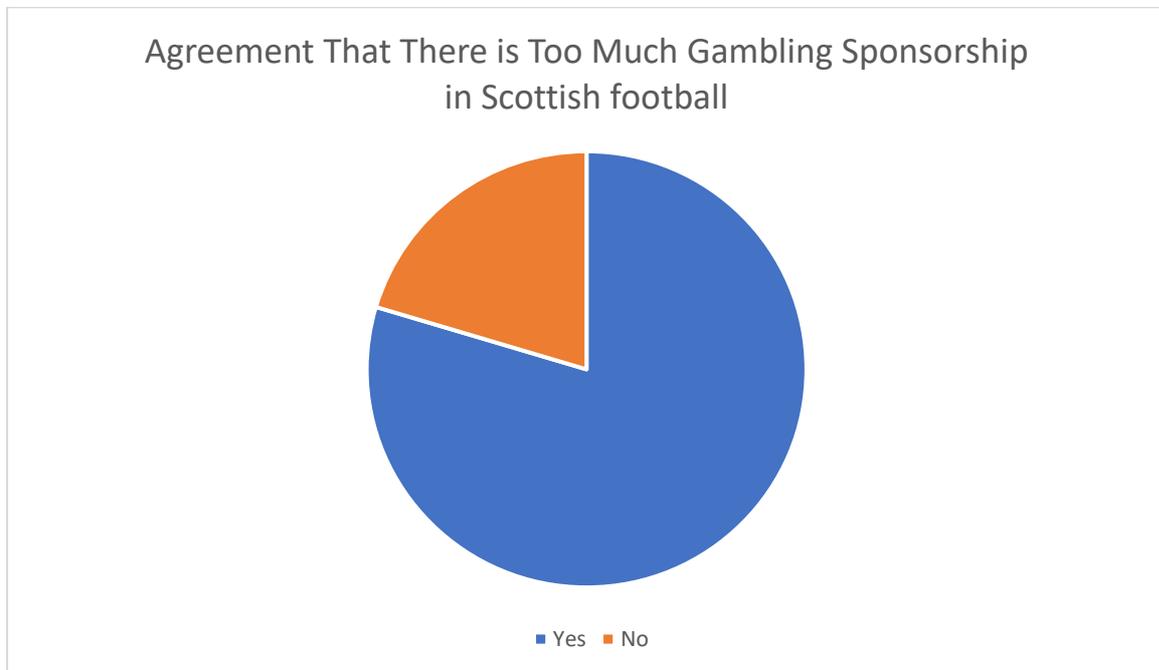
Question 5



Question 6



Question 7



Question 8

